

John Wheatley College
Board of Management
Personnel and Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee held on Tuesday, 3 October 2006 at 12.30pm in the Board Room of Glasgow Metropolitan College at 60 North Hanover Street, Glasgow.

1. Sederunt

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and was attended by:

H Ostrycharz (Chair);
I Graham;
A Woolley; and
D O'Brien (from 12.35pm onwards);

Also in attendance:

A Kirk (Depute Principal);
J Wilson (Associate Principal [Quality]);
D Sneddon (HR Manager);
L Brown (HR Assistant, observer); and
S Vaughan (for recording purposes only).

2. Apologies

R Venditozzi
M Forsyth
M Axford
A McFarlane
A Sherry

3. Terms of Reference

Members noted the terms of reference for the Personnel and Staffing Committee. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 3 members in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

A Woolley declared an interest with respect to item 12 (Investors in People Re-Recognition) as a result of his employment by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, which owned part of liP Scotland.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee on 25 April 2006

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 25 April 2006.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising from the agenda.

7. Minute of and Matters arising from previous meeting

JCC minutes

- i) 28 October 2005**
- ii) 16 December 2005**
- iii) 24 March 2006**

The Chair requested that items 7(i), (ii) and (iii) were considered together. Members noted the contents of the minutes.

Desmond O'Brien joined the meeting at 12.35pm.

8. Correspondence

a) EIS – Curriculum and Staff Planning

Members considered the contents of the correspondence from Marian Healy (National Officer, the Educational Institute of Scotland [EIS]), which detailed a statement issued by the Executive Committee of EIS-FELA outlining its opposition to redundancies. The Principal commented that it was unlikely that the College could agree to a policy which dictated that it would have no redundancies (it already has a Redundancy Policy to deal with such eventualities). He informed members that he would respond to the correspondence, explaining that the College had already agreed a Redundancy and Dismissal policy with its staff and that it only used redundancy as a last resort. I Graham reminded members that the College already had a trade union learning representative (representing EIS-FELA members) and it was understood the UNISON branch was in the process of training such a representative. The Principal agreed to place his reply to the correspondence on the agenda of the next meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee under 'matters arising'. Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

b) Scottish Funding Council – Staffing Statistics for FE Colleges in Scotland 2004-05

Members considered the contents of the document from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The Principal stated that this item would be considered under item 18 (Staffing Statistics for Further Education Colleges in Scotland: 2004/05). Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

9. Staff Attendance Report 1st February 2006 to 30th April 2006 and 1st May 2006 to 31st July 2006

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of her report, which apprised members of attendance statistics. She proceeded to highlight the attendance statistics for permanent staff, which decreased from 6.72% in the first quarter of 2005/06 to 5.77% in the fourth quarter of 2005/06. She stated that the slight increase in

absence statistics from 5.53% in the third quarter to 5.77% in the fourth quarter was mainly due to long-term absence.

The Human Resources Manager reported that the absence statistics for support staff had risen from 5.5% in the first quarter of 2005/06 to 6.53% in the fourth quarter. She noted that the absence statistics for permanent academic staff had decreased from 7.99% in the first quarter of 2005/06 to 2.97% in the third quarter, before rising to 4.91% in the fourth quarter.

D Sneddon indicated that the absence statistics for temporary academic staff had risen from 1.52% in the first quarter to 4.28% in the fourth quarter, because of an increase in long-term absence. Members noted that the annual absence rate for session 2005/06 was 5.91%, compared to 5.98% in 2004/05. She stated that 2 members of staff had been absent in the third quarter due to mental health conditions. She also reported that 6 members of staff had been absent in the fourth quarter, 5 of which had experienced personal difficulties and one of which had been absent due to work-related issues. In the latter case, she confirmed that the College had managed the absence in accordance with its Attendance at Work Policy, by making use of the services of its Occupational Health Service and the Individual Stress Risk Assessment Process. She anticipated that the individual concerned would return to work in the near future.

D Sneddon commented that the cost of absence for session 2005/06 was £189,121, compared to £228,689 for session 2004/05. She stated that the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) Annual Survey had concluded that the cost of absence remained almost static at £598 per year, compared to last year's figure of £601. She indicated that the cost of absence was highest in the public services sector at £680 per employee per year, a slight increase from last year's figure of £645. The HR Manager reported that the cost of absence per employee for the College was £816 per year and that the College remained focussed on reducing the long-term absence rate, which was 4.21% in the fourth quarter of 2005/06. D Sneddon asked members to note that an average of 12 days had been lost per employee in 2005/06, in comparison to the CIPD Survey which had reported that the average was 8 days per employee.

In response to an enquiry from H Ostrycharz, the Principal stated that other members of the College's Benchmarking Club had not produced absence statistics in a format that could be compared directly with the College's figures. D Sneddon noted that the CIPD Survey had concluded that Return-to-Work interviews were the most effective approach to managing short-term absence across all sectors and that the College provided training in this area. She also indicated that the involvement of occupational health professionals and rehabilitation programmes were rated as the most effective approaches to managing long-term absence and that the College already embraced and utilised these approaches.

In response to an enquiry from members, the Principal stated that Langside College did produce reports on long and short-term absence, but that it used a very different definition of short-term

absence, so that it was difficult to compare the statistics with those for John Wheatley College. He reminded members that he had written to Audit Scotland informing it that the College needed comparable absence figures to ascertain how successful its absence management strategies were and why there was a difference between the public and private sectors. H Ostrycharz commented that overall the College's absence figures were encouraging.

Members agreed to:

- (i) note the contents of the report and its appendices;
- (ii) note that training for managers in conducting Return-to-Work interviews will be carried out in session 2006/07; and
- (iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Committee.

10. Professional Development Programme 2006/07

The Associate Principal (Quality) spoke to the contents of the report, which outlined the bids received from staff for session 2006/07 for financial support to undertake qualifications under the College's Professional Development Programme. She stated that bids received for session 2006/07 totalled £17,612, which was almost 50% of the Quality budget. She proposed that the College pay £1,880 to support three members of staff that were undertaking programmes of study which commenced in previous sessions. Members considered the new bids from staff wishing to embark on programmes of study in session 2006/07, which totalled £8,922. She indicated that most of the courses were directly related to the targets which were outlined in the College's operational plan. It was agreed that the College would support all of the bids, with one exception, at a total cost of £4,461.

The Principal informed members that through the Professional Development Programme, the College offered to provide financial support for up to 4 members of staff wishing to undertake the distance learning Teaching Qualification Further Education (TQFE) programme at the University of Dundee. Following discussions, it was agreed that the College would support all four of the proposals received from staff. I Graham asked members to note that the College had agreed to a request from the EIS for some staff to fast-track the TQFE programme, provided that the staff members concerned paid the relevant fees.

J Wilson stated that the College had invited staff to undertake training in the area of Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL). She reported that the College had subsequently received applications from three members of staff to undergo ESOL-related training. The Associate Principal (Quality) commented that one member of the College's staff wished to complete a Diploma in English Languages Teaching to Adults (DELTA), which represented a significant cost of £1,960, but which would enable the staff member to train the College's staff. Members decided to support all three applications. Following further discussion, members agreed the

implementation of the Professional Development Programme for Session 2006/07.

11. Workforce Profile – Scotland’s College

The Principal spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise the Committee of the interim findings of a joint Association of Scotland’s Colleges (ASC) and Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) exercise which sought to ‘profile’ the workforce currently deployed in Scotland’s Colleges. The Principal reported that the workforce profile exercise had been contracted to the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU). He proceeded to highlight the findings of the survey which had been published by the SFEU, which included that almost 51% of the staff employed in Colleges were engaged in teaching activities and that women comprised over 56% of the sector’s workforce.

Following discussion, members agreed to:

- i) note the content of the Principal’s report;
- ii) note the contents of the Interim Workforce Profile (attached as an annex to the report) which has been conducted by the SFEU; and
- iii) note that the College has significant reservations about the ability of the SFEU to conduct the second phase of the Workforce Profile exercise.

12. Investors in People Re-Recognition

The Chair reminded members that A Woolley had declared a conflict of interest with respect to this item, since he was an employee of Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, which owned part of liP Scotland.

The Principal spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the outcome of the Investors in People (liP) audit conducted in the College in June 2006. He reminded members that one of the targets included in the College Plan for sessions 2005/08 was to seek re-recognition under the liP quality standard. The Principal recalled that the College had previously let its accreditation under this quality standard lapse as an efficiency saving as part of the financial security strategy. J Wilson stated that to ascertain the College’s compliance with the liP standard the auditor had interviewed thirty-three staff that had been selected to provide a representative sample of the workforce. The College received formal confirmation of liP recognition on 10 July 2006.

Members were informed that the auditor had identified a number of examples of good practice during the audit, which included significant levels of development activity and commitment of resources to staff development. J Wilson commented that there were three potential development areas which the College would consider as part of the operational planning process. The Principal opined that the College

would decline the option of taking part in the audit at a future date, because of other projects.

Following discussion, members agreed to:

- i) note the content of this report and its appendices;
- ii) note that the College has achieved Investors in People recognition for a period of three years; and
- iii) request the Assistant Principal to place copies of this report on the agendas of future meetings of the:
 - i) Audit Committee
 - ii) Personnel and Staffing Committee; and
 - iii) Joint Consultative Committee.

13. Employee Counselling

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the referrals to the Employee Counselling Service during the period 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006. Members were informed that six employees had used the service during the aforementioned period. D Sneddon noted that one individual had used the service because of perceived discrimination and she reminded members that the College had run training courses on discrimination in the past and intended to run additional courses in 2006/07. She stated that it was assumed that the individual that had used the Counselling Service due to work-related stress was the same individual referred to under item 9. The Human Resources Manager confirmed that posters and leaflets advertising the counselling service were on display in the College's staff restrooms.

With no further discussion, members agreed to note the contents of the report.

14. Work-life Balance Policy

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the draft Work-life Balance Policy, which would replace the College's various Family Friendly policies. She outlined the areas that the Policy covered, which included parental and maternal support leave and adoption leave. D Sneddon reported that the draft Policy had been presented at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings on 24 March and 19 May 2006 and that members' comments had been incorporated into the Policy. She also confirmed that the draft Policy and Procedure had been reviewed by the College's Solicitor. The Principal requested that the report on the Policy which was subsequently considered by the Board of Management detail what Policies the Work-life Balance Policy would replace. The Chair requested that the repetition of the "Dignity at Work" phrase on page nine was removed.

Following discussions, members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendix;
- ii) comment on the College's Work-life Balance Policy;
- iii) request that the Human Resources Manager bring the supporting procedures for each area to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee; and
- iv) request that the Human Resources Manager present the Work-life Balance Policy at the next Board of Management meeting.

15. Staff Turnover Indices – 1 August 2005 – 31 July 2006

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the staff turnover and stability ratio for the academic year 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006. She stated that 27 posts had been advertised during session 2005/06 for support staff, that 18 appointments had been made and that 9 new posts had been created. D Sneddon commented that the College had advertised 31 permanent academic posts during session 2005/06 and made 28 appointments. Members compared the 7.38% 'wastage rate' for permanent academic staff in session 2005/06 to the 60.75% 'wastage rate' for temporary academic staff during the same period. The reasons for the difference between the figures included the fact that a number of part-time temporary staff had not worked for the College for over 26 weeks and had consequently been removed from the payroll system.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendices; and
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

16. Higher Education Role Analysis – Job Evaluation System Update

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the progress in evaluating the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) system. She reminded members that the College had initially agreed with the Trades Unions and Professional Associations to evaluate 20 posts as part of the pilot, using the HERA system in its current format. She confirmed that 10 staff had been interviewed to date and that the initial feedback had been positive. The Depute Principal stated that a report on the HERA initiative had been prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the College's Senior Management Team (SMT). The Principal opined that HERA was a potentially very useful tool. In response to a proposal from the Principal, the Chair agreed that a report on the HERA initiative should be considered as a topic on the next schedule of Board Development events. The Principal reminded members that

the decision to adopt HERA would ultimately rest with the College's Board of Management. He did stress the need for a 'modernised' system to replace that inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council at Incorporation.

Following discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report; and
- ii) request that the Human Resources Manager provide an update report at the next meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

17. Equalities Committee

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of changes to the remits, structure and membership of the Equal Opportunities Development Forum (EODF) and Consultative Committee on Inclusive Learning. She explained that the EODF and Consultative Committee on Inclusive Learning had been replaced with an Equalities Committee, the Equalities Employment Work Group and the Inclusive Learning Work Group. The Principal asked D Sneddon to modify the report which was considered by the Board of Management to detail which of the College's Committees would cease to exist. D Sneddon stated that the College was required under the Disability Equality Duty to produce an equalities scheme by 4 December 2006 and that this would be the main focus for both of the Work Groups. The Principal informed members that the Equalities Committee would advise the Board on the College's statutory obligations. A Woolley commented that he welcomed this initiative.

The Principal requested that D Sneddon ensure that an Equalities Report was considered at the next meeting of the Board of Management. I Graham noted that the gender imbalance in student enrolment at the College was now less pronounced than it had been in previous years (however, the primary counter-balance was a predominantly male enrolment in Construction-related provision).

Members agreed to:

- i) note the content of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendices;
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring a revised Equalities Policy with supporting policies and procedures to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee; and
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring the College's Equalities Scheme and Action Plan to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

18. Staffing Statistics for Further Education Colleges in Scotland: 2004/05

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which apprised members of the Staffing Statistics for Further Education Colleges in Scotland for 2004/05 which was produced by the SFC. Members considered the main points in the document, which included that the Further Education Sector employed more temporary part-time teaching staff than permanent full-time and part-time staff combined. D Sneddon stated that the Statistics had been used to inform the College's Annual Equalities Report to compare the College's staffing profile with the FE Sector. Members agreed to note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendix.

19. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of comments on the draft Recruitment and Selection Procedures. She reminded members that the College had introduced a revised Recruitment and Selection Policy in session 2004/05 and that it had been agreed that supporting procedures would be developed and introduced to ensure consistency in recruitment and selection of all staff. Members considered the Procedures, which covered the full recruitment and selection process and which would be made available to everyone involved in the recruitment and selection process. The Principal noted that the changes to the Procedures included that if a new member of staff decided not to commence employment with the College, then the second person on the College's short-leet would be offered the position, provided that they were competent and that this occurred within a reasonable time period. D Sneddon confirmed that the College's legal advisers were currently considering the Procedures. I Graham stated that this document did not need to be reconsidered by the Personnel and Staffing Committee. Following discussion, D Sneddon agreed to make some minor alterations to the document.

Members subsequently agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendix;
- ii) comment on the College's draft Recruitment and Selection Procedures; and
- iii) note that the Recruitment and Selection Procedures will be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the College's Joint Consultative Committee; and
- iv) request the Human Resources Manager to bring report on the implementation of the Recruitment and Selection Procedures to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

20. Human Resources Section – Operational Plan 2006/07

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the Human Resources section of the Operational Plan. Members considered the operational targets for the section, which included that the College would produce a Workforce Plan to inform the budget for session 2007/08. The Principal stated that the report was presented for information only and that the College's Senior Management Team (SMT) would agree the targets for the Human Resources section.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the content of the report and its appendix; and
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward reports detailing progress against targets for session 2006/07 to future meetings of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

21. Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to advise members of the approach the College was taking to address the requirements of the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 in respect of successive fixed-term contracts. The Depute Principal stated that the report had been referred from the Executive Committee. D Sneddon commented that the proportion of the College's lecturing staff on fixed-term contracts had reduced since 2002, although the exact proportion was not known at this stage. She reminded members that the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 state that if two or more fixed-term contracts have been in effect for four years or more (from 10 July 2002) then the employee shall become a permanent employee. Members were informed that the College now had 54 staff that fell into this category.

In response, D Sneddon explained that the College proposed to terminate the contract of approximately 30 staff that had not worked for the College for a period of time in excess of twenty-six weeks. Furthermore, the College intended to terminate the contract of 5 staff who work in areas where it is not anticipated that there will be work in session 2006/07 and one staff member who teaches evening class only. She indicated that the remaining 18 staff had accepted the College's offer of a permanent contract in mid-June 2006, which would result in an additional 5.4 FTE of lecturing staff. Members noted that as a result of implementing legislation, the College's normal Recruitment and Selection Procedures would be set aside in this instance.

The Human Resources Manager stated that these changes would mean that should the demand for staff in one area decrease, then it would not be possible to compensate for this by releasing temporary staff. In this situation, the College would have to apply the terms of its

Redundancy and Dismissal Policy. The Principal acknowledged that the reduction in the percentage of fixed-term staff would result in a reduction in the flexibility of the College to respond to changing demands.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendix;
- ii) note the requirements of the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 in respect of successive fixed-term contracts;
- iii) endorse the College's approach to lecturing staff who have had successive fixed-term contracts of a duration of four years or more; and
- iv) request the College to refer this paper to the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

22. Closure

The meeting closed at 2.00pm with the Chair thanking all members for their attendance.

23. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee is scheduled for 30 January, 2007.