

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 16 October 2017**

**Present: -** Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)  
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Professor Robin Baker  
Mrs Lynn Forrester-Walker  
Mr Neil Hadfield  
Dr Elizabeth Halford  
Ms Mairead McVeigh  
Mr Tim Newsholme  
Mr Mike Rookes  
Ms Katie Seekings  
Mr Oliver Tomlinson

**In attendance: -** Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)  
Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)  
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Mr Ben Gamble (Head of FE)

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

**1. Process of the Meeting**

- I. Apologies for Absence: Mrs Alison McLean, Mr John Nicol, Mr Scott Rolfe, Ms Kay Sandford-Beal and Mrs Wendy Tolley.
- II. Chair's Remarks and Correspondence:
  - a. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting of the new academic year. He congratulated the Principal, SLT and staff on the excellent outcome following the recent Ofsted inspection which was reiterated by Governors.
  - b. In response to Governors' appraisals the format of the Board meeting had been changed removing the development session permitting additional time for strategic discussion. This would not preclude Governors' development which could be held as part of future meetings.
  - c. The Head of FE had been invited to the Board meeting; the Search and Governance Committee would discuss FE representation on the Board.
- III. Declarations of Interest: The Clerk reminded Governors to return any outstanding annual forms.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

- I. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 July 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- II. Action List: Noted showing progress of actions and matters arising.
- III. Matters arising from the Minutes: These were addressed by the action list.
- IV. Development session: Noted. The Vice Principal was asked to investigate Intellectual Property for both HE and FE students' work.  
**ACTION: VICE PRINCIPAL**

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

**3. Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal presented her report with a specific mention of the College's Ofsted inspection and the importance of continuing to maintain standards for teaching and learning. She commended the Head of FE who had been in post for only six weeks who gave a brief summary of key themes. Ofsted had agreed that the Self Assessment Report (SAR) accurately reflected the College's strengths and areas for improvement. From this it was noted that 'My Concern' software had been purchased to improve reporting for safeguarding. Particular attention was also given to high grades which showed a significant difference by gender with female performance better than males; this would be addressed. Work placements would be planned for students within relevant industries. In order to enhance some of the issues with work experience, a Governor suggested developing an employers' guide for work experience. The College would also ascertain if it was eligible for ESFA funding to support developing a strategy for work experience.

**ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR.**

The final Ofsted report will be circulated once received and SLT will develop an operational development plan to work towards achieving outstanding characteristics. The Chair thanked the Head of FE for his informative briefing and leading the College through the inspection.

There was a decrease in FE recruitment to Level 2 and Level 3 Art and Design. The financial impact was mitigated by an increase in Portfolio students. SLT are assessing FE provision and researching potential areas for course development. Parents and potential applicants are being provided explanations about diplomas.

HE is a competitive environment and it is crucial to draw on and embed best practice throughout the College. An AQ&S panel had been established to work with the Vice Principal to review all HE courses. The Principal had arranged to visit Cleveland College of Arts to discuss student recruitment and comparisons within the current challenging environment.

The Principal reminded the Board that, with funding secured from the Arts Council of England, Ferrous 2017, a city centre blacksmithing festival, will be happening during the coming month. Governors were encouraged to attend.

The new FE and HE prospectuses had been published and made available to Governors.

The College had undergone a funding audit by ESFA with a positive outcome. Appreciation was recorded to the Finance Director and his team.

- II. Finance Update: October 2017: The Finance Director provided a summary of potential risks and opportunities which were likely to affect finances. Draft financial statements to July 2017 had been provided which were subject to the financial statements audit.

A summary of HE and FE enrolments was provided showing impact in the management accounts compared to budget. Actual recruitment will be confirmed at the census dates by early November. Additional expenditure for the MA programme had not been budgeted; a Governor pressed when the monthly accounts would be issued noting that September accounts would be issued imminently; the October accounts will show adjustments based on actual recruitment.

Pay and non-pay costs were outlined in the report along with actions taken by SLT. The rent review for College Road Campus (CRC), previously

discussed by the Accommodation Group; Artist Blacksmiths use of forges at Herefordshire and Ludlow College and the change of payroll provider and potential investment in IT systems were discussed. The Finance Director highlighted progress on potential options to develop student accommodation with Herefordshire Council and Housing Association. Governors noted that these areas were incorporated in the risk register.

- III. Risk Management Report and Register: Key risks had been discussed during dialogue on the Principal's report.

The Board agreed: -

- To reiterate congratulations to the Principal, SLT and staff following the recent Ofsted inspection
- To note the informative and clear reports
- To note that the F&GP Committee would continue to scrutinise and monitor the College's financial position, student numbers and development of student accommodation, and the potential impact on the balance sheet

**4. Marketing Plan Academic Year 2017/18**

The Principal presented the marketing plan covering the current academic year and recruitment for 2018/19 in place of the Head of Comms who was representing the College at a UCAS fair.

Use of the College's new brand and identity were shown in a sample of marketing material along with a SWOT analysis and planned activity to enhance strengths, combat weaknesses, capitalise on opportunities and combat threats.

A breakdown of the budget and its context was also provided. A Governor asked about costs for the website which appeared high; this had been allocated to redesign the website this year. A question followed if this would be in time for this year's recruitment cycle; it would not be ready until the following year (2019). In the interim the content of the website, blogs and short films will continue to be updated along with social networks. A Governor expressed the importance of quality assurance to ensure a unified approach; the Principal works closely with Head of Communications to ensure unity and that these align to the brand.

A Governor commented that the quality of studios could be emphasised to applicants. Students could also be encouraged to tell their schools and colleges about HCA and be involved in interview days to build relationships with prospective students. School teachers and tutors could be targeted in the region with invitations to College events and exhibitions.

A Governor enquired as to who would be responsible for ensuring course information was accurate in the CMA for HE courses. The Vice Principal was ensuring the CMA was an accurate reflection of courses and the College. A suggestion was made to involve tutors in HE administration and policy making as some are practitioners and researchers who could provide useful ideas to make courses distinct. Tutors could also be involved in marketing courses.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the marketing plan academic year 2017/18

**5. Governors' Activity 2016/17 and recommendations 2017/18**

This was presented to the Board annually to confirm and endorse key appointments on the Board and inform Governors of activity undertaken during the previous year.

The paper covered the following areas: -

- I. Composition of the governing body 2017/18
- II. Attendance by non-members at Board Meetings 2017/18

- III. Appointment of the Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Committee 2017/18
- IV. Membership to Committees 2017/18
- IV. Attendance records 2016/17 showing 74% attendance at Board meetings
- V. Appointment of designated Governors to safeguarding and health and safety, namely John Nicol and Kay Sandford-Beal respectively
- VI. Review of Confidential Minutes 2016/17
- VII. Summary of feedback from Governors' appraisals

The Board agreed:

- To note and endorse all recommendations in the paper
- The Clerk would work with the Search and Governance Committee to ensure appropriate actions were taken to address Governors' comments from appraisals

**ACTION: CLERK**

**6. College Strategy**

The Principal gave a presentation outlining an overview of the current HCA profile and vision to be widely recognised as a leading art school rooted in place but connected to the world. Reference was made to elements of the current Strategic Plan which had been revised in April 2017 in tandem with an overhaul of the College's brand. Committees have a vital role to focus on the vision from the aspect of the curriculum, resources, facilities and potential future investment for consideration at the next Board meeting.

**ACTION: COMMITTEE CHAIRS/SLT/ CLERK**

The profile of HCA staff was outlined and it was noted that 47% of staff are part time which created some disadvantages included access for students, staff buy in to the College's culture and timetabling to fit around part time staff. A Governor observed that a more granular understanding of the staff profile could be beneficial to assist Governors to aid the strategic discussion in due course.

A financial overview of FE and HE income and expenditure would be prepared for the next meeting.

**ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Discussion followed identifying that in general HEI strategies predominantly focus on research, teaching, innovation, financial stability and investment, relationships with the local, regional, national and international community, and how to improve.

Governors concluded that the Board need to focus on differentiation as a small specialist institution. Further exploration and views from stakeholders, including staff and students, were being sought about the College's vision to be recognised as a leading arts school. There is an opportunity to adopt a traditional or non-traditional model.

Discussion progressed to CRC and a comment from the Student Governor that the College needs to own the space. As a listed building this brought challenges to its use and flexibility. Students from all courses need to feel welcome in all areas. The Tech Dems are extremely supportive and knowledgeable. In addition, the café is a great facility but closes too early for students. In general it was recognised that overall the environment at CRC needed to change and course profiles raised.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the report identifying the College's current position. Board meetings in December and February would focus on what the College wants to become and how to achieve this
- To thank the Principal for the presentation providing a platform to prepare a new strategic plan

**7. Authorisation of Procedures**

- I. Amendments to Bank Signatories: Changes were presented in the paper to add the Principal to the list of signatories.
- II. Academic Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference: Changed were outlined to take account of the new structure of separate committee meetings for FE and HE.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve amendments to Bank signatories
- To approve the revised Academic Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference

**8. Academic Quality and Standards Committee (FE) Minutes 2 October 2017**

The Board agreed: -

- To note the minutes which had scrutinised the College's Self Assessment Report (SAR)

**9. Any Other Business**

No items

**10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Board meeting on Monday 11 December 2017 commencing at 4.30pm

[Staff Governors and Managers left the meeting for a confidential discussion which was recorded in a separate minute]

**Signed as a true record of proceedings**

**Chair:** ..... **Date:** .....