

**The College of West Anglia  
Minutes of Corporation Meeting  
13 May 2009, Board Room, King's Lynn  
10.00 am**

<b>Present</b>	Peter Dixon	Chair
	Di Atkinson	Chris Barnes
	Kate Barnett	Sharon Cambridge
	Andrew Cave	Paul Cotton
	Cheri Crosley	Yvette Pratt
	David Steele	Will Trattle
	Sandy Willatt	
	David Pomfret	Principal
<b>Attending</b>	Richard Williamson	Executive Director of Finance and College Services (part)
	Arlene Clark	Executive Director Curriculum (part)
	Gordon Gillespie	Director of Capital/Educational Developments (part)
	Mark Reavell	Director, Employer Engagement (part)
	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation

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**1 Apologies**

Roger Almond, Kate Atherton, Jack Bantoft, Derek Stringer, Alexandra Szatmari, Roger Ward

**2 Minutes of previous Meetings – 11 March 2009 and 24 April 2009**

The Minutes of the meetings of 11 March 2009 and 24 April 2009 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**3 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4 Report from Students' Union**

The Student Governor, Cambridgeshire sites, provided a verbal update on Student Union activities and highlighted the following:

- The Thorpe Park trip arranged for the following week would now include land-based students from Milton
- Generally, SU activities had been limited during the year because of limited funding
- There were now over 200 class representatives – a very strong, committed group.
- Events at King's Lynn had continued throughout the year.

- Students had expressed concern about recent proposals for re-structure and possible staff cuts. HE students in particular were anxious for their own staff and some were considering moving to another college to complete their degrees.

The Principal advised that he was due to meet all class representatives today (13 May) following the Board meeting.

In concluding his report, the Student Governor advised that he would complete his course of study shortly and this would be the last meeting he would attend. Also, that the SU adviser was leaving the College at the end of the academic year.

The Chair, on behalf of all governors, expressed appreciation for the work he had done for students and thanked him for his contribution to the Board.

**The report was noted.**

## **5 Management Accounts to 31 March 2009**

The Executive Director of Finance and College Services presented the Management Accounts to 31 March 2009. He explained that the accounts reflected the re-forecast budget. An error in the reforecast was highlighted which had increased the deficit of £1.3m to £1.5m and he was concerned that the College might not be able to recover this during the remaining months.

Other key points were:

- Pay and non-pay costs were below budget, but not significantly so.
- Some income streams could exceed the maximum contract levels set by the LSC, particularly Train to Gain. Negotiations were continuing with the LSC to agree appropriate allocations for 2009/10. The College believed there was a possibility of significant increases in the number of starts that could be achieved and it was hoped that the 2008/09 contract value for Train to Gain would be increased from the current cap at £1.5m.

Governors debated the issues around LSC contracts and funding and the current responses from the LSC. It was acknowledged that the position would be clearer at the next meeting.

**The report was noted.**

## **6 LSC Funding Position 2009/10**

The Executive Director of Finance and College Services reported significant implications arising from the 2009/10 funding allocations, as currently notified, as follows:

**16-18 allocation:** There was a very significant increase in student numbers but only a very slight increase in funding of 1.8% implying a reduction in funding per student. In financial planning 2-3% growth above inflation had previously been assumed. This allocation had been made prior to the government's budget announcement of further 16-18 places and, therefore, there was potential for additional funding.

**Adult learner responsive:** The allocation had been cut by 25% (£1.2m).

**Train to Gain:** The current allocation of £1.5m for 2008/09 had been increased to £3m for next year. The growth expected was more firmly based than previously and included specific contracts in varying stages of negotiation.

The Principal commented that the indicated contract values were positive but LSC had yet to confirm them.

**16-18 Apprenticeships:** The allocation had been increased by £350k by the LSC today (13 May) to bring the total up from a 20% cut to slightly above the current year's allocation of £1.7m. The increase was expected to be confirmed by the end of the week. However, the number of apprenticeships achieved this year could exceed the contract, so this could represent a cut.

**Learner numbers:** SLN/Learner ratio had been reduced from 1.41 to 1.37 and for 2009/10 to 1.33. The LSC appeared to be pushing down funding for students. This drop in the SLN/Learner ratio was being disputed by the College, but was unlikely to be increased. The cut in teaching per student could have a negative impact on success rates.

**Adult Learner Responsive:** The LSC maintained that the College has had too much developmental learning and were pushing up a number of categories of priority provision and cutting dramatically developmental learning.

The Principal commented that the adult offer would have to be rationalised significantly – the offer for this category of provision had been reduced by £1m which presented huge challenges for the College.

Governors commented that full fee provision to achieve a break-even position would be required. Further, that additional modules on training courses could be offered at full cost.

**The report was noted.**

## **7 Property Strategy Update**

This item was deemed to be "Confidential".

Gordon Gillespie left the meeting.  
Richard Williamson left the meeting.

## **8 Draft Corporate Goals 2009-10**

The Principal presented the draft Corporate Goals in the format agreed at the Planning Day on 1 April 2009. He advised that detail on specific targets may be subject to change.

Governors commented positively on the goals, but felt that targets at item 5.14 could be strengthened and some compliance dates were yet to be added to the document.

The Principal undertook to bring forward the final draft for approval by Corporation at the July meeting.

**The proposed Corporate Goals for 2009-10 were noted.**

## **9 Principal's Strategy Report**

The Principal's Strategy report focussed in the main on providing an update on the proposed organisational restructure. He advised the Board of actions taken to date and of the timetable and framework for consultation. In particular, the following points were noted:

- A series of staff and student briefings were taking place

- Discussions were being held with the trade union officers
- To date 70 written responses on the proposals had been received. Areas of concern raised included the counselling service; class size; access to MIS; job descriptions; relocation of land-based provision from Wisbech to Milton; discontinuation of the nursery, Wisbech; merging of SLDD and MLDD Programme Areas.
- Detailed discussion had been held with commercial providers and County and District Council staff in order to seek options to secure nursery provision.

The Principal invited comments and questions from governors.

- It was suggested that the Principal might publish the answers to a series of generic questions.

The Principal advised he was preparing an open letter to staff for issue at the end of the week. Further, that more specific questions about the process were being responded to through the HR team and documentation was being completed which would be fed back through the unions.

- It was queried whether there would be an appropriate number of senior managers available to respond to staff in discussions timetabled at the end of the process.

The Principal advised the position would be set out in his letter to staff.

The second part of the Principal's Strategy Report informed the Board that, at the launch of the National Skills Academies for Retail on 29 April 2009, the College had been accepted as one of only 16 providers nationally to be accepted in phase 1.

Congratulations were extended to Pauline Atkinson and Mark Reavell for this success.

**The report was noted.**

Mark Reavell joined the meeting at 11.40 am.

## **10 Downham Market Learning Centre Review**

The Director, Employer Engagement, reported on the current situation at the Downham Marketing Learning Centre as part of an on-going review of the overall performance of this outcentre.

The Director advised that changes had taken place in the focus for the use of the centre – the establishment of the Employer Engagement Team there – and were known to governors. He reported on the decrease in running costs achieved in the period 2008-09 (down by 17% overall) and the projected likely break-even position at the end of the year. This outcome had been mainly due to the reduced level of adult responsive provision being offered at the centre.

Governors noted the increase in the work of the Employer Engagement team and their contribution of £2.5m to college business. Further, that the Centre was a valuable asset providing a professional, high quality environment for work with employers. They added their appreciation of the achievement of reduced running costs.

**Derek Stringer proposed, seconded by Andrew Cave, that, in line with managements' recommendations, the Downham Market Learning Centre be kept open. Agreed unanimously.**

Arlene Clark joined the meeting at 11.55 am

**11 Closure of AAT and Accounting Provision**

The Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning, explained the management decision to close the AAT and Accounting provision on both Wisbech and King's Lynn campuses at the end of the academic year. The provision had suffered from a number of issues, including poor student retention and an inability to recruit suitable staff and was no longer economically viable for 2009/10.

Governors noted that alternative provision was accessible for students wishing to undertake these courses of study.

**The Board endorsed the proposal put forward by management.**

Arlene Clark left the meeting at 12 noon

Kate Barnett left the meeting at 12 noon

**12 Quality Improvement Strategy**

The Board considered the recommendation of the Performance Review and Quality Committee of 4 March 2009 to adopt the Quality Improvement Strategy presented by the Principal.

**Cheri Crosley proposed, seconded by David Steele, that the Quality Improvement Strategy be adopted. Agreed.**

**13 Appointment of Auditors for 2009/10**

The Board considered the recommendation of the Audit Committee of 29 April 2009 to approve the re-appointment of the Internal Audit Service (PricewaterhouseCoopers) and Financial Statements Auditors (KPMG) for a further year.

**Cheri Crosley proposed, seconded by Paul Cotton that PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG be appointed for a further year. Agreed.**

**14 Clerk's Items:**

**(i) Review of the Annual Agenda Framework**

The annual agenda framework was presented to the Board by the Clerk. Minor changes were noted. In particular, the addition of the need for the Corporation to approve a new item (Higher Education Strategy) at its December meeting was highlighted.

**Sharon Cambridge proposed, seconded by Andrew Cave, that the Annual Agenda Framework for 2009/10 be approved. Agreed.**

**(ii) Governance and Financial Management Regulations Update**

Minor amendments to the Governance and Financial Management Regulations were reported to the Board by the Clerk and noted.

**Peter Dixon proposed, seconded by Andrew Cave, that the amendments to the Regulations be adopted. Agreed.**

**15 Minutes of Committee Meetings and Working Groups:**

**(i) Performance Review and Quality Committee 4 March 2009**

Paul Cotton, Vice Chair of the Committee, proposed the Minutes for adoption. He highlighted the key messages on College performance and the outcome of the Ofsted desk-based review.

**(ii) Property Steering Group 24 March 2009**

Peter Dixon, Chair of the Committee, proposed the Minutes for adoption and confirmed that the updates provided during the course of this Corporation Meeting reflected the current position.

**The Chair moved adoption of the Minutes, en bloc, seconded by Sharon Cambridge. Agreed unanimously.**

**16 Any Other Business**

- (i) The Clerk drew attention to the availability of an internet link with the AoC and special governors' briefings. Those members interested in forming the link were asked to give permission to release their e-mail address to the AoC by signing a declaration.
- (ii) CHC raised the issue of the cost of posting, under separate cover, additional papers for the Board and its Committees.

**17 Date and Venue for next Meetings**

Special Meeting: Friday, 5 June 2009, King's Lynn.  
Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, 8 July 2009, King's Lynn

**The meeting closed at 12.15 pm**