



Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2019

Present: -

- Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Professor Robin Baker
- Ms Stevie Callender
- Ms Jennifer Hodgeman
- Miss Hannah Jones
- Mr Tim Newsholme
- Mr John Nicol
- Mr Mike Rookes
- Mr Scott Rolfe
- Ms Kay Sandford-Beal
- Ms Katie Seekings

In attendance: -

- Mr Ben Gamble (Head of FE)
- Mr Justin Gregory (Head of HE)
- Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
- Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)

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

1. Process of the Meeting

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Daniel Fox and Dr Mia Gordon
- II. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new academic year.
- III. There were no declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the Last Meetings

- I. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 July 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- II. There were no matters arising which were not covered on the agenda.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

3. Principal's Report

- I. The Principal drew Governors' attention to OfS's approval of the Access and Participation Plan (APP) which had been a significant challenge during the summer liaising with the OfS representative to meet all requirements. This was a significant achievement for the College. Preparing the APP had stimulated further engagement with published research. Changes are being embedded to introduce a culture of research, which will have an impact across the curriculum, and student wellbeing.

FE enrolment was buoyant evidencing the positive impact of the strategy to develop the Digital Futures curriculum had been achieved with 18 students enrolled onto the programme. Appreciation was recorded to the Head of FE

for all his work to oversee the development and planning for the programme. Governors were encouraged by the strong FE recruitment particularly as the Government's strategy discourages creative GCSEs being offered in schools. Distinctiveness of courses is being identified to market courses more accurately and effectively with a streamlined marketing approach. The Principal was tasked to share distinctive features with Governors following discussion by appropriate Committees. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

A Governor raised the inconsistencies of courses working collaboratively with a response that cultural changes are being introduced with HE staff to reinforce collaboration. This will be addressed as part of revalidation of courses which will introduce shared modules and some collaboration at course level, an example being visiting lecturers. A Governor suggested opening invitations to the community for out of hours lectures in future. Collaboration between FE and HE is being developed with internal progression taster events.

- II. Progress against the Principal's objectives and KPIs for 2019/20 was presented. Discussion progressed to the increase in the number of safeguarding issues with confirmation that this was in line with schools and members of Guild HE. FE staff have had staff development to equip them to support students with safeguarding issues.
- III. Office for Students (OfS) had approved the 5-year APP. There will be ongoing reporting on progress to the Committees or the Board as appropriate.
- IV. There were three changes to scores on the risk register. The risk score had been reduced for student accommodation following the commencement of building the new student accommodation. In addition, the risk of the implications of the Augar Report had also reduced as this was no longer a Government priority. The risk of HE applications and enrolments had increased which had been discussed previously during the meeting.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the reports and congratulate the Principal and team on receiving approval of the 5 year APP from OfS

4 Strategic Milestones 2019

This showed the top-level strategic milestones which are being implemented at College level. The HE Operations and Strategy Implementation Manager is tracking implementation. A Governor asked about progress compared to plan which was crudely c65% complete to date.

The College calendar was raised noting an internal staff calendar and student facing calendar which will be launched later in October. There is also a section on the website showing 'what's on'. Governor access to the calendars and events would be explored.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CLERK. A Governor asked if attendance to non-timetabled events is monitored which was currently monitored if attendance is required as part of formal assessment.

A Governor asked about short courses which will be changed from an annual short course programme to a year round new short course engagement leaflet to allow flexibility to the short course offer. There was a question if HE short courses were offered proposing investigating developing online short courses for HE in the future. Short master classes are being offered which are very successful.

5. Resources Report

- I. Members of the F&GP Committee have discussed the budget headlines 2019/20, impact of recruitment on the budget and reforecasts for the next three years. The Finance Director reported on the improved year-end position and EBITDA by £11K reported in the July management accounts. The 2019/20 budget had been revised based on actual student enrolments as outlined in the report. Increased FE enrolments would increase funding in the next financial year based on the lagged funding methodology. However, there will be some increased income for students with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and some increased costs for exams. ESFA will notify the College of next year's grant in February. HE income was less than budget. Marginal differences to pay and non-pay costs are anticipated. SLT have benchmarked costs and collectively interrogated costs to identify savings. Staff are being encouraged to review spend and make cost reductions where possible. A Governor asked about the financial validity of courses with confirmation that this is being reviewed by the F&GP Committee which will feed into the wider portfolio review.

2020/21 revisions to income and costs were outlined. There will be additional funding of £119K. allocated to the Teachers' Pension Scheme next year.

The College has a healthy cash balance of £2.637M. The Board will continue to monitor finances and ensure the cash balance remains above £1.4M during a challenging financial year. The F&GP Committee will continue to meticulously scrutinize finances; including the outturn compared to the original budget.

- II. The student accommodation report summarized progress of the student accommodation development. Foundation students have been involved in designing art work for the hoardings. To date the project is operating on time. The College has planned for robust accommodation management and safeguarding arrangements when the accommodation is operational.
- III. The College does not have a formal sustainability statement which is part of its strategy. A statement will be prepared as a short term approach and reported to the F&GP Committee. **ACTION PRINCIPAL.**

Reference was made to the launch of a climate change education committee in November with FE and HE institutions sharing best practice.

The Board agreed:

- To note the reports
- To thank the Finance Director for undertaking significant work to remodel the budget and forecasts

6. Quality Assurance Report

- I. The Head of HE gave an overview of the HE course review process. The culture is being changed which will be supported by robust data capture for reporting and as a management tool, a requirement identified by OfS during the process to prepare the APP. There will be discussion with Course Leaders at annual reviews with the validating body (UWTSD). Areas in the review template were noted with a question if there were any external benchmarks. Currently students provide feedback on course issues; however, feedback methods are being extended with training provided for course reps. Governors were supportive of the process agreeing this will be a positive change; however, it was acknowledged that changing the culture may have some challenges whilst being embedded.

- II. The summary Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) highlighted the shift in focus at inspections which would become quality driven focusing on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact. It will examine achievement rates and high grades testing if there are consistently high teaching standards to measure their impact on the curriculum. A trained Ofsted inspector will deliver training to key staff about the EIF.

The Board agreed:

- To note the quality assurance report supporting the new HE course review process
- To note the Ofsted EIF summary

7. Governance

- I. Governors' activity 2018/19 and recommendations 2019/20
This was presented to the Board annually to confirm and endorse key appointments and inform Governors of activity undertaken during the previous year.

The paper covered the following areas: -

- I. Composition of the governing body 2019/20 noting that there are five vacancies which are being addressed by the Search and Governance Committee. Governors were invited to suggest potential Governors. Hannah Jones was appointed as Student Governor (HE) with a vacancy for the Student Governor (FE) which had been advertised.
 - II. Attendance by non-members at Board Meetings 2019/20
 - III. Appointment of the Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Committee 2019/20
 - IV. Membership to Committees 2019/20 with an additional change that Tim Newsholme would move from AQ&S (FE) to AQ&S (HE), and Katie Seekings to join AQ&S (FE) (who agreed to remain on the Audit Committee until January 2020). Hannah Jones agreed to attend AQ&S (FE) until another Student Governor was appointed.
 - V. Attendance records 2018/19 showing 90% attendance at Board meetings which was commended.
 - VI. Appointment of designated Governors to safeguarding and health and safety, namely John Nicol and Kay Sandford-Beal respectively
 - VII. Review of Confidential Minutes 2018/19
- II. Standing Orders and Terms of Reference 2019/21 were presented with amendments highlighted.

The Board agreed:

- To note the paper endorsing the current number, composition and membership to the Corporation, appoint Chairs for 2019/20 and release of confidential minutes as recommended
- To approve the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference 2019/21

8. Any Other Business

Governors were invited to the forthcoming FE music first induction gig and Level 4 performances at the Cathedral.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be on Monday 16 December 2019 commencing at 4.30 pm with an option mooted to have a pre-Christmas get together after the meeting.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**