



**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 8 January 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
- Mr Tim Newsholme
- Mr Scott Rolfe
- Mr Mike Rookes
- Ms Katie Seekings
- Mr Oliver Tomlinson
- Mrs Wendy Tolley

**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)
- Mrs Jennie Hermollie (Head of Communications) [item 5]

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

**1. Appointment of Jordan Knight (Student Governor FE) and Tim Newsholme (Independent Governor)**

[Jordan Knight and Tim Newsholme left the meeting for this item]

The Board agreed: -

- To appoint Jordan Knight as Student Governor FE until 31 August 2018 and Tim Newsholme as Independent Governor for a second 4-year term in office.

**2. Process of the Meeting**

- I. Apologies for Absence: Ms Mairead McVeigh, Mr John Nicol and Ms Kay Sandford-Beal.
- II. Chair's Remarks and Correspondence: The Chair welcomed everyone wishing them a Happy New Year. Appreciation was recorded to Governors for accommodating the revised date for the Board meeting following the inclement weather at the end of last term.
- III. Declarations of Interest: Item 1: Tim Newsholme and Jordan Knight.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

- I. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the Board meeting held on 16 October 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 had been addressed in the action list.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

**4. Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal commented that several issues had progressed since the last

meeting. She highlighted key points including an update on the Office for Students (OfS) consultation which will have significant impact on the College.

The UCAS deadline for HE applications was 15 January 2018 although, in practice, students make late applications throughout the summer. International students could make applications beyond the UCAS date providing that there is sufficient time to process applications. There was an overall reduction in applications by 5.5% nationally and 11% in the sector; to date the College's applications showed a reduction of 29% across different courses. It was reiterated that the synergy between applications and enrolments was uncertain. Applications were still being received and further interview days arranged. There was a question if the number of applications was similar to last year, noting these were fewer. Comparisons with other art and design providers may be useful. FE applications are received in the spring term. To date applications to Art and Design were good with a small decline to Foundation. It was agreed that the context for the College's future strategy remained crucial.

The Head of Communications joined the meeting answering questions about competitors, marketing strategies and providing a flavour of standards at the UCAS fairs where the College had compared well with competitors despite some having made significant investment into facilities. The Student Governor had attended a UCAS fair and concurred with this. Feedback from HCA students about the College and its competitors at UCAS fairs could be useful for future marketing.

Tracking internal progression was raised; this is not currently tracked. Governors agreed that the statistics in the Principal's report showing a growth in jobs and employment in the creative industries were encouraging and should be publicised in communications to future applicants and parents.

- II. Risk Management Report and Register: Noted with significant risks discussed as part of the Principal's report.
- III. Finance Update: October 2017: The Finance Director commented that the November monthly management accounts would be issued imminently. The Finance Director confirmed that there were no significant changes to report since the October 2017 management accounts.
- IV. ESFA correspondence Chief Executive and Accounting Officer dated 17 November 2017: Noted.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the informative reports

## 5. **College Strategy: Strategic Plan 2018/22**

The Principal reminded Governors about the process to prepare the new strategy. A summary of findings from the consultation with staff and students had been included with papers. The Principal had provided a document about the College's vision for the future incorporating feedback from the consultation. Governors agreed that this was an inspiring vision.

The Principal gave a presentation outlining key components to recognise the College as a beacon of creativity and a vibrant community of learning at the heart of the region followed by discussion: -

- Specialists in Arts

- Champions of STEAM
- Rooted in place
- Connected to the world
- Innovators
- An incubator of new creative industries
- Serious about environmental sustainability
- Committed to improving wellbeing

Soft evidence, such as the learning experience, staff and course delivery, are strengths to publicise. Students find distinctive themes on courses attractive, however; if these are too narrow, these could create a risk in the market. Sustainability, the environment, anti-consumerist and the ethical view could be distinctive. A slant towards external facing creativity with the world's problems as opposed to students finding their own style and materials could be explored. This could dovetail with some subjects requiring students to progress work for clients and meet a brief and style which does not necessarily match the students. It is important that students are encouraged to develop different views and an awareness of external influences. Students appreciate the opportunity to explore working with different materials and creative development. Courses and materials should not be too restrictive encouraging exploration of the use of materials, an example of recycling disposable coffee cups was used which are made from a combination of card and plastic creating limitations to recycling.

Tensions between individual creativity and client briefs, and the environment/sustainability verses choices of materials would be explored further.

**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Clarification on the College's ambition and timing to achieve HEI status was sought. First and foremost the College would create an excellent institution which could apply for HEI status at the appropriate time and subject to meeting necessary criteria.

The College has multiple strands: HE, FE, staff, students and the community. In addition to delivering its core strategy to students, its assets could be maximised to deliver a supplementary strategy, such as using accommodation at weekends and holidays, delivery of short courses, conferences and events with student involvement to support delivery of the core strategy. The College could become operational seven days a week throughout the year. This would affect staff contracts unless different staff deliver the supplementary strategy. Case studies were requested showing how different strands could be delivered and what this model would look like, the information provided about the textiles course was a useful template to provide additional case studies.

**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Key themes identified from the consultation with stakeholders: -

- Collaboration between courses
- Mature students – growth area
- Maximise benefits of Hereford and its landscape
- Blacksmithing course is distinctive and central to development
- Develop creative digital skills and delivery

The Board agreed: -

- To thank the Principal and support the high-level direction that was described in the draft the Strategic Plan, setting out the College's future vision which was inspiring and well written
- The Board would need to agree key elements of the 5-year strategy and implementation. This would be addressed at the strategy meeting in February As part of preparation, the Principal would work with different stakeholders in order to revise the draft vision for the future and develop

specific themes  
**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

**Items 6, 7, 8 had been approved by a special resolution. The Board were required to note the resolution.**

The Board agreed: -

- To note the special resolution issued on 12 December 2017 approving the following items: -
  - RSM Internal Audit Service's Annual Report 2016/17
  - Audit Committee's Annual Report 2016/17
  - Value for Money Annual Report 2016/17
  - Health and Safety Annual Report 2016/17
  - Treasury Management Annual Report 2016/17
  - Members' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2017 and Letter of Representation with authorisation to the Chair and Principal to sign
  - College Self-Assessment Report 2016/17 and Quality Improvement Plan

## **8. Quality Report**

Maintaining standards and addressing Ofsted improvement areas (17/18 inspection report): The Head of FE presented the report focusing on key findings from the recent Ofsted inspection. The Quality Improvement Plan had been replaced with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to focus on the following key themes:

- Teaching and learning
- Personal development, behavior and welfare
- Curriculum and quality
- Stakeholder engagement
- Innovation and resources

Staff development had been provided to introduce and embed the PIP. The AQ&S Committee will receive regular RAG-rated progress reports to monitor progress.

Governors commended the new system for lesson observations focusing on 10 teaching standards as opposed to graded lessons on a scale of 1-4.

This year the DfE will issue statutory guidance for colleges to provide careers advice and guidance. The College will prepare an action plan to ensure it meets requirements for both FE and HE students. There was challenge about the low level of external support the College provides for students. It is challenging to find appropriate work placements for students who are provided with high levels of professional advice from staff within College.

A College working group had been established to improve and develop the use of Pro-Monitor, an MIS tracking tool for student performance. The working group had made positive progress including developing badges to provide a live snapshot of learner profiles accessible by all staff. A visit had been arranged to Newcastle Under Lyme College to observe full integration of Pro-Monitor and its benefits and capacity.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the report which had not been approved by special resolution evidencing robust plans were in place

## **9. Governance**

- I. Amendment to Board composition as per Instrument of Government (clause

2.I.c. to increase Staff Governors from 2 to 3 to permit appointment of a Staff Governor (FE). The Search and Governance Committee had discussed succession planning agreeing to target candidates with senior FE experience and accountants in the future. In addition under-representation of FE, including Staff Governors, had been discussed concluding that Staff Governors should be increased to include appointments from HE and FE and professional services (replacing the non-teaching appointment and covering all other staff).

- II. Governors, staff and student engagement: This proposed alternative methods of engagement, instead of the Link Governor Scheme, which had been developed in response to feedback from Governors' appraisals. Governors were encouraged to make suggestions; these included campus tours combined with staff induction and some meetings at Folly Lane.

**ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

- III. Benchmarked self-assessment exercise 2017 feedback: Noted.

The Board agreed: -

- To amend Board composition to appoint 3 staff governors from each of the following areas: HE, FE and professional staff
- To discontinue the Link Governor Scheme replacing it with a programme for Governors to engage with staff and students
- To note feedback from the benchmarked self-assessment exercise 2017

**10. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**

An additional amendment was requested, namely that the procedure covered issues whereby they could not be addressed through normal operating procedures, and that the Chair should be notified of an issue concerning the Principal. This would ensure that there would not be any ambiguity in the future.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the policy subject to a small amendment to make the policy more robust

**ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

**11. Minutes and Summary of recommendations from Committees**

Chairs were invited to draw Governors' attention to key items; these had all been addressed as part of the agenda.

- I. Audit Committee: 20 November 2017  
II. Search and Governance Committee: 27 November 2017  
III. Finance and General Purposes Committee: 27 November 2017  
IV. Academic Quality and Standards Committee: 28 November 2017

The Board agreed: -

- To note the minutes

**12. Any Other Business**

There had been very little time between Committee and Board meetings in December. In future the December Board meeting would be scheduled one week later.

**ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

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

Strategy meeting: **Monday 12 February 2018** commencing at revised time of 12.30 pm.

Governors' conference on **Friday 16 March 2018** commencing at 9.30 am.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

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