



Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 12 February 2018

Present: -

- Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Professor Robin Baker
- Mrs Lynn Forrester-Walker
- Dr Elizabeth Halford
- Mr Neil Hadfield
- Mr Jordan Knight
- Mrs Alison McLean
- Ms Mairead McVeigh
- Mr Tim Newsholme
- Mr John Nicol
- Mr Scott Rolfe
- Mr Mike Rookes
- Ms Kay Sandford-Beal
- Ms Katie Seekings
- Mr Oliver Tomlinson
- Mrs Wendy Tolley

In attendance: -

- Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)
- Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
- Mr Ben Gamble (Head of FE)
- Mrs Jennie Hermolle (Head of Communications)

The meeting was quorate as seventeen Governors were present during the meeting.

1. Process of the Meeting

- I. The Chair welcomed everyone to the strategy meeting.
- II. Apologies for Absence received from Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)
- III. No declarations of Interest were declared.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- I. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 January 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- II. The action list was noted showing progress of actions.
- III. Matters arising from the minutes had been addressed in the action list.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

3. Principal's Report

- I. Governors noted the comprehensive report covering recruitment, academic development, the student experience, resources and major partnerships. The Principal informed Governors that since preparing the report the College had been successful in a bid to refurbish a room for English and Maths at Folly Lane. Catering had gone to tender with presentations arranged to a group of students and staff to ascertain their views. The College would support the catering company initially to implement changes to improve the service. Options for student accommodation continue to be explored with

Herefordshire Council and potential developers. The Principal had arranged meetings with NMite in order to discuss options to work together.

- II. The Head of Communications presented the paper on student applications and marketing strategies. FE applications, including the Foundation Course, showed a marginal decrease. HE applications were overall 12% less than the previous year. Significant marketing activity had taken place in the autumn term which was ongoing. Numerous applicants do not attend for interview and, hence, actions have been put in place to encourage attendance to interviews such as travel bursaries. In discussion a Student Governor highlighted the possibility of using Skype for interviews which would also enable applicants to bookmark their portfolio. Further, an online template for students to create digital portfolios was suggested which is practice in some HEIs.

The time lag from embedding the new brand had been acknowledged. The paper was clear and concise although the role of course tutors to make connections appeared inconsistent; staff from each course need to liaise with partner colleges. Course Leaders' job descriptions include involvement in student recruitment but sufficient capacity was needed to release staff. Maximisation of appropriate and current social media for student recruitment and revaluation of tactics was proposed, for example use of You Tube. The College is a small institution with a modest budget and resources delivering a personable marketing approach. It was agreed that options to increase the marketing budget should be considered by management. Governors expressed a view that the challenges to address recruitment are for the whole college and not just the marketing team. The Principal would share the report with Course Leaders.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL

Discussion progressed to how many applicants receive offers and the level of quality of applicants. The College has a low tariff entry but does not give unconditional offers. Trends show a decline which could be partly due to the whole campus experience offered by competitors. Student accommodation and social engagement needed to be explored. The F&GP Committee would discuss further and make comparisons with competitors to ascertain actions required.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL/FINANCE DIRECTOR

- III. The risk register was noted particularly 2018/19 HE applications which had already been discussed. There was a request for a summary of key changes on the front page for future reports.

ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR

- IV. The Finance Director presented the management accounts to December 2017 with no significant changes. Additional marketing expenditure had been agreed which had not been included in the budget. It was crucial to make investments for the future despite deteriorating finances which would be cushioned by College reserves.

The Finance Director outlined progress in understanding course costs. These will be examined further by the F&GP Committee. Effective and efficient FE delivery is being addressed along with investment to improve systems to make efficiencies, examples included 'My Concern' safeguarding software which was being used effectively.

Governors stated that they understand that the College has a small team and limited resources and it is important to realize that on occasions it might need to buy in resources.

The rent review for CRC is of concern. Governors requested that, notwithstanding any progress with negotiations, it is important to access a fallback position.

It was noted that there is only 1 Technical Demonstrator in HE which can be limiting on students' access to the workshop. The workshop needed to be used efficiently with appropriate timetabling to maximise its use.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the informative reports

4. **Draft Strategy: Strategic Plan 2018/23**

The Principal gave a presentation drawing on the long term vision document which had been discussed at the last meeting. Governors were invited to provide feedback to inform the strategy which would be presented at the April Board meeting for discussion and approval.

Key areas had been drawn together in the 'strategy house' document. There was discussion about the statement 'widely recognised as an art college' questioning who would recognise this. This would be made more explicit to assist to identify the market for the future which could include students, academic institutions and industry. Growth versus achieving success was raised agreeing that the ambition is to grow whilst maintaining appropriate applicants.

In summary: -

- I. Staff recruitment is crucial to key posts to ensure staff have correct skills and competences
- II. Invest in FE and HE product development e.g. digital curriculum
- III. Develop short course product
- IV. Improve operational effectiveness, compliance whilst maintaining and improving key quality measures
- V. Improve data analysis and tracking
- VI. CRM trigger actions and communications to applicants (currently tracked manually). HESA data future requirement to track HE data, provide advice and guidance. Tri-annual reporting requirements
- VII. Develop salary strategy including an open salary review process and review of staff contracts. Important to agree brief and outcome so that expectations can be carefully managed.

The Board agreed: -

- The Principal will present the strategic plan 2018-23 at the next Board meeting for discussion and approval. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- To task the F&GP Committee to review the budget comparing several scenarios considering implications on revenue (ongoing and one off), capitalising costs and the return on investment. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/FINANCE DIRECTOR**

5. **In-depth group discussion**

There were group discussions about the Textiles programme and its future development with Claire Anderson, Textiles Course Leader and Nick Thomas, Textile Design Tutor and curriculum positioning of STEAM.

6. **Conclusion**

- I. There appears to be a generational concept locally that the College is not recognised as Hereford College of Arts. It is perceived to be an art and design college. Music, performing arts and media are not known locally.
- II. Prejudice from some parents who want their children to take an academic route. Publicise creativity and its role in careers.
- III. Visualization of curriculum – the curriculum ethos will be developed as a later

- part of the strategy work.
- IV. Address critical recruitment related activity in challenging times.
- V. Two key messages – what students think the College is about and what we think it is.
- VI. There are silos between FE, HE professional services staff.
- VII. Define relationship with NMite.
- VIII. Caution around STEAM campaign and what this should look like.
- IX. F&GP Committee to receive detail on development work and funding implications for the strategy.
- X. Strategy to be refined for consideration and approval by the Board

7 Any Other Business

The Clerk reminded everyone about the Governors' conference on Friday 16 March 2018 with Hereford colleges.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 23 April 2018 commencing at 4.30 pm

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**