



## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 7 February 2022

**Present: -** Mervyn Jones (Chair)  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Jennette Arnold OBE  
Professor Robin Baker OBE  
Victor Barratt  
Peta Darnley  
Dr Mia Gordon  
Joe Hedges  
Andrew Jones  
Hannah Jones  
Kate Murrie  
Tim Newsholme  
John Nicol

**In attendance: -** Xaviere Hughes (Head of FE)  
Justin Gregory (Head of HE)  
Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)  
Tim Williams (Finance Director)

The meeting was quorate as a minimum of thirteen Governors were present during the meeting.

### **1. Process of the Meeting**

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Oliver Cameron-Swan, Clive Hodgeman and Katie Seekings. Stevie Callender did not attend.
- II. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- III. There were no new declarations of interests.

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

- I. The Board agreed the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 as a true record.
- II. There were no matters arising.
- III. The action list was noted agreeing to carry forward the action regarding providing Professor Baker background research for the Product Design BA (Hons) **ACTION: HEAD OF HE**

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

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

- I. The Principal thanked Governors who had attended the previous meeting to discuss the OfS consultation. This included the regulatory measures and proposals for the Teaching Excellence Framework. HCA are collecting relevant data and will measure its context during the year. There had been discussion about the curriculum, its connections to the employment market and developing students' entrepreneurial skills to enable them to succeed in their chosen careers. This is an important area which will continue to be reported to the Board regularly. There was a question if the College completed an analysis of reasons students do not complete courses; this was available.

UCAS data showed HE full time applications are 29% better than last year. FE applications are also positive. Sector trends show application data remains uncertain until enrolment. The positive input from staff to deliver physical open days was commended.

The recent 'Inspired by Colour' project celebrating and using colour in creative work and the world was excellent with high levels of contribution from students, staff and the public. Speakers included sustainable paint pioneer Edward Bulmer and trend forecaster Chloe Frost. The College currently has exhibitions at the Cathedral and The Courtyard Theatre.

The College has remained open with the vast majority of teaching on campus despite higher numbers of staff and student absence in January creating additional pressure on teams following a cluster outbreak which was addressed following due process. Staffs' commitment to work together to provide support and cover was recognised. DfE is committed to delivery of face to face learning.

Student wellbeing remains a key focus with an additional wellbeing post being recruited to support students. A Staff Governor reported on the high proportion of students with mental health issues; these are recorded on MyConcern. Staff were commended for the additional support provided to students in addition to teaching and learning. It was acknowledged that mental health issues have been accelerated by the pandemic.

The Marketing and Communications Manager would be leaving for personal reasons with appreciation recorded to Kate Howe for her immense input into the marketing strategy and fundamental role in the College.

The business case for the digital suite and tendering for Architects will be submitted to the Stronger Towns Board by the end of March 2022; the final business case by June 2022. The F&GP Committee would sign off the business case to draw down £854K of the bid funding, (the total drawdown was £650K with £200K commitment from College reserves phased over three years). If necessary, an additional Committee meeting would be arranged. Herefordshire Council are required to approve the business case in advance of the Board being requested to approve this. Further detail will be provided for the Board.

OfS consultation of regulations and the Levelling Up White Paper have been published. Herefordshire Council will bid for funding with a skills focus with ongoing discussion between the Principals at colleges in Hereford, Herefordshire Council and Jesse Norman MP. It was crucial that the creative skills are included in the skills focus for Herefordshire.

Progress against the College objectives and KPI's was reported with numerical data and a RAG rating. OfS requirements have been incorporated into the objectives. There would be more detailed discussion at next Board meeting.

- II. The Finance Director summarised the December 2021 management accounts. There were no major changes during the period; however, the impact of increased utility costs was estimated at £14K this year and £40K next year; and National Insurance increase would be £17K this year and forecasted at £51K next year. These would be factored into the forecast.
- III. There were no changes to the previous risk register. The OfS consultation had a risk score of 15 with a proposal to consider increasing this subject to the data for the consultation. Governors were supportive of this increase. **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Principal's report, December 2021 management accounts and risk register

#### 4. **Wellbeing Strategy for Staff**

The Principal reminded Governors that the Board had planned to focus on people issues at this meeting. The Principal had prepared a new wellbeing strategy encompassing wellbeing mechanisms. Student wellbeing would be addressed separately although these are linked. This had included consideration of the DfE Wellbeing Charter and references from a member of staff completing a PhD about wellbeing.

Previous consultation on wellbeing with staff had been taken into account before consultation with the Wider Leadership Team. There was a general comment that the strategy was clear and simple.

There was a question if staff know how to seek external support and advice. Emails from HR automatically include details of external organisations. The pressures on staff working to provide additional support to students was recognised with a suggestion to consider having a wellbeing button on staffnet.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the wellbeing strategy for staff
- To adopt the DfE Wellbeing Strategy

#### 5. **Personal Development Policy**

The Board were asked to approve the Personal Development Policy (PDP). This is a key policy for staff and would normally have been presented to the

F&GP Committee, but was escalated to the Board so that this could be implemented in the College. The PDP would ensure formal recording of conversations between line managers and their teams in a more succinct and simplified manner and was more accessible to use. There was discussion about the process concluding that it is important to draw the line on previous processes and line managers should determine the most appropriate time in the year to conduct reviews with their reportees which will be tracked. Interim reviews could be held as part of the process to keep documents live. There was a suggestion to copy individual PDPs to the line manager's manager which would ensure a link between processes.

Common themes are identified and addressed by Talent Management Group. There was a suggestion to link an aim with a strategic priority.

There was discussion about staff completing the form before the meeting and line managers agreeing the time of year for completion. The ethos and culture in the organisation will drive process with a suggestion for line managers to use the coaching grow model.

The impact assessment was referred to and the comment that people with disabilities have more time off sick which was only the case if the employer had not made adjustments.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the Personal Development Review Policy in principle subject to amendments taking account of discussion

## 6. Ofsted Update

The Head of FE gave a presentation briefly summarising Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and how the College is preparing for an Ofsted inspection.

The College was last inspected in October 2017 when it was judged good; an inspection is anticipated. The EIF judge providers against the following key areas: -

- Quality of education
  - Intent (curriculum design, coverage and appropriateness)
  - Implementation (curriculum delivery, teaching and assessment)
  - Impact (attainment, progress, knowledge and skill development, destinations)
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Governors requested information on the number of students with EHCPs and high needs for further discussion. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE.** There was discussion about deep dives which have been conducted in house.

The Board agreed: -

- To note and thank the Head of FE for the presentation

**7. Any Other Business**

- I. The Clerk informed Governors that a joint Governors' conference was arranged for Governors from colleges in Hereford during the morning of Thursday 7 April from 9.30am.
- II. [This item was raised during the confidential discussion but would be included in the publicised minutes as this was not deemed to be confidential] A Governor referred to a recent article in the press regarding risks to students in halls of residence who are being targeted by County Lines drug dealers. Governors were reassured that the College works closely with the Police. There was a question if the College has a drugs policy noting that this is incorporated in the safeguarding policy. A summary of the drugs policy could be extracted and publicised separately.

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

The next meeting would be on Monday 9 May 2022 commencing at 4.30 pm.

**Signed as a true record of proceedings**

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