

# John Wheatley College

## Board of Management

### Personnel and Staffing Committee

**Minutes of the Personnel and Staffing Committee held on Monday 31 January 2005 at 12.30pm at the College of Building and Printing**

**1. Sederunt**

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and was attended by:

H Ostrycharz (Chair)  
D O'Brien  
J Cope  
A Woolley  
I Graham (Principal)

In attendance:

A Kirk (Depute Principal)  
D Sneddon (Human Resources Manager)  
A Sherry (Assistant Principal)  
J Wilson (Associate Principal – Quality)  
Laura Crouchman (for recording purposes only)

**2. Apologies**

There were no apologies tendered for the meeting.

**3. Terms of Reference**

Members noted the terms of reference for the Personnel and Staffing Committee. It was confirmed the meeting was quorate with 5 members in attendance.

**4. Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5. Minutes of previous meeting held on 3 November 2004.**

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 3 November 2004.

## **6. Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting**

### **a) ASC – Review of Pension Schemes**

It was noted that this was a response by Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC) on the Review of Pension Schemes. It was agreed that the views outlined in the document were in line with those of the College.

## **7. Minutes of and Matters arising from previous meetings**

### **a) JCC minutes of meeting held on Friday 5 November 2004**

#### *Item 6 – Library Development – Meeting with staff: 27 October 2004*

I Graham reported that this document outlined the steps which had been taken in consulting individually and collectively with Library staff on the proposed transfer to Glasgow City Council. He reported, in response to questions, that five members of staff would transfer and that they will transfer on their existing terms and conditions.

#### *Item 9 - Proposed Organisational Culture Effectiveness Survey*

I Graham reported that the survey had received a disappointing response rate of 40%. D Sneddon added that the College was issuing a reminder letter to all staff requesting that they return any uncompleted survey forms. It was expected the Report from the Pacific Institute would be available in the Spring.

#### *Item 10 – Building Specifications*

A Kirk reported that the room schedules were in the process of being finalised.

### **b) Health and Safety minutes of meeting held on 28 October 2004**

#### *Item 5 - Health and safety Update – October 2004*

H Ostrycharz enquired as to whether aggressive behaviour could be registered on the Health and Safety reports. I Graham agreed, and cited an example of a student being verbally aggressive towards staff earlier that week. It was agreed that the possibility of including this would be investigated.

### **c) Equal Opportunities Development Forum minutes of meeting held on 4 November 2004**

Members noted the contents of the minutes.

## **8. Correspondence**

### **Association of Scottish Colleges –**

#### **a) SPPA consultation on the review of STSS**

I Graham reported that this was ASC's response on the consultation on the review of the Scottish Teachers Superannuation Scheme. He added that this response included the College's view.

In response to questions the Principal informed members that staff had been asked for their comments via their Union representatives and that the EIS/FELA had responded nationally.

Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

#### **9. Staff Attendance Report – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2004**

D Sneddon spoke to her report reminding members that as part of the College's monitoring systems it regularly recorded staff attendance figures and reported these to the Committee.

D Sneddon drew members' attention to the appendices which contained the attendance information split into various staff groups represented in the College's workforce. These were:

- Established Permanent Staff
- Support Staff
- Established Permanent Academic Staff; and
- Temporary Academic Staff

D Sneddon explained that Table 1 and Table 2 showed a drop in absence rates of permanent staff and support staff. She added that the decrease was mainly attributed to a fall in the number of staff absent on long-term sick leave.

D Sneddon highlighted that temporary academic staff absence rates were increasingly slightly. This was attributed to short-term intermittent absences.

D Sneddon drew members' attention to page 4 of the report which recorded that 234 days were lost due to stress related illnesses in the fourth quarter and involved eleven employees. It was further reported that for the first quarter in academic year 2004/05 195 days were lost and this involved five members of staff.

D Sneddon reported that the College continues to monitor and review the application of its Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure. She informed members that the Personnel Team were now able to identify irregular attendance patterns more quickly and bring this to the attention of managers.

D Sneddon reported that the College continued to make use of the Occupational Health Service in managing absence. She added that there is regular contact between the Personnel Team and the Occupational Health Service to ensure the smooth running of referrals and ensuring staff make optimum use of this provision.

I Graham advised members that there may be more interest in Public Service absence levels from the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) as part of the drive to improve efficiency within the public sector. Tom McCabe, the Scottish Executive's Finance and Public Sector Reform Minister, had already indicated his interest in improving attendance of workers in the Public Sector.

The Chair asked for a graph to be prepared, in future, to more accurately show the difference between the quarters of 03/04 and 04/05. D Sneddon agreed to bring this back to an appropriate future meeting.

The Human Resources Manager reminded members that a review of the Attendance at Work policy was currently being undertaken and that a revised policy would be brought forward in due course for consideration at the Committee. The Principal indicated that there would be appropriate discussion of options in this respect in future meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

With no further discussions members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report and its appendices;
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring the revised Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure to a future meeting; and
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Committee.

#### **10. Staff Turnover Indices – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

D Sneddon informed members that as part of the College's monitoring systems it regularly records staff turnover and stability rates and reports these to the Committee.

The Human Resources Manager highlighted that there were now fewer vacancies for support staff as the majority of vacancies had now been filled.

D Sneddon highlighted the turnover and stability information for the year from 1 August 2004 to 31 October 2004 which was detailed to be:

##### **Permanent Support Staff**

- Wastage Rate 1.59%
- Stability Rate 80.95%

##### **Permanent Academic Staff**

- Wastage Rate 2.58%
- Stability Rate 84.62%

##### **Temporary Academic Staff**

- Wastage Rate 2.43%
- Stability Rate 48.48%

The Chair proposed that as there was nothing for concern in these reports that had been regularly considered by members these could be brought back yearly, rather than quarterly. Members agreed.

With no further discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report and its appendices; and

- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Committee on an annual basis.

## **11. Well-being at Work Survey April 2004**

D Sneddon reported that the College had conducted a Well-being survey with the assistance of two external consultants in academic year 2003/04. D Sneddon added that this report was the results of that survey.

D Sneddon reported that the process related to the completion of the survey included:

- a Focus Group was formed by inviting members of staff, representatives from management, recognised Trade Unions and Professional Association;
- a meeting was held with the Focus Group to agree the guidance notes, questions and process for analysis;
- the questionnaire was distributed by the College, along with envelopes addressed to the Positive Mental Attitudes (PMA) Team ensuring anonymity for staff;
- the comments from individual questionnaires were keyed into a spreadsheet by PMA staff. Questionnaires were coded to allow accuracy checking – no personal identifiers were keyed into the spreadsheet;
- an accuracy check was undertaken with a random sample of entries;
- comments were sorted by question then alphabetically and the data printed out;
- the Focus Group supported by the PMA Survey Team considered each comment, identified the issue to which it related, built up a reference list of issues and coded each comment to the appropriate issue. A common set of issues was built up for all four questions; and
- the Focus Group met to discuss the next steps in assisting the College to address the issues highlighted by the Survey. It was agreed that the Human Resources Manager would compile a list of the common issues raised by staff and the steps taken by the College to date to address some of the issues that were highlighted.

The Principal noted that the responses to the questionnaires in some instances were ambiguous as it was, for example, not clear, on occasion, which level of management was being commented on. It would appear that in some areas that the comments might be related to the Senior Lecturer cohort though this was not explicit. D Sneddon agreed with this observation and reported that some of the definitions in the Survey would require to be clarified in discussions in focus groups.

In response to questions D Sneddon confirmed that this report had been discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) earlier that month and

all staff had received a copy of the report and results through the post. She added that staff had also been made aware of what steps the College was taking in addressing some of the issues raised in the Survey. This included Management Development Days which had been completed before the end of calendar year 2004.

Members agreed that the 65% return rate for the Surveys was very encouraging.

It was agreed that there would be an article in the Newsletter highlighting the results of the Survey, continuing to make staff aware of this report.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendix;
- ii) request that the Human Resource Manager bring a progress report on the steps taken to address the issues raised by staff to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee; and
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring the College's draft Well-being Policy to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

## **12. Senior Lecturers' Workload Review**

D Sneddon spoke to her report and confirmed that the College had conducted a review of the Senior Lecturers' Workload after discussions with members of the EIS/FELA. D Sneddon added that the main reason for carrying out this exercise was the concern about the high absence rate among teaching staff.

D Sneddon reported that each Senior Lecturer had completed two questionnaires – one related to their post and one related to their workload. An external consultant engaged by the College then interviewed each of the Senior Lecturers and applied a standard job evaluation methodology. D Sneddon added that the results of this exercise were attached as an appendix to the report.

D Sneddon reported that the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) had considered the report and findings at a meeting on 7 January 2005.

D Sneddon highlighted that the consultant had found that none of the Senior Lecturers had stated that they were overworked however that some of them required assistance in order to optimise their time and improve effectiveness

The Principal noted that the review had been conducted during September and that this was usually an exceptional busy time for all College staff and that the workload for these staff may have subsequently tapered off. He opined that it may be possible to consider sharing workload across the Senior Lecturer cohort to ensure a more even distribution of tasks. He further suggested that the Senior Lecturer Forum should act as a focus group to consider the report in more detail and how work might, in future, be reallocated. This might be considered as part of a wider review of the College's structure.

I Graham reminded members that the College had appointed more Senior Lecturers than the number required in the 'Blue Book' (the inherited terms and conditions which apply to staff in FE colleges) as it was recognised that the College's operational environment was different from the majority of other colleges in the sector. However, these appointments took full account of these differences.

I Graham added that it was anticipated the whole management structure would be looked at the following session as the College planned for the development of the new East End campus and the opening of the Bridge at the Easterhouse campus. This, he speculated, might be undertaken in session 2005/06.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendix; and
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring a further report on the action taken to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

### **13. Project Team Annual Report – Personnel and Payroll**

D Sneddon spoke to the report and reminded members that as part of the College's self-evaluation process the Personnel and Payroll function produce a Project Team Annual Report using HMIe self-evaluation methodologies.

D Sneddon reported that the document evaluated the operational targets for academic year 2003/04 and the Team's achievement or otherwise of these targets. She added that the Team identified and evaluated ten key areas (explained in more detail in the appendix) and the report sets out those areas to be addressed for quality improvement and subsequent training and development needs for the team and individual team members.

With no further discussion members agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

### **14. Staff Development Annual Report session 2003/04**

J Wilson reported that in order to support the implementation of the College strategic and operational plans in session 2003/04 a comprehensive Staff Development programme had been put in place. This report sought to apprise members of the activities undertaken during this time and to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

She informed members that Appendix 1 was a comprehensive review of the staff development undertaken and drew members' attention to page 8 which recorded the evaluation of these activities against the Investors in People (IiP) principles. She added that each section had been given a grading by the College and these were detailed at the end of each section, the majority of these being graded 'good'. J Wilson informed members that the quality criteria employed IiP were not the same as that used by HMIe therefore direct comparison across grades was not possible.

I Graham reminded members that the College would seek re-accreditation with liP and that Scottish Enterprise Glasgow would provide assistance with some of the costs involved. He further reminded members that the College had let its liP accreditation lapse for budgetary reasons.

J Wilson further reported that the College was keen to have all teaching staff complete one day per year on a work placement. She added that a number of staff were doing this already and had been providing feedback to the Quality Team.

With no further discussion members agreed to note the contents of the report and its annex.

#### **15. Continuing Professional Development: Staff Development Plan 2004/05**

J Wilson spoke to her report informing members that it provided detailed information on the training which was required to support the work of the College during session 2004/05. She further informed members that there was particular emphasis in the plan to improving the learner experience reflecting the change in emphasis in the revised SFEFC/HMle Quality framework.

The Associate Principal highlighted that the College would increase the number of staff on working towards TQ:FE as a result of the distance learning programme offered by the University of Dundee. This development had enabled the College to enrol an additional eight staff on this qualification due to commence in March 2005.

Members commented on the comprehensiveness of the report and after discussion agreed that the planned activities contained in the report could be met with the budget the College had allocated for this area of work. I Graham reported that there was more funding expected from the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) to help support the Information and Learning Technology Champions project.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Plan; and
- ii) agree implementation of the Plan for Session 2004/05.

#### **16. Comparison of salaries by gender**

A Kirk spoke to his report informing members that due, in part, to the recent press coverage related to the respective salaries of female and male workers in various employments, the College had decided to review the position with regard to College employees.

A Kirk reported that the females in the College were paid approximately 97% of male colleagues' salaries when evaluated on a college-wide basis. Members agreed that this was heartening, and whilst not being complacent, it seemed a considerable improvement of the national average of 70%.

It was agreed that this report should be carried out yearly or periodically.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendix; and
- ii) request the College to undertake a further review during 2004/2005.

#### **17. Supporting Health and Safety in Further and Higher Education**

A Kirk reported that this paper was primarily here for information. He explained that the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), in conjunction with the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), and at the request of the Scottish Executive had established a service to support and enhance health and safety in further and higher education.

A Kirk highlighted the Funding Councils' first year priorities and advised members they would be updated with information when appropriate.

Members noted the contents of the report and its appendix.

#### **18. Closure**

The meeting closed at 1.30pm with the Chair thanking all members for their contribution.

#### **19. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee is scheduled to be held on Thursday 28 April 2005.