

Colchester Institute Corporation

*Minutes of a Meeting of the Personnel Committee
held on 22 February 2011
at the Sheepen Road Campus*

Present

Beth Smith, in the Chair
Danny Clough
Michael Dew
Lesley Cook

Ron McKay
David Priest
Daren Shinnick

In Attendance

Linda Cox Director of Human Resources and Projects
Hazel Paton Clerk to the Governors

Apologies for absence were received from Patrik Minder

PART 1

1. Declaration of any conflicts of interest regarding any items on the agenda

None.

2. Minutes of the Meeting 19 October 2010

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2010 (CIC/PC/11/1/1) were received and confirmed, subject to the following amendment. The Chairman signed the minute book.

The second paragraph of Minute 6.2 was amended to read 2009-10 instead of 2000-10.

3. Action Sheet and Matters Arising

None, other than on the agenda.

4. Equality and Diversity Report - February 2011

CIC/PC/11/1/2, Equality and Diversity Report February 2011, was received and considered in detail.

Equality and Diversity (E&D) in the Curriculum was discussed and Members asked how the College assures itself that E&D is fully embedded within student recruitment, inclusive teaching materials, assessment and group tutorials. They were advised that an Equality Group looks at this. Marketing materials are reviewed, and a working group has been established to look at group tutorials. E&D is emphasised in training for teaching staff and the Teaching and Learning Observations form includes feedback on handouts and materials to ensure there is no obvious bias.

Members were interested to note that a DVD consisting of five films depicting everyday scenarios has been developed in house by staff and students. Each film is about fifteen minutes in length. It was agreed some of the films may be appropriate to show to Board members, either as part of the Board meeting or during the Planning Day.

It was noted that although there is currently no legal requirement to do so Impact Assessments are carried out as new policies and procedures are revised/agreed following the merger with Braintree College.

It was confirmed that each Centre has its own E&D targets, for example to enrol more female students in Construction. The LSC required colleges to set EDIMs (Equality and Diversity Impact Measures) which were three year targets. Although there is no longer a requirement to set EDIMs the College finds them useful and will continue use them. Members were disappointed to learn that two local schools had withdrawn from the Women into Technology event at Sheepen Road at short notice, having previously said they would be attending. Arising from the discussion it was noted that another local school had been reluctant to release a Year 9 student to attend the event stating that it was for Year 10 students. Members questioned whether the event was targeted at the right Year group, given that students decide their options at Year 9 and the wrong choice could prevent them following a chosen path later on. Members also questioned whether more could be done to work with the schools. They were advised that the College was doing all it could. One issue is that schools with sixth forms are in competition with the College. The College has however developed better relationships with the schools in Braintree.

Members raised the cuts in funding for English as a second language provision and asked how this would impact on the College. It is believed some funding will be available. However there are concerns that the more stringent controls being placed on non EU students coming to the UK to study may have an impact although the College has achieved Most Trusted Status from the Border Agency.

Noting that the College now employs more females than males, Members commented that they would not like the number of females to increase to a level where males are discouraged from applying.

The gap in male appointees was discussed. Members were reassured that the College has robust recruitment procedures. All posts include a person specification against which staff are appointed. All staff involved in appointment panels receives training; the E&D element of the training has recently been increased. All appointment panels also include a member of Human Resources. Members noted that the action plan 2011-12 includes action to address the gap in male appointees.

The pay gap was discussed. It was noted that this partly historical and a consequence of the increment system and partly due to the difficulty in attracting applicants in areas where there are skills shortages. The College has had to pay the market rate in Construction and IT.

The abolition of the default retirement age was discussed. It was thought this may be an issue for the College in the future.

The number of students with dyslexia, and the support they receive from the College was discussed. It was agreed that this was a strength of the College.

The Committee welcomed the report but agreed that the level of detail was too much for this Committee. Without restriction on essential information, members asked for a more succinct report in future years.

5. **Health and Safety Committee**

CIC/PC/11/1/3, Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 16 February 2011, was received. Members noted a small number of incidents of students splashing mortar in their eyes and asked why they were not wearing eye protection. All staff are aware of the need to enforce the use of protective equipment. These incidents were very early in the term and action has been taken.

The autumn term security report was considered. The number of reported incidents was small given the size of the College and the number of people on campus.

6. **Staff Survey 2010**

CIC/PC/11/1/4, Staff Survey Results 2010, was received and considered. The return rate was 53%. An area of concern was staff at the Colchester campus being pressurised to work long hours. Members explored this at length, trying to ascertain whether this meant managers were putting their staff under pressure to work late as opposed to staff feeling obligated to do so; was there an element of compulsion? It is believed that the low result may be in response to the increased volume in work for some individuals following the merger with Braintree College. It is anticipated that this will be temporary as new management structures are put in place. Preparations for the anticipated Inspection may also be a factor. It was noted that the results for the College at Braintree were generally lower than at Sheepen Road and Clacton, although given the circumstances arising from merger, this was not unexpected bringing down the overall results. The action plan focuses on this, particularly the need to make sure there is better communication at Braintree.

7. **Employment Law Update**

CIC/PC/11/1/5, Employment Legislation Update, was received and presented by the Director of Human Resources and Projects. Noting that the right to request flexible working is to be extended to all parents with children under 18 a Member reported that the Institute of Directors has put forward 50 suggestions to the Government, one of which is to remove the right to flexible working. This change is unlikely to have an impact on the College as it is open to requests to work part time.

It was noted that the additional paternity leave may have a cost to the College. The Committee asked for both the paternity and maternity leave policies to be reviewed. It was noted that the AoC Paternity Leave agreement is silent on the matter of payment for additional paternity leave.

8. **Updated Safeguarding Policy**

CIC/PC/11/1/6, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which has been identified as exemplary by local Stay Safe Group, was received, considered and accepted for recommendation to the Board.

9. **Student Disciplinary Policy**

CIC/PC/11/1/7, Student Discipline Procedure, was received, considered and accepted for recommendation to the Board. It was noted that training on the new policy would be included in the summer Staff Development programme. Members were reassured that help would be available for any student involved in the procedures.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 24 May 2011 at 4.30 pm.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

Part IIa – these minutes are non confidential although some of the associated papers may be.

12. **Safeguarding**

12.1. CIC/PC/11/1/8, Safeguarding and Child Protection Annual Report, was received, considered and accepted.

12.2. CIC/PC/11/1/9, Safeguarding Report, was received. The summary of new child protection cases dealt with since the last report in October 2010 was considered. It was difficult to identify which, if any, were college related rather than external and Members asked for future reports to highlight any incidents in the College.

The Staff Governor withdrew from the meeting in accordance with Instrument 14(5)

13. **Part II Minutes**

The Part IIb Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2010 (CIC/PC/11/1/30) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.