

## Full Governing Body meeting Tuesday 31 March 2009 at Ashington Campus 5.30pm

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| <p><b>Present:</b> Linda Ions Rachel Ellis-Jones Michael Jeans Tony Shirley Ian Todd Chris Smith Kate Morrison Peter Sample Mags Barnfather</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Mark Rossi, Prof Fleming, N Hall, Simon Reed</p> <p><b>In Attendance:</b> Helen Wright Chris Todd Peter Caudren ☐</p>  |   |
| <p>The meeting was confirmed to be quorate and there were no interests noted. The Chair noted that Cllr Simon Reed had moved in a re-shuffle and would no longer have the College in his portfolio – the Chair would write to him to thank him for his valuable input and also to invite his replacement to join the Board. She also introduced Mags Barnfather the student Governor representative who outlined her interest in the role and some of her background. The Chair proposed a resolution that the staff and student members be asked to withdraw from the confidential parts of the agenda and this was passed.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 10 and 23 February were agreed to be accurate and received.</p> <p>The UCU resolution on the BNP was a matter arising and the clerk put forward a statement on behalf of the Governing body stating it's position with regard to equal opportunities which was agreed save for one amendment to take off the reference to the academic board.</p> | <p>Chair to write to S Reed and clerk to write to his replacement</p> |
| <p><b>Chair's Comments:</b> The board were asked to accept the clerk's recommendation paper following the result of the election for staff governor. Mark Rossi was the elected candidate and the board unanimously agreed to appoint him. The Board also approved the recommendation of the Search committee that Mags Barnfather be appointed as student governor. The Chair reminded everyone about the forthcoming retreat event. The Chair then noted that North Tyneside College was in a difficult position financially and felt that this College should make some effort to show support and make some partnership with them. It was noted that Newcastle College were thought to be making moves towards their area and it was in the interests of all small Colleges to show support for each other. There was general agreement that this was a good idea as long as it did not detract from the mission of the College.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>Principal's comments:</b> The Principal noted that she had now been elected to two national AoC committees which was useful in giving insight into the national picture, she had consulted the Chair about whether this was a good use of her time and it had been agreed that keeping in the loop nationally was a good idea.</p> <p>The Principal noted that the College was looking at closer partnership with</p>   |   |

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| <p>Sunderland University and the Unitary Authority to give a badge to HE provision in the region. Robin Casson spoke to support the Unitary Authority approach on this and to emphasise that they saw it as very important to the region’s learners. The new Chief Exec of the Authority had paid a visit to College which was seen as a good sign for co-operation in the future.</p>   |                               |
| <p><b>5. Minutes from sub-committees</b> – F&amp;P was agreed, Search and Audit were still with their Chairs, Standards was agreed and it was noted that the QIP was to be circulated to Governors. Ian Todd drew attention to point 7 which he felt showed good work being done on the staff development issue and also that the LBI position would be placed on every agenda. Audit Chair Sharon Barlow noted that the auditors had presented well and all appeared to be on track with the reports that were presented. Michael Jeans Chair of Search noted that the advert had gone out on the new governor recruitment and that the farming committee was about to be set up.</p>   | <p>Clerk to circulate QIP</p> |
| <p><b>6. LSC Capital Projects update:</b> The clerk was thanked for sending updating emails with media reports on this topic. The AoC were keeping up pressure politically and the College had met with the MP Alan Beith to lobby him to place a parliamentary question on the future of the capital project. Chris Saint had attended an AoC summit on the financial aspects. The picture was one of confusion nationally. It was important to manage expectations locally with regard to how this would affect the College and proposed move. When the Foster report was published things would be a little clearer as to the way forward.</p> <p>There was discussion about making a “plan B” and the general agreement was that this needed to be planned for including cosmetic improvements to the existing building, alternative funding streams, a new timescale. Robin Casson speaking with an interest on behalf of the local authority emphasised the centrality of the College to the regeneration of the whole area and providing opportunities for learners. There was concern that the Foster report would not provide a resolution but simply move the goal posts so that the delays would grow. All agreed that the most crucial thing was the learner experience and this was echoed by Mags Barnfather who noted that feedback on the delay and implications should be given to students.</p> <p>Ian Todd recommended that Kendall College be looked at as an example of cosmetic building work.</p> |                               |
| <p><b>7. Management Accounts and Financial Headlines:</b> Chris Todd noted that the accounts had just been scrutinised in F&amp;P committee however due the serious ongoing nature of the financial challenges there would be an opportunity for the whole Governing Body to raise any questions. The accounts were presented again and detail of the overdelivery given, although this was unfunded growth it was real growth and would place the team in a strong position to negotiate with the LSC next year. Linda Ions asked about the budget setting for next year and Chris Todd agreed that it</p>  |                               |

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| <p>needed to be more realistic and brought to the Governors earlier. There could be some early signs of recovery of the position for the year end he believed. In response to a question about the recovery of the new build costs he stated that this was a matter for negotiation with the LSC but they were aware of the issue. Chris was asked about the possibility of an intervention by the LSC if the financial health grade remained at inadequate and noted that the overall position was not inadequate if the unfunded growth and capital project borrowing was taken into account. It should also be noted that the FIP and restructure showed that the management team were taking the issue seriously and tackling it.</p> <p>Ian Todd noted that unfunded growth was a big issue and showed the need to reduce the cost of delivery also he believed it was a matter for governance and for the governors to decide in what areas it should be directed, part of this work would be underpinned by the curriculum plan. He emphasised that the need was to look at what you wanted to deliver to design the curriculum to do this and then look at the staff you needed to deliver this with. It was suggested that policy changes in fees and other things likely to affect the budget should be put on the agenda for future meetings or briefings. All agreed that this was an opportunity for changing the structure and cost of delivery.</p>  | <p>Policy changes on fees etc to be put on agenda</p> |
| <p><b>8. Curriculum Review: CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS :</b> Rachel Ellis-Jones explained that the SMT and CMT had worked to produce analysis of efficiencies, excess staff, underperformance and strategic priorities. This had covered teaching and support staff. The paper set out the process and the Appendix showed the detail.</p> <p>Land Based Industries (LBI) had been analysed and there was a proposal to eliminate some of the provision as the curriculum offer was not of sufficient quality. The idea was to re-shape the curriculum to offer more science and renewable energy courses. The whole exercise was a large and technical one and very demanding. It was showing the need to keep the personnel mapped onto the offer and not the other way round. The process was on schedule and going well and needed to be rolled out to staff next.</p> <p>Ian Todd noted that in his experience the roll out to the staff needed to come from the management as a whole and not just the finance team as this would mean people bought into the idea more thoroughly. He also emphasised that there would be likely to be need to spend capital to support the areas that were going to be grown as a result of the plan. Ian Todd and Chris Todd exchanged ideas about how to manage the budgets of departments to allow growth and it was suggested that they continue to exchange ideas at a further meeting together.</p> <p>There was further discussion on LBI and it was noted that this fell within the area of Governance as it was related to the educational characteristic of the College. It was noted that the offer on agriculture was to be dropped, numbers had fallen and the results were not up to standard. The staff had gone to the press on the issue. It was important that all discussion focussed on the new curriculum plan and new offer and tie any staff loss back to that. Helen Wright agreed that the UCU had been supportive of this approach in that if the curriculum plan did not support an area of offer continuing the staff would not be needed.</p> <p>(M Jeans left the meeting at 7.15)</p> |   |

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| <p><b>Additional Item: Voluntary Redundancy offer CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:</b> This was an additional paper tabled by Peter Caudren. Helen Wright and Peter Caudren had negotiated with the Unions. The offer had to be worthwhile to attract applicants. The Union had warned that there would be a ballot on industrial action as soon as any compulsory redundancies were mentioned. It was agreed that the VR should be opened up as soon as possible. The Chair noted that good work had been done to prepare the VR offer quickly and negotiate with the Unions. There was some technical discussion about the potential timing of redundancies and pensions. The Chair summed up that all agreed the offer as proposed. It was noted that the scheme must end on 1 August. There was some discussion of using a press officer to meet any potential media interest and the Governors would like copies of press releases if any.</p> <p>(R Casson left the meeting at 7.30)</p> |  |
| <p><b>9. Update on Financial Intervention Plan: CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:</b> The Chair summed up that this item had been dealt with at the F&amp;P Committee and that the timeline had also been covered. The valuation of the estate was being done and the new financial controller could look at the leases and assets. The issues of employer engagement were being dealt with on a staffing level. All actions were on target and a lot of work had been done since the plan was drafted. It was generally agreed that capital expenditure would be needed next year and that the infrastructure was needing updating. It was also noted that if some of the curriculum was restructured in LBI the grade may go up from a 4 to a 3.</p>  |  |
| <p>Confidential items – curriculum review, VR package, update on FIP</p>   |  |
| <p>Date of next meeting 19 May 2009</p>  |  |

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| <p>Chair to write to S Reed to thank him</p>                      |  |  |
| <p>Clerk to write to new Councillor to invite to sit on board</p> |  |  |
| <p>Clerk to circulate QIP</p>                                     |  |  |



