

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation of West Thames College
Held on Wednesday 16 March 2016 in the Banks Room**

Members Present	Mr J Bolt (Chair)	Ms M Semple	Mrs M Harpley
	Ms A Patterson	Mr T White	Mr S Castle
	Mr M Michaelides	Mr B Armstrong	Mr M Piwowarski
	Ms L Graves	Mr S Wilcox	Mr F Spraggs
	Ms C Ajit Singh		

Also present	Ms T Aust	Mr M Cooper	Mr J Allen
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The meeting commenced at 18.00

40 APOLOGIES & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Mr A Joshie and Ms I Stefan.

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

42 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declared interests against any agenda item.

43 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 16 March 2016(Paper 1).

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Corporation held on 20 January 2016(Paper 10).

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair to sign the confidential minutes as an accurate record of the strategy meeting of the Corporation held on 10 February 2016 (Paper 2).

44 SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING

The '*Summary Action Lists*' were received (Paper 3 & Paper 11). It was confirmed all the outstanding action points are addressed through agenda items at this meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the '*Summary Action Lists*'.

45 EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT

The Executive Team Report (Paper 4) provided Members with updates on the following topics:

- Strategic Context – Area Review Update
- Partnership Update
- Leadership & Management staff update
- LEP Project
- Student and Events news stories.

The Area Review process has commenced. The first Steering Group – with 36 attendees – took place on 8th March. It was primarily an information giving session with a number of presentations including: the Skills vision for London; the area

context (data on learner numbers and the economic context); the college picture (a top level analysis of the college questionnaires); and a discussion on stakeholder engagement.

Two FE Commissioner Advisers – Louise Twigg and Teresa Kelly – have commenced their two-day visit to the College meeting staff, students and governors.

Feedback received has resulted in the re-writing of some elements of the College's questionnaire in order to make more of what the College is good at; to identify areas where the College should lead on in West London; and what strategic partnership models we would want to pursue.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Executive Team Report.

46 MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

The College report '*Development Plan 2015/16: Key Objectives Progress Report*' was received (Paper 5). The paper provided Members with a summary progress update against each of the key strategic objectives from the College's Development Plan 2015/16. A total of 18 objectives were reported against, under the three key headings of:

- Goal 1: To provide an OUTSTANDING learning experience for all our learners
- Goal 2: To be INNOVATIVE and RESPONSIVE to current and future needs
- Goal 3: To provide an EXCELLENT environment and resources.

Attached to the report was the 'Data Dashboard' report that summarised performance against those key performance indicators that governors should be made aware of.

An 'Amber' assessment was noted for attendance, with attendance at 88% against the target of 90%. Although 2% below target, the current attendance is 1% above the rate for the same period last year.

A 'Red' assessment was noted on EFA 16-18 numbers. The College currently has 1,964 16-18 year olds against the target of 2,037.

The other 'Red' assessment noted by the Corporation was in-house apprenticeship numbers. Against the target of 362, 120 have been recruited.

The teaching, learning and assessment observation process was amended for 2015-16 and now includes a series of 3 observations:

- Peer observation in the autumn term
- A thematic observation in the spring term
- A graded/non-graded in the second half of the spring term.

All peer observations were completed in the autumn term with areas for improvement identified and carried through to observation two. Feedback from peer observers identified the need for further training in terms of providing feedback to their colleagues, particularly where areas for improvement had been identified.

The second observations are almost complete with Health & Care and English & Maths, the two remaining areas to complete their observations. This has been the first time that students have been formally and consistently involved in the observation process and the feedback from both staff and students has been positive. There was some apprehension from staff before the process began but the

feedback from staff following the observations has not reflected this. Following the observations, students were invited to feedback their experience of the process at the ET+ Teaching, Learning and Assessment Group. The students were very clear about how they wanted to be taught and gave constructive feedback. All students involved in the process were given a briefing from the Quality Improvement Team and had 3 questions, which they responded to as part of their feedback process. The student feedback from observations is being used alongside the feedback on teaching, learning and assessment from course representative meetings and the student survey. Students have also been invited to be part of Directorate Teaching, Learning and Assessment Reviews.

The third observations are underway in most areas and this is where we are piloting the non-graded observations with the following curriculum areas: ESOL, Motor Vehicle & Engineering and Teacher Education. Observers (CQTMs, Directors and QIT member) will use the descriptors from the Teaching & Learning standards criteria to assess teachers' performance. For quality assurance purposes joint observations will be carried out by QIT including the feedback meeting. A detailed report on the outcomes of these observations will be reported at the next Quality and Equality Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the monitoring report.

47 TEACHING & QUALITY FOCUS

The College Report '*Final Success Rates 2014/15*' was received (Paper 6).

Final success rates for 2014-15 have now been confirmed internally. The interim Qualification Success Rate Data has just been received and going forward there will be a new format for reporting success. Further details of this will be shared at the next Quality and Equality Committee, by which point, the final published success data for 2014-15 will be available, in the new format.

Classroom based learning represents the greatest proportion of provision at the College. The inclusion of functional skills and the need for students to gain a grade C or above in GCSE maths and English, has had a significant impact on the balance of provision at levels 1, 2 and 3, when reported by enrolment rather than headcount.

Overall success is 85.5% which is 3% above the overall success rate in 2013-14 and is 2% above the National Rate (NR) of 83.6%. This overall success rate places the College at the 50th percentile.

In 2014-15, there were 302 overall leavers of which 94 were apprenticeships delivered directly by the College and 206 were delivered by sub-contracted partners. The overall success rate is 81% which is a much improved position on 2013-14, where overall success was just 59%. The overall success rate compares favourably to the NR of 70%.

In 2014-15, there were 233 timely leavers of which 139 were apprenticeships delivered directly by the College and 94 were delivered by sub-contracted partners. The timely success rate is 30% which is significantly below the NR of 54.7% and below the 60% target set. However, this will not be repeated this year as the College has changed its sub-contracted partners and changes have also been made within the Examinations Department to improve claiming certificates within the timely period.

The following key issues/risks were identified that are subject to on-going scrutiny by the Executive:

- Failure to make the planned improvements in overall success rates and therefore not meeting the overall success rate target of 90%.
- Key areas of concern for CBL that need to be targeted in 2015-16 are: functional skills (primarily level 2 achievements for all ages), level 3 achievement for 19+.
- Key areas of concern for Apprenticeships are poor timely success rates.
- Failure by some curriculum areas to accurately predict results. A revised process for predicting and validating success rates is in place for 2015-16.
- Poor processes for tracking and monitoring that the appropriate exam claims have been made and in a timely manner. Revised process in place for 2015-16.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

48 FINANCE & ESTATES FOCUS

The following reports were received:

- Minutes of the Finance & Capital Advisory Group that met on 24 February 2016 (Paper 7)
- Management Accounts up to 31 December 2015 (Paper 8)
- Tuition Fee Policy 2016/17 (Paper 9)

The reported YTD operating result for the 5 months to December 2015 is a surplus of 317k compared to a budgeted surplus of £89k. There were some sizeable YTD variations between actual and budgeted income and expenditure. In particular, SFA Adult Skills Budget funding (£222k adverse); High Needs Student funding from Local Authorities (£93k favourable); HE and full-cost fee income (£100k and £58k favourable respectively); payments to partner providers (£98k favourable) and expenditure on exam fees (£129k adverse) show significant movements. This last item and many of the other minor variances are due to timing differences. However, for other income and expenditure lines, changes to full-year forecast figures have been made taking a prudent approach.

The year-end forecast is for an operating surplus of £250k against the budget surplus of £25k, a positive year-end variance of £225k.

The Committee received a detailed paper on the College budget for 2016/17. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allocations for 2016/17 have not yet been received by the College. For most FE institutions, these are due for release by the end of February and end of March respectively. However, some information has already been released by the EFA, including 16-19 Student Number Statements and confirmation of the national funding rate for full-time 16 to 17 year olds. This information provides a good indication as to the funding the College will receive for its 16-18 provision. Aside from budget announcements and the Skills Funding Letter of December 2015, there has so far been little detailed information released by the SFA concerning next year's allocation.

The College is yet to receive from HEFCE a provisional grant letter and student number allocation for next year, which is due for release in March. The student number control was removed from all HEFCE-funded institutions in 2015/16 so, as in previous years, when actual student numbers were close to the minimum permitted,

there is the possibility of some growth. However, this is likely to be challenging due to increased competition in the sector.

The net result of the initial draft estimate of year-on-year income and expenditure movements is that further net income or cost savings totalling around £450k would be needed to breakeven next year. It was noted these scenarios do not include any assumptions about potential savings relating to direct employment of teaching or support staff. There is also no assumption about any further reduction in subcontracted provision which could be replaced by in-house provision that generates higher contribution percentages.

Methods by which the College is working to mitigate the impact of funding cuts and increasing costs include:

- Setting robust income targets by curriculum section and close monitoring of performance against these targets for specific income streams that provide opportunities for growth, such as Apprenticeships funding, Advanced Learner Loans and HE fees
- Close monitoring and analysis of staff utilisation to increase efficiency and drive down unnecessary agency staffing costs
- Increasing recruitment and class size; combining small groups
- Raising funded retention
- Reducing non-starters
- Reviewing delivery hours and methods
- Improving room utilisation
- Curtailing delivery of poor quality or cost-ineffective classroom provision

Following a thorough review of all the reports presented under this agenda item, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To note the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee meeting held on 24 February 2016;
- (ii) To note the Management Accounts up to 31 October 2016; and
- (iii) To approve the '*Tuition Fee Policy 2016/17*'.

49 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Student Governor presented a short paper outlining required changes to the Students Union Constitution.

Following review, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the changes to the Student Union Constitution.

The Chair announced that at the meal arranged for next week he would use this occasion to place on record the Corporation's thanks and sincere appreciation of the contributions made by Marjorie Semple during her tenure as Principal of the College.

50 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Strategy Meeting Wednesday 15 June 2016 @ 16.00
- Corporation meeting Wednesday 13 July 2016 @ 1800

51 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

(College officers, staff and student governors withdrew from this part of the meeting)

Tabled at the meeting for information purposes was the confirmed training and mentoring programme to support Tracy Aust following her appointment to be Principal of the College.

Paper 12(i) outlined in more detail the consultancy role for Marjorie Semple for the period 01 April 2016 to 31 July 2016.

Paper 12(ii) outlined the proposed Executive Management structure. The proposal is not to have in post a Deputy Principal. Instead, there will be two posts covering the work of the Deputy Principal – Executive Director Curriculum and Executive Director Performance, Development and Student Experience. The ED Curriculum post to be advertised externally with the other ED post being advertised internally and would be subject to a formal recruitment and selection process.

It was confirmed the restructure would not result in any additional costs and would retain existing senior staff.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) Approve the training and mentoring programme to support Tracy Aust;
- (ii) To approve the appointment of Tracy Aust to be a governor of the College during her tenure of being the College's Principal from 01 April 2016;
- (iii) Approve the remit of the consultancy role for Marjorie Semple; and
- (iv) To approve the proposed Executive Management structure.

Signed: _____ Date: _____