



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND STANDARDS  
COMMITTEE held at Bicton College on Tuesday 13 November 2007**

**PRESENT:** Dr F Harper - Chairman  
Ms J Bashford  
Mrs A Liverton  
Miss C Hogan - Student Governor

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr J A T Lee - Chairman of Governors  
Miss J Townsend - Acting Director of Students and Learning  
Mr S Spiller - Director of Enterprise  
Mr I Carlson - Director of Finance and Planning  
Mrs D West - MI and Quality Systems Manager  
Mr G R Copper - Clerk to the Board of Governors

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs J Yung  
Mr P Sadler

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recommended approval of the retention and achievement targets for 2007-8 by the Board.
- Subject to there being no substantial changes the Committee would recommend approval of the Self Assessment Report to the Board on 12 December 2007.
- Approved the Learner Engagement Strategy
- Approved the Sustainability Policy

**1. MINUTES**

**1.1** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**1.2 Matters Arising**

Minute 10.1

The Chairman repeated his request for a quality audit report to be provided for the next meeting.

## **2. ENROLMENTS REPORT 2007-8**

- 2.1** Received a report showing enrolments for full time courses in 2007 and targets for 2008. There had been 488 FE enrolments against the target of 526, and 60 HE enrolments against the target of 84. The LSC target was 576 and including second and third year students 610 were enrolled. The Chairman asked about targets still showing for 2008 against courses which did not run in 2007 and was informed that the College had taken a decision not to run those courses in 2007.
- 2.2** Advice had been taken regarding the public services course and this had indicated that the College should consider military targeted programmes. The Chairman was concerned that higher education enrolments were declining and was keen to see growth in student numbers. The curriculum development group was now operating to look at new courses and would be focusing on higher education in the next week. It was agreed that a final version of the full time course offer for 2008-9, with enrolments targets, would be brought back to the Committee to approve.

## **3. LEARNER ATTENDANCE, RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT**

- 3.1** The Acting Director of Students and Learning presented reports on learner attendance, retention and achievement for 2006-7. Overall average attendance for FE full time courses was reported as 86% which was considered to be satisfactory but a few instances of low attendance were noted. HE full time course attendance was 80%. Remedial actions on attendance were being taken and attendance was being monitored via MIS and students with poor attendance were being targeted. Direct comparison with previous years was difficult due to the improved data collection following the introduction of electronic registers in 2006-7.
- 3.2** Received the retention and achievement report. Retention was considered to be satisfactory but there was a concern that level 3 achievement was 57% in 2006-7 against the benchmark of 83% and level 2 at 71% against the benchmark of 85%. The Quality Systems Manager said that there was some data still to be included but that success rates were at the benchmark level.
- 3.3** The learner destination and withdrawal reports were received. It was noted that out of 103 full time FE withdrawals, 26 had entered employment. The HE full time course withdrawals were thought to be high. Consideration would be given to refining the destination data and possibly to collect data after a longer period had elapsed since the end of the course as many students record temporary positions.
- 3.4** The Acting Director of Students and Learning reported on value added measures and explained that this was a measurement of the difference between a learner's grades on entry and the grade achieved at the year end. This was the first year of measurement so no previous data was available for comparison.
- 3.5** Received the proposed targets for retention and achievement for 2007-8. The Chairman noted significant differences between achievement in 2006-7 and the targets for some programmes and sought assurance that the targets were realistic. After explanation, it was considered that the targets were achievable and the Committee recommended approval by the Board.

#### **4. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Quality Systems Manager reported on lesson observation grades for 2006-7. During the year 140 lessons had been observed. The College still needed to move satisfactory lessons towards good or outstanding grades to match the national profile. There was a mock inspection being undertaken which was producing grades similar to the College team. Noted that for 2007-8 there would be a single grade for teaching and learning with a grade for practical and theory. All full time staff were observed twice per year and part time staff once per year. The process to follow up unsatisfactory observations was being followed and no action had been necessary on competence grounds.
- 4.2 The exit learner survey for 2006-7 was received which showed the satisfaction rate had increased since 2005-6. The Student Governor found the surveys a good opportunity to raise issues and was very useful. For 2007-8 it was planned to re-introduce a mid year survey.

#### **5. FE AND HE STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The Acting Director of Students and Learning presented the operational strategies for FE and HIM together with the action plans. The FE operational strategy had been developed from the three year delivery plan. The Train to Gain contract had been successful and a new contract had been awarded for 2007-8. The HE strategy had been well received by the University of Plymouth and the College was now running the Initial Teacher Training course in its own right.

#### **6. COURSE OFFER FOR 2007-8**

- 6.1 Received a report from the Director of Enterprise on the full cost course plan. The college was seeking substantial growth after the previous year's underachievement. The strategy was to go for high growth markets, particularly lifestyle and rural professionals. The College was establishing a rural academy covering rural life, leisure, and the environment. An example was given of the successful smallholder weekend course. Targets for October 2007 had been achieved.
- 6.2 There were some areas for improvement, particularly in the quality of information provided to customers and good practice elsewhere was being examined. The budget had been reviewed to ensure that delivery costs were included. The Enterprise income target was £695k of which full cost course income was £135k. It was recommended that a paper be presented to the next Finance and Policy Committee on the non course Enterprise activity.

#### **7. SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT**

- 7.1 Received the draft Self Assessment Report (SAR) which was considered in detail, noting in particular the responses to the key questions and the strengths and weaknesses identified. The acting Director of Students and Learning explained plans to improve grade 3 areas to grade 2. Improvements since the previous SAR were noted. The Quality Systems Manager reported that the supporting data

required final validation before the report was submitted to the LSC. Overall the Committee thought the report was a fair assessment of the College position from their perspective but there was a suggestion that comments relating to floristry should be separated from horticulture. The Committee asked for a report on Child Protection to be available for the next Board meeting and ensure that a Governor link was nominated.

- 7.2** It was agreed to delay submission of the report to the Board until the data had been validated, success rates added and any issues arising from the mock inspection. Governors to be advised of any significant changes. Subject to there being no substantial changes, the Committee would recommend approval to the Board on 12 December 2007.

## **8. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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- 8.1** A first draft of the Quality Improvement Plan was tabled for Governors to read after the meeting. It was agreed to receive the plan at an additional meeting on 12 December 2007.

## **9. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC POLICIES**

- 9.1** Received an outline of the learner engagement strategy and an explanation of the objectives. The draft Bicton Learner Engagement Strategy was received and the establishment of a learner council and the increased number of student Governors from one to two was noted. The Bicton Learner Engagement Strategy was approved.
- 9.2** Received a draft sustainability policy which would assist the College in reducing the environmental impact of its activities. The Policy was supported by the Committee and approved. The Committee requested a standard format for College policies.

## **10. ACADEMIC BOARD**

- 10.1** Received the Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 10 October 2007 which had been attended by the Chairman. The Chairman was pleased to note the improved effectiveness of the Academic Board in recent years with reports and initiatives feeding through to the Committee.

## **11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

- 11.1** Received a summary report on staff development activity undertaken during 2006-7.

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 12.1** It was agreed to receive the draft Quality Improvement Plan at an additional meeting on Wednesday 12 December 2007 at 9.00 am. This meeting would also receive the Self Assessment Report with updated and validated data. The next scheduled meeting to be held on Tuesday 12 February at 2.00 pm.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
ACTION ITEMS ARISING**

<b>MINUTE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>BY</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1.2	Requested a quality audit report to be provided for the next meeting.	Quality Systems Manager	12.2.08
2.2	A final version of the full time course offer for 2008-9, with enrolments targets, would be brought back to the Committee to approve.	Acting Dir of Students and Learning	12.2.08
7.1	A link Governor to be nominated for Child Protection	Clerk to Governors	31.12.07
7.1	An updated Self Assessment Report to be presented to recommend approval at an additional meeting on 12 December 2007	Acting Dir of Students and Learning	12.12.07
9.2	A standard format for College policies was requested.	SMT	31.12.07
10.1	The Quality Improvement Plan to be presented to the Committee to recommend approval on 12 December 2007	Acting Dir of Students and Learning	12.12.07