

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 2 October 2009

Present:

J Bloomfield	S Leggo
R Carter	C Manning
J Finn	E Milburn (Chairman)
S Gerber	R Millea
K Golding (to item 13)	J Simmonds
A Gordon-Stables	E A Williams (Principal)

In attendance:

- D Howells (Deputy Principal)
- P Thirkettle (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)
- M Wagner (Vice Principal, Student and Business Services)
- M D Fell (Corporation Secretary)

The Governors welcomed Mr Gordon-Stables and Mr Millea following their recent illnesses. They both expressed their appreciation for the support and encouragement received from fellow Governors.

Members confirmed that they had no interests to declare in respect of any items on this agenda.

	<u>Action</u>
1 <u>Apologies</u>	
Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Cook, Mr P Dickie, Mr D Hills, Mr J Roberts, Mr B Smith and Mr R Windsor.	
2 <u>Minutes</u>	
The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2009 were confirmed and signed.	

3 Matters arising

- i Student Accommodation – it was noted that Sarah Collins, UCS Accommodation Officer was to be invited to attend a meeting of the Accommodation Strategy Committee to discuss the procedure that would be followed if it was decided to seek to provide accommodation for students of the College.
- ii UCS. The Chair confirmed that she had sent a letter of good wishes to Bob Anderson on his retirement as Pro Vice Chancellor of UCS.
- iii Accommodation Strategy – it was noted that the local MP David Ruffley, had agreed to pass an invitation to the opposition spokesman for FE to visit the College to promote awareness of the issues facing the College.
- iv Governors' Self Assessment – it was noted that the Quality Committee was to consider a draft questionnaire for the self assessment of governance and subject to comments made at that time, members would be asked to complete the forms in time for the Governors' meeting in December.

4 Governance Issues

A report of matters relating to governance was received, arising from the report:

- i The Governors confirmed the renewal of the appointments of Sarah Leggo and Ryan Windsor as the Student Governors, on the nomination of the Student Council for a further one year term ending on 31 July 2010. (Proposed by R Millea, seconded by Jo Finn).
- ii Register of Governors' Interests. It was noted that the update of the Register of Governors' Interests had now been completed and could be accessed on the Governors' Staffnet pages.
- iii Governors' Attendance Summary 2008/09. The summary of Governors' attendance at meetings in 2008/09 was received; in view of the long-term illness of a number of members, the attendance at 80% for Corporation meetings was considered to be a creditable performance.

- iv Governors' Conference. It was agreed that Seckford Hall would be the preferred venue for the conference this year, but it would not be available on the planned date of 14-15 January.

It was agreed that alternative dates and venues should be explored by management, and that members be advised of the outcome as early as possible.

MDF

5 FE Strategic College Forum

The draft minutes of the meeting held at Lowestoft College on 25 September 2009 were received. The Governors were concerned that very limited progress had yet been made by the County Council on the issue of funding for the additional transport costs that would arise with the introduction of the new diploma curriculum in schools and colleges. It was noted that consultants were expected to be appointed later this month, and it was hoped that this would enable the issues to be evaluated and resolved more speedily.

6 Members' Reports of Representational Activities

Jo Finn outlined the issues discussed at the LSC Regional Council, which had mainly involved college merger proposals and current developments under Machinery of Government.

7 Colleges' Key Facts

A report introducing two Key Facts documents that had been prepared with the Principals' Group for stakeholders and for promotional purposes, were received. The documents were both considered to provide valuable comparative data that would provide useful reference data to raise awareness of the range and extent of provision in colleges. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to whether the Colleges' HE provision should be under the title UCS Bury St Edmunds or UCS West Suffolk.

EAW

It was requested that a summary of the information on the Key Facts be provided on the Governors' Staffnet site and/or the website and on a laminated card for reference purposes.

MW

8 2008-09 Operational Action Plan

An update of progress made against the Operational Plan Action Plan was received, and it was noted that 87% of planned actions had been completed by the end of July. A further update would be provided for the next meeting.

9 Principal's Report

The Principal's report was received and noted. The Governors were interested in the suggestion that international students should be encouraged to UCS provision in order to secure an alternative income stream, although it was recognised that appropriate support would be essential, and that there would need to be sufficient numbers of students to justify the cost of the support provision.

10 Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 29 September 2009 were received and noted.

11 Finance Report

The Finance Report for the year to July 2009 was received, and it was noted that the provisional on outturn surplus was £1.62 million, compared to a budgeted surplus of £1.29 million. It was recognised, however, that this was subject to adjustment, particularly in respect of the possible write-off of fees associated with the capital project. It was confirmed that if there had to be a significant write-off, it would be clearly identified in the published accounts, with a note of explanation, the wording of which was being prepared by the Finance Managers network.

12 Three Year Financial Forecast 2010-2013

The three year financial forecast for 2010-2013 was received. The Governors considered that the basic assumption on which the forecast had been prepared, that quality of provision should not be compromised, was entirely appropriate. At this stage, however, it did lead to a declining performance over the period, to the point that there would be a deficit in the third year of the forecast.

It was anticipated though, that improvement in business processes and other adjustments would result in the deficit situation being avoided.

The three year forecast was approved by the Governors as presented for submission to the LSC. (Proposed by A Gordon-Stables, recorded by J Simmonds).

13 Accommodation Strategy Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 August 2009 and 17 September 2009 were received and noted. The Governors recorded their appreciation of the very high standards once again achieved in the College grounds this year, and it was requested that their thanks be passed on to the staff concerned.

14 Accommodation Proposals update

A report was received that outlined the current issues relating to accommodation, particularly in the light of the failure to secure funding for the building project.

The Governors considered that the opportunity to acquire freehold premises that could replace the facilities currently leased at Anglian Lane was a very attractive option. Negotiations with the owner were being undertaken and if it appeared that these could be concluded satisfactorily, a detailed report and proposal would be prepared for the Governors' formal approval.

DJH

15 Curriculum and Quality Report

A report of current issues relating to curriculum and quality was received and noted.

16 Student Governors' Report

Sarah Leggo confirmed that there were no issues currently that the student representatives wished to raise.

17 ILT Strategy

An update on progress on implementation of the action plan in the ILT Strategy was received and noted. It was agreed that the Strategy should be extended to include a section on security.

DJH

18 Business and Student Services

A report of current issues relating to Business Development and Student Services was received and noted. The partners with whom the College proposed to work up to 31 March 2010 were noted and approved. (Proposed by R Millea, seconded by Jo Finn).

19 Learner Development Fund

A report confirming the use of the LSC Learner Support Funds during the academic year 2008/09 was received and noted.

20 West Suffolk Educational Opportunity Trust

Alan Gordon-Stables gave a verbal report on developments and application of the West Suffolk Educational Opportunity Trust. Donations to the Trust included £20,000 which, although not contingent, the donor would prefer to be retained by way of endowment, and the trustees would prefer to honour the donor's wishes. A further £1,000 had been received in unrestricted donations, together with £1,083 in interest to date.

Details were given of two grants each of £500 that had been awarded to students so far, and both were agreed to be worthy recipients. Publicity for the Trust was being developed, and would include a link on the UCS WSC page of Wolsey, a Trust website, and an information leaflet. The timing of an appeal to attract further funds had yet to be determined, and would be kept under review as the economic climate improved.

It was noted that the main donor's offer of a further donation of £50,000 had been subject to matched funding, and the time limit for this had now passed. It was hoped, however, that the offer could be revived if the matched funding condition could be satisfied. The Governors agreed that this was a very appropriate means of providing support to students and that a payment of £50,000 should be made to the Trust in order to allow the additional donation to be secured. (Proposed by K Golding, seconded by R Millea).

It was agreed that it would be beneficial if the trustees included some external membership, and suggestions were invited of suitable people who might be approached.

21 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Health and Safety Annual Report for 2008-09 was received and noted.

22 Performance Indicators

The Performance Indicators in relation to student enrolment were received and noted.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm