

AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES AND EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES

Date: 21 October 2008
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Prof A Trinci (Chairperson), Mrs M Bentley, Mr G Carty, Mr D Fowell and Mrs E Rice.

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr A Smith	Principal
Mr E Moore	Vice Principal
Mr W Spencer	Assistant Principal
Mrs H Sturley	Office Manager
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mr L Byrne.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the Agenda for this meeting.

5. ADMISSIONS 2008/2009

Mrs Sturley circulated a paper that gave information in relation to the number of students that were at the College on 1 October 2008.

The breakdown was 1020 in lower sixth, including 73 returners and recyclers, and 16 Extended Education students, who are now dispersed throughout the Lower Sixth tutor groups. The number of students in the upper sixth is 855, which is 3 students more than planned. The number of extended Education Students has increased by 2 to 16. The total number of students in the College is, therefore, 1875. Dr Smith advised Governors that it had been necessary to recruit a modest amount of additional staffing to accommodate students and their curriculum choices although this amounted to no more than one full time equivalent. Rooming is an

issue because accommodation is extremely tight. The work on the new building had a minor impact on the operation of the college on a day to day basis.

Mrs Sturley reported that some places had been offered to late category 1-4 students on the waiting list who came to the induction courses in July. Places were also offered to students with particular difficult circumstances and “looked after children”. However, because of the pressure of numbers we offered uniquely few such places this year.

The college has more students than it is being funded for in 2008/2009, but this will help in the discussions for 2009/2010, although it is not clear what will happen with transitional funding.

6. ADMISSIONS 2009/2010

Dr Smith reminded Governors that the number of students in the transfer age group in Stockport would be down by about 400 for September 2009, with relatively small further decreases occurring in future years.

It was agreed that the telephone system for administering the admissions process would be used again for 2009/2010. Governors noted that the closing date for application forms was 30 November 2008 and that the telephone applications would be made on 6 December 2008, with students being informed in writing of the outcome of their application by 13 December 2008.

Dr Smith advised Governors that the two Open Evenings had been well attended and if anything had been busier than last year. Applications were coming in earlier than previous years. The number of places that would be offered would probably be slightly less than in previous years. The new college has planning permission for up to 1,900 students.

A paper was also circulated that showed the number of students from Bramhall High School who had applied, been offered places and how many had actually transferred to the college in the last three years. The Headteacher of Bramhall High School had stated that pupils from the school were opting for Wilmslow High School rather than Aquinas. However, the data showed that more Bramhall High School students had applied, more had been offered places, and more had actually then enrolled in each of the last three years – both as in actual numbers and as a percentage of the relevant Bramhall High School cohort. Prof Trinci undertook to share that information with the Chair of Governors of Bramhall High School.

More information would be available for the Committee at its Spring Term meeting.

Mrs Sturley left the meeting at this point.

7. ANALYSIS OF STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

Mr Moore circulated a paper that gave details of the number of students who had withdrawn from the college during 2007/2008. The analysis showed that 11% of students had left prematurely. The number of withdrawals is mainly the

result of the college's none selective admissions policy. Overall the retention record for the college is good compared to comparable institutions. The normal practice is for a Senior Tutor to meet the student to find out the reason(s) why they are leaving the college. This is normally followed up by a telephone call to the student.

Governors felt that the data provided was incomplete and in many cases the destination of the students was missing. The quality of the data needed to be improved to enable Governors to make an informed decision.

8. SELF ASSESSMENT REPORTS

A copy of the draft report from Ofsted following the two day inspection was circulated to all Governors. The college had been given three weeks' notice of the inspection. The college had replied to the draft report and Governors were reminded that the report was confidential at this stage. The Governors noted the excellent results that the college had achieved with 4 grades classed as outstanding (grade 1) and the remaining 2 classed as good (grade 2) and that the overall judgement was that the college was outstanding. Mr Spencer added that the college had hoped for a grade 1 for Capacity to Improve instead of a grade 2 that had been given by the inspectors.

Dr Smith advised the Governors that all members of the senior management teams at the college had contributed significantly to the inspection. Mrs Rice placed on record her appreciation of the briefing that that Mr D Pearson had given Governors before they met the inspectors.

Whilst the inspectors had looked at many aspects of college, Dr Smith felt that they needed to recognise the danger of Ofsted concentrating primarily on examination results and similar quantitative data.

Mr Spencer advised Governors that in view of the excellent outcome of the inspection the next one could be self regulatory.

Mr Spencer advised Governors that due to the recent inspection the Quality Review meetings would not be held until after half term. Governors would be invited to participate in these reviews. He also advised the Governors that the process is more important than the end product because it identifies strengths, weaknesses and points for action. It is also a mechanism for celebrating success. A copy of the draft Cross College Self Assessment Report for 2007/2008 was circulated to all Governors. A view was expressed that if the college is outstanding why had some departments not achieved a better grade.

RESOLVED: That i) The Governors recorded their appreciation to staff for all the hard work involved that is reflected in the Ofsted results and ii) that the draft Cross College Self Assessment Report for 2007/2008 be noted.

9. CURRICULUM ISSUES UPDATE

Dr Smith reported on the following:

i) In L6 there is a level 3 Performing Arts course at BTEC National from September 2008, which is equal to 2 A levels. It is a 2 year course, which is more practically based.

ii) There are ongoing issues with the introduction of Specialist Vocational Diplomas. There are none being offered in Stockport at the moment. In the future the college will be involved in 4 diplomas including the Media Diploma but none will be offered until the college moves into the new building in 2010. Stockport College and Cheadle and Marple are offering diploma courses from September 2009.

iii) New specifications are being written for all AS level courses.

iv) The breadth of curriculum offered at the college is wide and the average student in 2008 studied 4.44 A levels overall. This figure is derived from the league table data where each A level a student takes is counted as 1, and any AS levels which were not taken through to A level are counted as 0.5 each. A typical student in L6 studies 4 AS level subjects dropping to 3 A2s plus general studies in U6.

v) Critical thinking is offered to the most able students in the college

10. PUBLICITY

a) Prospectus - Mr Moore advised the Governors that a copy of the prospectus on a CD had been issued to Governors. However, some governors said that they had not received it. A copy was given to those Governors who had not received it earlier. A paper copy was available for anyone who did not have access to a computer.

b) Mr Moore circulated a copy of the Living Edge publication that featured an interview with Dr Smith.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

10 February 2009 at 4.30 pm

Signed -----
Chairperson

Date -----