

## **Minutes of the 45th Meeting of the English UK Board**

Held at: Regents University London, Inner Circle, Regents Park, London NW1 4NS

Date: Thursday 17 October 2013 from 13:30

Present: Sue Edwards (Chair) Sarah Cooper (Vice-chair), Richard Day, Caroline Hugo, Steve Phillips, Shane Wilkinson, John Barnett, Daphne Laing, Kevin McNally, Jane Lancaster and Simon Cleaver (hereafter SCle)

Attending: Tony Millns, Annie Wright and Huan Japes (minutes)

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### ***Constitutional business***

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Andrew Hjort. Sarah Cooper left at 15:00.

#### **2. Declaration of any interest in any business of the meeting**

None

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting of 13 June 2013**

No points of accuracy were raised. SC confirmed that she and DL were still attempting to get people together for an FE/HE group meeting, with some difficulty.

#### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes and updates (paper B45/1)**

JD pointed out that the proposed meeting on 1st April 2014 clashes with IALC. SCle and RD will miss the meeting on 12 June 2014.

#### **5. Membership of the Board and committees (paper B45/2)**

SE confirmed that Joanne Moore of Bell should be invited to attend the Finance Panel on 1 August as an observer (action point). In the wake of Greg Watson's resignation, it was agreed that AH would now be co-opted to the board until the 2014 AGM.

#### **6. Membership of the association (paper B45/3)**

SE commented on the healthy membership numbers overall before moving to the matter of subscription debtors. TM expanded on the situation with FE Colleges: some needed advice on mergers (especially the Scottish Colleges) while some were experiencing payment problems (e.g. Central Sussex College, City of Glasgow College). There was concern about Shane Global's outstanding debt (SE), apparently a cash flow matter, although a payment schedule had now been agreed. RD asked that details of where debtors were based should be provided in the papers. JD was concerned that one new member was already a debtor – TM commented

that this could be the result of a pre-existing booking. CMLA was, however, likely to be a bad debt.

AW mentioned that members could join the A2 International Education Fairs, newly joined as corporate members.

### ***Matters for discussion and decision***

#### **7. Public affairs update and HO fee protection proposals (paper B45/4)**

##### ESVV

TM commented that all signs are positive for the ESVV to be introduced into the Immigration Rules in 2014.

##### Net migration

TM noted that Teresa May had softened somewhat on the 'hard target' of net migration numbers (it is now perhaps a 'hard aspiration') and that the HO may here need to appear less isolated within government. However, it was at least 70% likely that students would remain in the net migration targets until the next election.

SW asked for clarification. TM referenced the recently commissioned IPPR report on net migration targets: numbers would rebound eventually and so the target would not be any closer to being met (and numbers were in fact up for August). From recent meetings with Labour and the Liberal Democrats, it was clear that neither party will have a net migration target in their next manifesto, and the Tories may abandon this policy as well, either alone or in coalition.

##### Fee protection

TM commented that it was clear from the Home Office paper shared with JET members that they were confused about the difference between a refund policy and a fee protection scheme. Other education sectors already have a functioning scheme, as used with the London Met closure. If English UK were to establish a fee protection scheme based on the current SESF, this might sound a further death-knell for ABLs.

##### Public Affairs updates from Jane Dancaster

- a) Round-table discussion on visitor visas at the GLA: the City of London Corporation and the mayor's office will produce a paper as follow-up, including the idea of a dual Schengen/British visitor visa issued from the same visa office, a reiteration of the need for the ESVV to be written into the IRs, and allowing Libyan students with company or government sponsorship to open a bank account when studying here.
- b) Meeting with Kit Malthouse and London First: Kit was onside with the English UK suggestion that the B1 Restriction be removed from the Tier 4 visa requirements. The deputy mayor attended the recent English UK FAM trip and is now fully aware of the new GVV study ruling.
- c) Meeting at Fragomen with representatives from the Border Force, Home Office (Paul Barrett), Economic Migration Policy Advisor and UKTI. The registered traveller scheme will further expand automatic passport control at Heathrow; the IRIS system will be discontinued. The proposed bond payments for students staying longer than 6 months were mentioned as another barrier facing UK education. Paul Barrett asked how the UK can

overturn any impression of being 'unwelcoming'? TM and JD will follow up with Mark Owen of UKBA in due course.

#### **8. English UK 2004-14: tenth anniversary (paper B45/5)**

SE asked for suggestions for the 10th anniversary celebration. JD suggested a reunion dinner at the next AGM, with an additional award or scholarship. SW emphasised that the guest list should bring together public and private sector organisations once more. TM mentioned the Wednesday night of the conference as a suitable date, with the Cinnamon Club as one possible venue. SE suggested Senate House, the British Museum or the BMA as alternatives, with Boris Johnson (or failing that Joe Johnson) as an after-dinner speaker. JD suggested the scholarship should be for a young person from a war-torn country; the scholarship award could run for the next 10 years as well.

AW asked about sponsors for the dinner. IELTS, Trinity and Pearson were mentioned. AW also suggested that three scholarships would generate more news copy. VSO could help with visas for those from troubled parts of the world.

#### **9. UK international education strategy (paper B45/6)**

Items 9, 10 and 11 were taken together. See notes under item 11.

#### **10. The English Language Working Group (paper B45/7)**

Items 9, 10 and 11 were taken together. See notes under item 11.

#### **11. English UK: the strategic context (paper B45/8)**

TM outlined the role, and potential roles, of the new UKTI Education Unit and English Language Working Group, and the rationale for devoting resources to this as outlined in papers B45/7 and B45/8. For example, discussions with the BC and others in Bogota could yield potential university partners and further opportunities for members. The heavy workload is balanced by the potential rewards, but there would be a need to look at the resources required. TM's proposal was for him to continue to chair the group on behalf of English UK while the new CEO adapted to other aspects of his role. UKTI were beginning to understand the sector and would need to see results within the next 18 months, with the potential for the ELT sector to take a clear lead within the broader strategy. SE commented that strategy would need to be considered in the context of the new CEO's appointment and asked for further comments from the board.

SCle asked for this to be discussed separately, at a future board meeting. TM mentioned that the IEC and EL Working Group would meet by the end of November, so there would be further clarity after that. He also emphasised the changing landscape of education (with increasing TNE) and the need for us to respond to this in members' best interests. JD and DL reiterated the need for English UK to take opportunities in (eg) Colombia or Kazakhstan and be outward-facing. SW asked about the resources needed, and SCle about the money available from BIS. TM estimated the total pot was around £2-3 million, with the only spending thus far on staff. RD was concerned about the commitment levels and also the role in this of the new CEO. SE asked about the immediate returns. TM gave the example of Kazakhstan, where there are 3000 students needing to reach B1/B2 level via UK-based and local delivery; there would need to be

a delegation visiting therefore within the next 2-3 months. SW asked if additional English UK staff would be needed. TM replied that there would need to be a mini-unit initially.

Action

It was agreed that further discussion should take place at the December board meeting.

**12. Budget 2014 and FP recommendation on subscriptions (paper B45/9)**

SE highlighted the fact that a 2% increase would generate a surplus of £31,000, with 2013 expected to deliver a surplus of £45,000. SCle added that it was prudent to have some increase, even if below inflation. SE emphasised the need to remind members of the CLA savings.

Action

The board approved a 2% increase in subscriptions for 2014.

**13. Appointment of Chief Executive (paper B45/10)**

After presentations by Ivor Caplin and Eddie Byers and an ensuing 30 minute discussion, the board agreed to offer the CEO post to Eddie Byers. SE asked who would now negotiate the contract. TM asked the board to consider what variations in the standard terms and conditions they would agree to? SCle asked that SC (now absent) be given delegated authority to carry out further negotiations, and the board agreed. SE commented that the picture would be clearer by the time of the next meeting on 3 December. A start-date in February or March would be suggested, with the fall-back that if Eddie did not come through, the process could be re-started without any slippage on the goal of a 2-3 month handover period in early to mid-2014.

Action

SE to phone Eddie immediately and SC will speak further thereafter.

***Matters for report and information***

**14. Accreditation UK Executive Board, 24 July 2013 (minutes)**

No further comments.

**15. Accreditation & Professional Services Board, 25 September 2013 (draft minutes)**

No further comments.

**16. Finance Panel, 3 October 2013 (minutes)**

TM highlighted the on-going matter of VAT on agents' commissions. Clive Barrow of BEET had applied to HMRC for a refund on net commissions, with a decision imminent. If the result was negative, it was agreed that English UK would take the matter on with advice from PwC, as clearly this is a high stakes issue for members.

TM also confirmed that Michael Cornes would stand down from the FP at next year's AGM. SCle asked about further information on the Endsleigh scheme. AW confirmed it would be on the website the following week.

## **17. Enterprises Board, 11 June (minutes) and 10 October 2013 (draft minutes)**

SP highlighted the need to follow up on the May mission to Libya, through training sessions and an inward mission. AW highlighted that now there are 184 partner agents, and the partner agency fee had increased to £250. In relation to StudyWorld, AW outlined the plan to charge a lower rate to guest representatives (without a Marcom eSchedule account) in order to counteract the shortfall in bookings from additional reps this year.

### ***Other business***

## **18. Dates of meetings in 2014 (paper B45/1) and any other urgent business**

For the additional meeting on 3rd December 2013, a later start was agreed (15:30) with dinner to follow.

The meeting ended at 16:00