

## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held remotely on Monday 13 July 2020

**Present: -**

- Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Professor Robin Baker
- Ms Stevie Callender
- Mrs Peta Darnley
- Dr Mia Gordon
- Mr Joe Hedges
- Mr Clive Hodgeman
- 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 sixteen Governors were present during the meeting which was held by conference call due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation at several additional meetings this term.

### **1. Process of the meeting**

- I. Apologies were received from Dan Fox.
- II. Mervyn Jones, Kay Sandford-Beal, John Nicol and Scott Rolfe declared interests regarding their reappointments to the Board. Staff declared interests regarding discussion about pay awards.

### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

- I. The Board agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the Extra-ordinary Board meeting held on 4 June 2020 as a true record.
- II. Matters arising had been addressed with progress shown on the action list.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

### **3. Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal apologised for the delay in issuing Board papers explaining that this was due to urgent work priorities which would be discussed during the meeting. Key points were raised from the report. 2020 FE acceptances have increased by 15% compared to last year with additional interview dates arranged for late applicants. Adjustments will be made to teaching spaces at Folly Lane during the summer to

accommodate additional students with minimal cost. HE firm acceptances are similar to last year and within the cap of 117. Course leaders and registry staff are corresponding with applicants including issuing packs explaining plans to keep students safe on campus. The Principal is in discussion with Herefordshire Council to secure a 1-year lease of the hive building to accommodate Blacksmith students to ensure social distancing for course delivery. A Governor asked about students traveling from campus to the forge noting that they will be encouraged to maintain 'social bubbles' in an attempt to mitigate risk of infection. Herefordshire Council have confirmed use of Gardner Hall student accommodation for September with ongoing negotiation to use Millers Court.

- II. The Principal gave a presentation summarising DfE's re-opening guidance following lockdown for education providers. The College is following FE guidance whilst taking HE guidance into account, including advice for residential halls. Systems of control ensure measures to keep everyone safe including prevention and response to infection. PPE will be available with guidelines on usage, measures to ensure social distancing, one-way systems and staggered breaks. Staff are planning face to face delivery teaching in social bubbles from September with planning for different scenarios including digital delivery in the event of another lockdown to ensure teaching and learning would be able to continue. Scenarios vary slightly for HE and FE. The implication of COVID-19 on short courses and how this has been communicated to community was raised. These have been suspended until after October half term currently which has been publicised.

- III. The risk register included the impact of COVID-19 within the risk update column. There was a request to add a footnote stating that COVID-19 had impacted several risks as outlined in the risk update.

**ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Workshops will open for HE final year students from 24 August. Campus risk assessments have been prepared for CRC and Folly Lane campuses which would be shared with the Chair and Chair of the Audit Committee to ensure robust measures were in place.

**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

COVID-19 has changed the student experience with a recommendation to review this risk and score. The relationship with Herefordshire Council is excellent as evidenced by the collaborative approach for student accommodation agreeing that this should be reflected in the risk register.

**ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

- IV. OfS correspondence dated 3 July 2020 confirmed that OfS have imposed a temporary condition on registration to all providers to prevent offering unconditional offers for the following year.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the reports, presentation and OfS correspondence
- To agree in principle to open workshops for HE final year students from 24 August subject to review of the risk assessments by the Chair and Chair of Audit Committee to ensure robust measures are in place

#### 4. Project 2020 Update [A confidential minute was recorded]

## 5. Finance Report

- I. A summary of headline data extracted from the financial return to ESFA 2020/21 and cash flow were provided in the written report. These would be signed by the Principal as accounting officer and submitted to ESFA by 31 July 2020.
- II. The staff pay award had been discussed by the F&GP Committee concluding that the College could not afford to make a pay award this year in view of its financial situation. This was regrettable and did not reflect staffs' hard work but financial uncertainties. The Remuneration Committee had mirrored this view for senior postholders. Staff would be notified of the Board's decision.  
**ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- III. May 2020 Management Accounts had been emailed to Governors showing that the year-end position had improved marginally during the year.

### The Board agreed:

- To approve F&GP Committee's recommendation that no pay award would be implemented this year following the impact of COVID-19 on finances and strategy

## 6 Black Lives Matter

The report provided a snapshot of the College's response to Black Lives Matter. The College promotes inclusion and is working with staff and students to develop an action plan to promote equality and diversity. The curriculum will also be revised to become more diverse with recognition of any distinctive actions specifically for an art college. This could be broadened to extend the message and relevant actions to the community and county.

A Governor commented that it is crucial that every aspect of diversity is scrutinised which was fully supported. The Principal had been encouraged how students and staff have embraced this issue. An FE induction project has been designed on Black Lives Matter. The Level 2 tutorial scheme of work for Performing Arts will incorporate the protected characteristics and British Values.

### The Board agreed: -

- To unanimously support the Black Lives Matter campaign which will be embedded throughout the College
- To acknowledge that the Search and Governance Committee is seeking to increase the Board's diversity

## 7. Governance

### The Board agreed to approve the following at the recommendation of committees: -

- To approve RSM's Internal Audit Strategy 2020/21-2022/23
- To approve Mazars' Audit Strategy and Memorandum to 31 July 2020
- To approve the Health and Safety Policy Statement which would be signed by the Chair and Principal **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CHAIR**
- To re-appoint Mervyn Jones and Kay Sandford-Beal as Independent Governors for a further 4-year term in office
- To re-appoint John Nicol, Mike Rookes and Scott Rolfe for further 1-year terms in office
- To re-appoint Kate Murrie and Graham Briscoe onto the AQ&S Committee and Audit Committee respectively as Co-opted Members for a further 1-year term in office
- To note the business timetable 2020/21
- To appoint Mervyn Jones and Tim Newsholme as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for 2020/21

**8. Minutes**

The following minutes from Committees were noted: -

- I. Academic Quality and Standards Committee: 29 June 2020
- II. Audit Committee: 8 June and 14 May 2020
- III. Finance and General Purposes Committee: 6 July and 11 May 2020
- IV. Search and Governance Committee: 22 June 2020. It is anticipated that the Graduation Ceremony will be held in January 2021 which will include graduation of MA students.

**9. Any Other Business**

The Chair congratulated the Head of FE on securing a post as Vice Principal at Birmingham Metropolitan College.

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

The next meeting would be held on Monday 19 October 2020 commencing at 4.30 pm with briefings from staff at 3.30 pm.