

## MINUTES OF THE FEC BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 2008

Present: Khadija Begum, Phil Brisk, Nick Brown, Ian Hill, John Hodgkinson, Irene Howard, Scott Jackson, Richard Lee, Steve Lowe, Asim Mahmood, Gloria Oates (Chair), Mike Pitt, Ed Stacey  
In attendance: Bev Beaumont, Jayne Clarke, Peter Roberts, Mick Walsh, Kath Wrigley (Clerk)  
Apologies: Iftikhar Naweed, Linda Newitt, David Read, Jackie Scholes, Peter Treadwell  
Absent: Cllr. Kay Knox

### ACTION

1. **Declaration of Interests**  
None was declared.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 2 July, 2008**  
Both the published and Confidential Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.
3. **Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising.
4. **Correspondence**  
There was no correspondence.
5. **Chairman's business**  
**Items of Confidentiality**  
The Chair reminded Governors that a review of all confidential Minutes took place annually at which it was decided whether or not the record of discussions should remain excluded from the published Minutes. The only items of Confidentiality recorded over the previous year included (a) the Minutes of the Remuneration Committee and (b) all discussion regarding the Science Centre contained in Board Minutes and those of the Finance Committee and Science Centre Steering Group. The notes regarding the Science Centre had been taken by the Clerk with a view to providing a clear audit trail from the inception to completion of the project.  
  
**RESOLVED:**  
**that** all items previously deemed to be confidential should remain so and should be excluded from the published Minutes.
6. **Principal's business**  
**Annual Report 2008**  
NB led this item referring to the Annual Report for 2008, a copy of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was acknowledged that this year's Report contained a lot of factual information and comment which made it a very comprehensive summary of the previous 18 months. NB drew particular attention to the following:
  - the College was currently at the high point of its success with examination results continuing to improve across the board with the highest ever A2 pass rates. These would be reviewed by PR later in the agenda;
  - value added, which had been consistently good, was extremely high;
  - the College compared very favourably when benchmarked against other Beacon Colleges who had a selective intake of students;
  - work had now begun to identify areas where improvement was required to provide a better all round service to students in the current ever-changing environment;
  - a number of difficult issues for the town could affect the College. There was no longer a site for the new Catholic School in Oldham and the College was continuing to monitor the situation and considering how it could best manage the outcome;
  - provided it continued to over-perform, the College could put a huge amount into the town. The Science Centre would be discussed later in the meeting, but all the different organisations in the town continued to give their strong support to the project;
  - once the Science Centre was built it could bring even more Higher Education into Oldham. UCO was likely to offer a broader range of courses as well as provide some of the teaching, thereby developing a stronger student base in the town. This could result in a larger professional and technically educated body who, in turn, would generate increased wealth for the town;
  - this would be a watershed year for the College. Based on the excellent examination results and value added success staff were now working towards a College which was confident and capable of moving itself forward and becoming firmly embedded into the town. The College was financially well-placed and, over the next three years, was capable of becoming the best in the country, competing against the selective Colleges in terms of both examination results and value added. This was the overarching message contained in the Report;

Questions were invited.

ES remarked that this was an excellent Report and asked how unusual it was for the College to have a growth in science provision which was against the national trend. NB agreed that growth in this area was unusual adding that already this year there had been two visits to look at the College's science provision.

#### Enrolment

NB made the following comments on this year's enrolment statistics, a copy of which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- the College was currently extremely short of space and during some timetabled slots every single room in both buildings was occupied;
- the College had always worked towards raising interest in education amongst Oldham's student population but this has resulted in such an increase in applications that this year it had been necessary to turn students away. Despite attempts to remain within the target numbers agreed with the LSC, the College had given places to additional students, all of whom were worthy of a place and had been refused admission to 14-18 schools. This had put even more pressure on staff;
- Year 12 this year was slightly larger than last year which could lead to problems in terms of having high numbers, if demand remained as strong in 2009-2010;
- however, the College must remain in this position because the effects of Rochdale's Sixth Form College would soon impact on student numbers and relieve the current pressure on staff and accommodation;
- the College had an excellent Liaison programme which would maintain the culture and move it forward.

SL queried the number of course changes this year in comparison with previous years. NB responded that there was the usual number of course changes, but whilst Psychology and Sociology were heavily subscribed, courses such as Modern Languages was struggling to recruit. In addition, it had been necessary to restrict the number of students taking science subjects.

#### 7. 2008 Examination results

PR presented this item, referring to papers circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- this year's examination results would illustrate how many students had benefited from their time at the College;
- results at A2 had consistently improved over the last 5 years and the overall pass rate of 99% was above the national average;
- the results of which the College was most proud were the number of A and B grades achieved, whereby over one-fifth of all entries (21.4%) had achieved an A grade. The College had almost reached the overall average for the NW of 22%. These results were even more significant when it was noted that the College had a non-selective cohort of students with mixed abilities. Staff worked with those students who were not expected to achieve higher grades to enable them to maximise their achievements;
- the College's most significant achievement in 2008 was the increase in A/B grades by 3.5%. This year this equated to almost 50% of all entries;
- the College's popularity continued to grow and this year 2,073 students were entered for A level examinations, compared with 1,985 in 2007. As a result, more students were able to progress to higher education and employment;
- those achieving A-C grades and securing a place at the more competitive Universities had risen from 56% in 2003 to over 75% in 2008, above the national figure. In response to ES's query it was confirmed that this was the first time the College had achieved in excess of the national figure;
- when overall results of students with a B profile were analysed they were even more outstanding;
- a meeting had taken place that week with a number of Beacon Colleges and their entry requirements were significantly higher (at 4 As and 4 Bs at GCSE) against this College's criteria of 5 C grades. Despite the lower entry requirement the College had still achieved excellent results;
- 33 subjects achieved a 100% pass rate and 39 subjects a 95% pass rate;
- overall there were only 22 U grades from over 2,000 students taking A level examinations this year and not one student from Rochdale (over 200) failed at A level;
- with regard to the number of subjects taken this year, PR confirmed that there were 48 A2 and 50 AS level courses, plus all the applied courses;

- AS results were slightly less positive this year with an A-E pass rate of 88.6%. The target for the College was to ensure that AS results exceeded the level achieved in 2007 (which were the best recorded). JH asked if this would mean lower A2 results for that cohort in next summer's examinations? In response, PR explained that this did not necessarily follow as similar AS results in previous years had generated very good A level performance;
- in terms of A grades, 2008 had produced the second best performance at AS, better than 2006 but slightly lower than 2007;
- in terms of raw results, the College compared very favourably with those that accepted only A-B grade students. The ALIS and ALPS value added figures placed the College in the top 10% nationally and higher than the other three Beacon Colleges in the peer referencing group. The College's value added results were outstanding and had been for the last three consecutive years;
- the three-year T-scores were also outstanding showing the best ever performance at A2 level, although work was needed to raise achievement at AS to the same level by 2009;
- the College's ALIS results had improved greatly and were well above the norm;
- GCSE results, with an overall pass rate of 70.7%, were above the national figure of 65.7% despite the fact that the College entered students who had failed at GCSE before they enrolled at the College. By enabling these students the College improved their life chances and their ability to succeed;
- BTEC performance in examinations was excellent as were achievements in Vocational courses overall – although some improvement was required in a few vocational subjects;
- self-assessment was the process by which measures were put in place to ensure improved performance the following year and the Governing Body played a very important role in supporting the College in its Mission.

In the absence of questions and on behalf of the Board, the Chair wished to minute Governors' congratulations to all staff on this year's excellent examination results and thanks to PR for his presentation.

## 8. **Committee business**

### Finance Committee

In the absence of DR, SL reported on the last meeting of this Committee, Minutes of which had been circulated previously. It was noted that Committee business at this meeting was brief, the main focus being an update on progress in the capital project (outlined in the *Confidential Minutes* circulated to the Board). SL presented the Terms of Reference for the Science Centre Steering Group, which were accepted by the Board. GO queried membership of the group and **it was agreed** that her name would be removed from the list. **It was also agreed** that the Steering Group should be authorised by the Board to appoint key members of the Design Team, as appropriate, to avoid any delay. The Board would subsequently be informed of these appointments.

The remainder of the discussion was deemed to be Confidential and excluded from the published Minutes.

### Search Committee

GO reported on this item referring to Minutes that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- the term of office of both IHi and JH ended on 30 November. The Committee had discussed the contribution that both Governors had brought to the Board and agreed to recommend their re-election for a further four-year term. As this was the last Board meeting before 1 December Governors were asked to accept the Search Committee's recommendation;
- the Search Committee Protocol had been updated in line with the revised Instruments & Articles and Standing Orders. The amended version was recommended to the Board.

### ***RESOLVED:***

***that*** the both IHi and JH were re-elected to serve for a further 4-year term of office from 1 December 2008; and

***that*** the Protocol for the appointment of new Governors was accepted by the Board and could now be published on the College website.

## 9. **Updates**

### Monthly Management Accounts

BB led this item referring to papers which were tabled. The following points were noted:

- the September Monthly Management Accounts were the first of the new financial year. The FGP Committee had agreed that management accounts would not be produced for August in view of the workload at year end and the fact that there was very little expenditure during August;
- the audit of Year End Accounts would take place the following week;

- subject to the audit, the accounts would show an operating surplus of £265,000 against just £56,000 last year. The main reason for this surplus was the capitalisation of assets below £1,000, which included computers.
- the College had retained its category A financial status and was now graded *Outstanding* under the LSC's Framework for Excellence;
- depreciation costs had reduced in the accounts as the inherited plant and buildings were over 15 years old. This put the College's operating surplus in a more favourable position when compared with other Sixth Form Colleges;
- the 2008-2009 predicted operating surplus was £35,000 but BB was confident this would increase in year;
- in terms of income, additional funding had been received from the LSC towards the research and development of the International Baccalaureate and a separate budget would be set up for this;
- the College was required by External Auditors to identify parental donations separately in the accounts, year on year, in order to provide a clear audit trail of how the funds had been spent. Last year the money had been used to refurbish the Science and Media Study Areas. This year £19,000 had been received (against £21,000 last year) but it was stressed that this was a *voluntary* contribution to College funds;
- £118,000 grant income in respect of NRF monies had been received;
- examination fee income had increased this year in respect of resits but there would be additional expenditure offset against this;
- the guaranteed minimum return from the Catering Contract would result in income of £13,500 this year. This had been invoiced and would be received soon;
- in terms of expenditure, capital items were listed in the papers, the majority being part of the capital bid process;
- the pay award should be agreed this month and it was expected to be around 2.5%, backdated to 1 September;
- a number of items had been removed from the Asset Register and disposed of in year;
- the cashflow would reflect the appointment of members of the Design Team for the capital project although no figures appeared in the accounts in respect of the AiP. As soon as figures were available the cashflow would be amended accordingly;
- the ratio analysis data included benchmarking data from 2006-2007 audited accounts. The College compared favourably on 2006-2007 outturn and going forward, based on benchmarking data used by the LSC;
- the College held healthy cash balances and current ratios were high according to benchmark figures.

SL added that it was worth mentioning that 50% of the Consultants costs for the Application in Principle stage were being met by the LSC.

#### Health and Safety

There was nothing to report.

#### Student Association

AM reported that:

- the Calendar of Events had now been finalised. Plans including holding a Pink Day, where everyone attending College was asked to wear something pink to get across the message that although the day was fun there was a serious purpose behind it – that of raising money for Breast Cancer research. A member of staff was donating 200 Helium balloons which would be on sale for £1 each on the day, there would be a Jewellery sale from which 10% would be donated to the charity;
- there were plans to hold a football tournament of staff versus students;
- a fashion show would be held in November;
- the Student Association had made a video introducing themselves to Year 12 students and inviting them to the Association's weekly meetings. MW confirmed that the video had been well made;
- a Suggestions Box invited students to put forward ideas for consideration by the SA Executive.

#### 10. Any other business

RL thanked Governors for the generosity in supporting his entry into the Loch Ness Marathon. He had completed the course and raised a total of £700 for the Red Cross.

#### 11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 3 December, 2008 at 4.30 p.m. in Meeting Room 1.

All Staff, Staff & Student Governors left the meeting at this point.

- 12. **Remuneration Committee**  
The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate. GO led the discussion of this item referring to the Minutes of the last meeting, which were tabled. There was some discussion of the points raised and one outstanding item would be brought back to the Board meeting in November.
- 13. **Items of confidentiality**  
Governors agreed that some of the discussion under *Principal's business*, feedback from the *Finance Committee* and the discussion of the Remuneration Committee's recommendations were confidential. These notes should be recorded separately and not included in the published Minutes.

The meeting closed at 6.05 p.m.

Submitted to Board for approval: 28 January, 2009

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of the Corporation