

Hereford College of Arts

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 24 April 2017

Present: - Professor Daniel Howard (Chair)
Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Professor Robin Baker
Mr Neil Hadfield
Dr Elizabeth Halford
Mr Mervyn Jones
Mrs Alison McLean
Mr Tim Newsholme
Ms Kay Sandford-Beal
Ms Katie Seekings

In attendance: - Mr Jim Walmsley (Vice Principal)
Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)
Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

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

	Action
1. Process of the Meeting	
I. Apologies for Absence: Miss Rachel Alferoff, Mrs Lynn Forrester-Walker, Ms Mairead McVeigh, Mr John Nicol, Mr Mike Rookes, Mr Scott Rolfe, Mr Oliver Tomlinson and Mrs Wendy Tolley.	
II. Chair's Remarks and Correspondence: The Chair welcomed Professor Baker to the meeting; introductions followed.	
III. Declarations of Interest: No declarations.	
2. Minutes of the Last Meetings	
I. Approval of the minutes of the last meetings: The minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 December 2016 and strategy meeting held on 6 February 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chair as true records.	
II. Action List: Noted showing progress of actions and matters arising.	
a. The Vice Principal reported that some colleges offer access to HE Art and Design as a year zero; SMT would investigate further before deciding if this could be an option in the future.	A Appleton/ J Walmsley
b. The Principal had made minor changes to the Strategic Plan following significant discussion by the Board. The final version would be sent to Governors and available to access on the website. The Principal would work with courses to introduce a soft launch of the revised values and integrate these into the College.	A Appleton
c. The Clerk reported that HE Music students are not timetabled on Mondays so it would be necessary to arrange visits to the course on alternative days.	
III. Matters arising from the Minutes: No further items.	
IV. Development session: Noted. Thanks were recorded to Oliver Tomlinson who had taken notes during the FE curriculum speed	

dating. There was an option to share the notes with staff.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

3. **KPIs and Dashboard**

The dashboard had been updated following the last meeting. Crucial areas to monitor are HE and FE applications and acceptances. HE firm acceptances were not the same as FE acceptances as FE applicants could accept more than one option. FE funding is lagged meaning that any changes to applications would become effective in the following year's funding agreement. HE firm acceptances were marginally less than the same time last year; the deadline for firm acceptances was 5 May. Concern was expressed about the conversion rate which SMT are addressing.

Governors commented that the information on UCAS applications and acceptances presented at the Development Session had been extremely useful providing a breakdown of applications, choices and some competitor information.

GCSE and Functional Skills maths and English attendance had been discussed by the AQ&S Committee noting actions embedded to improve this.

The Board agreed: -

- To note progress to date against KPIs and actions to address areas RAG rated red.

4. **Principal's Report**

The Principal outlined her report with specific discussion on the following areas: -

- I. Additional first year students have been accepted for Artist Blacksmithing from a strong pool of applicants. Discussion was ongoing with Herefordshire and Ludlow College regarding use of the forges at Holme Lacy and formalising the agreement. There was extensive discussion about Artist Blacksmithing delivery, staffing to deliver modulus and the important role of Technical Demonstrators. Discussion progressed to options to secure use of additional forges suggesting investigating foundries in the area. Artist Blacksmithing is a niche course which attracts some international students. All courses are building on their USPs whilst enhancing the student experience and engagement.
- II. It was anticipated that the outcome of the TEF would be delayed beyond May following the announcement of the general election. The Higher Education and Research Bill would go to Parliament later in April. Any bills not approved by 3 May, (when Parliament would be dissolved), would be dropped.
- III. Significant work was underway on HE curriculum revalidation which would regularise modules to 20 credits to support progression and an alternative to the current dissertation and Level 6 whilst providing structured collaboration between courses.
- IV. A new post of Well-being Officer would be advertised

- imminently to enhance the student experience and support both students and staff.
- V. A meeting has been arranged with RNC property consultants in tandem with further discussion with private property developers regarding student accommodation options.
 - VI. NMite had confirmed that it had secured additional government funding with recruitment and curriculum development underway. The Principal has joined the Student Experience and Campus Development Task Groups.
 - VII. The Principal would present Hereford's case for the City of Culture on Midlands Today. To date the bid had increased partnerships and attracted some funding to Hereford from the College's engagement with the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership. This had led to investment into a forged metal festival which will showcase the College this autumn. It had secured investment in the long-term infrastructure for the College. A Governor acknowledged the Principal's commitment to raise both Hereford and the College's profile.

The Board agreed: -

- To thank the Principal for her informative report

5. Risk Management Report and Risk Register

The Finance Director presented the register stating that numerous risks had been discussed as part of KPIs and the Principal's report. HE and FE applications and enrolments had been separated on the register to be reported as separate risks with individual scoring.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the risk register

6. SFA/EFA correspondence: Hereford College of Arts Financial Statements 2015/16

This was SFA/EFA's assessment of financial performance based on the financial statements showing that the College was in a good position with its finances regarded as outstanding.

A Governor commented that EBITDA was the weakest ratio as the College were not spending on capital. They expressed concern that the College was not generating sufficient income to make a surplus; however, the College is replacing some equipment and making some capital spend. Refurbishment and depreciation of College Road Campus over the time of the lease had also impacted on this. The College has potential to draw on reserves to invest to generate more income. This might not necessarily be capital investment but could include staffing..

The Board agreed: -

- To note correspondence from SFA/EFA regarding financial statements 2015/16
- The Finance Director would prepare a report showing key investment priorities to leverage growth

7. I. Audit Committee: 7 April 2017

Alison McLean presented the minutes in the absence of the Chair.

A. The Board were requested to approve an amendment to

T Williams

<p>the standing orders and terms of reference so that the Audit Committee would make a recommendation to the Board to approve the members' report and financial statements as opposed to the F&GP Committee which was current practice. This would meet requirements in the revised Audit Code of Practice. The F&GP Committee would continue to discuss the figures whereas the Audit Committee would consider the process and make a recommendation to the Board for approval.</p>	L Watkins
<p>B. The Clerk would send the Education Training Foundation (ETF) link to Governors to complete Prevent training</p>	L Watkins
<p>C. The Board were requested to appoint RSM Internal Auditors for 2017/18. A joint tendering process had commenced for Financial Statements Auditors with Herefordshire and Ludlow College.</p>	
<p>II. Search and Governance Committee: 13 March 2017</p>	
<p>The following key items were raised by the Chair: -</p>	
<p>a. The Committee recommended the Board appoint Professor Robin Baker as Independent Governor for a 4-year term in office and Mairead McVeigh as Student Governor (HE) whilst she remained a student at the College.</p>	
<p>b. Succession planning for the Chair of the Corporation in 2017/18 would commence as Professor Howard would be stepping down as Chair. The Clerk would send Governors the Chair's job description for comment which would ensure that the Chair had the appropriate skills to enhance the College and Board. Following this, the process would commence to appoint a Chair in accordance with the standing orders. It was anticipated that an appointment could be made at the July Board meeting.</p>	L Watkins
<p>c. The Governors' self assessment 2016/17 action plan was discussed by the Committee evidencing steps to improve Governors' knowledge and governance in specific areas identified by the self assessment. This process would be completed this year in addition to one to one appraisals for all Governors conducted by the Chair and Vice Chair.</p>	L Watkins
<p>III. Finance and General Purposes Committee: 13 March 2017</p>	
<p>Mervyn Jones reported to the Board in the absence of the Chair. The Committee had spent significant time discussing the first draft budget for 2017/18.</p>	
<p>A. The Board were requested to approve the Accommodation Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference.</p>	
<p>B. The Annual Health and Safety Report 2016/17 was presented for information. Positive improvements had been made to health and safety. The Committee had requested scrutiny of staff sickness levels and patterns.</p>	
<p>IV. Academic Quality and Standards Committee: 20 March</p>	

2017

In the absence of the Chair, Dr Halford reported the Committee's business. Key risks are GCSE English and maths, HE recruitment, safeguarding and work experience. The AQ&S Committee's report and dashboard had been issued to Governors for information. The Principal and Clerk had preliminary discussed an option to change the meeting structure for 2017/18 to address FE and HE business at separate meetings; Governors were supportive of this which would be taken forward.

L Watkins

The Board agreed: -

- To amend the standing orders and terms of reference so that the Audit Committee would provide assurance and make a recommendation to the Board to approve the members' report and financial statements as opposed to the F&GP Committee which was current practice
- Governors should complete ETF online training on Prevent
- To appoint RSM Internal Auditors for 2017/18
- To appoint Professor Baker as Independent Governor for a 4-year term in office and Mairead McVeigh as Student Governor whilst she remained a student of the College
- Individual Governors would be invited to consider the role of Chair of the Corporation 2017/18 and thanked Professor Howard for effectively chairing the Board for the last four years.
- To approve the Accommodation Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference
- To note the Annual Health and Safety Report 2016/17
- The AQ&S Committee would be divided into two Committees to address FE and HE business separately

8. **Management Accounts to 31 March 2017**

The Finance Director outlined the management accounts drawing Governors' attention to the cash balance and current ratios which were high. Pay costs as percentage of income had decreased which was encouraging.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the management accounts to 31 March 2017 and current financial position

9. **Link Governor Feedback**

Several Governors had made visits as Link Governors with a general conclusion that visits are more purposeful if staff invite them to view a specific project or area.

The Board agreed: -

- Staff would be reminded to invite their Link Governors to events, projects or to provide specific substance to a meeting.
- The marketing calendar would be issued to Governors once produced

A Appleton

L Watkins

10. **Any Other Business**

- I. The Staff Governor informed Governors that some courses were involved with Hay Festival in planning some events.
- II. Governors had been invited to a lecture for the Illustration Course.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Development Session and Board meeting on Monday 10 July 2017 commencing at 4.30pm and 5.30pm respectively.

[Staff Governors and Managers left the meeting for a confidential discussion which was recorded in a separate minute]

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**