

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Body of
THE CITY LITERARY INSTITUTE held on **23rd March 2010** at
Keeley Street, London WC2

Present:

GOVERNORS

Ms. A. Bennett+	Mr. M. Macchitella+
Prof. M. Biriotti*	Mr. T. Mitchell+
Mr. I. Chapman*	Ms. M. Ndagire+
Mr. P. Davies+	Ms. J. Obi-Keller+
Mr. J. Flowers+ (from item 10/07)	Mrs. H. Priest*
Mr. C. Galleymore+	Ms. J. Reynolds*
Mr. K. Geeson+	Mr. W. Stokoe+ (Deputy Chair)
Mr. D. Greenland+	Mr. J. Stone+
Mrs. A. Harrison+	Ms. C. Stott+ (Chair)
Mr. P. Hay+	Mr. A. Weale+
Mr. B. Leigh+	

Key: + Present
* Apologies tendered

In Attendance: Nick Moore (Deputy Principal)
Joe Manifold (Vice Principal)
Brian Watts (Director of HR & Organisational
Development)

Clerk: Denise Gill

PART ONE: STANDING ITEMS

10/04 Apologies for Absence

The Board approved the absence of Maurice Biriotti who had been unable to attend three consecutive meetings. This was a requirement under the Articles of Association.

10/05 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10/06 Membership

Members received a report containing the recommendations of the Search Committee which was proposing the appointment of Jonathan Flowers to the Board. A copy of his curriculum vitae was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Board considered the report and unanimously supported the appointment of Jonathan Flowers to the Governing Body for a period of four years. Jonathan was invited to join the meeting.

10/07 Presentation

Nick Moore and Brian Watts gave a presentation on the role of governors in equality and diversity. Nick advised that the Governing Body carried the ultimate responsibility, under the law, for ensuring that the Institute met the requirements of equality legislation. He listed the various ways in which the requirements were fulfilled at City Lit by the Governing Body.

Nick then advised that management regularly kept governors informed about equality and diversity issues through reports, review documents and the SAR. Nonetheless there were raised expectations for equality and diversity and the new Ofsted inspection framework put much greater emphasis on equalities and the 'equality of outcomes'. The Equality and Diversity inspection grade was now a limiting grade. Brian then gave a brief overview of the Equality Act 2010 which will expand existing discrimination law and will come into effect in October this year.

Members were advised that students now had a higher expectation of what could be provided and were more aware of their entitlements. A list of actions being taken to develop and improve equality and diversity were included in a report and the LSIS guide for governors on Equality, Diversity and Governance was tabled.

The Board discussed how it could be more pro-active in promoting equality and diversity. Nick advised that the draft Equality and Diversity strategy would be brought to the Governing Body and recommended that a set of actions and key targets should be agreed. It was commented that it should not become a compliance issue as diversity was a rich resource that should be built on and celebrated. Indeed the Governing Body itself was trying to become more diverse and it was suggested that intent should be written into City Lit's core values. It was agreed that governor training on Equality and Diversity should be considered and further opportunities for boardroom briefings provided if appropriate.

Members noted the presentation and also that an Equality and Diversity strategy would be brought to the Board for approval.

10/08 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 7th December 2009 were approved and signed by the Chair. The Chair advised that under 09/66 the advice on CRB checks on governors was given *at* the AoC conference and not *by* the AoC. A very minor typographic error was noted.

10/09 Matters Arising Not Appearing Elsewhere

09/122 The Chair advised that she would give a presentation on inspection from a governor's perspective at the next meeting.

10/10 Principal's Report

The Principal presented his report December 2009 to March 2010. He started by presenting the Balanced Score Card which showed that the only red area was tutor observations but it was anticipated that it would be in amber in three months time. A graph showing fee income was shown which demonstrated that income was above target.

He advised that the main activities during the period had been:

- Curriculum planning for 2010/11
- Finalisation of the summer prospectus
- Revalidation of Deaf Degree with London Metropolitan University
- Initial thinking around provision for expansion options
- Generation of the quality improvement strategy around the new common inspection framework
- A record number of nominations had been made for Adult Learners Week
- Funding negotiations.

Governors were advised that City Lit's indicative funding for 2010/11 showed level capped funding for the main adult budget, with reductions in 16-19 year old funding and Train to Gain. However overall this was less than a 1% reduction in LSC funding, whereas most other providers were facing cuts of between 10% and 20%. The Institute was also receiving nearly £220K for over-performance in 2008/09, as its bid was >109% of its allocation.

The Principal then gave an update on two successful bids and notable successes in Employer Engagement. Members were informed that enrolments and fee income were ahead of the previous year and just ahead of where City Lit needed to be to meet budget targets. A very generous donation of £80K had been received from the estate of a former student and this had been placed in the bursary fund. Unfortunately applications to various trusts for funds for the bursary had been totally unsuccessful.

Members were advised that generally, morale across the college remained positive. Clearly there were still concerns about future funding with the state of public sector finances. The Principal stated that this term he had been impressed and very pleased with the smooth way curriculum planning for 2010/11 had gone with all areas thinking carefully about the programmes and promising increases in provision, for example on Sundays.

As another indicator City Lit entered The Times Best Company competition – unfortunately the return rate of 34% (probably mainly a factor of the number of part time tutors) was too low to be rated. However it did provide some useful data.

The Top 10 priorities for the spring term and the progress against the previous term's 10 ten priorities were included in the paper.

The Principal was thanked for his report.

10/11 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 11th May 2010 at 5 p.m. It would be preceded by a Review Meeting at 2.30 p.m.

PART TWO: MATTERS FOR DECISION

10/12 Self Assessment Report 2009

Nick Moore presented a paper which included a synopsis of the 2009 Self Assessment Report. He stated that adult and community learning providers and colleges must undertake a self-assessment of their provision and include a development plan to show how the quality of provision would be improved. Nick added that self-assessment must have a firm basis in evidence and identify what needed improving; must reflect the needs of City Lit and its learners, and also reflect LSC requirements which was to base it on the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Broadly the SAR must comprise:

- Background (with description of the SAR process)
- Reports on Curriculum areas
- Report on Leadership and Management.

In addition, the City Lit SAR contained reports from service areas.

Nick explained the SAR process for the year and how it had been compiled. He advised that the self-assessment process for 2009 began in curriculum areas in the summer in preparation for the Curriculum Reviews in October 2009 when each area presented its draft SAR. As a result of the Curriculum Reviews the SARs were amended and the data, key strengths and weaknesses, and action/quality improvement plan sections compiled into the institute-wide SAR. Curriculum areas retain a full SAR addressing each of the Ofsted 5 Key Questions separately.

At the end of the process, upward grade changes in 2009 from 2008 were:

- The Centre for Teacher and Management Training from 2 to 1.
- Health and Movement Studies from 2 to 1.

- The Deaf and Disabled Support service from 3 to 2.
- Community Outreach from 3 to 2.
- Skills for Life from 3 to 2.
- Computing from 3 to 2.

- Deafness, Skills and Professional training (formerly CaT) from 4 to 3.

Downward grade changes from 2008 were:

- Continuing Education (Skills for Life) in Deaf Education from 2 to 3 because of concerns over data management and success rates. Grade 3 had previously been determined in 2007.

Governors discussed the summary SAR and commented that a key issue was the rigour governors applied to the validation of the judgements made by staff. Nick advised that the Institute had worked hard to achieve consistent data and the Quality and Standards Committee scrutinizes the full SAR meticulously. Members discussed achievement rates and queried whether defining non-accredited learners who had achieved over 50% of their learning objectives as 'achievers' was controversial. Nick responded that RARPA was a problem for both staff and students but this method was less controversial than the system used by some ACL institutions of equating retention with achievement.

The Board then discussed the Leadership and Management SAR and the Chair reported that she had met with the Chairs of committees which had led to the strengthening of this section. Governors agreed that the Board worked hard on developing strategy and the monitoring of performance and standards and this should be reflected in the SAR.

The Board accepted the recommendation of the Quality and Standards Committee that the full SAR be approved for submission to the Learning and Skills Council.

10/13 Review of Governance in Strategic Leadership in English Further Education

Members received a report advising them of a consultation exercise which was currently being undertaken on the recommendations contained in the report 'Review of Governance in Strategic Leadership in English Further Education'. A copy of the Executive Summary and recommendations was contained in the report.

The Chair of Governors advised that the AoC Governors' Council, of which she was a member, had met with Stephen Marston, Director General of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and he had indicated that a Code of Governance on a comply or explain basis would be looked on favourably. Therefore the Governors' Council had commenced work on this. Members queried whether this would lead to a lighter touch being applied to higher performing institutions but they were advised that this was not something that had yet been promoted. The Board felt that the implementation of the recommendations would depend on the outcome of the election but members had significant doubt about the recommendation that data on membership and other aspects of governance practice should be collected regularly by an appropriate sector body for use by colleges. Membership on governing bodies was constantly changing and there was potentially Data Protection issues.

The Chair agreed to report the views of the Governing Body back to the AoC Governors' Council.

10/14 New Report Cover Format

The Clerk presented a suggested new format for the cover sheet for Governing Body reports. She reminded members that at the last review day it had been requested that risks should be listed in reports and she also proposed linking topics that were contained in the Common Inspection Framework. The Board agreed the new format but asked that under 'key risks' that 'how risks would be mitigated on the register' should be added.

PART THREE: MATTERS FOR REPORT

10/15 Management Accounts to 31st January 2010

Joe Manifold presented the management accounts for the six months to 31st January 2010. The report included:

- Narrative
- Summary Income and Expenditure
- Comparison of current operating surplus against prior year
- Balance sheet
- Cash flow forecast chart
- Bursary Fund Summary
- Risk Analysis year ending 31st July 2010.

The Board was informed that the management accounts ending on 31st January 2010 showed a surplus of £2,089K and an overall favourable variance against budget of £131K. Student fees were on target and there was a shortfall on Employer Engagement Income of £26K which was being monitored. There was an adverse variance against pay of £30K and there remained a risk that this variance could increase during the rest of the year. There were no other significant expenditure variances. There was an adverse variance of £30K on 'Other Premises' costs. This included expenditure of £10K relating to the new Kean Street lease and the balance of this variance was due to the timing of expenditure.

Members were informed that City Lit had bank and cash balances of £1,961K at 31st January 2010. A new revolving credit mortgage arrangement with Allied Irish Bank had been entered into in December and this had a zero balance at the end of January.

Governors discussed the accounts and queried why there was only a growth of 4% on student fees and asked whether this was a consequence of an increase in guided learning hours compared to the previous year or due to a price increase. Joe stated that he would check this information and report back to the Finance and Employment Committee.

The Board noted the management accounts for month six ending on 31st January 2010.

10/16 Application of Company Seal

The Company Secretary reported that the Company Seal had been applied on 15th December 2009 on a 5 year lease on the new Kean Street Studio as well as the rent deposit deed. These documents were signed by Peter Davies - Principal, and Janet Obi-Keller, a staff governor.

Members noted the report.

10/17 City Lit – Change/Initiative Summary

The Principal presented a report for information on various changes and innovations at City Lit. He advised that he was bringing the report to give Governors a flavour of what

was taking place across all areas of the Institute and to give them confidence that nothing stood still for very long, if ever.

The report outlined changes and developments in the staffing structure, inspection arrangements, learner involvement, curriculum programme areas, Supported Learning Centre, integrated learning technology, employer engagement, information advice and guidance, learning support, marketing, human resources, staff development, information registration services, management information systems, IT contract, procurement, premises, health and safety, finance and the bursary fund raising.

Members were asked whether they would like any further information on any of the items at future meetings. The Board discussed the report and expressed further interest in knowing more about the revision of the observation of teaching and learning system and the trialing of a revised RARPA system. In particular they said they would like to know more about the tutor experience, the key themes and the core aims.

The Principal was thanked for a very interesting report.

10/18 Learner Performance Results

The Principal introduced a report on LSC produced data related to success which had implications for inspection, and to a lesser extent, funding. He advised that prior to funding negotiations each year, the LSC produced a Minimum Level of Performance report for every college against Long, Short and Very Short course lengths. Summary information from City Lit's report for 2008/09 was attached to the report. Members were advised that the data for Long courses was probably inaccurate and outlined the reasons why. He stated that those for Short and Very Short were probably pretty close.

Members were advised that some of the apparent low success rates in the report were as a result of data anomalies and timing issues. On querying the National benchmark information with the data authority which placed City Lit below the benchmark, it was highly questionable if first, the data was accurate and secondly whether it was a like-for-like comparison. The Principal advised that he was not trying to be defensive but from an inspection perspective, it was essential that City Lit should be compared against relevant and accurate benchmarks. The Board concurred and stated that it was essential that published data must be reliable to enable them to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.

The Governing Body noted the reports being generated by the LSC and the action being taken to analyse and challenge the information.

10/19 Minutes of Meetings

The Board received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the following meetings:

- Search Committee held on 12th January 2010.
- Health & Safety Committee held on 11th February 2010.
- Audit Committee held on 2nd March 2010.
- Quality & Standards Committee held on 9th March 2010.

Chair.....

Date.....