

YMCA GEORGE WILLIAMS COMPANY
(Registered Number 2978406)

**Minutes of the Board of Governors of the
YMCA George Williams College
held on
Thursday 29th January 2009
at
The YMCA George Williams College**

WEDNESDAY



The opening meditation was led by Katei Kirby.

Ann Morisy welcomed John Peaper to his first meeting as staff observer and David Taylor and Paul Sathianesan, who were awaiting election to the Board of Governors at the ensuing AGM. Ann Morisy also welcomed Ian Green, the Acting National Secretary of YMCA England, in his absence.

01.09: Present: Nash Ali, Lynne Brooker (Company Secretary), Peter Croy, Andrew Edwards, Barbara Holden, Jean Hutcheson, Katei Kirby, Louise Longa (Student Observer), Emma Neighbour (Staff Observer), Ann Morisy (Chair), John Peaper (Staff Observer), Mandy Robbins, Ali Rusbridge, Neil Sherringham, Robert Talbut, Sarah Wilson and Mary Wolfe (Principal).

In attendance: Paul Sathianesan and David Taylor

02.09 Apologies: Jonathan Clark, Ian Green, Anam Hoque and Sue Piotrowski.

03.09 Declarations of Interest

It was recognised that Sarah Wilson's declaration had been noted for all meetings.

04.09 Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd October 2008

These were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

05.09 Matters arising:

45.08 ISA. Mary Wolfe reported that this government-led agency had been established to ensure unsuitable people did not work with children or vulnerable adults. It would come on line from October 2009 and take over from the work of the CRB. ISA checks would follow people throughout their careers, unlike CRB declarations which were not portable. Employers would be committing a criminal offence if they employed anyone who had been barred. The emphasis was more fully on employers, staff and stakeholders to report any person(s) whom they knew should be barred but was in employment working with children or vulnerable adults.

Canterbury Christ Church had not yet issued its guidelines in connect with the ISA but would pass any guidelines to the College once they had been agreed.

Peter Crory asked whether this legislation covered Scottish students. Mary Wolfe advised that the legislation would only apply to England and that the College would continue to work with Disclosure Scotland.

Neil Sherringham noted that although registration would be costly, it would be simpler to check students or employees and would be available on line.

55.08 Status of Staff and Student Observers. Sue Piotrowski had expressed her concern at the previous Board meeting in relation to students not being recognised as full members of the Board. Lynne Brooker advised that she had contacted the Charity Commission and Companies House for their views on changing the status of student observers to full members. She had been asked to send her request electronically which had been done. A response was expected shortly. Mary Wolfe advised that she had checked with a number of YMCAs in connection with the representation of users as Board members. She had been advised that only one YMCA included users as full members. The meeting also agreed that there could be a conflict of interest were staff members to become full members.

After a full discussion, it was agreed to proceed, subject to the Charity Commission and Companies House approval, with changing the status of the student observer to that of a full member. At the same time, it was agreed to change the Memorandum and Articles of Association so that there would be two student members. It was further agreed that, in line with their wishes, staff should remain as observers. Resolution passed.

Action: Mary Wolfe & Lynne Brooker

55.08 College Website – Mary Wolfe advised that she had contacted IPC media who hosted a number of “speed matching” sessions for voluntary groups. The January meeting had been cancelled but the College had been invited to send a member of staff to the next session in March. She commented that the College would be looking for someone to advise on scheduling of the re-working of the website. IPC Media might be able to offer some professional advice pro bono before the March meeting were there to be a suitable volunteer available.

06.09 Finance Committee

Jean Hutcheson presented the minutes of the most recent Finance Committee held on 7th November 2008.

She noted that, under item 30.08, the final claw back figure from the University was within the sum allocated. The repayment of this money had been agreed with Canterbury and would be achieved over a 6-month period. The meeting noted that the College had identified this overpayment and had alerted the University.

Ian Mathieson of PKF had expressed some concern at the extent of debtors. Mary Wolfe expressed her confidence that most of this money would be paid and that a significant sum resulted from the timing of the accounts:

- Over £43k related to invoices issued in June and July and to other monies which had now been received.
- Over £37k was owed by the Student Loan Company.
- £28k was owed by students who were aware that they could not receive their awards until they had settled academic debts to the College.

The Finance Committee had noted that the College used the Higher Education SORP but recommended that it would be more appropriate to change to the Charity SORP. Mary Wolfe had checked with Canterbury Christ Church University who did not predict any difficulties with the College making this change and had confirmed that this was a matter for the College's own internal decision.

Following concerns expressed at the most recent Board meeting, the Finance Committee had written to Cafbank to seek some financial reassurance. Cafbank had responded, giving their assurances that they did not invest overseas and assurance of their good practice. The Finance Committee had considered the option of spreading the risk across a number of banks but had felt that this would not be practical. Mary Wolfe noted that, after checking with other YMCAs, it was apparent that none of them had withdrawn their reserves from Cafbank. The Finance Committee had also noted their intention to continue to monitor this situation.

Jean Hutcheson noted that the management accounts continued to predict a small surplus for the current year, although funding continued to experience pressure.

The Board asked whether the "credit crunch" had affected students. Mary Wolfe advised that students were affected, although this was mitigated by the Jack Petchey Bursary and the College's own bursary. She noted that advice was available for student via the Library. The College had noted a small, if growing number, of distance learning students had lost their funding because their employers had withdrawn fee support. It was predicted that the global economic situation would impact more directly on the College's work in the years after 2010.

After a full discussion, the Board agreed the accounts and recommended them for acceptance to the AGM.

07.09 Budget of Opportunity

Mary Wolfe welcomed the proposal, which promised positive engagement by all members of the College. The meeting agreed a number of amendments to the proposal:

- The College Principal would agree any project proposals, in consultation with one member of SIG if necessary
- Any appeals would be referred to the Strategic Issues Group (SIG)

- The Board of Governors would agree any allocation of funds to the budget of opportunity at their meeting which agreed receipt of the annual accounts. The Finance Committee could opt to make a recommendation in relation to the budget to the Board.

The Board of Governors would receive an annual update on the budget via the Principal's report.

08.09 Student items

A) Louise Longa circulated an article from the Newham Recorder which referred to the College's award ceremony. Neil Sherringham noted that he had attended the event which had been extremely successful. He regretted that he had been only governor present, because Ann Morisy had been unwell. There would have been only two representatives from the Board of Governors and he urged other members to prioritise these events. The meeting was aware that formal invitations had been sent to all members in advance but it was suggested that a further reminder be issued a week before a key event encouraging members to attend. The Board expressed their thanks to Emma Neighbour and colleagues for her work in arranging the Award Ceremony.

B) *Visitors to the College.* Louise Longa reported that a recent visitor to the College had made comments that had been deemed inappropriate. He had referred to a "colourful group of students" and to "colourful presence of the YMCA College". Mary Wolfe advised that this matter had been brought to her attention by a group of students and that she had responded to them. The student observer had not been aware of this. It was agreed that the majority of visitors to the college both recognised and respected the values and mission of the work. Mary Wolfe and Louise Longa agreed to discuss this matter further outside of the meeting.

A member of staff had spoken of a class being "too diverse" in terms of their learning styles. The Chair advised the meeting that the Academic Board would address this issue and would take appropriate action. The Board would follow this matter via the minutes of the Academic Board.

C) Louise Longa advised the Board of Governors of a student in the third year who was at risk of having to leave the College because he was unable to pay his fees. The student feared that, were he to leave the College, he would be deported. She noted that a number of students wished to help him and students in his group were willing to contribute financially but this would not be sufficient. Nash Ali advised that, depending on his place of residence, he might receive local authority funding. Mary Wolfe undertook to send him details of any charities that offered specific help to students in his situation.

Action: Mary Wolfe

09.09 Principal's Report

Mary Wolfe briefly presented her report noting:

- The two new short courses – Working with Homeless People and Youth Work and Human Rights were now both running successfully.
- The College had been unsuccessful with both its bids to the Children’s Workforce Development Council. The College had received feedback.
- The College was cautiously hopeful of securing 50% funding for a development worker/tutor to be based in Scotland.
- Stephen Timms, MP, had recently attended the College’s Award Ceremony and reminded very supportive of the College.

10.09 Recruitment 2008 – 2009

Student numbers had increased by 4 full time students 15 part time (distance learning) students. There had also been additional students to the Working with Homeless People and the Human Rights courses.

Enrolment had been very successful; however the College had lost a number of distance learning students during the first part of the academic year. These students had largely completed their DipHE programme but had not secured ongoing funding to complete Level 3 of the Degree.

2009-2010

The distance learning year 1 group was large in 2008-2009 and this would therefore continue to impact on recruitment in years 2 and 3. The recent requirement that youth workers study to BA Honours from 2010 had already started to impact on recruitment to Level 3 of the distance learning programme. It was further noted that the launch of the Open University distance learning course had not significantly impacted on College recruitment. The Board expressed its thanks to Deepa Joshi for the recruitment records.

11.09 Nominations Committee

Ann Morisy noted that the challenge last year had been to build the financial expertise of the Board. The challenge for the coming year would be to build the Board’s strength in diversity, in youth work and in local issues. The Nomination Committee had achieved this and Ann Morisy briefly introduced those nominees who would be recommended to the AGM to the Board of Governors. Ann Morisy thanked members of the Nominations Group for their work: Katei Kirby, Nash Ali and Andrew Edwards.

12.09 Diversity

Mary Wolfe tabled a paper outlining the End of Level One Distance Learning Programme results in line with the diversity monitoring of the College and following the Board of Examiners’ meeting held on the 15th January 2009. No clear trends had been identified between those students who had passed or failed the programme overall. However, it was noted that 2 out of the 9 students with stated disabilities had withdrawn and Mary Wolfe was asked to investigate this.

Action: Mary Wolfe

It was suggested that the July Board of Examiners' meeting, which included both Distance Learning and Full Time students, might be more revealing in terms of diversity monitoring.

13.09 Board of Governors and Academic Staff Residential

John Peaper advised that a meeting had taken place to plan the agenda for this event which would be based on 6 key themes affecting the College. It was hoped that the residential would give rise to active action planning from participants.

Mary Wolfe said that a group of participants had planned to cycle from Haslemere Station to Dunford House and that anyone interested in joining them should contact her or Lynne Brooker. Lynne Brooker would circulate programmes and travel details shortly.

Action: Lynne Brooker

14.09 Quality Standards

Robert Talbut recommended the Terms of Reference for this group to the Board which were accepted. He advised that the group had met twice and had looked at, and discussed, a wide range of standards including PQASSO, InSync, EFQM and Investors in People. The group recommended to the Board that the College proceed with the PQASSO standards in the first instance. The College could undertake the YMCA's InSync standard at a later date if this were felt to be useful. PQASSO had been identified as a reasonable standard to secure within a comparatively short period of time. The College had been advised that InSync standards were robust but required an extended period of time to achieve.

Mary Wolfe had circulated information to staff on the 12 quality areas of PQASSO, as set out below:

- Planning for quality
- Governance
- Management
- User-centred service
- Staff and Volunteers
- Training and development
- Managing money
- Managing resources
- Managing activities
- Networking and partnership
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Results

Ann Morisy reminded the Board of their responsibility for strategy within the College, and not for management. She reminded the Board of the important of being alert to any blurring of responsibilities in these areas.

The Board expressed their thanks to the Quality Standard Group. The PQASSO briefing paper would be circulated to Members when the College had received its documentation.

Action: Mary Wolfe

15.09 Academic Board

John Peaper presented the minutes from the Academic Board meeting held on 3rd December 2009. He noted the additional tutorial support offered to students with dyslexia and the successful visits to the College by Lionel Morrison OBE and Rose Hudson-Wilkins (at the Award Ceremony).

John Peaper also referred to the forthcoming of the second edition of Context, an annual Occasional Paper from the College which published students' work and which would be launched at the College Open Day in April.

16.09 Health and Safety

Lynne Brooker advised the Board that the 5 year test of the College's electrical circuits had been completed successfully and that the annual PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) would be completed shortly.

17.09 Dates of events in 2009:

Board 24hr Away at Dunford House Midhurst, West Sussex. GU29 0AF	Wednesday 11 th & Thursday 12 th March
Board meeting	Thursday 30 th April
Board meeting	Thursday 30 th July
Board meeting	Thursday 29 th October

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.20 pm

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Listed change to the Memorandum of Association

Page 10 deleted capital One to one

Listed change to the Articles of Association

Page 10 Paragraphs 5.4.5 and 5.4.6 wording changed to reflect two students governors and not one.

Page 14 Paragraph 7.1 s added after Student Governor on line 2 and after Student Observer on line 3

Page 19 Following sentence deleted:
In each case the members of these committees shall be drawn from the Board of Governors other than Staff Governors or Student Governors.

Page 26 Paragraph 12.4.2 s added after student Governor and Student Observer on line 2 and line 4.