



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE held at Bicton College on Tuesday 3 June 2008**

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|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| PRESENT: | Mrs J Yung | - Chairman |
| | Mr M Ellingham | |
| | Mr J F C Lowe | - Staff Governor |
| | Mr D Watson | - Student Governor |
| | Mrs L Twigg | - Interim Principal |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | Mrs A M Pearson | - Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement |
| | Miss J Townsend | - Acting Director of Students and Learning |
| | Mrs D West | - MI and Quality Systems Manager (Items 8 & 9) |
| | Mrs G Beasley | - Marketing Manager (Item 6) |
| | Mr G R Copper | - Clerk to the Board of Governors |
| APOLOGIES: | Dr F Harper | |
| | Cllr J Berry | |
| | Mrs C Bourne | |
| | Miss C Hogan | |

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approved the Quality Strategy.

In the absence of the Committee Chairman, Mrs Yung chaired the meeting.

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 February 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 Matters Arising

Minute 5.1

The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported that the University of Plymouth contract was still awaited. The University had however now confirmed the funding model and allocation. Retention and withdrawal rates and subject areas were factored into the funding allocation and claw back of funding had been introduced. Delays in confirming funding had been attributed to staff changes at the University. Funding was now lower when compared with the previous formula.

Action was being taken at Bicton to improve the efficiency of curriculum delivery and the whole curriculum was being reviewed. The University was undertaking a strategic options review and may streamline its provision but it had agreed to the College offering units of degrees.

2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 2.1 The Interim Principal circulated a summary of the changes to funding bodies and transition arrangements. Funding for 14-19 would transfer from the LSC to local authorities from 2010. Adult funding would be based on a demand led system funded from the DIUS through the Skills Funding Agency. Also circulated was the response from Landex to the government consultation on 'Raising Expectations : enabling the system to deliver'
- 2.2 The LSC had only very recently confirmed the funding agreement for 2008-9. The 16-18 allocation was £3.3m, £377k was allocated for apprentices (work based learning) and adult funding was £1.1m. The allocation of additional learning support funding had still to be confirmed. Funding for employer responsiveness provision, including Train to Gain had not been limited.

3. EMPLOYER AND LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported changes to the curriculum following the Leitch Report. The Quality Improvement Agency had been working with the College to prepare for the quality audit – New Standards which would audit the College's ability to engage with employers. The actions for the College to link with employers were reported and also activities undertaken to link with the local community. Reference was also made to the Bicton hub, previously demonstrated to Governors, being developed with local Primary schools to support rural dimension activities.
- 3.2 The Interim Principal reported that the College was currently bidding for a Train to Gain contract.

4. COURSE OFFER 2009-10

- 4.1 Received the proposed full time FE and HE course offer for 2009-10. The move to BTEC qualifications in horticulture was highlighted and noted new Foundation Degrees being developed, including three in partnership with other colleges. The provision of all courses was subject to the number of enrolments.

5. MARKETING PLAN 2008-9

- 5.1 The Marketing Manager provided an update report on marketing activity. Details of events and promotions were provided for employer engagement marketing and promoting FE and HE courses. In particular it was reported that 500 invitations had been issued to employers in horticulture to attend tea at the College Open Day, and 800 promotional 'zipalopes' had been sent to employers in Devon. Work on the 2009-10 prospectus was in hand and the short course prospectus for 2008-9 would be completed by July. The new website was due to be completed in July. A

Bicton corporate identity guide would shortly be available.

- 5.2** The Rural Academy had been launched at the Devon County Show with advertising and press releases. A Governor enquired about links with schools and was advised that the onus was on schools as they had the budget for links with colleges and much depended on the building of individual relationships.

6. ACADEMIC BOARD

- 6.1** The Acting Director of Students and Learning provided a summary of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 7 May 2008. It was planned to invite Governors to spend time with students as managers had found this exercise to be very informative. The Board was analysing the use of IT in the classroom to ensure that staff were making effective use of the facilities available. The Board had also examined an analysis of withdrawals and complaints as received by the Committee..
- 6.2** Following a review of the terms of reference, the business of the Academic Board was now linked to the planned cycle of business of the Committee and reports prepared for the Academic Board would then be presented to the Committee which would make the flow of information more efficient.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

- 7.1** The Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement explained that the College was now required by the Articles of Government to have a quality strategy in place. The draft strategy had brought together the targets in the Quality Improvement Plan together and a comparison of the targets set for 2008-9 with results for 2006-7 was examined and questioned.
- 7.2** The Chairman asked how the impact of the targets for students and learning could be measured. In response, the Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement said that student success rates, satisfaction survey results and lesson observation grades were appropriate measures. It was agreed that the Quality Strategy be approved.
- 7.4** The MI/Quality Systems Manager reported on the audit of course and Tutor files undertaken in April. Some consistent issues were found where targets had been set but it was unclear by whom or when they were to be completed and some had not been updated to show actions were complete. However files contained all of the contents on the checklist and most were well organised. A report had been forwarded to each tutor detailing the issues raised and appropriate staff development had been recommended. A further audit was planned in early autumn 2008.
- 7.5** Received the results of the mid year learner survey which had been re-introduced for 2007-8. The comments from students were examined and the Student Governor felt the report was a fair reflection on how students viewed the College. Governors discussed some of the issues raised and the actions taken by management, particularly in respect of residential accommodation.

- 7.6** The lesson observations report for the spring term was presented. Governors were pleased to note the continuing reduction in inadequate lessons to 2% of those observed, but were concerned to find that there were fewer outstanding lessons and most remained in the good and satisfactory categories. The Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement said an improvement in the position was expected when the full year figures were produced. It was reported that Landex were working on a comparison of grades in land based colleges to replace the previously published benchmark averages.
- 7.7** Received the complaints report and noted that the Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement was recording complaints and co-ordinating responses. Governors examined the details and were satisfied that action was being taken by management to address complaints made. It was noted that compliments were also being recorded.

8. ENROLMENTS

- 8.1** The applications report for full time students for September 2008 was received. FE applications were close to the previous years figures. HE applications were below the 2007 figures and there was concern about this. Additional information was now being obtained from the University of Plymouth to identify the first choice and insurance applications. The applications report was available to all tutors and marketing team would focus efforts on HE recruitment.
- 8.2** Received a report on part time and short course enrolments for 2007-8 to date which were compared with 2006-7. Governors noted the broad range of provision and that short course enrolments would continue to increase during the remainder of the year.

9. RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT

- 9.1** Received a report on attendance to 1 April 2008. FE full time attendance was 89% and HE full time was 82%. Landex benchmark information was awaited but these figures were considered to be above the national average.
- 9.2** Governors examined the retention and withdrawals reports. Most courses had good retention and the few below target were being investigated by management. Management were also investigating reasons for students leaving late in the summer term and also trying to ensure that appropriate systems were being used to assist students in financial difficulty.
- 9.3** The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported that the available software to measure value added only captured BTEC data to measure students progress and there was little to report at this stage. The Interim Principal explained how Ofsted were using the information and it may be necessary for the College to devise its own method of measuring value added for vocational courses.

10. INSPECTION REPORTS

10.1 The Interim Principal was expecting the report on the Ofsted annual assessment visit to be received shortly. The one day visit had focused on six themes reflecting Ofsted's perceived areas of concern. In all six areas the inspectors had assessed the College as making reasonable progress which was seen to be a good result and in line with a provider having good quality assurance in place.

10.2 Received the report on the Ofsted Care Standards inspection conducted in February 2008. The report raised some issues regarding HR procedures in respect of CRB checks on staff, updating of policies and standard of some accommodation blocks and management were addressing the issues raised in the report. Overall the report was satisfactory with good for helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do and good for helping children to be healthy.

11. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

11.1 Received an update report presented by the Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement. The report continued to use a colour coded system to monitor areas of concern and those areas which were satisfactory or improving, although further refinement was being considered to show improvement or deterioration more clearly. No new areas for concern were reported and progress had been made in improving issues identified to satisfactory status. Having examined the report, Governors were generally satisfied that quality improvement was progressing as planned.

12. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

12.1 Received a report including details of development provided in 2007-8 and actions planned for 2008-9. Staff Development was now the responsibility of the Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement. Assurances were given that appropriate staffing for staff development would be maintained

13. ACADEMIC POLICIES

13.1 There were no new or revised policies for approval at the meeting, but the Acting Director of Students and Learning would be updating policies during the summer.

14. CHILD PROTECTION

14.1 The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported that she had now undertaken formal training in child protection. There had been no referrals of learners to Social Services, but the College was aware that some learners were already the subject of Social Services referrals.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 Next meeting re-scheduled to Tuesday 25 November at 2.00 pm to allow sufficient time for preparation of the Quality Improvement Plan. The SMT would consider whether an additional meeting was required in September.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____

**EDUCATION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
ACTION ITEMS ARISING**

| MINUTE | ACTION | BY | WHEN |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1.2 | University of Plymouth contract to be received by the Committee. | Acting Director of Students and Learning | 25.11.08 |