

Plumpton College

Strategic Plan 2009 - 2015



September 2009

Mission

Plumpton College is committed to providing excellent education and training

Key Strategic Objectives for 2009-2015

1. To achieve continuous balanced and sustainable growth in student numbers, and a substantial increase in services to business, over the period 2008/09 to 2014/15.
2. To provide outstanding land-based education, training and expertise to learners and businesses.
3. To generate sufficient cash internally over the period of this plan to fund capital investment.
4. To develop the College's human and physical resources, manage its activities in a safe and sustainable way, and ensure Outstanding governance, leadership and management in order to achieve the aims set out in Objectives 1-3.
5. To develop a reputation as the leading centre of land-based education and training in the South-East, and to increase awareness and support for further development of our business.

OBJECTIVE 1: FURTHER GROWTH

To achieve continuous balanced and sustainable growth in student numbers, and a substantial increase in services to business, over the period 2008/09 to 2014/15.

To fulfil this Objective we aim to:

- 1.1 **14-16** Achieve strong growth in enrolments, with a balanced intake of students across all abilities.
- 1.2 **16-18** Maintain substantial, broadly-based growth in 16-18 enrolments from all parts of Sussex and the South East.
- 1.3 **HE** Achieve continuous steady growth in HE enrolments for Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees, and post-graduate/research students.
- 1.4 **Apprentices** Remain the leading organiser of work-based learning to the land-based sector in Sussex, pursuing steady solid growth in both the 16-18 and 19+ markets, but responding quickly to opportunities for stronger sustainable growth.
- 1.5 **Train to Gain** Exploit profitable short-term growth opportunities, minimising long-term commitments and investment in dedicated resources.
- 1.6 **Other 19+ (Full cost/LSC Funded/Overseas)** Achieve steady growth in full-cost business to offset decline in LSC-funded numbers.
- 1.7 **Achieve balanced and inclusive growth.**
- 1.8 **Consultancy, Applied Research, and Field Trials**
Achieve sustainable and profitable growth in areas which play to our expertise.

OBJECTIVE 2: OUTSTANDING QUALITY

To provide outstanding land-based education, training and expertise to learners and businesses.

To fulfil this Objective we aim to

- 2.1 **FE** Achieve and maintain an Ofsted classification of Outstanding Overall from the end of 2009/10 onwards.
- 2.2 In a steady measured way build on the exceptional added value we currently provide.
- 2.3 **HE** An overall HE success rate of 75% for 2009/10 and 79% for 2010/11, with continuing improvement thereafter.
- 2.4 HE quality in each Department excels that of HE departments in other land-based providers and rises towards the upper end of the top IQER grade in terms of such criteria as the lesson and tutorial quality, the learner experience, the College's HE infrastructure, the effectiveness of management and quality assurance systems, and (where relevant) the quality and relevance of our scholarly activity and research.
- 2.5 **All Students** Maintain the ethos of a small, friendly, secure and well-ordered college community which fosters the development of personal, inter-personal, employability and enterprise skills (as well as vocational and learning skills) along with a sense of belonging, purpose, self-confidence, respect and good citizenship in all students, whatever their prior attainment.
- 2.6 **Business** Ensure that all our courses are relevant to the needs of land-based employers, and ensure that we provide business with an outstanding training service that is well-informed and responsive across the whole college, flexible in method, timing and location of delivery, communicates well with employers at all stages, and which generates real benefits for their business; and enables the college to continue to lead the employer satisfaction league in Sussex.
- 2.7 **Consultancy/Applied Research/Facilities Hire** Ensure that our service fully meets the needs and expectations of the client, is prompt and well-presented, and offers a high quality of service and excellent value for money.

OBJECTIVE 3: STRONG FINANCES

To generate sufficient cash internally over the period of this plan to fund capital investment.

To fulfil this Objective, we aim to

- 3.1 Income** Maintain overall academic income per student in real terms over the Plan period 2006/07 to 2014/15 taken as a whole.
- 3.2 Margins** Ensure that all courses and other income-generating activity make at least a positive contribution to overheads, and raise Governor awareness of their relative profitability.
- 3.3 Farm** Ensure that the farm at least breaks even in cash terms over the period 2006/07 to 2009/10 (after minor capex and academic credits); achieves an average annual cash surplus on the same basis of £50k over the period 2010/11 to 2014/15; and following completion of the major project is rated as Outstanding for both its academic and its commercial performance.
- 3.4 Residential and Lettings** Achieve consistent year on year increases in income and contribution from residential and catering activities and from the letting of our conferencing facilities and other non-residential infrastructure.
- 3.5 Sales of wine and produce** Achieve continuing increases in income and contribution from sales of wine and other ancillary produce consistent with the primary educational purpose of the department concerned.
- 3.6 Student Transport** From 2010/11 ensure that the costs of student coach transport is fully covered by charges to students and transport grant contributions from the Local Authority without recourse to wider student support funds.
- 3.7 Costs** Maintain staff costs (including agency costs) over the period to 2014/15 at an average of no more than 50% of turnover.
- 3.8** Achieve a 0.5% pa reduction in real terms in the price of bought-in supplies, and a 1% real reduction in the unit price of bought-in services over the period 2005/06 to 2010/11.
- 3.9 Financing Increase and expedite external grant support for future capital expenditure, and further diversify our sources of funding.**

OBJECTIVE 4: MANAGING OUR RESOURCES

To develop the College's human and physical resources, manage its activities in a safe and sustainable way, and ensure Outstanding governance, leadership and management in order to achieve the aims set out in Objectives 1-3.

To fulfil this Objective we aim to

- 4.1 **Staffing** Attract additional/replacement high quality staff and retain existing staff in order to achieve the growth strategy.
- 4.2 Develop staff and motivate them to continuously update their knowledge and improve their performance towards excellence
- 4.3 **Premises** Achieve the increase in, and efficient use of, teaching, commercial and ancillary accommodation and infrastructure, at the main College site and outcentres to achieve the planned growth and quality improvement strategy.
- 4.4 Ensure all operational buildings on all our sites are graded "Good" or better by 2011, and that all facilities have a high rate of accessibility and suitability for those with disabilities.
- 4.5 **IT** Put in place by end-2009 a sufficient volume of accessible and reliable IT facilities and applications to support Outstanding teaching and learning, a step-change in management controls (including management of student progress), and significant improvements in internal and external communications (including an Outstanding website).
- 4.6 **Transport** Ensure adequate transport capacity for students to access our provision at a cost which is affordable by both the student and the college.
- 4.7 **Health and Safety** Reduce the number and severity of accidents and the potential for accidents.
- 4.8 **Environment and Sustainability** Become a model to the FE sector and the communities we serve in developing, applying and promoting sustainable use of resources and in limiting any adverse environmental aspects of our business, with the aim of reducing our net consumption of fossil fuels and electricity per Guided Learning Hour by an annual average 2% over the period 2006/07 to 2014/15.
- 4.9 **Leadership and Management** Maintain robust planning and control systems across all aspects and levels of the college's business, with
 - effective co-ordination, prioritisation and drive from SMT

- quick response to external changes in demand, funding or Government policy
- appropriate delegation of decision-taking
- continuing attack on undue bureaucracy within the college's control
- rigorous and comprehensive annual self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- regular upward identification of opportunities as well as risks
well-considered improvement/mitigation plans to address areas of weakness and risk
- strong, open, up/down and lateral communication at all management levels
- efficient, accessible, and coherent management information flows and management accounting data at all levels
- contingent plans for management continuity/succession.

4.10 Governance Ensure that clearly articulated and coherent strategic goals are set, and performance against them regularly monitored, by Governors with a range of diverse backgrounds, experience, skills and networking ability relevant to the college's business and committed to acting in the best interests of the college.

OBJECTIVE 5: MANAGING OUR EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

To develop a reputation as the leading centre of land-based education and training in the South-East, and to increase awareness and support for further development of our business.

To fulfil this Objective we aim to:

- 5.1 Students** Ensure that a wide range of potential students and their parents/ schoolteachers are aware of, value, and want to pursue/recommend the range of learning opportunities at the College.
- 5.2** Ensure that current students represent the College creditably, that current and past students value and recommend the College, and are keen to progress here/return for further training later in their career.
- 5.3 Staff** Current and potential new staff see Plumpton as a rewarding and fulfilling place to work and good for their career development; and current staff are knowledgeable, proud, and effective ambassadors for the College.
- 5.4 Business** Ensure that employers, entrepreneurs, and voluntary groups are aware of, and value, the tailored training and vocational qualifications we offer, and the additional attributes the Plumpton ethos instils, and view us as a preferred supplier of both new and existing land-based courses and services.
- 5.5 Local Community** Raise awareness of what the college does (and how well) among the local communities and their representatives, and increase their perception of the college as a good neighbour, good employer, and a natural hub for land-based activity across Sussex; and stimulate their pride in our success and their goodwill towards our plans.
- 5.6 Customers** Achieve a higher profile amongst customers, and hence a premium price, for the wine and other products we produce.
- 5.7 Partners and Peers** Develop closer ties, and a reputation for excellence, with the University of Brighton and other potential HE partners, professional institutes and vocational bodies.
- 5.8** Ensure that, in our chosen fields, schools, colleges and other providers view our quality and value for money as excellent; and prefer to collaborate with us as partners rather than compete.
- 5.9 Policy-makers and Funders** Influence CSA, FE and HE policy and regulation at national, regional, and local level, by effective lobbying through AoC, AoSEC, LANDEX and FE Sussex, and by direct engagement, punching above our weight.

5.10 Ensure that we are seen by LSC, DIUS, DCSF, and other partners at all levels (e.g. SEEDA and GOSE), as responsive and co-operative partners, constructive in our criticism, reliable in delivering what we are funded to deliver, impatient for excellence, and flexible and nimble in embracing new ideas and priorities.