

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2019, Board Room, Silbury Campus
17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2019/20	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings (joined 3.10.19)	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Tony Berwick	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	0 of 0	Agreed absence
Alan Cook	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Nathan Indge	Staff	3 of 3	Yes
Liz Marr	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
David Meadowcroft	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Julie Mills	CEO	3 of 3	Yes
Asad Mir (joined 6.11.19)	Student	2 of 2	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	2 of 3	Apologies
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	2 of 3	Apologies
Neil Sainsbury (joined 3.10.19)	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Aniesa Shah	Staff	2 of 3	Apologies
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	2 of 3	Yes (in part)
Manish Verma	Independent	2 of 3	Apologies
Dotun Adeoye (resigned 2.10.19)	Independent	0 of 0	
Attendance % this meeting		77%	13 / 17
Attendance % year to date		92%	44 / 48

Regular attendees at this meeting: Annie Allen, (CPO), Imelda Galvin (COO), Chris McLean (Principal: College), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Other attendees (in part): Jess Annison (Project Director IoT)

Strategic Priorities

2.1 CEO's Report to the Board (previously circulated as Paper 2.1)

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

Julie Mills drew attention to the Strategic Plan for the next three years which has been reviewed by the ELT and SLT. 'Transforming Lives through Learning' remains at the heart and the four workstreams are:

- Student, Customer and Employer Experience
- People
- Commercial Excellence
- Brand

The workstreams are interdependent and each has specific projects; priority projects for 2019/20 are:

- Curriculum Design and Delivery Model (SCEE)
- Sector Pathways (SCEE)
- Develop Together – Leadership & Management (P)
- Reward & Remuneration (P)
- Data Strategy (CE)
- Digital enabled process improvement (CE)
- Group Structure and IoT establishment (B)
- Stakeholder Development (B)
- Staff Engagement (B)

The three Enablers (Inclusion, Unity and Digital Enablement) sit across all workstreams. The values, which are the core principles (Respect, Excellence, Integrity, Inspire and Innovate), have not changed.

College wide KPIs will drive strategic progress at an operational level. The annual financial, quality and people KPIs which are approved by the Board, will continue to provide specificity. The Strategic Plan will be rolled out to staff on 10th January at an all staff event to increase communication and ownership at all levels.

The Board:

- **Received the CEO's report**
- **Approved the College Wide KPIs**

2.2 Institute of Technology (*previously circulated as Papers 2.2A, 2.2B and 2.2C*)

Minuted as confidential

Jess Annison was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

2.3 Student Experience

a) Current Position (*previously circulated as Paper 2.3A*)

Quality Improvement Plan

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), (consent item 4.1), has seven themes aligned to the current Ofsted framework and is based on areas identified for improvement in the College Self-Assessment Report (approved by the Board at the last meeting).

Chris McLean highlighted:

- Good Progress is being made:
 - Theme 1 (Teaching Learning & Assessment). A good start has been made with project-based learning. The Quality Team has been restructured to focus on teaching and learning.
 - Theme 3 (Attendance). Targets are realistic and English & Maths attendance is better than this time last year as strategies are having a positive impact
 - Theme 7 (Managing Students' Progress). The PDR strategy is being implemented and a sixth Progress Mentor is being recruited (there are interviews this month).
- Too early to expect any impact:
 - Theme 2 (Retention). 15 students have been withdrawn to date.
 - Theme 4 (Personal Development). Progress Mentors are in place and working 1:1 with students.
 - Theme 5 (Leadership Programme for Curriculum Managers).

- Theme 6 (Industry Updating). Work experience for teachers will be scheduled after Easter. Meanwhile, Digital teachers have responded positively to new working with employers.

Key Performance Indicators

There is a new specification for Functional Skills English and the College has been waiting for revision papers. The latest news is that the College must change awarding bodies. This time last year 30% of students had already completed, and this combined with the new (harder) qualification, means the functional skills target is at risk of not being achieved.

There has been a slow start to work experience, but the College is well ahead with industry placements (the College is recognised as a centre of good practice by the ESFA).

All other KPIs are on target.

Chris responded to questions:

How many parents responded to the invitation to use ProMonitor Parent Portal?

Only 80 of the 600 that were invited have signed up so far. It will be promoted at parent evenings and recruitment events. Parents now receive a text if their son or daughter misses a session.

The budget includes 6 Progress Mentors and currently 5.4 FTE are in role – if they are adding real value, are you prioritising the students who receive support?

Yes, we initially focus on red students, but at week 10 we move to prioritise amber students. We are always looking at where we can have maximum impact.

The Board received assurance on improvement actions and KPIs

b) Curriculum and Quality Group (CQG) Meeting 27th November 2019 (previously circulated as Paper 2.3B)

Liz Marr referred governors to Paper 2.3B. The CQG had discussed the concerns about the lack of headroom in the budget this year and how savings, (e.g. from late recruitment to posts), are being managed. Chris McLean explained that such savings are used to mitigate under budgeted costs elsewhere but curriculum planning for 2020/21 will include headroom to anticipate cover for vacancies and staff absence. As raised at the FinG meeting on 27th November, the ELT will bring a strategy to the Board Away Day on a sustainable delivery model.

There is an ongoing investigation involving a HE sub-contractor which will be reported to the OfS. The College is waiting for Pearson to conclude its investigation and meanwhile, students have not received their certificates. The CEO will now write to Pearson asking for confirmation of the outcome.

The Board noted the report from the CQG.

2.4 Financial Sustainability and the Student Experience

a) Curriculum Planning 2020/21 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4A)

Chris McLean explained that Ofsted are reviewing curriculum plans as they are evidence of curriculum 'intent'. The College is intending to consolidate its provision in 2020/21 (having removed c150 courses this year) and is aiming for modest growth in student numbers. Course teams have been more engaged with curriculum planning and capital requirements are known for every course. Paper

2.4A sets out: the aims of the curriculum plan; learnings from the 2019/20 planning process; funding changes (there is a base rate uplift worth c£500k); target numbers for full-time, part-time, HE and apprenticeships; priority capital investment areas; and additional staffing requirements. The next steps are test the validity of the planning assumptions; test the plan against sector benchmarks; complete the financial modelling; agree the staff and resource model. The three-year financial plan includes a curriculum contribution of 50% and a campus surplus of £315k.

The Board discussed the Higher Education offer as the IoT provision will be centred on Digital and STEM. The College is already speaking to Level 3 students about progression to HE and students like the delivery model with employers, the cost of staying local and the guaranteed top-up year.

Governors were directed to Appendix 1 which illustrates a progression pathway including campus and apprenticeships.

Chris responded to questions:

Is there a growing regulatory pressure on HE and have we assessed this risk?

Yes, we are used to managing regulatory requirements as FE is already highly regulated however, the Risk Management Group is reviewing regulatory risk. The IoT will significantly increase the amount of provision regulated by the OfS and we have recognised that the College needs a Head of HE (new post). A governor added that the OfS is a hands-on regulator with the power to fine and deregister providers.

What research has been done to analyse the impact of a later start to the year and more learning hours per week?

Initial analysis has revealed budget implications as it would cost around £200k to 'fatten' the week to compensate for a later start, so more analysis is needed. We do, however, need to improve the student experience and the demanding workload for staff at the start of term.

Have you tracked the progress of the late enrollers?

Yes and 79% are still in College. Experience tells us that when students enrol late, there is a higher chance that they will withdraw / not achieve. Some students do not make a decision until GCSE results are published in August. The College continued to enrol students rather than imposing an earlier cut off.

Gwynneth Tan left the meeting at 18:30

Will we be pushing students into courses if we have narrowed the curriculum too much?

We have removed duplications rather than narrowing the offer.

The Board noted the report on curriculum planning for 2020/21.

b) Finance Group (FinG) meeting of 27th November 2019 *previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)*

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings referred governors to paper 2.4B. The FinG had signed-off the action plan relating to the FEC Diagnostic Report and commented on an earlier draft of the curriculum planning paper. As minuted in item 2.3 above, the FinG had also asked the ELT to propose a 3-year plan based on a sustainable delivery model.

The Board noted the report from the FinG

2.5 Financial Sustainability – 2019/20 Financial Health (previously circulated as Paper 2.5)

Imelda Galvin referred governors to the Period 3 (October) management accounts and assured governors that the year to date position is slightly ahead of budget for both campus and prisons. Cash days are 12 days ahead of target.

A detailed reforecast will be carried out to include unbudgeted partnership and franchise costs of £318k and unbudgeted pay costs £260k. The ELT is meeting next week to agree a plan to recover the position.

The Financial Health is expected to be 'Requiring Improvement' for 2020/21 (although the points score is expected to increase). Good financial health could be accelerated but this is likely to be at the expense of quality. Getting to 'Good' is relatively easy but sustaining it is more challenging. The College must continue to build cash balances and deliver an operating surplus.

The Board noted the financial position as at 31 October 2019 including the additional franchise and partnership costs of £318K which will be adjusted in the P4 management accounts.

Governance & Compliance

3.1 Audit & Risk Committee 28th November 2019 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Alan Cook referred governors to Paper 3.1. The Committee had reviewed the Financial Statements in detail with the auditors and was recommending the reappointment of the external auditors for 2019/20. The internal audit work had been discussed and the Committee set a zero tolerance for overdue actions relating to previous audit recommendations.

The Board noted the report from the A&R Committee meeting on 28th November 2019 and approved the re-appointment of Buzzacott as provides of the College's External Audit Service for 2019/20

3.2 Financial Statements 2018/19 (previously circulated as Paper 3.2)

The operational surplus was £798k against a budgeted surplus of £12k (£559k of the surplus was release of provisions relating to the termination of the OLASS contracts and without this the operating surplus would have been £239k). The Balance Sheet has swung to negative due to the pension valuation (the size and age of a college affects the pension charge). There was a positive cash inflow.

The Board noted the final 2018/19 position and approved the:

- ***Regularity SAQ (previously circulated as Paper 3.4A)***
- ***Internal Audit Annual Report (previously circulated as Paper 3.4B)***
- ***External Auditors' Post-Audit Management Report (previously circulated as Paper 3.4C)***
- ***Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st July 2019 (previously circulated as Paper 3.4D) including:***
 - ***Corporate Governance Statement (pages 11-16)***
 - ***Regularity, Proprietary & Compliance Statement (page 17)***
 - ***Statement of Responsibilities (page 18)***
 - ***Independent Auditor's Report (page 19-20)***
 - ***Regularity Audit Opinion (page 21-22)***
- ***Representation Letter from the College to Buzzacott (previously circulated as Paper 3.4E)***
- ***Audit & Risk Committee and Search & Governance Committee Reports for 2018/19 (previously circulated as Paper 3.4F)***

3.3 Agenda items next meeting

- Financial performance YTD / Staff Pay / Integrated Financial Plan
- Student Achievement / Experience - progress against KPIs
- Marketing strategies to support the 2020/21 curriculum plan
- Prison Services
- Reports from CQG, PDMG
- Governor Development: Equality & Diversity Single Equality Scheme, Annual Report for 2018/19

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

- 4.1 **Campus Quality Improvement Plan** (previously circulated as Paper 4.1)
- 4.2 **Papers from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 28th November:**
- a) **A&R Committee Terms of Reference for 2019/20** (previously circulated as Paper 4.2A)
 - b) **College Financial Regulations (6 sections)** (previously circulated as Paper 4.2B)
 - c) **College Strategic Risk Register** (previously circulated as Paper 4.2C)
- 4.3 **Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 6th November 2019** (previously circulated as Papers 4.3A and Confidential 4.3B)
- 4.4 **Modern Slavery Statement** (previously circulated as Paper 4.4)
- 4.5 **Assurance on Website Accessibility (European Accessibility Act)** (previously circulated as Paper 4.5)
- 4.6 **Fraud Policy** (previously circulated as Paper 4.6)

Next Meeting 12th February 2020, 5pm - 7pm

Date raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
11/12/19	None		
6/11/19	Act on the feedback from governors re the FH paper and finance pack	Imelda Galvin	This action will be complete by the February Board meeting
17/7/19	Assure the Board that the College is compliant with the European Accessibility Act.	Imelda Galvin	Complete (item 4.5 above)