

Minutes of 34th Meeting (part 2) of the English UK Board

Held at: Prospero House, 241 Borough High Street, London SE1 1GA

Date/time: 17:30 on Wednesday 25 May 2011

Present: Sue Edwards (Chair), John Barnett, Kate Cadwgan-Evans, Alison Chambers, Sarah Cooper, Michael Cornes, Jane Dancaster, Richard Day, Caroline Hugo, Kevin McNally, Steve Philips, Sarah Schechter, Graham Simpson and Shane Wilkinson.

In attendance: Andrew Hjort (observer), Tony Millns, Mark Rendell and Annie Wright.

Opening remarks

SE reminded the Board that the purpose of the Meeting was to discuss agenda items 8 and 9 from the 34th Meeting of the English UK Board held on 14 April 2011. SE explained only half of the Board were present at the 34th Meeting in April and it had therefore been decided that any discussion concerning agenda items 8 and 9 would be postponed until 25 May 2011, when the majority of Board members would be present at the English UK Annual Conference & AGM.

SE invited TM to comment briefly on the Board elections, the results of which were announced earlier in the day at the AGM. TM confirmed all 5 private sector members standing for election had been elected and all 3 state sector members had not been elected. TM suggested the results presented the association with a constitutional and representational problem and noted there was now no HE state sector member represented on the Board.

TM agreed to write an options paper, on the subject of Board composition, for discussion at the 35th Meeting of the Board on 16 June 2011.

RD commented on the Minutes of the 34th Meeting (part 1) held on 14 April and advised that the date of the April 2012 Board Meeting clashed with the 2012 IALC Workshop. TM recommended items such as matters arising and approval of the minutes should be raised at the June meeting.

There were no apologies for the Meeting.

8. Strategy 2011-5: key questions

TM spoke to the paper which intended to address the fundamental strategic questions facing English UK. TM explained the aim of the paper was to ascertain a preliminary view from the Board so a more comprehensive strategy paper can be produced.

The main questions set out in the paper asked whether the association should carry on within its current remit and consolidate or whether it should consider going beyond it.

TM remarked on the outlook concerning membership growth and the subsequent effect on income from membership subscriptions. MC proposed rates for supplementary subscriptions could be increased in order to cover the expected future shortfall in subscription income, should overall student week figures go down. TM commented that it might be difficult to get a 75% majority vote on this proposal and MC suggested the proposal could be argued very carefully in order to secure the necessary number of votes.

TM noted there were alternative ways to generate income and asked the Board whether it was in agreement that all proposed options outlined in the paper be explored further. The Board agreed all options should remain open and explored.

In reference to the proposed option of establishing an international association for language centres, SS noted that it might be of interest to know CILT (the National Centre for Languages) was no longer in operation and had merged with the education charity CfBT Education Trust. TM thanked SS for bringing this to his attention.

CH questioned TM's use of the word 'risk' when referring to the options outlined in the paper and TM commented that the association would be moving out of its comfort zone of the UK, should it decide to go beyond its current remit. CH suggested any expansion be carried out in stages, starting with the EU for example.

RD commented on the reference to the growth of the Partner Agency Scheme and noted this was already underway. RD also noted he was in favour of the proposed individual professional membership scheme, aimed at marketers and social secretaries (as well as academic managers), although he raised concerns regarding the cost of setting up and staffing such an initiative.

JD commented that the subject of accreditation was not referenced and TM noted accreditation was still in the mix.

9. Succession planning: sub-group report

JD spoke to the paper which included notes from the succession planning sub-group meeting held on 3 March 2011.

JD summarised the situation and reminded Board members of TM's intention to reduce his working hours by 2013 at which point he will work for a further 2-3 years, on a part-time basis.

JD explained TM would continue to lead the association but would not deal with aspects of operational management. This area would be handed over to the two deputy chief executives, AW and MR, who would take on extra responsibilities in order to ensure all duties and functions continue to be covered.

RD asked if the proposed structure would put a greater onus on the role of the Chair of the association. TM commented that he didn't, in principle, see the Chair taking on more duties although he did see there was likely to be a need for more interaction between the Chair of the association and the Deputy CEOs plus probably the Chair of the Finance Panel.

RD suggested the Chair should have more of a platform and questioned whether the current structure of appointing a Chair from within the Board was the most appropriate. TM noted it

would be difficult to move to an appointment via a wider platform under the current Board model. TM also advised against this process of appointment, suggesting that it might favour someone who spoke well or was generally popular rather than actually being the best person for the role of Chair.

JB questioned if there would be a committee working alongside AW and MR in order to take some pressure off the Chair. SE indicated this was a good idea and suggested the small succession planning sub-group could be developed into a longer-term support committee.

The Board was in agreement with the proposed plans.

TM informed the Board he would discuss the re-allocation of duties with AW and MR before AW goes on maternity leave at the end of June.

Any other urgent business

JD asked if there was an update on London College Wimbledon and TM confirmed the centre had ceased trading but explained the association did not have access to full student records which was causing difficulties activating the SESF. TM confirmed he hoped to circulate information about the centres closure to London members via the English UK London network.

SE thanked the outgoing Board members for their contribution to the Board.

The meeting concluded at 18:10.