

**The College of West Anglia
MINUTES OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY COMMITTEE
11 February 2009 – 8.30 am Boardroom**

Present:	Derek Stringer	Chair
	Sharon Cambridge	
	Di Atkinson	
	Kate Barnett	
	David Pomfret	Principal
Attending:	Nicky Rowland	Head of Human Resources
	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Sandy Willatt.

2 Minutes of last Meeting – 15 October 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of 15 October 2008 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

(i) Page 3 item 8 Proposed Senior Management Team Structure Changes

The Principal reported that, following consultation and action to address concerns arising from feedback, the changes to the Senior Management Structure had been implemented.

4 Health and Safety Report for the period September 2008 to January 2009

The Head of Human Resources presented the report on health and safety for the period September 2008 to January 2009. She highlighted a number of investigations which had been undertaken during the period, as follows:

- Incident involving a quad bike and train near miss at Milton – Students were not sufficiently supervised in the area in which they were working. Gates had been left open at an unmanned level crossing and the students drove across as a train was approaching. The train was slowing and no injuries were caused. Specific follow-up action was taken as a result of the incident.
- Inadequate ventilation within the photography department at King's Lynn. – Certain operations were closed down for a period of time. Venting was improved and the practice of disposing of chemicals down the drain had stopped. Some disruption occurred and there were budgetary issues. The health and safety issues had been resolved.
- Asbestos containing materials at King's Lynn – A deep survey at King's Lynn during the summer had identified some asbestos in the Science

Department. Air tests showed no fibre pollution. Specialist advice was taken and the find, behind a radiator, had been encapsulated and made safe.

- Outbreak of sickness within the Vancouver Building – Advice was sought from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and deep cleaning was carried out. The outbreak of the virus was contained.
- Electrical near miss at Milton – No injuries had resulted. Recommendations had been made to the Principal and some actions had already been taken.

Update on SAR Action Plan

The Head of Human Resources reported the actions taken to eliminate weaknesses identified through the self-assessment process. The biggest problem faced by the Health and Safety Officer was in relation to maintenance of the estate - accommodation was becoming unsatisfactory for students and staff.

More positively, HSE staff had visited the campus at King's Lynn in connection with a RIDDOR report. They carried out a full inspection of the hospitality facilities at Vancouver and advised that they would use the facility as an exemplar for other colleges.

Governors commented on the progress being made to increase the involvement of the Health and Safety team into working area change projects; whether there was a need to increase human resources; and the training in place for duty officers controlling emergency evacuations.

The Committee noted the report and progress made on the SAR action plan.

5 Staff Development Annual review for August 2007-July 2008

The Head of Human Resources presented the Annual Review of Staff Development from which the following points were noted:

Induction:

- "Flying Start" induction for teaching staff had been well received and the programme had been short-listed for a Beacon Award.
- Induction material was provided to new staff before they took up post.
- An induction checklist was completed by each individual within 20 days and a full corporate induction was guaranteed within 3 months of joining.

Corporate training:

- Two days each year were set aside for cross-College training for all staff. The focus for February had been equality and diversity and in particular a case study built around Polish migrant workers.

Management and Supervisor Development:

- Internal and external programmes and a range of activities for different groups of College managers and supervisors had progressed during the year.

Teacher Education/Qualification:

- Turnover of staff had impacted on progress and the achievement of full qualifications during the period.
- 84% of full-time staff and 63% of fractional and part time staff had teaching qualifications.

Governors queried the availability of benchmark data. The Head of Human Resources undertook to present details to the next meeting. **Action: NR**

Resources:

- The total amount spent on investment in personal and professional development equates to 3% of staff costs.

Governors queried the issue of staff literacy levels being addressed by the INSET Committee and were advised that the need for improvement, particularly in the vocational areas, was being addressed.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

- An update on the progress to address priorities identified for 2007/08 and the priorities identified for 2008/09 was provided.
- A considerable amount of work had been done to simplify bureaucracy surrounding the registration of teaching staff.
- Substantial training activities were in place to support the corporate goals set at the beginning of the year.
- ITT was continually under review.

Governors requested that reaching College targets on ITT be carried forward as a priority for 2008/09. **Action: NR**

Appraisal:

- The process was to be reviewed to ensure appraisals were completed in a timely way. The Principal was to lead on the issue.

The Committee noted the report.

6 Staff Survey 2008

The outcomes from the Staff Survey issued to staff in November 2008 were presented by the Principal. He commented on the low response rate at less than 40% - equating to 400 staff - and that being able to complete the survey on line in the future could result in a better return.

The lowest number of returns were recorded from Isle (24%), Downham Market (28%) and Plaxtole House (26%).

Overall satisfaction:

- There was a 7% improvement in overall satisfaction levels and 6% improvement in the number of people who rated the College as a good place to work.

Strategic management:

- Results were broadly in line with the previous year with a slight improvement on awareness of the role of senior managers and governors and the extent to which it was felt the College was well managed.

Organisational values and culture:

- 87% of respondents found the College a friendly place to work.
- The percentage of respondents who thought that things were improving in the College fell from 56% last year to 53%.

Communications:

- Communications across the College remained an issue. Some actions had been put in place including a communications group across campuses with staff involvement. The group was looking at protocols for e-mails in particular and a range of other issues were being addressed.

Di Atkinson outlined a set of principles adopted by her organisation and offered to share these with the Principal. **Action: DA/DP**

Appraisal, Training and Development:

- Strong responses were received but varied across categories of staff.

Self-Assessment and Planning:

- 68% of respondents were clear about their role and contribution to the College's self-assessment and planning process – an increase of 7% over last year.

The work itself:

- 90% of respondents found their work at the College varied, interesting and challenging (same as last year).

Review of areas of concern identified during 2007:

- Communication continued to be an issue.
- There were still concerns about the lower than average response rate from Land-based but some responses from Milton had been more positive this year.
- Some pleasing responses had been received from those staff who had been with the College less than two years.

Focus Groups:

- Areas identified included Land-based, Adult and Community Learning, MIS and Property Services.

In response to a governor's query regarding external bench-marking of curriculum management, the Principal explained that he was optimistic progress would be made in the coming year through the work of the Executive Director, Curriculum.

The report was noted.

7 Appointments/Resignations – Staff Numbers

The Head of Human Resources referred governors to the tabulated data in her report setting out the numbers of staff in post compared to the establishment put in place during the year.

She noted that a freeze on recruitment activity had been implemented because of the current budgetary position. Further that the number of

students receiving additional support had reduced which impacted on staffing requirements.

The Principal added that recruitment of business critical posts was continuing. 70% of posts proposed for recruitment had been frozen which would affect the vacancy rates and the budget. He noted that staff were less likely to move on in the current economic climate.

The report was noted.

8 Any Other Business

There was one item of AOB deemed to be "Confidential".

9 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Health and Safety Report
- Staff Training and Development
- Staff Survey

10 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 17 June 2009, 8.30 am.

The meeting closed at 10.05 am