

## GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

of the non-confidential section of the meeting of the Governing Body of Richmond Adult and Community College held at 6.30 pm on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 in the Richmond Business School, Parkshot, Richmond TW9 2RE

- Present
- Ms Mary Tyler, Vice Chair (presiding)
  - Dr Tim Woolmer, Vice Chair
  - Ms Siân Bates MBE
  - Ms Sally Field
  - Ms Rohini Bhattacharya
  - Councillor Sally Cole
  - Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal & Chief Executive
  - Mr Kevin Finnigan
  - Ms Louise Fluker
  - Mr Robin Jowit OBE
  - Mr Manoj Nanda
  - Mr Sylvester Olutayo
  - Mr Sebastian Scotney
  - Dr Michael Sevitt
  - Mr Geoff Varrall
- Apologies
- Mrs Diana Rawstron, Chair
  - Mr T. C. Lim
  - Mr Chris Williams
- In attendance
- Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services)
  - Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
  - Ms Nicola Scott, Head of Marketing and Sales (item 4)
  - Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body

### Part I (Non confidential items)

The Chair welcomed Louise Fluker and Sebastian Scotney as new Governors.

1. The Chair reported that Mrs Rawstron had been very ill, but was now getting better: she would be returning to work part-time after Easter, and expected to resume as Chair of the Governing Body on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009. In the interim, she (Mary Tyler, as the accredited deputy) would continue to act as Chair.

With regard to succession planning, she was in the process of establishing which Independent Governors might be prepared to become Chair with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009. After consultation with the Principal and the Clerk, she proposed that there should be a brief Special Meeting of the Governing Body on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 (the Governors' development day at Warren House) to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair designate, for confirmation at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009.

2. **MINUTES**  
The minutes of the non-confidential section of the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008 were, approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
3. **MATTERS ARISING**  
Referring to item 3 (SAR), the Principal reported that, although the College had graded itself as 2 (Good) in the SAR, an Ofsted desk assessment had graded the College as 1 (Outstanding), and the College would therefore continue to describe itself as an Outstanding College.  
She further informed the Governing Body that the findings to date from the telephone survey of learners were based on too small a sample to be reliable: the findings would be reported to the Quality & Standards Committee once a larger enough sample had been obtained.

CJC

#### 4. SUMMER RECRUITMENT

The Head of Marketing and Sales reported that the prospectus had been launched the previous Thursday at the Surviving Recession event, and there had already been 1,056 enrolments (compared with 632 at the same stage last year), of which only 72 were free tasters, and only 64 were the quarter-price "recession busting" courses.

She circulated a paper showing the statistics relating to the current Summer enrolment position in more detail, and an analysis of the Surviving Recession event. She said that the latter had contributed significantly to the current enrolment position, by bringing enrolment to the front of people's minds, and putting the prospectus in their hands. The Principal added that better curriculum planning was also a cause, to go with better marketing.

The Head of Marketing and Sales summarised the analysis of the Surviving Recession event. Seminars (in RBS) had all been fully booked, but the footfall in the main exhibition (QCH) had only attracted just over 200 visitors. For similar events in future, offers of free tea and coffee in the main hall after RBS seminars would be considered, as would an increased College staff presence to meet and greet people and encourage them to visit the main exhibition.

*The Governing Body noted the report, and congratulated the College staff on the event and the summer enrolment position.*

#### 5. REVISED BUDGET

The Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) reported that the revised budget had received scrutiny from the Finance & Resources Committee. In the face of reprofiling of income, payroll costs were lower than originally budgeted, largely as a result of the pause in delivery of TrainToGain and the impact of the recovery strategy. Marketing costs were more targeted and cost effective.

As a result, the College was now budgeting a surplus of £383K (as opposed to the £169K originally budgeted). However, if it were necessary to write off the costs of the Capital Project, this could produce a position much closer to break-even. The College expected a cash balance of £6m at the year-end.

*The Governing Body approved the revised budget.*

#### 6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Vice Principal (Finance and Corporate Services) summarised the half-year management accounts to January 2009. She reported that tuition fees were on track. Project income for the first six months had not all come through as expected, but there had been a more recent improvement in the period since January 2009. She explained that premises costs were over budget, largely because of the urgent need to replace the Clifden boilers: these costs could, however, be capitalised if the Capital Project were significantly delayed.

*The Governing Body noted the management accounts.*

#### 7. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Governing Body noted the reason for the change to the policy, following a recommendation from the internal auditors.

*The Governing Body approved the Risk Management policy.*

#### 8. STATEMENT OF SAFETY POLICY

*The Governing Body approved the Statement of Safety Policy, which was signed by the Chair and the Principal.*

#### 9. REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES

##### ▪ **Quality & Standards Committee**

The Chair reported that the Quality and Standards Committee had met twice this term. The first

meeting had been mainly concerned with the College SAR, and had included consideration of student feedback. The Governing Body suggested that tutors could be incentivised to register comments, suggestions and complaints from students, and that this might include evaluation of the College and its offerings as a whole, rather than being limited to questions about a single course. The Committee had considered that the period until the next planned meeting in June was too long to support the Executive Team in the development of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and a second meeting had been called for this purpose, at which it had been recognised that the College's quality strategy needed to be highly flexible, because of the range of rapidly changing external influences.

The Chair said that, while the content of minutes was now improved, their circulation remained far too slow. The Clerk informed the Governing Body that this was an agenda item for the meeting of the Search & Governance meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Clerk

▪ **Finance & Resources Committee**

In the absence of the Chair, Kevin Finnigan summarised the proceedings of the Committee.

▪ **Business Development Committee**

The Chair reported that this term's meeting had been largely concerned with marketing matters. The Committee had considered its terms of reference, and the Chair had agreed with the Principal and the Clerk that the Governing Body should decide what the Committee was for, and what it should be doing. The Clerk informed the Governing Body that all the Committee terms of reference would be considered by the meeting of the Search & Governance meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Clerk

▪ **Audit Committee**

The Chairman drew the attention of the Governing Body to the concern raised by the Principal about Tenon's revised internal audit approach: Tenon's expectation was that they would assess only 1-2% of Colleges as Outstanding. This was a much lower proportion than that normally expected by the LSC (c. 20%), and the Committee would review Tenon's revised approach in practice to ensure that the College was not disadvantaged. Audit

The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) reported that the LSC PFA audit had now taken place: the results were expected within a matter of weeks, and she would notify the Committee Chairman once these were received. The Governing Body, at the request of the Principal, expressed its gratitude to Rohini Bhattacharya and Anna Labedzka in particular for their excellent work in connection with the PFA audit. JP

Considering the Audit Committee report for 2007/08, the Governing Body noted that the excellent management effort in largely clearing the backlog of audit recommendations.

*The Governing Body received the Audit Committee report for 2007/08.*

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mary Tyler informed the Governing Body that she had attended an event for school and college Chairs and Vice Chairs at RuTC, where she had met the new Principal and new Chair of the Governing Body. She had received a very warm welcome, and had been encouraged by RuTC's wish to work closely with the College. The Principal reported that she too had met the new RuTC Principal, and that she was holding monthly meetings with him to discuss matters of mutual interest.

11. **DATES FOR REMAINING MEETINGS 2008/09**

As stated under item 1, the Governing Body will hold a Special Meeting at Warren House on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Clerk

This part of the meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

**CHAIR**