

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND STANDARDS  
COMMITTEE held at Bicton College on Tuesday 12 February 2008**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Dr F Harper	- Chairman
	Ms J Bashford	
	Mrs C Bourne	
	Mrs J Yung	
	Mr J F C Lowe	- Staff Governor
	Miss C Hogan	- Student Governor
	Mr J Wyman	- Student Governor
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mrs A M Pearson	- Vice Principal / Director of Quality Improvement
	Miss J Townsend	- Acting Director of Students and Learning
	Mr S Spiller	- Director of Enterprise
	Mrs D West	- MI and Quality Systems Manager
	Mr G R Copper	- Clerk to the Board of Governors
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Cllr J Berry	
	Mrs L Twigg	

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Approved the Marketing Plan for 2008-9.
- Approved the Weapons Policy.
- Recommended approval of new terms of reference by the Board.

**1. MINUTES**

1.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 December 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**1.2 Matters Arising**

Minute 1.2

The Chairman requested regular reports on child protection to be presented to the Committee. The Acting Director of Students and Learning would provide them.

**2. LEARNER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION**

2.1 The Acting Director of Students and Learning presented the attendance report for the autumn term 2007. Overall attendance for FE was considered good at 89%, the national average was regarded as 84%, but was no longer published by Ofsted. Landex would provide a benchmark in future. Noted lower attendance in Certificate Landbased Studies which was considered to be mainly due to the nature of the course. HE attendance was satisfactory at 82%. No national

benchmark was available for HE but attendance was considered to be in line with College expectations.

- 2.2 Received the retention report for the autumn term 2007. Noted lower retention in the second year of some level 3 courses. It was reported that there were issues in getting students back to College from work placements and sandwich years. Retention at levels 1 and 2 was much better and more consistent. Overall FE retention was good at 88% at 1 January 2008. HE retention was also good at 82% at the same date. Issues identified with attendance and retention had been captured in the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and actions planned in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Heads of Faculty, Faculty Section Managers and course teams would be involved in implementing the actions. Noted there had been no recruitment to the Foundation Degree in Veterinary Health. It was reported that the course was being investigated to see if it was still appropriate for learner needs.
- 2.3 Received a report on the profile of withdrawals for the three year period up to 2007-8 and reasons for withdrawals in the autumn term. Noted higher withdrawals in the months of October, November and June. This was being investigated. Outdoor leisure management had higher than average withdrawals. It was confirmed that a process was in place prior to a student being requested to leave. A Governor enquired whether the prospective student interview was adequate to ensure a suitable selection of course. The Acting Director of Students and Learning said the interview process was being reviewed to ensure more impartiality in the advice and guidance provided.
- 2.4 Received a report on work based learning retention. Overall retention was 96% but noted the AMA in Engineering which was 75%. The MI/Quality Manager stated that nationally retention and success rates were low. It was explained that timely completion was completion within one month of the planned completion date. The Chairman questioned whether recruitment was satisfactory, and was advised that the College was now targeting learners leaving FE programmes. The LSC had been impressed with the College's success rates and had allocated additional funding, but recruiting the additional students was challenging.

### **3. COURSE OFFER 2008-9**

- 3.1 The Acting Director of Students and Learning presented the course offer for work based learning in 2008-9. New courses in arboriculture and outdoor leisure were being planned for 2008-9. In addition to this gamekeeping was being re-introduced and provision in floristry was being explored. With changes in funding priorities, this is key area for future growth.
- 3.2 The Acting Director of Students and Learning also presented a paper on the operational and resourcing plans for 2008-9. Noted the operational considerations, especially the growth of Train to Gain, work based learning and full cost courses. Resourcing considerations were also noted which included capital spend on realistic working environments and learning technology.

### **4. MARKETING PLAN 2008-9**

**4.1** The Director of Enterprise provided a summary of the marketing plan. Recommendations by word of mouth were still an important factor for selling the College. Brochures now had less significance for providing information to customers than the web site. A researcher had been employed to obtain information to assist in understanding the influences on customers' decisions to come to Bicton. The marketing team were supporting higher education and work based learning recruitment as a priority. The marketing plan was approved.

## **5. LEARNER APPLICATIONS FOR 2008-9**

**5.1** The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported on learner applications for 2008-9. FE applications were slightly behind the 2007 profile, however there was no reason for concern at this stage. Recruitment targets were based on historical recruitment and estimated demand.

**5.2** The HE recruitment target was 106. There was an issue because many applicants had given Bicton as their second choice in UCAS applications. The reasons for this were being investigated. Communication from the University of Plymouth had scope for improvement and issues with student numbers and capital funding had arisen which were now being resolved. The Chairman requested that a copy of the contract with the University be provided to the Committee.

## **6. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

**6.1** Director of Quality Improvement introduced the quality assurance reports. The Clerk reported that the new Instrument and Articles of Government required Governors to approve a quality strategy. The Director of Quality Improvement would prepare a draft.

**6.2** Received the quality audit report. The MI/Quality Manager reported that **three** audits had been carried out and the report detailed the common issues found. The recommendations had been noted and were being addressed. A room audit had found that rooms were not being used as per the timetable and staff needed to ensure that when the activity had been moved to a different location a note was left advising of the change. The recommendations had been noted for action.

**6.3** Received the learner survey report. It was reported that strengths identified in 2006 had dropped slightly in 2007. Some weaknesses had improved but some had declined. It was noted that the assessment days in August were mainly used as a vetting process for residential suitability and the assessment was then carried through to the recruitment process.

**6.4** Received the lesson observations report. The report included observations carried out during the mock inspection, when the College inspection team had shadowed the mock inspectors and had arrived at similar grades. To conform with the latest Ofsted system only one grade, for learning, was now recorded. It was considered that there was still insufficient good or outstanding teaching. No national average was available but the College had participated in an exercise with Landex who would publish data.

**6.5** Received the complaints report. It was confirmed that all complaints reported had now been investigated and closed.

## **7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**7.1** Director of Quality Improvement presented an update report on actions in the Quality Improvement Plan. Most actions due to have been taken place had been completed. Governors welcomed the new 'traffic light' system of prioritising action items. Governors were satisfied with the report and progress with actions.

## **8. FULL COST COURSE OFFER**

**8.1** The Director of Enterprise reported on the full cost offer. The Rural Academy was being run by the Enterprise team. Income to date was slightly down on the profile. Details of activities were provided and these had been well received. The Bicton lectures were being used as a marketing tool to put the College on the map.

## **9. ACADEMIC BOARD**

**9.1** Received a report on the Academic Board meeting. The meeting agendas were now planned in line with the cycle of business of the Committee meetings. The Board was now focussing on levels rather than programmes. An update on the implications of the new LSC funding arrangements for 2008-9 was provided. An additional paper, previously provided to the Academic Board analysing post course destinations was circulated. A Governor enquired about open days for employers. It was reported that these were working well for outdoor leisure but need to be extended to other curriculum areas and integrated with employer links.

## **10. ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**10.1** Received the proposed Weapons Policy. No concerns were reported but specific issues such as the use and storage of horticultural knives needed to be addressed. This was approved for introduction. Governors requested a standard format for College policies.

## **11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT**

**11.1** Received the report. The Equality and Diversity Committee was now meeting monthly. A member of the Human Resources team was involved. The Student President was the student link. Legislation issues and responses were highlighted and the College was trying to fully embed equality and diversity.

## **12. TRAIN TO GAIN**

**12.1** Received a report. The College was part of a partnership with Exeter and East Devon Colleges and provided the land based training. The target was 60 learners but it was very difficult to find employers who need level 2 qualifications for their

employees. The College was now aware of other areas to exploit with discreet qualifications or units of qualifications leading to a full qualification. The action plan was noted. The relationship with Business Link was an issue and the partnership may be masking enquiries. It was difficult to establish what employers required. The Train to Gain funding stream was increasingly important and the College was looking at offering programmes in leadership and management.

### 13. TERMS OF REFERENCE

13.1 The Clerk presented proposed terms of reference which were in a new format and reflected the changes in Committee membership with effect from 1 January 2008. These were recommended for approval by the Board.

### 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 Tuesday 3 June at 2.00 pm. (to be confirmed)

Following the formal business the Acting Director of Students and Learning provided a preliminary report on the outcome of the Ofsted Child Care Standards inspection. The official report would be presented to the Committee.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### EDUCATION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS ARISING

MINUTE	ACTION	BY	WHEN
1.2	Requested regular reports on child protection to be presented to the Committee.	Actg Director of Students and Learning	3.6.08
5.1	Requested that a copy of the contract with the University of Plymouth for HE provision be provided to the Committee.	Actg Director of Students and Learning	3.6.08
6.1	A quality strategy to be prepared for approval.	Director of Quality Improvement	3.6.08