



Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 23 April 2018

Present: -

- Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Professor Robin Baker
- Mrs Lynn Forrester-Walker
- Mr Neil Hadfield
- Dr Elizabeth Halford
- Ms Alison McLean
- Miss Mairead McVeigh
- Mr John Nicol
- Mr Mike Rookes
- Mr Scott Rolfe
- Mrs Kay Sandford-Beal
- Ms Katie Seekings
- Mrs Wendy Tolley
- 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 a minimum of twelve Governors were present during the meeting.

1. Process of the Meeting

- I. Apologies for Absence received from Mr Tim Newsholme.
- II. The Chair remarked that this was Jim Walmsley's last Board meeting before his retirement at the end of June. Appreciation was recorded recognising Jim's contribution to leadership of HE over the last twelve years.
- III. Alison McLean declared an interest regarding item 6.I to discuss her reappointment.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- I. The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 February 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- II. The action list was noted showing progress of actions, some of which would be addressed during the meeting.
- III. Matters arising from the minutes had been addressed.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

3. Principal's Report

- I. The Principal presented her report drawing Governors' attention to student applications. FE recruitment showed a slight improvement year on year. HE recruitment was below the sector and subject area at this point. Strategies are being embedded to minimise the impact. This includes

student ambassadors contacting applicants before attending interviews as the first part of communication and which continues this year, during the clearing process via UCAS. Digital portfolios could be used to make offers to late applicants in September.

The College is not offering unconditional offers in 2018 as this would not meet the College's admissions policy. Unconditional offers will be introduced for 2019 based on specific criteria which would ensure that applicants have the ability to be successful on the course.

A visit by officials from UCAS provided useful insight about external factors influencing applications. On the back of this SLT are investigating provision of dual degrees which could include enterprise, marketing or business. The Board raised a question as to whether the College has established partnerships with employers and whether employers work directly with students; this will be reported to a future meeting.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL.

Internal progression is low in comparison with other colleges. The Head of FE is working with Course Leaders, students and their parents to provide information about progression options and careers in the creative industries. FE applicants could be guaranteed progression to HE programmes with fee discounts or bursaries available. SLT had preliminary discussion about repositioning FE curriculum to create individual schools. This would also embrace the community by strengthening links with other organisations. This would be a significant culture change to bring together departments with further discussion required.

A few courses are at risk of not being provided in 2018/19 based on acceptances to date which were outlined. The College will work with UCAS information before making a decision early in May. Assurance was given that the College will liaise with applicants to offer alternative courses where possible. A Governor asked if Course Leaders had contributed ideas to reposition programmes and attract students; this was confirmed

[Professor Baker arrived]

- II. Risk Management Report and Register showed key risks which had been discussed during dialogue on the Principal's report. The Finance Director had prepared a summary of increases to risk scores since the last meeting predominantly Office for Students (OfS), CRC lease, retirement of the Vice Principal and HE applications.
- III. The AQ&S Committee had in-depth discussion about OfS which came into effect from 1 April 2018 and will impact on the whole of the HE sector. It focuses predominantly on value for money for students and the tax payer measuring the return on investments based on graduate salaries. Whilst this creates concerns for the creative sector, it creates opportunities for the College regarding access and widening participation and students' retention.

The College is preparing its registration to OfS for submission by 23 May 2018. There will be financial implications to monitor data internally with additional fees to OfS in the region on £32,000. The College is taking appropriate actions to ensure that it meets OfS requirements.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the reports
- To establish a working group to address OfS requirements and measurements

[Mairead McVeigh left the meeting and Lynne Forrester-Walker arrived]

4. College Strategy: Strategic Plan 2018/23

The Principal and Finance Director presented the draft strategic plan which would be finalised at the next Board meeting in July. SLT had recognised the seriousness of the potential financial situation based on anticipated recruitment levels. The Finance Director presented four financial scenarios with different options. ESFA assess the College's financial health category which is likely to decrease to satisfactory based on the EBITDA. ESFA assesses risk using the College's financial plan which could potentially place the College in intervention. A summary of each scenario was outlined noting that scenario 4 would provide a positive contribution by 2021/22.

FE predictions did not include the marginal demographic increase but included expenditure and costs for the introduction of digital courses.

Opportunities and risks were reiterated. .

In the periods to the July Board meeting the following plan was outlined: -

- Tactical improvement on recruitment process (internal progression and relationship with feeder schools and organisations)
- Continue Plan A definition
- Make estimates of future costs (staff/student and external consultation to prioritise the implementation plan), business case development, monitoring mechanism and validation timetable 2019/20. (MA programme and BA minor modifications)
- More robust costs and space planning
- Pilot strategic initiatives to assess impact
- Pursue other income sources such as short courses, sponsorship and grants
- Develop a Plan B for consideration at July Board meeting which would define a fall-back in the event of further under-delivery of student numbers

Several questions were raised and discussion followed.

The plan for HE growth and actions was welcomed, in particular assurance that staff understand and support this. Staff have been widely consulted and understand the necessity for consistency in approaches throughout the College. It was recognised that more coordination is required between FE and HE.

Expenditure and risk to achieve the strategy was presented to the Board with further discussion at the next Board meeting to ascertain outcomes from expenditure or further actions required if forecasts are not achieved based on the Plan B. Following approval of the strategic plan SLT will openly engage with staff to embed the strategy to improve recruitment and ensure the College has the correct programme offer.

The Board noted that the College could require an overdraft or loan in the future to manage short-term cash tightness. The Board will need to meticulously monitor finances throughout this period.

HE growth and student recruitment are critical which will take time to improve and show results. Expansion of the MA offer, FE programmes and short courses for employers could be addressed quickly and show dividends sooner.

A fund raiser freelance post was suggested by the Board to help diversify income; however, this was likely to take c.12-18 months to realise any income which was frequently capital from such initiatives. This process could potentially fund projects

such as a digital workshop and blacksmithing facility. To develop short courses additional marketing support and intelligence is required.

The Board agreed: -

- To congratulate and thank the Finance Director for preparing the 5 year plan and clear financial scenarios

5. Finance Report and Budget Planning 2018/23 to underpin the Strategic Plan

- I. February 2018 Management Accounts had been issued by email for reference only. No questions were raised.
- II. The paper on investment priorities for launch and phase 1 strategy implementation was an abbreviated version of a paper which had been discussed by the F&GP Committee. Investment proposals were being tested and planned to identify immediate priority actions, particularly estates projects for completion in the summer. Another priority is digital recruitment with market intelligence being collated. The impact of spend would be evidenced to Governors. It was agreed that projects and spend would be approved by the F&GP Committee via email if necessary in order to ensure that projects are not delayed.

ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR

- III. First draft 2018/19 College budget and future assumptions – This item had been discussed as part of item 4.

The Board agreed:

- To note the reports and delegate approval of immediate projects and spend to the F&GP Committee

6. Governance

- I. [Alison McLean left the meeting for this item]. Re-appointment of Alison McLean (Independent Governor) for a 1 year term was requested. It was noted that Alison had expressed concern at being re-appointed beyond the normal two terms in office and did not wish this to set a precedent as normal practice.
- II. Re-appointment of RSM Internal Auditors for 2018/19 was recommended by the Audit Committee as per the report.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee to re-appoint Alison McLean for a further year in office who brings extensive experience to the Board.
- To re-appoint RSM as internal auditors for 2018/19

7. Minutes and Summary of recommendations from Committees

- I. Audit Committee: 26 March 2018
- II. Search and Governance Committee: 12 March 2018
- III. Finance and General Purposes Committee: 12 March 2018
- IV. Academic Quality and Standards Committee: 19 March 2018

The Board agreed: -

- To note the minutes

8. Any Other Business

A Staff Governor reported that New Designers had agreed to sponsor HCA to attend at the New Designers exhibition in London this year. Governors were encouraged by this news and opportunity for students.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Board meeting on Monday 9 July 2018 commencing at 4.30pm. A 'speed dating'

session would be arranged at 3.30 pm for Governors to meet groups of staff and glean information about some areas in the College.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

[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: