

Ruskin College

GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

**Minutes of the five hundred and fiftieth meeting of the
Governing Executive held on Friday 20 February 2009
at Ruskin College, Oxford**

Present: David Norman (Chair), Carole Orgell-Rosen, Pearl Ryall, Liz Mathews, Helen Kidd, Sue Ledwith, Jo Morris, Audrey Mullender, Jane Dixon, John Fray, Ruth Hunt (part)

In attendance: Sally Courtney, Chris Wilkes, Rebecca Cox (minutes), Brian Bulfin (Davis Langdon) (part)

PART A

- | | | |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Keith Sisson, Jan Etienne. Carol Newbury, Pam Johnson, Doug Nicholls and Mike Bradley. | Action |
| 2 | Absent
Paul Atherton, Chris Baugh, Robert Elkins and Pamela Roberts were absent. | |
| 3 | Election of Chair
Carole Orgell-Rosen took the Chair for this item, and David Norman was re-elected as Chair of the Governing Executive. No other nominations were received. | |
| 4 | Election of Vice Chair
Carole Orgell-Rosen was re-elected as Vice Chair of the Governing Executive. No other nominations were received. | |
| 5 | Minutes
Agreed: an amendment to 10.1 under the Audit Committee item that the following should be added to the minutes:
<i>'The internal auditors recommended that the senior management team should look at the possibility of making the Premises and Health and Safety Manager's position a full-time post'</i>
Confirmed: as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on 28 November 2008, subject to this amendment. | |
| 6 | Matters arising
Noted: that there were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda. | |
| 7 | Capital Project
Agreed: that this item would be taken out of order
Received: presentation from Brian Bulfin, the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Co-ordinator for the Capital Project, from Davis Langdon, and a hard copy of a more detailed presentation.
Noted: that a CDM Co-ordinator was legally required to oversee health and safety during all phases of the Capital Project. Brian Bulfin outlined the requirements of the CDM 2007 Regulations and the responsibilities of the key duty holders, highlighting in particular the client's duties. He assured members of the Governing Executive that he was satisfied that all | |

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requirements had been met to date and that the contractors appointed fully understood the key health and safety factors specific to the Capital Project. As CDM Co-ordinator, he would become increasingly involved once construction had commenced and he would always be happy to answer any questions at any stage in the project. Questions were raised regarding the interface between the CDM Co-ordinator and the College's Health and Safety Manager. It was noted that once the site was handed back to Ruskin by the main contractor on completion of the project, the College would again assume responsibility for health and safety. Prior to this, there would be a period of training for the College's Premises and Health and Safety Manager, together with the maintenance staff, to ensure that they were fully prepared to take on the hard facilities management on site. In addition, there would be constant close liaison between the CDM Co-ordinator and the College regarding health and safety matters for the duration of the project.

The Chair thanked Brian Bulfin for an informative presentation.

8 Policy Review

Received: report on a recent change to the Freedom of Information Act, and the College's proposed new Publication Scheme.

Noted: that, following a change in the Freedom of Information Act, the College was legally required to have a revised Publication Scheme from 1 January 2009. The Clerk summarised the proposed new Publication Scheme, which detailed all information published by the College, how this information could be obtained and what fee would be charged, if any.

[Ruth Hunt joined the meeting at 11.45am].

Approved: the new Publication Scheme.

9 Draft meeting dates for 2009/10

Received: draft meeting dates for the Governing Executive and its committees during the next academic year.

Approved: the meeting dates for 2009/10

10 Finance Committee items

Noted: that the Finance Committee meeting had not taken place on 6 February due to the snow, so all items requiring a decision had been brought to this meeting of the Governing Executive.

10.1 Financial Regulations

Received: a proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations.

Noted: the General Secretary summarised the proposed amendment which would stipulate that any purchase order of £1000 would require authorisation by two signatories, including the General Secretary and/or the Finance Director, and all other purchase orders would be double-checked by the Finance Office.

Approved: the amendment to section 10.2 (h) of the Financial Regulations.

10.2 Development Fund support

Received: a report outlining Ruskin's proposed involvement with the Thames Valley Consortium, and a verbal report from the Principal requesting Development Fund support for this and also to pursue a route to 'Train to Gain' funding through the trade unions.

Noted: that the LSC would cease to exist next year and funding for adult education would come from two funding streams managed by the Skills Funding Agency, one adult responsive and the other Train to Gain. The College currently received no funding from the latter source and would not receive approval to apply for it alone due to its size, and so was exploring two

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possible routes to accessing Train to Gain funds. The first was the possibility of joining a consortium of 12 colleges in the Thames Valley who were proposing to establish 'Thames Valley Principals Ltd'. This would be a separate body from the Colleges themselves aimed at obtaining Train to Gain funding and would appoint a manager, initially for a year. The LSC had agreed to fund half this post and the Colleges involved would be asked to pay for the remainder at a cost of £3K each. The second route was to explore the possibility of reaching employers through the trade unions, and a further £3K was being requested from the Development Fund to pay for the time of one of the College's visiting tutors to make initial approaches to the unions. There was general agreement that it was extremely important that work be carried out to try to tap into the significant funding available for Train to Gain and a number of helpful suggestions were made, including:

- that it would be essential to ensure that Ruskin's voice was heard and to avoid being 'a little fish in a big pond'
- that the College should continue to pursue any other sources of Train to Gain funding independently from the consortium
- that Nigel Williams as TUC Centre Co-ordinator should be involved
- that professional advice on ways of obtaining funding was available free of charge, with a fee payable only when a bid was submitted, and that this should be pursued in addition to the routes proposed

Approved: a total of £6K to be drawn from the Development Fund to pursue Train to Gain funding.

10.3 Financial report

Received: report on financial position to the end of December 2008

Noted: the contents of the report, and the Finance Director's summary of the key points, including:

- that the management accounts are largely in line with budget at this point in the year
- that the targeted shortfall make-up figure had been reduced now that income had been confirmed
- that LSC income had been calculated based on accurate student numbers to ensure that no adjustments would be required in the event of money being clawed back following a mid-year audit
- that HEFCE money had been released into the accounts as student numbers were within the 5% allowance and no clawbacks would be made
- that income from residence and catering was down on budget by 20%, but it was anticipated that this could be made back later in the year
- that the full pay award was now included in the accounts and was being managed as agreed by the Governing Executive

Agreed: that the Finance Director would bring a breakdown of the running costs for each site to the next meeting.

SC

11 Annual review of health and safety

Received: corporate manslaughter briefing and verbal report from the General Secretary

Noted: that this briefing had been brought to the Governing Executive in May 2008 but, following an internal audit of health and safety systems, the Audit Committee had recommended that this be re-presented to emphasise the Governing Executive's responsibilities. The auditors made one medium priority recommendation in their report on health and safety, which had now been acted upon, and five low priority recommendations, one of which had been implemented and the remainder would be completed within the next month. Governing Executive members noted their responsibilities under the

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Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, and the assurances of both the senior management team and the Chair of the Audit Committee that steps had been taken to ensure that the College was compliant. The Chair re-iterated that staff members of the Governing Executive should raise any day-to-day operational issues relating to health and safety through the appropriate internal channels.

12 Audit Committee

Received: minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2008.

Noted: the minutes of the meeting, which had been verbally reported upon at the last meeting of the Governing Executive.

13 Amendment to Memorandum and Articles

Received: verbal report from the General Secretary

Noted: that the senior management team had responded to the students' request that an amendment be made to the Memorandum and Articles to allow newly elected student representatives to be eligible to vote at meetings of the Governing Executive prior to ratification of their election by the College Council. The College's lawyers had been approached with the wording of a proposed change and an amendment to the Memorandum and Articles would be brought to the next meeting, to be recommended to Council in June.

CW

14 Principal's report

Received: report from the Principal.

Noted: the Principal summarised her report, in particular:

- **Finance:** the LSC had placed a delay on decisions regarding capital submissions, and a national meeting would be taking place on 4 March, following which new guidance would be issued. The Principal had asked Andrew Smith MP to lobby for additional government money for capital projects generally, which would boost the construction industry, and to state Ruskin's case in particular, with a view to reducing delays once submissions could be considered again. The College had asked Davis Langdon to draw up a Risk Mitigation Plan to respond to possible delays in funding. This would be considered at the next meeting of the Audit Committee and the Chair asked that it also be circulated to all Governing Executive members. The Principal confirmed that any such delays would not impact on the sale of Walton Street. The College had been advised that planning applications should be submitted on schedule on 6 March, and any revisions as a result of funding issues would then be submitted as changes at a later date if necessary. The Chair assured members that a meeting of the Finance Committee would be convened if required.
- **Curriculum and Quality:** the College was very busy planning for revalidations and the creation of a new Foundation Degree in Writing for Performance. Governing Executive members were asked to request prospectuses and brochures if they could offer any assistance in promoting Ruskin. In light of the data on enrolments against targets, it was suggested that more work be carried out on business marketing, possibly with advice from a marketing professional and through raising awareness of the College by forging links with external bodies such as schools. The Principal was appreciative of this advice and outlined the work that Ruskin was already undertaking in this area, with six student ambassadors, a PR company, national and local media coverage, high-profile patrons and through links with the Fellowship. The Principal stated that any further suggestions would be most welcome

Clerk

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and the College's Outreach and Recruitment Committee was fully prepared to follow them up.

[The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.50pm and restarted at 1.30pm]

15 Student representatives' report

There were no student representatives present as it was Reading Week, so this item was not taken.

16 Adult Skills Reform

Received: report from Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 'Machinery of Government change: 16-19 and post 19 Education and Skills reforms'.

Noted: the contents of the report, which provided a good summary of the split in funding that will happen in 2010.

17 Charity Commission

17.1 Received: amendments to the Annual Return part B submission.

Noted: the amended figures.

17.2 Received: Charity Commission document, 'The Essential Trustee'.

Noted: the guidance regarding the roles and responsibilities of trustees detailed in the report.

18 Academic and Quality Standards Committee

Noted: minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 17 December 2008.

19 Date of meetings for 2008/09

Noted: the remaining meeting dates for this academic year:

- 8 May 2009
- 3 July 2009

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.45pm