

**The College of West Anglia  
MINUTES OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY COMMITTEE  
24 March 2010 – 8.30 am Boardroom**

<b>Present:</b>	Sharon Cambridge	Chair
	Sandy Willatt	
	David Pomfret	Principal
<b>Attending:</b>	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation
	Nicky Rowland	Head of Human Resources

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**1 Apologies**

Derek Stringer, Di Atkinson, Kate Barnett.

**2 Minutes of last Meeting – 14 October 2009**

The Minutes of the meeting of 14 October 2009 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**3 Matters Arising**

**(i) Page 1 item 3(ii) Grievances**

No particular themes had been identified from analysis of the 8 grievances arising during 2009/10.

**(ii) Page 2 item 5 Support for Programme Managers**

The need for additional support for Programme Managers had been highlighted in a recent Internal Audit report and recognised by senior managers. A number of managers were developing a wider approach to coaching and Programme Managers' conferences were taking place led by the Executive Director, Curriculum, and the Head of Organisational Development and Quality.

**(iii) Page 3 item 6 Health and Safety Action Plan**

There was still an inconsistency in practice across the College. Core responsibilities were being embedded with Managers and all staff were being made aware of the need for a rigorous approach to health and safety. The statement prepared for the HSE recognised failings and demonstrated the College's responses to them. A number of training events had been put in place; health and safety was now a standing item on all team meeting agendas; two management development days had focused on health and safety; all managers, including Programme Managers, were to undertake an IOSH training programme.

#### **4 The Single Equality Scheme**

The Principal presented the Single Equality Scheme on behalf of the Executive Director, Partnerships. He noted the most significant change since the document was last considered was the new post of Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding Co-ordinator working closely with the Head of Organisational Development and Quality. A thorough review would be undertaken by the new postholder this year and the document had been adapted to recognise this role.

The Head of Human Resources added that the new postholder was working with the middle management group and all equality procedures were being impact assessed.

**The Committee agreed to recommend the Single Equality Scheme for approval by Corporation.**

#### **5 Staff Development Annual Review 2008-2009**

The Head of Human Resources referred governors to the Staff Development Annual Review for 2008-09. She highlighted the following points:

- In spite of the financial difficulties and restructure during 2008/09 progress had been made against the priorities for action.
- The development of the REFLECT tool meant that CPD could be captured and incorporated into appraisal.
- The Hair, Beauty and Hospitality Faculty had piloted externally run classroom behaviour management training aimed at improving confidence in tackling classroom management. This programme had since been taken up by other Faculties.
- Support Departments had identified issues around working together and sharing ideas. A workshop was held to address this and was positively received.
- Child protection training, across all campuses, aimed at updating those who had previously been trained, incorporated legislative and system information and also focused on softer skills.
- Cross-college opportunities included ILT based programmes and ITQ and a drive towards achievement of NVQ Level 2.
- Comprehensive programmes for middle and senior management development were planned following a pilot coaching programme undertaken by 12 middle and 6 senior managers.
- Government targets for Teacher Education/Qualification had been exceeded.
- The College's total commitment of resources directed towards investment in its people represented over 3% of staff costs.

The Head of Human Resources referred governors to page 6, Part 2 of the report - strengths and weaknesses of training and development provision - and highlighted the priorities for 2009/10, as follows:

- Enforcement of the application of the appraisal system at all levels
- Development of new diploma programmes
- Achievement of increased number of grade 1 and 2 lesson observations
- Analysis of the effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Unit
- Development of Guidelines for study leave
- Development of a Programme Manager Development Programme
- Achievement of IIP accreditation

Part 3 of the report (page 8) provided examples of relevant courses/training sessions which supported the work towards achieving Corporate goals.

**The report was noted.**

## **6 Staff Survey and Appraisal Feedback 2009**

The Principal presented the results and findings from the Staff Survey and Action Plan circulated with the agenda, the contents of which were noted.

The Principal reported that the results were very negative and disappointing overall. He felt they reflected the issues faced by the College throughout the year - restructure, no pay award and the LSC decision on capital funding. The negative perceptions of teaching staff on almost every level were of particular concern.

The response rate had increased to 48.7% compared with 39% last year, but the Communications Group were considering how this might be improved further.

The key themes emerging were highlighted by the Principal:

- 74% of respondents were clear about the strategic direction of the College compared with 79% last year
- 53% of respondents were clear about the role of Senior Managers/Governors, down 8% on last year.
- 80% said the College was a friendly place to work (87% last year)
- The extent to which staff felt their opinions and work was recognised went up by 1%
- 67% of respondents compared to 74% last year, felt that the College treated them fairly
- There was a marked decrease in the number of respondents who thought things were improving – down from 53% to 35%.
- In spite of much hard work to improve communications, survey results were down on last year. Alternative methods of communicating with staff were being explored, including establishing a Principal's blog. The Head of Human Resources was to seek wider feedback from the sector.  
**Action: NR**
- A significant drop of 9% was recorded in the number of respondents who believed the curriculum was well managed and learners well supported.

- 83% thought their area/department was well managed, up 3%.
- 94% felt well supported by their team (90% last year)
- 91% of respondents participated in the appraisal scheme – a drop of 2%.
- The extent to which training helped people in their work fell by 5% on last year
- The number of respondents who believed there were opportunities for career development at the College increased by 1%, higher at management level
- 91% were familiar with the Equal Opportunities Policy - a small drop of 2%.
- 92% of staff were familiar with the Health and Safety Policy - up 1%
- 71% of respondents thought that the College provided a safe working environment (down from 87%) This was particularly marked at Kings Lynn where a major building had been decommissioned.
- There was a dramatic decrease in the number of respondents who felt confident about the future of the organisation – from 72% last year to 44% this year.
  - Governors felt this was of concern and should be reported to Corporation.
- Only 45% of respondents thought that their pay and benefits were fair for their work – down 5%
- Self-assessment and planning – A 5% increase in respondents who felt they had made a direct contribution to self-assessment and planning processes
- The percentage of staff who would recommend the College as a good place to work had dropped by 16%. This was considered to be a very important indicator.

The report provided a summary of additional comments, the highest number of which reflected IT reliability; too high workload; insufficient speed in decision making by SMT/lack of support/lack of understanding of operational issues by SMT. Communication and low staff morale had also been determined from the survey as a whole.

There were two areas of concern requiring intervention – Plaxtole House and Property Services. Plaxtole House would be the subject of an Ofsted inspection for three days from 29 March.

Management had identified repeat messages emerging from the Survey and through the IIP process which were being addressed. Communication remained an issue and it was felt that focus groups would uncover some of the key themes.

Governors commented on the way in which communication with staff might be enhanced:

- Corporation and Committee Minutes on intranet as well as on web
- Press and PR coverage and photographs of governors at shows/events etc.
- Governor profile on intranet
- Governors' group photograph – updated annually

## **The report and proposed actions were noted**

### **7 Investors in People**

The Principal reported that an IIP assessment had been undertaken from 11 to 22 January the outcome of which was a conclusion that the “College continues to meet the evidence requirements of the current version of the National Investors in People Standard, often to a high level.”

Some good practice had been identified and some positives. However, there were factors identified which management needed to reflect upon - for example, the visibility of SMT and the need to find ways of engaging with staff and of celebrating successes.

The assessor had intimated that the College was close to achieving a Silver Award, subject to buying-in a more in depth assessment. Governors considered the value of seeking such an award and determined that, for the time being, it would not be meaningful.

**The report was noted.**

### **8 Succession Planning**

The Principal reminded governors of the referral from the Audit Committee arising from the departure of the Head of MIS in 2008 and a protracted replacement campaign. He reported that a response had been fed back to Audit setting out the College’s position and the approach it was taking in succession planning for key post holders.

Key posts were being identified and risk assessed. Appropriate training and development was being undertaken for the wider teams and a form had been distributed to managers to collect information to assist future planning.

The report also included an age profile of employees, not addressed by Audit Committee, which reflected some significant issues, particularly within the Faculty of Technology.

The collection of data had provided a clear picture of areas at risk. The next step was to develop contingency plans to address the risks for the future.

**The Committee noted the action taken to date.**

### **9 Appointments/Resignations – Staff Vacancies**

The Head of Human Resources presented statistics illustrating the number of staff in post and the number of vacancies as at 28 February 2010. She noted the changes in additional support funding and an increase in support officers related to it and growth in the number of resignations, particularly from teaching staff at this time of year.

**The statistics were noted.**

**10 Any Other Business**

- (i) Arrangements for governors meeting with candidates for Principal Designate post, King's Lynn Academy, confirmed.

**11 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation**

- Staff Survey
- Succession Planning

**12 Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday, 16 June 2010 at 8.30 am.

**The meeting closed at 10.15 am**