

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Search and Governance Committee
held on Monday 23 November 2020 held remotely**

Present: - Tim Newsholme (Chair)
Abigail Appleton (Principal)
Mervyn Jones
Katie Seekings

In attendance: - Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)

The meeting was quorate as four Members were present.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Professor Robin Baker.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Committee agreed the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2020 as a true record.

Matters arising would be addressed during the meeting. The Principal confirmed that she has contacted a potential Governor whose application was discussed at the last meeting and will arrange a meeting.

The Committee agreed: -

- To approve the minutes of the last meeting

4. Governors' Data

- I. The skills audit dated October 2020 showed the profile of Governors' skills. This was completed by individual Governors noting some Governors had been modest with their scoring. Collectively the Board is represented by highly skilled Governors with 71% who are highly competent with skills and experience in areas required for FE Boards. Under-represented skills remained similar to last year; predominantly law and legal expertise; if required, legal advice could be purchased. Other areas scoring less than 50% included accountancy, audit, financial and internal controls, MIS, competitive tendering, voluntary sector and marketing. The skills audit would be considered as part of succession planning. The Committee had previously agreed to seek to appoint a qualified accountant and agreed to continue to pursue this. John Nicol's experience and knowledge of secondary education and safeguarding remained crucial agreeing to ask him to consider serving for another year. **ACTION: CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE**
- II. Equality and Diversity data was collected in October 2020 before recent appointments were made to the Board and provided a snapshot at that date. It was noted that there are more males than females on the Board; however all Governors are treated equally.

- III. Attendance 2019/20 to the Board and Committees was very high at 92% and likely to have improved with remote meetings being held during the pandemic. Individual attendance was noted with no areas of concern.

The Committee agreed: -

- To note the skills audit addressing areas with lower scores as part of succession planning
- To note attendance records showing excellent attendance at 92%

5. **Vacancies on the Board and Committees 2020/21**

There is currently one vacancy for an Independent Governor which the Committee had already agreed to target an accountant. In 2021/22 three Independent Governors and two Members co-opted onto the Audit Committee and AQ&S Committee will have completed at least two terms of 4-years in office. Professor Baker will have completed a term in office. Applications were presented for consideration. Discussion followed with views shared.

Candidate A was a construction industry professional with significant involvement in stage and scenery development and supporting large-scale events all over the world. It was agreed that candidate A would not bring additional skills and experience as there is an architect serving on the Board. The Clerk would notify candidate A. **ACTION: CLERK**

Candidate B had experience in heritage, culture and curating which would also fit in with strategic development of the MA programme. The Principal would arrange a meeting with candidate B. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Candidate C was a marketing professional in Higher Education working in international student recruitment. Marketing was already represented on the Board; however, it was agreed to arrange a meeting in the spring after lockdown with the Principal, which could involve the Head of Comms, to forge a link. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Candidate D had extensive leadership experience in Further Education but had retired 16 years ago. They also curate a studio. It was felt that because their experience is not current in FE leadership they would not bring skills being sought on the Board. Regardless of this, it was agreed that the candidate should be invited to visit the College to forge a useful connection to a cultural leader in the area. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

Committee membership was noted agreeing that this should remain unchanged with the exception of Jennette Arnold joining AQ&S (FE) Committee.

The Committee agreed: -

- The Clerk and Principal would contact candidates who had applied for governorship as indicated
- Jennette Arnold would join the AQ&S (FE) Committee

6. **Governors' External Review**

The Committee agreed: -

- It was appropriate to defer the external review due to COVID-19. RSM internal auditors will review governance processes this year.

7. **Staff and student engagement and topics for future development**

The Clerk had not arranged any engagement for Governors with staff or students as this had been an exceptionally busy term due to the impact of COVID-19

bringing immense pressure to staff and different priorities.

The Committee agreed: -

- Governors would be invited to participate in staff discussion on equality and diversity next term **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS**
- The Chairs of the Committees and Chair of the Board would be invited to join the Student Council next term. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**
- Governors would continue to support the executive as required

8. Fellows for consideration in 2021

The Principal had not approached potential Fellows as there had been uncertainty about graduation arrangements due to COVID-19. The Graduation Ceremony has been postponed to 5 March 2021 which could be linked to International Women’s Day and some shows and exhibitions by granduands. Governors and Fellows would be notified of the date. **ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS/PRINCIPAL.**

Further exploration of potential Fellows who had connections with the College digitally, possibly during lockdown and who met the criteria, would be approached. Logistics for the Graduation Ceremony are being considered which might be conducted in two ceremonies to accommodate guidelines and social distancing; this would require at least one Fellow at each ceremony.

A Governor suggested reviewing venues in the town centre or at Station Approach for the summer show. It was agreed that this may increase the footfall and should be explored further. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL**

The Committee agreed: -

- To investigate Fellows who have delivered lecturers digitally with an option to consider an artist from the out of nature exhibition and issue suggestions to the Committee for comments in January.

9. Any other business

There were no items.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting was arranged for Monday 22 March 2021 commencing at 3.00 pm.

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**