

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body
16th December 2010

Present: Mr H Haines (in the chair)
Mr B Davies
Mr J Cuthbert AM
Mr J Dewar
Mr D Hardacre
Mrs G Genner
Mr P Cooper
Mr D Bull
Ms J Hare
Mr W Hunt
Mrs M Lippard
Mr D Collins
Mr I Tompkins
Mr W H Coleman - in attendance
Mr PH Martin – in attendance
Mr D Finch - in attendance
Mrs J Siddle – in attendance

Apologies: Mrs L James, Mr R Gough

Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 7th October 2010

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 7th October 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 15th November 2010

The minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 15th November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Annual Report on the Quality of Teaching and Learning 2009/2010

The Curriculum and Quality Committee had considered in detail the Annual Report on the Quality of Teaching and Learning 2009/2010 prepared by David Finch, Deputy Principal (Academic) which was endorsed by the Governing Body.

Members noted that the PMAR scheme is to be reviewed in 2010/2011.

Minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 25th November 2010

The minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 25th November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Sickness Absence Reports 1st August 2009 to 31st July 2010 and Monthly Reports for August, September and October 2010

Members were informed that the sickness absence reports 1st August to 31st July 2010 and monthly reports for August, September and October 2010 had been considered by the Committee using a comparison with the AOC Survey on Sickness Absence in FE Colleges (2009/2010). It was noted that the sickness absence levels at the College were below the average rate identified in the survey.

College Whistleblowing Policy

Members endorsed the recommendation of the Personnel Committee for introduction of a College Whistleblowing Policy for implementation as part of the College Personnel Policies/Procedures subject to a reference in the policy that separate procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against Senior Post-holders and moreover the inclusion within the text that managers will maintain confidentiality when dealing with issues brought by an individual(s) under this policy.

College Employee Suggestion Scheme

Members also accepted the recommendation of the Personnel Committee for the introduction of an Employee Suggestion Scheme for implementation as part of the College Personnel Policies/Procedures subject to a reference to the fact that the Personnel Committee would consider only those employee suggestions recommended for approval by the Assessment Panel as opposed to all valid suggestions.

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9th December 2010

The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9th December 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 9th December 2010

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 9th December 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

Annual Report of the Audit Committee (2009/2010)

The Governing Body considered the Annual Report of the Audit Committee on its activities and deliberations which covered the period 1st August 2009 to 31st July 2010. Following general discussion the report was accepted by the Governing Body for submission to DCELLS.

Annual Financial Statement for the Period 1st August 2009 to 31st July 2010

The Committee considered in detail the contents of the Annual Financial Statement for 2009/2010 which was presented by Mr P H Martin, Deputy Principal (Finance/Planning). The Committee noted the effects of the International Standards of Auditing (ISA 260) upon the College's pension liability which had substantially reduced.

Following lengthy discussions the Committee noted the external auditor's opinion that:

- a) the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the College as at 31st July 2010 and of the surplus of the College for the year then ended;
- b) the financial statements had been properly prepared in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting for Further and Higher Education Institutions and the Accounts Direction issued by the Welsh Assembly Government;
- c) in all material respects income from the Welsh Assembly Government, grants and income for specific purposes and from other restricted funds administered by the College had been applied only for the purposes for which they were received; and
- d) in all material respects income had been applied in accordance with the Financial Memorandum with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Members approved the Annual Financial Statements for submission to DCELLS.

Report and Financial Statement of the College Subsidiary Company - Ystrad Mynach Property Services Ltd (2009/2010)

Paul Martin, Deputy Principal (Finance/Planning) presented the report and financial statement of the College Subsidiary Company (Ystrad Mynach Property Services Ltd) which were agreed by the Governing Body.

Key Question Action Plans for the College Self Assessment Report (SAR) (2009/2010)

David Finch, Deputy Principal (Academic) presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR 2009-10). Members considered in detail the grade profile for prospects for improvement and key questions 1 - 3 which included the grades for each sub-section. Members also received and considered the Learning Area profiles. The Committee noted the special measures being applied to those areas which are deemed unsatisfactory and requested that they receive a detailed account of the Internal Inspection of General Education. Members also noted the SAR Target areas for improvement and development.

Quarterly Summary of Financial Information 1st August 2010 to 31st October 2010

Members considered details of the Quarterly Summary of Financial Statement Information to 31st October 2010 together with a verbal update by Paul Martin, Deputy Principal (Finance/Planning) on the financial position as at 30th November 2010. In addition the Committee considered details of the funding cash flow position which members noted showed overall a positive variance.

Annual Report prepared by the Clerk to the Governors on behalf of the Governing Body (2009/2010)

The 2009/2010 Annual Report prepared by the Clerk to the Governors on behalf of the Governing Body was discussed and approved.

Learner Council Constitution

Members considered and approved the Learner Council Constitution. The Committee requested feedback be given to them on activities undertaken by Learner Council.

Any Other Business

Proposed Strategic Alliance with Coleg Gwent

The Governing Body considered the merger proposal from Gwent College and following a lengthy and full discussion agreed that this was not an appropriate way forward for the benefit of learners in this College at this time. Further co-operation with Gwent College should not cease where appropriate but it should be progressed at Principal level rather than by the Governing Body.

The Governing Body was concerned that merger with Gwent College in its current financial position would engulf the strong reserves of this College and thereby prevent the planned investments to improve facilities for learners. The Governing Body was also concerned that continuing discussion on the merger proposal from Gwent College was taking management time and concentration away from plans for improvements in this College this year.

The Governing Body believed that this College and its learners would gain far more benefit from pursuing the alternative proposal to link much more closely with UWIC and the other three College members of the FE2HE Consortium (Bridgend, Barry and Glan Hafren Colleges) built around UWIC.

The Governing Body observed that the greatest proportion of College leavers look to the Cardiff and M4 corridor region for employment which would make a link with UWIC and the three Colleges in the region more appropriate. The Governing Body also wished this FE2HE grouping to be broadened to include UWN, with the consent of its Vice-Chancellor and Governing Body, enabling the development of a powerful educational consortium for the region.

The Governing Body asked the Principal to draft a letter for the Chair, Liz James, to sign informing Keith Denison, Chair of Gwent College, of its decision in this matter. The Principal agreed to circulate the draft for comment before its dispatch.

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Proposals under Transformation

Members received the verbal report of the Principal regarding Transformation within Caerphilly County Borough Council. It was noted that the previous proposal for a Tertiary system within the County had been rejected by Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Principal reported that DCELLS staff had expressed their disappointment that the Council had made this decision which left Caerphilly as the only County Borough in South East Wales rejecting Tertiary as the way to improved educational performance for post-16 students. The Principal reported that DCELLS would be seeking to move matters forward in the Spring of 2011 with CCBC to introduce a Tertiary system. The Governing Body

expressed its dismay at the CCBC decision and wished to see a Tertiary system using the strengths of the College introduced.

Past, Present and Future

The Chair proposed that the Principal reflect upon the journey taken by the College over the last 17 years since Incorporation, highlighting the positives of independence and the improvements seen by the College and that a promotional document showing the journey be produced for staff and external bodies. Members indicated their thanks to all members of staff under the direction of the Principal, recognising the achievements of the past and acknowledging that staff are always prepared to meet challenges for the future.

Enterprise

The Committee noted that the College had won the recent 'Big Pitch Enterprise Competition'. Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to those staff and students involved in the achievement of the award.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Body is to be held on Thursday 24th March 2011 at 4.00pm.