

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation

Held on 17th October 2023

Present: Martin Wyn Griffith (Chair)
John Arnott, Peter Boucher, Simon Cove, John Dernie, Richard Hewitson,
Emma Jarman, Megan Jones, Monica Lawson, Leah Palmer, David Panes,
Tim Thurston, Samanta Uddin, Rob Wheeler

With: Simon Perryman, invited observer
Nicola Beckley, invited observer
Lynne Plested, Interim Deputy CEO/Deputy Principal Quality and HE
Lindsey Stewart, Interim Vice Principal
Marc Webb, Chief Financial Officer
Matthew Butcher, Chief Commercial Strategy Officer
Peta Fry, Head of HR
Tracy Scaife, Head of Governance

383. Apologies for absence and welcomes – apologies for absence received from Kathy Newman.

The Chair welcomed Simon Perryman, Nicola Beckley, Megan Jones and Samanta Uddin to the meeting. Simon Perryman is the External Reviewer conducting the external governance review and is attending the meeting as an observer as part of the review. Nicola Beckley has recently been appointed as Chief Operating Officer, taking up her position at the beginning of December and is also attending as an observer. Megan Jones and Samanta Uddin are newly appointed Student Governors. The Chair also welcomed Richard Hewitson to his first Board meeting as an External Governor, Leah Palmer to her first as Interim Principal and CEO. He also congratulated Marc Webb on his permanent appointment to the post of Chief Financial Officer.

The Chair opened by saying that what the Board papers had underlined to him was that we are in a financially secure position with a strong balance sheet, improved cash at bank and a small forecast surplus. It was clear that our focus needs to be on improving quality of delivery across the whole College with the student experience being at the forefront of our attention. To that end, we would be hearing about the work being led by Leah and Lynne and we needed to understand and embrace the journey we are on.

The Chair also noted that the quality of some of the papers was not to the standard expected. To that end it has been agreed that the Chair and Interim Principal will run a coaching session for members of the Exec Team at the beginning of next month to agree the principles and requirements for papers to be submitted to Corporation and committees in future.

384. Disclosures of interest – received from Monica Lawson, Leah Palmer, David Panes, Lynne Plested, Lindsey Stewart, Marc Webb, Matthew Butcher, Peta Fry and Tracy Scaife with regard to item 12 on the agenda relating to pay award.

385. Non-confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 4th July 2023, matters arising and outstanding actions – agreed as a correct record. The outstanding actions were noted.

Matters arising were raised as follows:

(a) Minute 370. Branding refresh and new logo - the Chief Commercial Strategy Officer advised the meeting that the new college website had been launched and is currently going through snagging. Accessibility access to the website has been considered as part of the project and an accessibility audit was carried out. There are however still some issues for those who use screen readers that need resolving. The new logo has also been launched and has been well received. The

majority of required changes to branding have been completed but there are still some outstanding and some that require planning permission before they can be put in to place.

(b) Minute 372. Items to note (d) Complaints and compliments – the Head of HR advised that the Whistleblowing Policy is currently being reviewed and as part of that review, an external referrer will be appointed.

386. Principal’s verbal update and report – presentation and report by Interim Principal and CEO received and noted.

The meeting noted research from the FE Commissioner regarding factors that trigger the need for cultural change including change of leadership, merger, Ofsted judgements. A culture change is needed at the college and this is in the process of being actioned. Also in progress is the role modelling of the senior team together with a commitment to be more visible. It is important that all staff understand that significant changes are needed and that everyone has a role to play in making those changes. There is also a need to repair the reputational damage caused by the latest Ofsted inspection. The college must work towards excellence, for students and staff and changes must be seen externally as well as internally. Focus needs to be on the whole student experience, not just qualification outcomes with every student feeling fully equipped for their next steps/progression when they leave the college.

The Interim Principal and CEO outlined her vision of success and five operational priorities for the current academic year and the defined roles and responsibilities for achieving these and gave examples of new initiatives that have been introduced.

387. Preparation for Ofsted Monitoring Visit and Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) – presentation and report by Interim Deputy CEO/Deputy Principal Quality and HE received and noted.

The college will receive an Ofsted Monitoring Visit between now and April 2024. Two days notice will be given and it will be a two day visit by two/three Inspectors and will commence with a two hour meeting on the first day for the college to explain what it has done, what the intended impact was and what the actual impact has been. The process for the rest of the visit was outlined and noted.

The LEEP (Learning Effective Enhancement Programme) was noted. This is a rolling programme that will run indefinitely. It will be used to improve the culture of improving teaching and learning.

The PIAP is a working document that can be amended if need be. An updated version will be presented to the next meeting of the Curriculum and Quality committee.

ACTION: LP to present updated PIAP to the next C&Q meeting.

388. Governance matters:

(a) External Governance Review update – report by Head of Governance received and noted.

(b) Governor recruitment update – the Chair advised that the recruitment project with Peridot Limited is in progress and a panel comprising himself, Vice Chair of Corporation, Interim Principal and CEO and the Head of Governance are meeting for informal chats with eleven applicants on Friday this week.

(c) Re-appointment of Rob Wheeler – the meeting noted that Rob Wheeler’s first term of office comes to an end early next calendar year. The Chair has met with Rob and discussed his reappointment for a further term of office of four years and Rob has indicated that he is prepared to serve for a further term.

RESOLUTION: that Rob Wheeler be re-appointed as a governor for a further term of office of four years commencing February 2024.

ACTION: TS to amend governor appointment record.

(d) Governor attendance 2022/23 and governor attendance target 2023/24 – report by Head of Governance received and noted.

RESOLUTION: that the governance attendance target for the 2023/24 academic year be set at 80%

389. Items to note – noted as follows –

(a) Student Voice report

(b) Minutes of committees – Resources, Integration and Change committee held 2nd October 2023

(c) Written resolutions

(d) Estates and Sustainability report – withdrawn at the request of the Chair. The report will be presented to the next meeting of the Corporation to be held on 12th December 2023.

ACTION: *TS to add Estates and Sustainability report to the agenda for Corporation 12th December 2023.*

390. Policies to approve – approved as follows:

(a) Sub-contracting Fees and Charges Policy – the Chair advised the meeting that he is not happy with the standard of the paper submitted, particularly as it misses the huge success story regarding the significant reduction in subcontracting by the college.

The Chair asked the Chief commercial Strategy Officer to provide a summary to governors prior to the next meeting of the Corporation in December. Governors need information on how aspirations for subcontracting are directed i.e. location, provision, providers.

ACTION: *MB to provide summary to governors prior to next meeting re. information on aspirations for subcontracting direction – location/geography, provision, providers.*

(b) Health and Safety Policy

391. Any other business – none raised.

392. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 4.00pm.

393. Confidential items to note – confidential minutes (part 1) refer.

394. Confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 4th July 2023 and matters arising – confidential minutes (part 1) refer.

395. Pay award from ‘recycled’ funding – confidential minutes (part 2) refer.

396. Confidential minutes (Part 2) of the last meeting held on 4th July 2023 and matters arising – confidential minutes (part 2) refer.

397. Principal and CEO recruitment update – confidential minutes (part 3) refer.

398. Confidential minutes (Part 3) of the last meeting held on 4th July 2023 and matters arising – confidential minutes part 3 refer.