

# CORPORATE GOVERNING BODY OF GODALMING COLLEGE

## Minutes of a meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee of Godalming College held at the College on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 7.00pm

**Present:** Stephen Dennison (Chairman)  
Angela Gallagher-Brett  
Karen Bryan  
Robin Galliver  
Helena Hockridge  
Neil Parsons

**Advisors:** Dave Cartwright (Assistant Principal)  
May O'Keeffe (Assistant Principal)  
Carol Horlock (Assistant Principal)  
Joe Yeadon (to end of third item)

**In Attendance:** Stella Halloran (Clerk to the Corporation)

### ACTION

1. **Apologies for absence**  
All were present.
2. **Declaration of Interests**  
None were declared.
7. It was agreed that Item 7 on the agenda should be taken at this point in order to enable Joe Yeadon to get away.

### Policy Review

#### ILT Strategy

The ILT Strategy for 2011 – 2014 had been circulated to governors with the agenda. The Chair thanked Joe Yeadon (Head of ILT) for attending the meeting to present the Strategy.

Joe Yeadon explained that the document had been written in the light of the anticipated cuts in funding over the next 3 to 4 years.

The key themes were:

- The Strategy had been written in the light of not knowing what the financial situation would be over its life. It had therefore been written to allow only for what was really needed.
- ILT needed to allow other staff to get on with what they were employed to do so that essential and routine tasks could be made as efficient as possible (eg communicating with parents, writing reports, tracking data etc)
- The College was fortunate to have a very good development team who could write software relevant to the College's needs
- Teaching staff recognised that the number of students may increase, but did not wish to have a reduction in the student:PC

ratio. This would be very challenging considering the age of the stock.

•  
Governors asked the following of Joe Yeadon and May O'Keeffe:

*What proportion of the budget was taken up by IT?*

For staffing costs, equipment consumables etc just less than 10%.

*To what did monitoring the take-up of Additional Learning Support refer and where did it appear in the Action Plan?*

Additional Learner Support funding had to be monitored across all areas of College and the IT input would be to improve the way monitoring would be carried out. In the Action Plan it would form part of the 'Electronic Individual Learning Plan'.

*Reference to support not being available outside core hours*

Currently students access College systems at times (e.g. weekends) when nobody was monitoring it. However, with the current financial constraints, no additional support could be made available. Governors felt it would be unwise to raise students' expectations that additional support would be available.

*Had consideration been given by the College to leasing Netbooks to students rather than replacing PCs?*

College had piloted this with psychology and childcare students, but the reported limitations were significant enough to make it not work well. Students complained about restriction of programs and size of screen. However, the matter was under review and consideration could be given to other laptops.

*Did the College's development of bespoke software mean that time was being spent re-inventing what others were doing?*

When the decision was made to write software in-house to suit the College's needs, rather than adapt off the shelf software it was done because of the different nature and requirements of Godalming College. That did not mean that there wasn't interaction between colleges, but these were more ad hoc and informal than e.g. selling software developed by the College. Examples of collaborative working between colleges were given.

'Cloud' and 'JANET', and their uses were explained.

The committee thanked Joe for a very clear and well-written strategy document and commended it to the Corporation.

*Joe Yeadon left the meeting*

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010 were approved and signed.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes**

*Item 5 – Safeguarding Policy*

This had been approved by the Corporation

*Item 6 – Underachieving male students*

Dave Cartwright was working on this and would report at the Summer term meeting of the committee.

CLERK

5. **Students Future Prospects**

Carol Horlock identified three issues currently concerning the College and its students:

- Cutting EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance)
- Cutting the Connexions service both at school level (advice about post 16 education, training and jobs) and at 6<sup>th</sup> form level (those wishing to get jobs)
- Higher Education fees.

Carol explained that there was currently little certainty about what would happen with any of the above.

EMA had ended; students receiving it this year would continue to do so until July. Thereafter it was assumed that the College would have to administer the Discretionary Support Fund to a set of criteria, in order to enable those from disadvantaged backgrounds to continue their post 16 education. Currently 356 students receive EMA, but as it was administered externally there were no statistics concerning how many receive £10, £20 or £30 a week or what they needed to use it on.

From the College's point of view, administration would increase, but there was also the possibility that fewer students would wish to attend Godalming due to travel costs or general costs.

The loss of most of the Connexions service meant that the College could now only call on the service in cases of extremely vulnerable students who were leaving the College. The College career team largely offers advice on further education, but was not totally aware of all there was on offer in terms of other courses, apprenticeships etc that could be accessed by students.

As Connexions had also been pulled out of 11 – 16 schools, students were not necessarily getting the advice they needed about post 16 education. The College was trying to assist with advice at open day and interview stages; to suggest appropriate courses.

The Education White Paper proposed an all-age career service from 2012, which would be independent of those employed by schools and colleges, but that left a gap in the meantime.

Students were worried about accruing debt if they wished to go to university and, although it was too early to tell, there could be fewer students wishing to continue their education in this way.

Whilst apprenticeships were an alternative there were very few available and there was a requirement to be in work to access them.

There might be a drift towards students wishing to take more traditional courses in order to improve their chances of university places.

Governors agreed that all that could be done at present was to monitor all

the above and thanked Carol Horlock for her input.

#### 6. **Implications of funding cuts on the Curriculum**

Dave Cartwright reported that no massive changes were anticipated for 2011/12; the College wished to maintain the broadest possible curriculum for students. Breadth of curriculum helped with marketing and maintaining, or increasing, numbers.

However, the following needed to be considered in deciding the curriculum offer:

- In the light of funding cuts, some courses might become non-viable in terms of numbers of students wishing to take them.
- The College wished to avoid compulsory redundancies as far as possible; therefore it might be necessary to rationalise courses where natural wastage occurred.
- There had been an upsurge in the number of students indicating that they wished to take biology next year – possibly due to the Russell Group of Universities indicating that having a science at A level would be an advantage.
- The criteria for deciding on course viability were largely the number of students wishing to take it and the cost of that course in terms of staffing availability, materials etc.
- Languages were a vulnerable area within College, but with the introduction of the English Baccalaureate at GCSE level, this might turn round.

Governors thanked Dave for his input and asked for an update at their Summer term meeting.

CLERK

#### 7. **IQRs 2009 – 2010 summary**

Governors had received a report of the 5 IQRs undertaken. May O’Keeffe explained that this year it had been decided to look at areas causing some concern.

Discussion centred on Maths AS. Students felt under a lot of pressure to continue with maths after GCSE if at all possible, even if just to AS level. The College only accepted students with a B grade or higher at GCSE onto AS courses. However, it had transpired that some students had attained a B grade without covering some vital areas of the curriculum. This put them at a great disadvantage when embarking on AS level. The College was therefore giving B students additional time each week.

The Department had introduced many steps to improve results, but any improvement would not be seen until the Summer results were known. Governors questioned what would happen if there was no improvement and May O’Keeffe explained that there would be a further review and more support. There was no indication at all that the teaching in the department was poor – quite the reverse.

The Economics IQR was discussed briefly.

The Chair thanked May O’Keeffe for the report and for sharing problems as well as successes with the committee.

8. **College Development Plan 2010 – 2011 February update**

1. Concern was expressed about the withdrawal rate, but Dave Cartwright explained that it was now similar to last year – the difference when the update was written was due to the fact that all interviews had taken place this year whereas they were only part way through last year. Withdrawals tend to happen after interview.

8. The retention rate was satisfactory.

15. The performance indicators for EPQs were the pass rate and numbers attaining high grades.

SLN (Standard Learner Number) was explained.

35. The Student Union had gone well this year due to a very dynamic executive.

***The areas of the Development Plan relevant to this committee were agreed for recommendation to the Corporation at their March meeting.***

9. **Risk register**

The change in level of risk of 2.1 and the new risk at 5.4 were noted and discussed.

10. **Date of next Meeting**

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed: .....

Date: .....