



## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 17 October 2022

**Present: -** Mervyn Jones (Chair)  
Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
Professor Robin Baker OBE  
Oliver Cameron-Swan  
Sophie Curtis  
Peta Darnley  
Joe Hedges  
Kate Murrie (Teams)  
Tim Newsholme

**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 at least eight Governors were present up to and including item 7 at which point the meeting became inquorate. At this point it was agreed by Chair's action that items requiring a decision by the Board would be addressed by a special resolution following the meeting. Several papers were presented for information only.

A workshop was held before the meeting to discuss the College's campaign to become outstanding. The Head of Further Education gave a presentation identifying the following key points: -

- Safeguarding – MyConcern is used for staff to log any concerns which the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads monitor and take appropriate actions. The system also generates updates to applicable staff. There are variable levels of information from students' secondary schools; there was a suggestion to pursue schools sharing information through MyConcern.
- Dialogue with employers – the College recently sent a questionnaire to employers to measure the impact of off-site work experience and how this can influence the curriculum. Dialogue with employers is crucial to inform the curriculum and meet employers' skills needs. There is flexibility in the curriculum framework. There was discussion about knowledge transfer/exchange and how students can be influencers.
- Quality assurance vs quality enhancement - the teaching and learning professional development cycle is being refreshed and embedded. The College is working with Northern College and Morley College as a 2-way process with lecturers visiting each other's institutions.
- High Needs Provision – differentiation, staff training, celebrate inclusion ethos. The College works with applicants individually to offer a course that is right for them.

- Celebrating the student voice to drive change, consistency of quality/delivery, increase high grade profile, increase attendance, starting points and target setting.

## 1. **Appointment of Student Governors**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting with introductions; he specifically welcomed Sophie Curtis as this was her first meeting.

The Board agreed: -

- To appoint Sophie Curtis and Emily Kirkwood as Student Governors, both studying FE programmes, for 1-year terms in office following their interviews at which they performed highly. The final vacancy for a Student Governor would remain open and be publicised to HE students. **ACTION: CLERK**

## 2. **Process of the Meeting**

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Jennette Arnold OBE, Dr Mia Gordon, Clive Hodgeman and Emily Kirkwood.
- II. The Chair had no specific remarks.
- III. Governors had been requested to declare interests using Google Forms.

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

- I. The Board agreed the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 as a true record.
- II. Matters arising and the action list were noted in tandem.
- III. The F&GP Committee had discussed a draft new course policy with comments from the Committee to be included in the revised policy for approval by the F&GP Committee in November. A previous action to consider if the College should publish a summary of the drugs policy extracted from the safeguarding policy will be considered once the revised safeguarding policy has been approved. **ACTION: HEAD OF FE**

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

## 4. **Principal's Report**

- I. The Principal outlined some key areas from the report. There was discussion about enrolments which are marginally below target; however, these remain good considering that FE Level 1 and Level 4 Diploma Courses have been withdrawn this year. Marketing and recruitment strategies were outlined in the report. Achievement showed that high grades have decreased slightly for FE and HE which is a sector wide issue post-covid and a reflection of attendance levels; this was also the pattern in secondary schools in Herefordshire which had been confirmed by Headteachers. GCSE English and Maths high grades were above target for English but below target for Maths.

HE course revalidation commenced during 2020 which UWTSD completed early in September. Students have agreed to transfer to revalidated courses and staff have agreed to deliver these.

The College was previously awarded a TEF silver which Governors recognised as an excellent achievement. Following consultation OfS relaunched the Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF) and the metrics. As a small institution HCA is under the limit meaning it is non-mandatory for the College to apply for TEF. The Principal recommended that the College does not participate in the TEF this year with further review once additional information is available. The College would prepare a report directly to the Board against the metrics but opt out of submission; this would be a useful process to measure the quality of teaching practice, improvements and the learner voice. A Governor asked if withdrawing to apply to TEF this year would have an impact on student recruitment; it was not anticipated to have a negative impact. Overall TEF is a useful external mechanism to drive changes and improvements for the learner voice. It was agreed that the College should ascertain more information about the system and its requirements before applying. A Governor enquired when the next opportunity would be to apply which was anticipated to be annually and would be ascertained. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

In parallel with FE quality, the College has commissioned a consultant to support the development and evaluation of the SAR. The potential timing for an Ofsted inspection was raised which is anticipated this year.

The staff wellbeing strategy was successfully embedded last year. A student wellbeing strategy is being developed to embed a joined-up structure drawing several departments to work collaboratively to enhance the student experience.

A sustainability annual plan was published at the beginning of October meaning that the College is registered with the Education Climate Commission Race to Zero campaign. There is a strong focus on the environment and sustainability throughout the College.

The F&GP Committee had discussed the staff survey in detail. Headlines in the benchmarked survey show that the College is similar to the average with other colleges. There was positive feedback from areas targeted in response to the previous survey. Key concerns include salary levels; the Principal will commission an external pay audit to ensure independence, transparency and parity of pay. Governors agreed suitably qualified and skilled staff are crucial to ensure high quality courses are provided; this affects the overall financial sustainability of the College. Staff wellbeing and morale continue to be addressed.

KPIs 2022/23 were presented showing comparisons with previous years, targets and a RAG rating. There would be further discussion about graduate outcomes, professional development and specific features that define courses at a future meeting.

Progress against the College's objectives and strategic aims was also presented with a narrative and RAG rating.

II. The risk register was noted.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Principal's report and risk register
- A TEF application should not be pursued this year

[Oliver Cameron-Swan and Sophie Curtis left the meeting]

## 5. Finance Report including summary of student enrolments

The Finance Director updated Governors that ONS are assessing reclassifying colleges to be within the public sector as opposed to the private sector. If this change is implemented it was anticipated that it would change some controls and increase regulation.

The report summarised variations to income based on enrolments to date, the positive variance to the FRS102 pension adjustment and lease for The Hive and The Chapel. There is no charge for void rooms at Station Approach this year which is at full capacity; next year the College will take on 170 rooms which will be added to the risk register. **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Utilities costs have increased significantly with an electricity contract increasing by c500% at the end of the contract. Comparisons with alternative providers were requested. **ACTION: FINANCE DIRECTOR** Costs for provision of Artist Blacksmithing were raised noting that the College is currently negotiating these with HLNCS. There was a suggestion to consider commissioning an energy audit to identify potential savings.

The overall impact on the education specific EBITDA was requested noting that the deficit would increase and the EBITDA would be negative in the region of £281K.

[Peta Darnley left the meeting]

## 6. Strategic Plan 2018/23

The Principal had prepared a report on implementation progress of the strategic plan. This had been affected by the covid-19 pandemic; however, there was still significant progress including growth in FE enrolments, revalidation of HE programmes and development of new HE programmes. The distinctive offer of HE programmes had been developed with integration between FE and HE.

The timing to develop a new strategic plan was discussed which would involve extensive consultation and external stakeholder engagement. Employer panels would be set up concentrating on digital and music as priority areas. The timing for the strategic planning process was discussed.

The Board agreed: -

- To congratulate the Principal and SLT on positive progress to implement the strategy, particularly during the pandemic
- To defer preparation of a new strategic plan later in the academic year for launching during 2023/24 which would be discussed at the February Board meeting

## 7. KPIs and Objectives 2022/23

The Principal presented the report with proposed KPIs covering recruitment, quality, employer engagement, new course development and staff.

The Board agreed: -

- The format presented for KPIs would be followed; Governors were invited to comment on these before adoption in December. **ACTION: CLERK**

[Kate Murrie left the meeting which became inquorate; Updates were provided on items with special resolutions to be issued to Governors as applicable which was agreed to be pursued as Chair's action]

## 8. **Quality Strategy Presentation on progress**

This was carried forward.

## 9. **HE Curriculum Development**

The Head of Higher Education outlined the paper which gave an overview of HE course development. Revalidation of HE programmes with UWTSD was a notable achievement following a thorough moderation process. A summary of course overviews and new courses was presented.

HE has been restructured into schools creating the School of Materials and Design and the School of Fine Art. This is a cultural change to bring consistency and improve communication. Foundations for Learning are being delivered in two groups covering professional skills, behaviour and collaboration. This will ensure delivery by highly knowledgeable lecturers whilst enhancing quality and the student experience.

Professional Practice includes live projects and conferences with input from external speakers. This prepares students for their future equipping them with skills and confidence to drive their careers. Employer panels will be part of this process to aid entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in the region.

Recruitment to three programmes had been below target this year with reasons identified in the report and actions taken to address this. There is a recruitment target of 140 for 2023 which is expected to be achieved based on marketing strategies and interest from potential applicants at this early stage in the year.

A course overview summarised areas working effectively, those requiring short-term development and each course's vision. There was a question about PGCE development which is continuing to be investigated.

## 10. **Safeguarding Briefing**

This was carried forward. Governors would be requested to approve the Prevent Policy by special resolution. **ACTION: CLERK**

## 11. **Governance**

- I. Governors' activity 2021/22 and recommendations 2022/23
- II. Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation (summary report with main document sent separately)

Governors would be requested to approve these by special resolution.

**ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**

**12. Minutes of the F&GP Committee held on 26 September 2022**

The minutes were presented for Governors' information.

**13. Any Other Business**

There were no items.

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

The next meeting would be held on Monday 12 December 2022 commencing at 4.30 pm at CRC

**Signed as a true record of proceedings**

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