

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2008

1. PRESENT

Mr P Cropley (Chair), Ms S Daley, Mr D Hanson, Mr R Haynes, Mrs L Ladds, Mr S McCracken, Mrs B Ward, Mr D White and Mrs H Wright.

Also in attendance: Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mr J Allison-Maybank (Director of Client Services), Mr P Collins (Director of Business Development), Mr J Rees (Director of Curriculum and Standards) and Mr K Tharby (Director of Human Resources).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Baron, Mr M Gallagher, Mr A Lascelles, Mr A Pottle, Mrs P Smith and Revd R Whitehead.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Members were advised that the Students Union had nominated 2 members to serve on the Corporation under the provisions of the revised Instrument and Articles of Government which allocated 2 places for this purpose. The nominees were Linsey Clark and Lucy Shannon and the Corporation agreed to accept the nominations for appointment as student governors for 2007-08.

Linsey Clark joined the meeting.

Members received recommendations from the Search Committee for appointments to be made to the Corporation to existing vacancies and to vacancies which would occur later in the academic year. It was agreed, subject to ratification of the numbers in the relevant categories, that all of these appointments should be made to the non-specified category of governors under the revised Instrument and Articles of Government.

The Search Committee recommended that Mr Andy Pottle should be appointed as a new member of the Corporation with immediate effect for a 4-year period and this recommendation was approved.

The Search Committee also recommended that a number of existing governors should be re-appointed since, having examined their range of skills and record of contribution to the work of the governing body, it was felt that re-appointment was justified in each case. Members agreed:

- a) to re-appoint Mr Chris Baron, Mr Adrian Reynolds and Mrs P Smith for a 4-year period with immediate effect.

Mr Reynolds joined the meeting.

- b) to re-appoint Mr Mick Gallagher and Mrs Helen Wright as members of the Corporation for further 4-year period upon the expiry of their current terms.

Mrs Wright withdrew for the meeting for the duration of the consideration of her new appointment.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

- a) Meeting of the Corporation 5 December 2007.

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 5 December 2007 having been circulated were, subject to a correction of a mis-quoted date in the heading of item 3, agreed and signed as a correct record.

- b) Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee 28 January 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 28 January 2008 were received and accepted.

- c) Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee 4 December 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4 December 2007 were received and accepted.

- d) Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee 19 November 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19 November 2007 were received and accepted.

- e) Meeting of the Standards Committee 28 January 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 28 January 2008 were received and accepted.

Members were advised that the success rates quoted in Item 7 of the committee's minutes had been provisional and that final data showed improvement.

- f) Meeting of the Audit Committee 16 November 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 November 2007 were received and accepted.

- g) Meeting of the Search Committee 17 January 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee held on 17 January 2008 were received and accepted.

4. STRATEGY UPDATE

Members received a presentation from the Principal on the strategic issues being addressed by the College at the present time. A number of issues were highlighted including recent suggestions that colleges should consider separating off 16-19 provision from that for adults. Members recognised that there were a number of challenges for the College, not least the financial challenges of the new funding arrangements and increasing competition. The Principal highlighted how many funding streams the College was now in receipt of for significant elements of work and it was agreed that in future the profit and loss account presented to the Corporation should include a breakdown by funding stream against budget. As part of the consideration of the financial challenges facing the College, members were advised that elsewhere in the country Section 106 levies had been used to provide additional funding for education and it was agreed that this should be examined as a possibility for Boston. Members agreed that the future for the College was challenging and that a number of strategies should be investigated to protect its position including a review of the geographic area served.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of events which had taken place since the last meeting. Particular note was taken of the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection which had focussed on provision for residential students and where the overall judgement had been that the College was outstanding. The role played by the College's Accommodation Officer in achieving this outcome was noted and it was agreed that she should be congratulated on this recognition of the quality of the College's work.

John Allison-Maybank left the meeting at this point.

6. CURRICULUM REVIEW AND PLANNING

Members received a report from the Director of Curriculum and Standards on the process which was currently being undertaken to review the College's curriculum portfolio in preparation for the 2008-09 academic year.

7. TRAIN TO GAIN

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the College's performance in Train to Gain provision. Members were pleased to note the recognition of the quality of the College's contribution in this area of work in both the East of England and the East Midlands.

8. APPRENTICESHIP

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the College's apprenticeship provision. Particular note was taken on the improvement

in performance over the last couple of years where the College's performance was well ahead of benchmark.

9. COMENIUS

Members received a report from the Director of Business Development on the College's participation on the Comenius programme which had seen a Polish language assistant based at the College. Members were pleased to note the success of this placement.

10. PROPERTY

Members received a report from the Director of Corporate Services and information from the feasibility study team on progress being made on the redevelopments of the College. It was agreed that the Corporation would meet to receive a presentation on the outcomes of the feasibility study at 4 pm on Wednesday 23 April.

Mr McCracken reported that members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee had had involvement in the property feasibility study through presentations at the committee's meetings and through member attendance at the project team meetings. He advised members that the project team seemed to be very competent and had identified the key issues which would influence decisions on the development.

It was noted that when a decision was made for redeveloping the College there was likely to be a reduction in the College's balance sheet relating to impairment of the values of the existing premises. It was agreed that Savills should be asked to provide a view on the impaired value.

11. GOVERNANCE

The Clerk to the Corporation raised a number of governance matters:

a) Revised Instrument and Articles of Government

Members received a report on the implications of the revised Instrument and Articles of Government which had recently come into force. A proposed Corporation structure for meeting the requirements of the new Instrument was presented and members agreed to adopt this. It was agreed that the Clerk and Director of Human Resources should review College practices and procedures which might be affected by the new legislation to ensure that they complied with the new regulations and the College's quality strategy would be referred to the Standards Committee in the first instance to bring back a recommended strategy to the Corporation for final approval.

b) Committee Membership

Members noted that a number of the committees still had vacancies but it was agreed that these could not be addressed until a full complement of Corporation members was available.

c) Governor Development

Members reviewed the outcomes of the Governor Development event which had taken place in January and it was agreed that they had found this very helpful and that it had allowed for good interaction within the team. Members had found it useful to spend time together and it had assisted in their knowledge of the College. Whilst the governance session had been a little long, the governors had found the afternoon session with their linked teams particularly useful and agreed that this should be repeated annually.

12. FINANCE

Members received a report from the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Director of Corporate Services on a number of financial matters:

a) Finance Report 2007-08

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee reported on the committee's review of the accounts up to 30 November 2007. Members were advised that there had been some difficulties in managing the close down of ledgers which had led to a shift in the College's final outturn position from that reported in the accounts. Members were also advised that in future the committee was expecting to see the budget to date identified in the profit and loss report to allow better comparisons with performance.

b) Fees and Charges 2008-09

Members were advised of the arrangements which had existed in the past for setting fees and charges and agreed that in the future, because of the need to reflect funders' policies and market conditions, the establishment of fees which reflect external requirements and the market within which the College operates should be delegated to the Principal.

c) Risk Management

Members were advised that satisfactory progress was being made in implementing actions within the Risk Management plan.

13. HUMAN RESOURCES

Members received a report from the Director of Human Resources providing statistical analysis of HR indicators for the College. Members noted that, whilst the

report gave overall College information, any issues identified were being addressed on a section by section basis across the College.

In respect of sickness absence it was noted that only 9 departments had exceeded public sector benchmarks and members asked that, to aid future analysis, staff numbers should be included alongside the percentage indicators. Members were advised that long term absences had now largely been resolved.

In respect of information on leavers from the College's employment it was agreed that in future retirement and non-voluntary leavers should be separated out to aid understanding of the statistics.

14. INSURANCE

Members were asked by the Clerk to the Corporation whether any of them were aware of any incidents which might give rise to a claim against the governor's liability insurance. Members confirmed that they were not aware of any such circumstances.

15. MEETING PAPERS

Members were asked for their reactions on the new format of presenting Corporation papers and in particular the agenda which was agreed to be an improvement. It was requested that in the future names as well as titles should appear on reports from members of the College staff.

16. DATES OF MEETINGS

It was noted that the next normal meetings of the Corporation would take place on:

14 May 2008
9 July 2008.

The special meeting to receive the property feasibility study recommendations will take place on 23 April 2008.