



GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

**Minutes of the meeting of the five hundred and seventy-first meeting of the
Governing Executive held on Friday 16th May at 11.00am in the Boardroom at
Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Old Headington, Oxford, OX3 9BZ**

Present:

Councillor Van Coulter (ordinary member)
Wendy Dawson (ordinary member)
Anne Hock (ordinary member)
Councillor David Norman (ordinary member)
Carole Orgell-Rosen (Chair) (co-opted member)
Alan Shepherd (co-opted member)
Marva Small (co-opted member)
Dr Peter Dwyer (staff member)
Guy Langton (staff member)
Dr Bridget Ng'andu (staff member)
Dr Chris Wilkes (Principal)
Kieron Winters (staff member)
Rowan Padmore (student member)

In attendance:

Sally Courtney (Finance Director)
Paul Di Felice (Vice-Principal-Academic)

PART A

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| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Professor Harriet Bradley, John Fray, Rob Hancock, Roger McKenzie, Jo Morris, Doug Nicholls, Professor John Raftery and Pearl Ryall. | Action |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
Noted: that no member present declared any interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda. | |
| 3 | Minutes
Confirmed: as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on 7 March 2014 | |
| 4 | Matters arising
Noted: that a query was raised regarding a note under 9.2 of the report on the financial position to the end of December 2013 on a shared services arrangement with Activate Learning for a new management information system.
Noted: that this had proved costly and needed review. The College would continue to look at other opportunities. | |



5 Finance Committee

- 5.1 Received:** the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 2 May 2014
- 5.2 Received:** a report on the financial position at the end of March 2014
The Finance Director introduced the report.
- Noted:** that the College was anticipating a small cash profit at the end of the financial year. A deficit of £3-4k was anticipated due to property depreciation.
- Noted:** that tuition fees in this report were below budget, but that had been built into the budget going forward.
- Noted:** that the business centres would be busy throughout July, and that the income would bolster the College's cash position.
- Noted:** that on cash-flow the College had agreed an overdraft facility with the bank which had to be used in March and April. Depending on the timing of the receipt of money from the sale of 5 Stoke Place the College may need to approach the bank again. The payment plan from Student Finance England (SFE) was unfortunately loaded to the back end of the year, which meant that cash flow was tight in the earlier part of the year.
- Noted:** that the proceeds from the sale of 5 Stoke Place would go into the general cash reserves. Assuming that the College received the proceeds from the sale before the end of the financial year it would meet its cash covenants on the loan.
- Noted:** that the College's financial security had been reviewed by the bank and that security levels were lower than the bank's requirements. The bank would therefore retain £135k from the proceeds of the sale of 5 Stoke Place.
- Noted:** that the report flagged up the importance and urgency of marketing and that student recruitment was key.
- 5.3 Received:** the draft budget for 2014/15, plus a tabled update as agreed at Finance Committee on 2nd May 2014.
- Noted:** that the budget was showing a £69k surplus which included a projected deficit of £139k for the Crinkle Crinkle café.
- Noted:** that a report on the café would be taken to the next Finance Committee on 20th June.
- Noted:** that the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allocation had been confirmed and that the current potential risk of under-delivering was £300k.
- Noted:** that the tuition fee targets had been reduced.
- Noted:** that premises work would be monitored throughout the year to assess affordability. If necessary the work would be spread over a number of years.
- Noted:** concern was expressed over how any reduction in student numbers would affect staff.
- Noted:** that the member of staff affected could teach on the Access Programme, and that there could be a saving on the number of Visiting Tutors.
- Noted:** that the College was constantly reviewing costs to ensure that non-payroll costs were as close to budget as possible and that 25% had already been saved on the utilities budget.
- Noted:** that the College had devised a template to monitor hours taught and people teaching on any course, and that would be presented to the next Academic and Quality Standards Committee (AQSC).



- Noted:** that the Principal thanked the Finance Director for bringing forward the budget setting process so that Governing Executive had more time to review and comment on the budget before it was finalised in July.
- Proposed:** in order to save costs that the papers for Governing Executive be sent electronically.
- Agreed:** that the Clerk would ask all members of Governing Executive for their Clerk preference for receipt of papers and send out accordingly.
- 5.4 Received:** the draft Access Agreement for 2015/16
- Noted:** that the Agreement informed the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) what the College intended to do to widen participation and to retain and progress students.
- Noted:** that the College would use more money from HE tuition fees in learning development.
- Noted:** that the report was due to be agreed by the beginning of July.
- Noted:** a question raised about the College's work with a local mosque and its work with other faiths.
- Noted:** a question about links outside Oxford with other colleges.
- Noted:** that the agreement focused on Oxford and limited the amount that could be written.
- Noted:** that the College had written to all secondary institutions within Oxfordshire and had met with Oxford Spires Academy, establishing a reciprocal relationship.
- Noted:** that the Vice-Principal (Academic) and the Quality Officer had visited Newman College in south Birmingham with a view to developing a joint provision.
- 5.5 Received:** the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 14 March 2014
- Noted:** that Critchleys were currently providing the internal audit service.
- Noted:** that the Audit Committee annual report would review how well the revised Joint Audit Code of Practice (JACOP) was working within the College.
- 6 Received:** the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 6 May 2014
- Noted:** that Michelle Walker had been nominated to the Council by the Oxford Playhouse.
- Noted:** that David McEvoy had been nominated to Governing Executive by the Search Committee. The Committee was awaiting acceptance of the post from David.
- Noted:** that the Committee had discussed the composition of the Governing Executive including the lack of educationalists and that the AQSC would be asked to send a list of possible candidates to the next Search Committee.
- Noted:** that Marva Small had been nominated to the Finance Committee.
- 7 Policy review**
- 7.1 Received:** the current Grievance Procedure.
- Noted:** that there were currently no proposed changes as the procedure required agreement from the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC)
- Noted:** that the Chair proposed setting a time limit of three months in which to raise a grievance, i.e. that a grievance should be raised within three months of the activity from which the grievance arose.
- Noted:** that this amendment was supported and would go to the JNC
- Noted:** that the titles of personnel within the document needed review.



- Noted:** that the document would return to the Governing Executive after the JNC.
- 7.2 Received:** a revised Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders
- 7.3 Received:** a revised Guidance re. Grievances Against Senior Postholders
Noted: that both documents had slight revisions to their wording
Noted: that the Chair proposed setting a time limit of three months in which to raise a grievance, i.e. that a grievance should be raised within three months of the activity from which the grievance arose.
Approved: a revised Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders and a revised Guidance re. Grievances Against Senior Postholders with the above amendment.
- 7.4 Received:** a revised Staff Development Strategy
Noted: that the document reflected what Ruskin was trying to do as an organisation and what development was required to equip staff with the skills to achieve that.
Noted: Priorities were the core programme of equality and diversity, safeguarding adults at risk, data protection and health and safety; blended learning and e-learning; raising success among hard-to-reach groups; training and development for support staff and supporting students with specific barriers to widening participation and learning.
Approved: the revised Staff Development Strategy
- 7.5 Received:** the Audit Committee Annual Schedule of Business
Noted: that there were no changes proposed.
Approved: the Audit Committee Annual Schedule of Business
- 8 Received:** the meeting dates for the Academic Year 2014/15
Approved: the meeting dates for the Academic Year 2014/15
- 9 Agreed:** that the submissions from Governors on improving efficiency in Executive meetings would be moved to the next meeting.
- 10 Academic Quality and Standards Committee**
Received: the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 7 February 2014
Noted: that the College experienced a high number of dyslexic students, and that it was targeting training for staff and developing a suite of information and guidance for students.
- 11 Principal's report**
Received: a report from the Principal.
Noted: that the College was in talks with the Communication Workers Union (CWU) to provide work for them under a one year agreement.
Noted: that the recent decision by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to delay the implementation of changes to the funding of TUC education provision would help the College earn its SFA allocation in 2014/15.
Noted: that the College of Social Work had confirmed their endorsement of the College's BA (Hons) in Social Work. The Principal offered his congratulations to the Social Work team. The MA in Public History was recommended for revalidation by the Open University panel, as was the Certificate of Higher Education in Law.
Noted: that the cross-college student survey was brought forward so that staff could



- consider the results and use them to make improvements for 2014/15.
- Noted:** that there had been an excellent range of evening and weekend events this term. The Ruskin Theatre Platforms had attracted many people to the College. Ruskin Arts Day was scheduled for 24th May and would involve the majority of students and some staff.
- Noted:** that much depended on the outcome of the 2015 General Election but that the College would continue to recruit and to change and improve.
- Noted:** that the Executive would like to receive notifications of events with any publicity attached.
- Noted:** that the College would attend the TUC Congress, sharing a stall with the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). International Labour and Trade Union Studies (ILTUS) had visited many conferences during the year.
- Noted:** that the Chair requested that a report on all external engagement be brought to Council (one sheet of A4) to celebrate the College's achievements in this area.
- 12** **Received:** a verbal update on the work of the Ruskin College Students Union (RCSU)
- Noted:** that the RCSU had been through a difficult time, after the resignation of its President and had largely been inactive.
- Noted:** that a general meeting had been called and a vote of no confidence passed in the current RCSU executive. A working party had been set up, in which all students had been invited to participate. The working party would organise the Red Ball. It had been agreed that the working party would be allowed funds through the proper channels.
- Noted:** that the working party had arranged for a welfare officer to be available four days a week in the lunch hour and that it would arrange the Fresher's Fair and exist till elections were arranged for the new academic year.
- Noted:** Congratulations to all those involved in the working party and to Rowan Padmore for bringing the student body together.
- 13** **Received:** a verbal report on a conference on "Transforming Leadership and Governance" attended by a governor.
- The Chair asked Councillor Van Coulter to report on a training course that he had attended.
- Noted:** that Councillor Coulter was rather disappointed with the course's emphasis on wealth creation and noted that students were encouraged to enter further and higher education with a profit motive and to become entrepreneurs. The conference appeared to be focused on profit and how to make a profit out of those disadvantaged.
- 12.55 Wendy Dawson left the meeting*
- Noted:** that Councillor Coulter had recently had the honour of addressing the European Climate Alliance and that he was able to do this through the inspiration of Ruskin's teaching. Councillor Coulter offered to share materials from the day with other governors.



14 Dates of meetings in 2013/14

Noted: the date of the remaining meeting for 2013/14

- 4 July 2014 at **9.30am**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.00pm

Signed by the Chair of the meeting succeeding that to which these minutes pertain

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