

# **John Wheatley College**

## **Board of Management**

### **Personnel and Staffing Committee**

**Minutes of the Personnel and Staffing Committee held on Wednesday 3 November 2004 at 12.30pm at Strathclyde European Partnership.**

#### **1. Sederunt**

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and was attended by:

H Ostrycharz (Chair)  
D O'Brien  
C McPhie  
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**

J Cope (Chair of Board)  
J Kerrigan

#### **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 28 April 2004.**

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 28 April 2004.

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

There were no matters arising.

**7. Minutes of and matters arising from previous meetings**

**a) JCC minutes of meeting held on 20 August 2004**

I Graham informed members that there would be a meeting of the JCC on the 5 November 2004. The Principal further advised members that there had been no progress on the salary claims. In response to questions the Principal confirmed that there had been a changeover of branch officials and that this had resulted in the delays. The Principal advised members that included on the JCC agenda was information on the last date by which a wage settled had to be agreed in order that staff would receive payment in this calendar year for the wage settlement.

***Item 8 – Classroom Observation – a Discussion Paper***

In response to the Chair's question if the Classroom Observation paper had been agreed, the Principal informed members that it has been agreed as a pilot this year and that it was anticipated that an external consultant identified the College with considerable experience in Further Education would undertake the task. It was noted that staff representatives on the JCC had expressed a preference to the use of 'Evaluation of Learning Experience' instead of Classroom Observation. This would be the terminology used in all future discussions of this issue.

**b) Health and Safety minutes of meeting held on 26 August 2004**

***Item 8 – Trade Union/Management Health and Safety Inspection – Easterhouse Campus***

A Kirk confirmed that inspections were ongoing.

I Graham advised members that it had been agreed a Student Association representative could attend these meetings with observer status.

**c) Equal Opportunities Development Forum held on 26 August 2004.**

D Sneddon apologised for the lack of detail in the minute.

The minutes were taken as read.

**8. Correspondence**

**a) Scottish Public Pensions Agency**

**i) Ill Health Retirement Applications**

I Graham advised that the current legislation for the above is to be revised to ensure that a more rigorous specialist medical examination was in place prior to any decision made regarding retirement on medical grounds. He added that organisations will now no longer be able to accept only the advice of general practitioners.

**ii) Review of the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme Consultation Paper**

A Kirk spoke to this paper and advised members of the proposed changes. D Sneddon added that in the past, the College had invited specialists to the College to talk to staff about the superannuation scheme.

Members agreed that part-time workers must be kept informed about the benefits of superannuation schemes. I Graham advised members that there would be an article in the next College Newsletter informing staff of the consultation process. The College would, most likely, channel its response by means of the Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC).

D Sneddon agreed to write a newsletter article and place additional information on the College website on the consultation exercise.

**b) ASC Circular – SPPA Teachers' Superannuation (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations**

Members noted the details of the correspondence

**c) SFEFC – Ferguson – tribunal hearing**

Members noted the details of the correspondence.

**d) JWC Memorandum by Principal – JCC Meeting Schedule Session 2004/05**

I Graham confirmed that this meeting schedule will be revised due to one of the dates falling on Easter Friday.

**9. Insight – Education Law Magazine**

I Graham advised this document was on the agenda for information only.

**10. Absence Management Reviews**

H Ostrycharz commented that this was a topical subject in light of recent statistics produced by the UK government.

I Graham advised members that the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has published a review of absence and absence management strategies. He further informed members that the College's

approach to absence management contained all the elements identified by CIPD as good practice.

I Graham confirmed that the College has above the norm absence figures and had continuing difficulties with long-term absence. He opined that in many of these cases there was little the College could do to address these absences as they were the result of long-term illnesses. The Principal added that absence management had been reviewed as part of the internal audit schedule however the recommendations were allocated low priority grades. This confirmed that the College was not ignoring the issue and had taken a range of appropriate measures to manage absence.

D Sneddon confirmed that some managers were now approaching the Personnel Department to seek advice over staff absence however there remained instances when managers required to be prompted to instigate the Absence Management Policy.

A Kirk added that overall the short-term absence rate was beginning to decrease.

Following discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Principal's report;
- ii) note the contents of the CIPD Absence Management Review (attached as annex 1 to the report); and
- iii) note and comment on the findings and recommendations of the Internal Auditors' review of the operation of the Board's Absence Management Policies and Procedures (attached as annex 2 to the report).

## **11. Proposed 'Professional Body' for College Staff**

I Graham spoke to the report informing members that the Scottish Executive had issued a consultative paper related to the proposal to establish a 'professional body' for staff employed in further education colleges in Scotland. The Principal informed members that the College had considerable concerns over this proposal highlighting the inflexibility which such a body was likely to introduce with regard to the recruitment and deployment of staff. He reminded members that General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) performed such a role in the schools' sectors and that it had acted as a brake on curricular development particularly in the secondary sector. In addition the consultation paper failed to recognise the key role played by support staff in supporting learners and their key contribution to the learning environment. In response to questions he confirmed that if a professional body on the lines of the GTCS was established there would be a membership fee. He opined that due the relatively small numbers of FE lecturers the membership fee was likely to be in excess of that paid by colleagues in the school sector or would require a top-sliced contribution from the Sector's grant-in-aid, an approach which the College opposed.

I Graham drew members' attention to the College's draft response attached as appendix 2.

The Principal continued that there was also the issue of the disciplinary role of the GTCS. He explained that although the College may dismiss a member of staff the GTCS may not take away their Licence to Practice. H Ostrycharz agreed and highlighted that the person may well go to another college to teach.

A Kirk explained that at present the GTCS maintains a list of people that had been disciplined or sacked from colleges.

The Principal also highlighted that the College was fundamentally opposed to the Scottish Further Education Unit performing the role of the professional body as it had little confidence that its staff were equipped to deliver such a function.

I Graham informed members that this document would be placed on a future JCC agenda.

Following considerable discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Principal's Report;
- ii) note the proposal to establish a 'Professional Body' for Staff in Scotland's Colleges (correspondence attached as appendix 1);
- iii) request the Principal to refer the Executive's Paper to the College's JCC for comments of staff members;
- iv) note and consider the College's Draft response (attached as appendix 2 to the report);
- v) request the Principal to respond to the Executive on or before the 30 November 2004 deadline for submissions; and
- vi) refer the College's response, for information, to an appropriate future Meeting of the Committee.

## **12. Internal Audit Report – Payroll**

I Graham spoke to the report and informed members that the College's internal auditors had recently reviewed the College's payroll services. He also informed members that the report had been considered by the Audit Committee and referred to the Committee for further comment if appropriate.

A Kirk confirmed that the report was generally favourable and that there was only one recommendation made, which had a 'low' priority, and this was related to the signatories required for staff receiving payments by cheque. He added that this was an extraordinary circumstance which was unlikely to happen.

Members agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

### **13. Staffing Return 2003/04**

A Kirk spoke to his report and confirmed to members that the College is required to return to the SFEFC, on an annual basis, staffing numbers and related information.

The Depute Principal confirmed that the College's total headcount of staff was 253 in 2003/2004 compared with 269 in 2002/2004.

Members were asked to note that for the first time the College had reported the number and FTE of non-payroll staff used by the College. The Depute Principal added that this amounted to a considerable number as this included all agency workers and external consultants engaged by the College during this period.

A Kirk also drew members' attention to the way ethnic origin had been described in the appendices as this was also different from previous years.

In response to the Chair's request for clarification of why the headcount in appendix 4 had decreased but that the FTE had increased, A Kirk explained that the actual headcount had decreased but that the length of time they were at the College had increased.

With no further discussions, members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report and its appendices;
- ii) note the contents of the College's staffing return to the SFEFC;
- iii) note that the College forwarded the staffing report to the SFEFC by the due date; and
- iv) request the College to bring forward a further report at a future date.

### **14. Equal Opportunities Annual Review – Academic Session 2003-2004**

D Sneddon spoke, at some length, to her report and advised members that, as part of the College's commitment to equality opportunities, it records, monitors and reports on a variety of indicators to this meeting on an annual basis.

D Sneddon informed members that the report sought to apprise them of the College's workforce profile as of 31 July 2004 and its ongoing progress in the area of equal opportunities. She reported that the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forum continuously reviews the operation of this Policy and associated procedures as part of its remit. The Human Resource Manager drew members' attention to the minutes of the Forum which were attached as appendix 1.

D Sneddon also explained the Supporting Structure diagram which demonstrated how the Equal Opportunities Policy relates to other College policies and procedures. She emphasised that this demonstrated how the College sought to embed equality of opportunities in all areas of its activities.

The Human Resources Manager informed members that one of the objectives of the policy and practices was to promote and increase representation of under-represented groups within the College's workforce. Therefore, a full picture of the current workforce had to be obtained. She confirmed that all new members of staff are given a Workforce Profile Questionnaire which, when the information is transferred to the College's Human Resources System, allows the College to produce a profile of its workforce.

D Sneddon confirmed that the College has 65 support staff of which 58 employees are full-time and 7 part-time. She highlighted appendices 3 and 4 which demonstrated these figures in more detail. The Human Resources Manager added that these appendices also record the male to female ratio and the salary scale points of these individuals, highlighting that overall, the gender balance of scale points 27-50 was 4 male and 2 female. and that on the lower end of the scale there were more females than males on lower salaries.

D Sneddon drew members' attention to the Tables 3 and 4 on page 5 of the report and confirmed that this demonstrated the breakdown of temporary lecturing staff by gender at each scale point for 2002/03 and 2003/04 and members noted that this was becoming increasingly more balanced between male and female. The Human Resources Manager confirmed that the tables on page 6 were the same but for permanent lecturing staff.

D Sneddon highlighted that the EIS/FELA in 2000 had indicated some concerns regarding the gender imbalance on the Senior Lecturers salary scale (males being under-represented on this grade). She highlighted that this now appeared to be much more balanced, adding that all appointments are made on the basis of meeting the essential criteria for the post and individual merit.

In response to questions she confirmed that there was no evidence to suggest that female staff were being appointed to lower salary scale points. D Sneddon confirmed that overall the College employs more female staff than male and that a detailed breakdown of these are demonstrated in Tables 6 and 7.

The Human Resources Manager explained that there had been a slight decrease, from 5 to 4, in the number of staff identifying themselves as being from an ethnic minority, but that it had remained fairly static with the variance in the number being a result of the overall level of staff employed by the College rather than an increase or decrease in numbers. She added that the College had taken steps to promote and encourage those from an ethnic background into employment at the College which was discussed in more detail in Section 5 of the report.

Members agreed that the College's staff development programme was crucial to the operation of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy. D Sneddon stated that

the College continues to develop and review its programme to ensure that a range of training opportunities are made available to staff.

D Sneddon summarised staff usage of the College's family friendly policies and procedures for session 2003/04. D Sneddon invited comments and questions about the Annual Report and its appendices.

Members agreed that this was a large, comprehensive document and that the Personnel Department should be commended for the time and effort that had given to complete this. The Chair opined that she had found this report highly informative and reflected the College's commitment to its Equal Opportunities policy.

It was agreed that the Report (minus its appendices) would be placed on the next agenda of the full Board of Management.

Following discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resource Manager's Report and its appendices;
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring draft policies and codes of practice to future Personnel and Staffing Committee meetings on an on-going basis;
- iii) endorse the commitment to a rolling programme of appropriate staff development; and
- iv) request the Human Resources Manager to bring this report to the attention of the College's Joint Consultative Committee.

## **15. Revised Equal Opportunities Policy**

D Sneddon spoke to her report and informed members that the College had reviewed its Equal Opportunities Policy in light of the recent changes in legislation.

I Graham informed members that the changes that had been made were in bold in the revised document. He confirmed that the majority of changes had resulted in additions to the policy document to reflect legislative changes.

The Principal confirmed that this document would be placed on the next JCC agenda and the next Board of Management agenda.

Following discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendix;
- ii) comment on the College's Equal Opportunities Policy;

- iii) note that managers and all staff will receive suitable training and development to raise their awareness in relation to equal opportunities on an on-going basis; and
- iv) request that the Human Resources Manager present a revised copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy at the next scheduled meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

## **16. Revised Grievance Procedure**

D Sneddon spoke to her report and informed members that the College had reviewed its Grievance Procedure in light of recent changes in legislation introduced under the Employment Act 2002 Employment Act (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004. The Human Resources Manager added that the document had only had minor alterations at present but that it was not at a stage where it could be presented to the Board of Management. A Kirk added that this procedure had been revised in order to ensure that there was greater clarity for all those who sought to use it.

H Ostrycharz asked for all comments to be forwarded to D Sneddon, A Kirk or I Graham by Wednesday 10 November 2004.

With no further discussions members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report and its appendix;
- ii) comment on the Grievance Procedure;
- iii) note that managers and all staff will receive suitable training and development in the operation of the procedure and the management of grievances; and
- iv) request that the Human Resources Manager present a revised copy of the Grievance Procedure at a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee

## **17. Family and Parental Leave Policy, and Personal and Domestic Leave Policy**

D Sneddon spoke to her report and advised members that this identifies the number of applications from staff under the Family and Parental Leave Policy and Personal and Domestic Leave Policy. In response to questions D Sneddon reported that in her view the policy had operated effectively during session 2003/04.

The Human Resources Manager added that the College will continue to monitor the progress of these policies.

Members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report; and
- ii) request that the Human Resources Manager present a revised Family and Parental Leave Policy and Personal and Domestic Leave Policy at a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

## **18. Support Staff Managers' Forum**

I Graham advised members that Senior Lecturers' Forum had operated for some time now and it had been recognised that a similar body was required for Support Staff managers. The report set out the membership of the forum and its remit.

Members of the Personnel and Staffing Committee welcomed this development and agreed to note the contents of this report and its appendix.

## **19. Staff Attendance Report – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2004**

D Sneddon spoke to her report informing members that as part of the College's monitoring systems it regularly records staff attendance figures and reports these to the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

The Human Resources Manager drew members' attention to page 2 which records a drop in the percentage rate between quarters 3 and 4 for permanent staff absence. H Ostrycharz commented that if this is sustained it would be a large drop, which would be beneficial to the College.

D Sneddon continued that comparisons had been drawn (one of which was demonstrated in Table 4 – Support Staff for the months of August and September 2003 and 2004) and that compared with last session absence rates seemed to be improving.

The Human Resources Manager advised members that the nature of illness had been monitored and that there had been 234 days lost due to stress related illnesses in the fourth quarter compared to 342 during the third quarter.

D Sneddon took members through the report, and highlighted that on page 6, paragraph 3 it should read 'of the remaining 4 employees', not 'of the remaining 10 employees'.

D Sneddon explained to members that tables 7 and 8 contained details of the total costs of absence, a breakdown of days lost and the number of instances of absence. It was noted that the total costs of absence was £316,266 in session 2003/2004.

The Human Resources Manager confirmed that the College classes a period of long-term absence as 20 days or more and that a breakdown of short-term and long-term absence is attached as appendix 9. It was highlighted that the College continues to experience a high degree of long-term absence in both the support and established academic staff with seventeen members of staff absent during the reporting period.

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;
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a report on the Wellbeing Survey at a future meeting of the Committee; and
- iv) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Committee.

## **20. Staff Turnover Indices**

D Sneddon spoke to her report and advised 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 and in response to questions confirmed that staff turnover was within the norm for an organisation of the College's size.

D Sneddon highlighted the turnover and stability information for the year from 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004 which was detailed to be:

### **Permanent Support Staff**

- Wastage Rate 11.34%
- Stability Rate 83.61%

### **Permanent Academic Staff**

- Wastage Rate 2.55%
- Stability Rate 90.41%

### **Temporary Academic Staff**

- Wastage Rate 23.09%
- Stability Rate 60.76%

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.

## **21. Staff Development: Professional Development Programme 2004/05**

J Wilson reminded members that the College Professional Development Programme was designed to enable staff to apply for funding to support their professional and personal career development. She informed members that staff

saw this programme as an important part of the College's Annual Continuous Professional Development Programme.

The Associate Principal Quality advised members that the 3 appendices contain information on the application for support in session 2004/05. She continued that Appendix 1 contains the information from staff wishing to continue on programmes of study commenced in previous sessions (this amounted to £2184). Appendix 2 detailed new bids from staff (£3749 at present), and that Appendix 3 contains applications for the TQFE programme at the University of Dundee (10 bids received).

J Wilson advised members that 8 staff would be supported on the Dundee programme for session 2004/05 at a total cost of £8,000.

D O'Brien questioned as to why 10 bids were received to study on the Dundee University Programme but that only 8 were supported. J Wilson reported that it was not possible to support all applications however that the College had sought to reallocate funding within this budget to increase the number of staff who could undertake the TQFE at Dundee University during this session. She also reported that the College supported both permanent and temporary staff who wished to gain this qualification.

With no further discussion members agreed to the implementation of the Professional Development Programme for Session 2004/05.

## **22. Draft DTI Guidance on the Information and Consultation Regulations**

Members considered the document and were advised that this would be placed on a future Board of Management agenda.

**The meeting was stopped at this point due to a fire alarm.**

**It was reconvened 25 minutes later with the Chair asking for item 23 to be discussed.**

## **23. Race Equality Action Plan and Policy Update – Gus John Partnership**

After considerable discussion, it was agreed to bring this report to a future Board of Management meeting where the Assessment of Impact Analysis would be highlighted.

## **24. Schedule of Meetings Session 2004/05**

Members agreed the revised schedule of meetings as proposed by the Assistant Principal and noted that the next meeting would be held on 31 January 2005.

## **25. Closure**

The meeting closed at 2.05pm with the Chair thanking all members for their contribution.

**26. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday 31 January 2005 venue to be confirmed.