

**HARROW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2008

1. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Attendance & Apologies for Absence

Members Present: Marie Harrison (Chair)
Tony Medhurst
Jayshree Radia

In Attendance: Ms J Chaplin (Clerk)

Apologies: Clifford Hurst

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the correction of Minute 2.1.5.

It was noted that it had been erroneously reported that, with other commitments on his time, attendance had been problematic for Mr John Steady when a period of absence had been the result of an injury, about which the Corporation had been made aware.

The minute was agreed with the deletion of that sentence in its entirety.

1.4 Matters Arising

Corporation Residential

Members were reminded that that the annual Corporation residential, usually scheduled for the Spring Term, had been deferred pending the arrival of the new Principal.

There was a discussion of:

1.4.1 The purpose and merits of residential events and the different practices adopted by colleges in the sector.

1.4.2 The most appropriate time within the Academic Year to hold such events.

1.4.3 Appropriate locations and venues for the residential.

After consideration, it was agreed that:

1.4.4 The Principal and the Clerk would meet to discuss and report back at the next meeting.

Committee Memberships

It was noted that, following recent member's departures it had been necessary to re-organise the membership of those committees affected in order to ensure that Committee and Corporation business continued effectively.

2. CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Corporation Membership Report

A report was received outlining changes to the Instrument & Articles of Government that came into force on 1 January 2008 and the action proposed in response to those changes to ensure that the Corporation remained fully compliant

The amendments to the membership categories and numbers were summarised:

- That the requirement to have nominated staff and student members remained unchanged, although there was an increase to the minimum number of student governors now required from one to two members.
- The removal of interpretation clause for business member, community member, co-opted member and local authority member; and
- The removal of the categories in the composition of the corporation. It was noted that the 2007 Order had provided no description for the new category of member that replaced the previous categories of membership and that one possible option, adopted by a number of colleges, was the descriptor "independent" members.

It was reported that the changes also presented the Corporation with an opportunity to review its current determined membership number of 15 and to consider whether to increase or decrease the membership number or to maintain the status quo, taking into account the current composition and balance of the Corporation and the effect of the changes.

There was a discussion of the changes, particularly the proposals regarding the future size and composition of the Corporation and after consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Corporation **APPROVE** the proposals:

- To retain of the determined membership number of fifteen members.
- To maintain the number of staff members at two.
- To maintain the number of student members at two.
- To not exercise the option regarding parent members.
- That, for future external members, the descriptor "independent members" is adopted for that category of membership.
- That the overall composition of the Corporation membership should be revised to comprise:
 - 2 Staff Members
 - 2 Student Members
 - The Principal
 - 10 "independent" members

2.2 Corporation Vacancies Report

A report was received updating members on the current and forthcoming Corporation vacancies and advising on further action that may be required.

Members were advised that:

- 2.2.1 Following receipt of the resignations of Mr Ken Goulding and Mrs Gillian Eldridge in April and May 2008 respectively, there were currently four Corporation vacancies.
- 2.2.2 The vacancies were originally in the categories of Local Authority nominee, business and co-opted members, all of which were now replaced by the one category of external (independent) members.
- 2.2.3 In addition to the four vacancies, the terms of office of Mr John Steady and Mr Clifford Hurst expired in March and April 2008 respectively. It was noted that a formal recommendation to the Corporation regarding their re-appointment had been delayed following the cancellation of the last meeting and that a recommendation regarding re-nomination would therefore now need to be retrospective. It was reported that:
 - Clifford Hurst had indicated that he would be prepared to remain on the Corporation until the end of the current Academic Year but that beyond that period he would not be seeking re-nomination following a change in his current work commitments; and
 - John Steady had indicated a willingness to be considered for re-nomination.

Members expressed their great concern at the number of vacancies and their regret at the departure of Ken Goulding and the prospective departure of Gillian Eldridge, both of whom it was considered had brought considerable knowledge and expertise to the Corporation. It was noted however, that Gillian Eldridge had subsequently agreed to re-consider the matter.

It was noted that with regard to filling the vacancies:

- 2.2.4 An advertisement had been placed in the local press and with the Institute of Directors in February 2008 and that six expressions of interest had been received from:
 - Mr Bhupendra Buch
 - Ms Rosy Creehan
 - Ms Sandra Ernstoff
 - Mr Vijay Ghurbhurun
 - Ms Fidelis Griffith
 - Ms Anna Kyprianou
- 2.2.5 Meetings with prospective candidates had taken place and formal applications had subsequently been received to confirm their interest in proceeding.
- 2.2.6 A letter had been written to Heather Clements the Director of Schools and Children's Development at Harrow Council, in the Autumn of 2007, who had been considering the matter. It was noted that a Council Officer had now been put forward and that a meeting with the Principal was scheduled to take place later in the month, in advance of a recommendation regarding appointment to the Committee and the Corporation.

Of the applications received, members were advised that it was considered that the applicants that most closely matched the skills and experience were:

- 2.2.7 Sandra Ernstoff a self-employed CIPFA qualified professional, currently working in the public sector, with considerable expertise in finance, audit and resources. It was noted that in addition, Sandra had membership on resources committees for two local schools and possessed knowledge and experience of the DDA and served on disability tribunals.
- 2.2.8 Anna Kyprianou, Dean of Faculty at Middlesex University, CIPD qualified and specialising in the area of Business. It was reported that Anna had a strong Higher Education background that it was considered that she would bring useful human resources expertise to the Corporation.
- 2.2.9 Rosy Creehan, currently Acting Dean of Faculty at Middlesex University, possessing strong experience in Further and Higher Education specialising in the creative industries. It was reported that Rosy would bring an extensive knowledge of quality assurance to the Corporation, having been an FE inspection nominee previously, along with experience in curriculum development and international partnerships.

Of the remaining applications it was noted that whilst it was considered that Ms Fidelis Griffith, did not currently possess all of the skills and experience that would be required for the role, it was believed that co-option on to a Corporation Committee would provide a potential opportunity to gain a greater insight into the role and to develop such skills for Corporation membership in the future.

In reviewing both the applications and the re-appointment of John Steady for a further term of office, consideration was given to:

- 2.2.10 The skills and experience that existing and potential members brought or may bring to the Corporation.
- 2.2.11 The relative experience of the Corporation in the context of the ratio of new and existing members and the number of terms of office served, a balance of which was considered of particular importance with the forthcoming appointment of four new members.
- 2.2.12 Those desirable/essential relevant skills, experience and expertise that would be required following the departure of former members to place the Corporation in the best possible position for the College's future strategic direction. Members were advised that it appeared, based on the last skills audit undertaken and the expertise "lost" resulting from the recent or impending departure of other members, that that the preferable skills/expertise required from potential new members to complement the current Corporation membership, included:

- Education, training & quality
- Audit and finance
- Estates/Property; and
- Human Resources; and

There was a discussion of the current situation regarding membership and vacancies, which would require the Corporation to appoint a new Chair and had highlighted the need to introduce succession-planning strategies to avoid and minimise the occurrence so many vacancies at one time in the future.

It was agreed that:

2.2.12 Making greater use of the facility for co-option onto committees would provide an opportunity to provide experience and better prepare potential members for the role.

2.2.13 In advance of the July Corporation meeting, discussions would need to take place between the Principal and current members regarding a successor for Clifford Hurst as the Corporation Chair.

And, after detailed consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to:

2.2.14 **NOTE** the report.

2.2.15 **AWAIT** the decision of Gillian Eldridge before taking further action regarding a potential successor.

2.2.16 **RECOMMEND** that the Corporation **APPROVE** the **APPOINTMENT** of:

- Ms Sandra Ernstoff in the category of external (independent) member for a four-year term of office from 15 July 2008.
- Ms Anna Kyprianou in the category of external (independent) member for a four-year term of office from 15 July 2008.
- Ms Rosy Creehan in the category of external (independent) member for a four-year term of office from 15 July 2008.

2.2.17 **RECOMMEND** that the Corporation **APPROVE** retrospectively the **RE-APPOINTMENT** of:

- Mr John Steady in the category of external (independent) member for a further four-year term of office with effect from 1 March 2008.
- Mr Clifford Hurst in the category of external (independent) member from 1 March 2008 until 31 July 2008.

2.2.18 **RECOMMEND** that the Corporation **APPROVE**, subject to her acceptance, the proposal to **APPOINT** Ms Fidelis Griffith as a co-opted member of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee.

2.2.19 **MEET** again immediately before the July Corporation to consider the application from Harrow Local Authority.

On behalf of the members, the Chair thanked the Principal and the Clerk for their efforts in putting forward the selection of candidates, the preparation and rigour of the process and the comprehensive report put to members for consideration, all of which it was considered had facilitated the decision-making process.

3. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

3.1 Report: Diversity & Governance in the Education Sector

A report was received advising on the findings of recent research into diversity and governance in the education sector.

Members were advised that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) had commissioned the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) to undertake a research project in 2007 and that the research had highlighted five primary barriers to diversity in FE governance:

- 3.1.1 Informal recruitment methods
- 3.1.2 Lack of knowledge about FE college boards, governors and governor vacancies
- 3.1.3 Lack of confidence
- 3.1.4 Time pressures
- 3.1.5 The absence of remuneration

It was noted that the research report had concluded with recommendations and an action plan to increase the diversity of college governors and to ensure effective monitoring in the future, which included:

- 3.1.6 Enhancing the profile of FE governors
- 3.1.7 Developing a national recruitment and induction strategy for governors
- 3.1.8 Creating an effective system to monitor and report progress on the diversity of governors
- 3.1.9 Developing support schemes for new and potential governors
- 3.1.10 Governor remuneration and improved governor recognition
- 3.1.11 Conducting further research on a number of issues

Members were advised that as part of working towards self-regulation, it was expected that colleges would look to lead on taking forward the recommendations contained in the action plan to develop further positive recruitment practices and the diversity of governing bodies.

The recommendations made in the action plan and College's current practices were considered, including

- 3.1.12 The degree of rigour applied to current recruitment practice and the ways in which recruitment practices could be further improved.
- 3.1.13 The potential for making available for members work-shadowing opportunities within the curriculum areas to further develop members' knowledge and understanding.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

- 3.1.14 **NOTE** the report.

3.2 Recruiting and Retaining Student Governors

A report was received advising members on sector practices regarded as successful in the recruitment of student governors.

It was reported that:

- 3.2.1 The raising of the 'learner voice' could be seen as part of the general move across the public services effectively to utilise the views of service users to deliver improved and substantially personalised provision.
- 3.2.2 It was important to recognise that student governors were full members of the corporation, possessing the same status as any other member of the governing board, but that they may have additional support and training needs.
- 3.2.3 Colleges had cited a number of issues around the recruitment and retention of student governors, some of which are similar to those identified in the recruitment of FE governors more generally. It was noted, however, that a recent report by the Institute for Volunteering Research had reviewed current recruitment practices and barriers to participation, specifically relating to the

recruitment of student governors, and made recommendations for future recruitment strategies.

Members were advised that the key points arising from the guide that colleges were advised to consider a number of strategies including:

- 3.2.4 A supportive infrastructure to ensure an effective system of active student representative bodies to provide and inform successive student governors.
- 3.2.5 The development of an effective cycle of recruitment that maximises the amount of time that student governors can offer, and a meeting structure and process that encourages attendance.
- 3.2.6 Providing proactive support from the clerk, principal and others to encourage student governor involvement and participation through the provision of coaching, buddying, training and practical support is essential.
- 3.2.7 The promotion of, and positive attitudes towards, student involvement throughout the college; and
- 3.2.8 The development of strong relationships so that students feel free to express their opinions and concerns.

The recommendations made in the action plan and College's current practices were considered, including

- 3.2.9 The degree of rigour applied to current student governor recruitment practices and the ways in which recruitment practices could be further improved.
- 3.2.10 The potential for introducing a student services committee, to which other governors could be a member, which would provide a forum for greater student member involvement. Members welcomed and endorsed proposals to review the current committee structure to ensure that it remained relevant and would best reflect the College's future strategic approach and direction.
- 3.2.11 The intention to incorporate some of the recommendations to improve practices further, in particular enhancing support strategies to facilitate the effective integration of all new members on joining the Corporation.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

- 3.2.12 **NOTE** the report.

4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 Corporation Training, Support & Development

A report was received on Corporation training and development, summarising the initiatives in place and outlining proposals for further initiatives for the development, support and training of members.

It was reported that Corporation had a number of training, development and support initiatives in place, the details of which were recorded on a Corporation Training Register, that were already the subject of an annual report.

Members were advised that for the forthcoming Academic Year, it was proposed to explore, and where appropriate, to develop further a range of additional initiatives intended to provide:

- 4.1.1 Support for new and potential governors
- 4.1.2 Support and Development for existing Governors; and
- 4.1.3 A Training, Support & Development Programme

Members welcomed and endorsed the proposed training and support initiatives proposed and there was a discussion of:

- 4.1.4 Respective member's experiences when joining the Corporation as new members.
- 4.1.5 The different approaches that could be used to assist new members to integrate more effectively
- 4.1.6 The range of initiatives proposed for new and existing governors.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

- 4.1.7 **NOTE** the report.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Dates and timing of future meetings.

It was reported that the Corporation meeting calendar was being revised in advance of Corporation approval at its July meeting.

There was consideration of the current start time for the majority of meetings, which it was noted was considerably later than colleges in the sector generally.

Members discussed the merits of breakfast, lunch and evening meeting times and alternatives meeting venues.

It was agreed that:

- 5.1.1 The Clerk would email members to seek views on preferences, in advance of finalising the calendar for 2008/09.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBC by the Clerk.

*M Hammar
12/11/2008*