

GOVERNING BODY

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the non-confidential part of the meeting held on Wednesday, 26th November 2008 at 6:15 pm at the Parkshot Centre, Richmond (meeting rearranged from 21st October 2008)

Present:	Ms Mary Tyler (Vice Chair and accredited deputy of the Governing Body) Cllr Sally Cole (elected as Chair of the Business Development Committee at this meeting) Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal and Chief Executive Mr Manoj Nanda Mr Chris Williams
In attendance:	Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) Mr Andrew Slade, Vice Principal (Skills and Business Development) Mr Colin Wise, Consultant Head of Marketing Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body

Non-Confidential Items

Since Colin Wise (former Governor and Chair of the Business Development Committee) had resigned from the Governing Body, Mary Tyler took the Chair.

1. MINUTES of the Committee meeting 20th May 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by Colin Wise, who had been Chair of the Committee on that date.
2. MATTERS ARISING
There were none that were not covered in the agenda.
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were none.
4. COMMITTEE CHAIR
Mary Tyler reported that the Search & Governance Committee on 11th November 2008 had requested her to ask Sally Cole whether she would be prepared to be Chair of the Business Development Committee for a term expiring on 31st July 2009, and that Sally Cole had said that she would be prepared to do so.
The Committee unanimously elected Sally Cole as its Chair, and she accordingly presided over the remainder of the meeting.
5. TERMS OF REFERENCE
The Committee reviewed the terms of reference as approved by the Governing Body on 25th September 2008.
It was agreed that these were likely to need revision after the special meeting of the Governing Body on 28th November, and that the current terms of reference and schedule of regular business did not put enough emphasis on marketing.
Chris Williams offered to produce a draft for consideration.
6. STUDENT PARTICIPATION MATTERS
The Committee reviewed the paper on the September Taster, along with an update presented at the meeting by the Vice Principal (Skills and Business Development).
The Committee noted that the taster week had generated 840 enrolments from 449 learners, which was a very encouraging result. The Principal explained that the high

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proportion of female learners was normal in the FE sector, although it was likely that the current financial circumstances might see an increase in male work-based learners. The Committee noted with satisfaction the part the College website had played in attracting learners, but considered that the other forms of advertising also had their place, especially because not all the College's target learners had internet access. The Committee also noted that 20% of learners who had attended tasters did not intend to enrol on courses at the College, and agreed that future tasters, such as the one planned for January 2009, should provide more information regarding bursaries, payment by instalments and other ways of mitigating the cost of courses.

The Committee also considered the update on learner numbers and funding for 2008/09. The Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) reported that there had been indications given at the AoC Annual Conference that the Treasury might relax its rules on the micromanagement of funding allocations, for example by allowing colleges to interchange learner numbers between sub-categories of Provision Type. She also reported that the LSC software still did not work properly, so that it was not possible to determine accurately which targets have been attained, and which funds drawn down.

The Principal reminded the Committee that over-achievement of SLN targets did not attract extra funds, but that it would be likely to be taken into account by the LSC in setting the targets for 2009/10 (e.g. for 16-18 funding). The Committee noted that all areas appeared to be satisfactory, with the exception of Employer Responsive funding

The Committee requested confirmation of whether the College had consolidated growth for 16-18 learners for 2009/10. The Committee further recommended that the Governing Body would need to be more critical in accepting LSC targets in future, and asked for a report on progress of 2009/10 targets at the next meeting of the Committee.

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7. MARKETING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Consultant Head of Marketing discussed the way forward for branding within the College. He proposed that the College's emphasis should be placed firmly on the RACC brand, and that the Community College Twickenham, Richmond Adult College and Richmond Business School be treated as "virtual brands". The Committee reviewed this proposal, and agreed that the multiple branding had not been entirely successful internally or externally, that the College was at an evolutionary stage, but agreed that the words "adult" and "community" were not attractive to employers and businesses looking for specific skills training. On the other hand, the same words were useful in addressing other target learners and non-commercial organisations, such as LBRuT.

The Committee agreed that the main marketing emphasis and investment should be on the RACC brand, but that the status of the virtual brands should be the subject of regular updates to the Committee.

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The Consultant Head of Marketing recognised that the paper on the College website was somewhat out of date, and presented a verbal update. He said that the use of the website for marketing was not as effective as it could be, but that it provided a good data base for development, and use in e-mail campaigns. He also proposed that the College could investigate the possibilities offered by texting: while this was not attractive to many older learners, those in the 19-25 age-group were far less resistant, and it could be of value with regard to LLDD. He further reported that some website development was being undertaken in advance of the January 2009 campaign, and would report on that use of the website at the next meeting of the Committee.

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Manoj Nanda informed the other members of the Committee that the access to RACC through search engines had been improved, as had the use of referral sites such as hotcourses.com.

8. COLLEGE EVENTS

The Consultant Head of Marketing reported that the Skills 2008 event had gone very well, and had generated 60 hot leads, as well as providing valuable experience in how to exploit that sort of event. The Business Breakfast had attracted 70 companies, and

had also gone well, with the guest speaker, Dr Vincent Cable, being a very successful attraction. The Committee suggested that the College should host this sort of event regularly, and stressed the value of obtaining a good guest speaker.

The Principal reported that the AoC Conference had specifically mentioned RACC for its contributions to Colleges Week: the business breakfast and the Outstanding Learners awards event.

9. CORPORATE HIRES 2007/08

The Committee noted that the Queen Charlotte Hall and the Adult Learning Suite were the College's biggest earners for external hire, but appreciated the assurance of the Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) that instructions had been given that rooms should not be made available for external use when a class was scheduled to take place in that room. The Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) informed the Committee that, from a marketing viewpoint, most external hires represented repeat business.

Chris Williams informed the Committee that, the previous evening, a charity of which he was a trustee held a major event in the Queen Charlotte Hall, featuring David Attenborough as guest speaker. This event had attracted some 400 people, and the charity (INS) had been delighted with the facilities, the organisation and the catering; Lisa Havenga (Facilities and Events Officer) had provided excellent service. Chris Williams agreed to ask INS for a written endorsement in the College's favour.

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The Committee noted that the room hire rates for 2008/09 were to be approved by the Finance & Resources Committee.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

11. DATES OF REMAINING MEETINGS FOR 2008/09

- Tuesday, 10th February 2009
- Wednesday, 20th May 2009 (changed from Tuesday, 19th May 2008)

This part of the meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.

CHAIR