MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2020 via Microsoft Teams
17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2020/21	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Alan Cook	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	3 of 3	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	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	Student	3 of 3	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	2 of 3	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Georgia Pongourou	Student	1 of 1	Yes
Charlynne Pullen	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Aniesa Shah	Staff	3 of 3	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	3 of 3	
Tony Berwick resigned 5/11/20	Independent	1 of 1	
Attendance % this meeting		100%	18 / 18
Attendance % year to date		98%	52 / 53

In attendance: Sally Alexander (Principal), Annie Allen (CPO), Imelda Galvin (COO), Alex Warner (Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Lee Parker, Director of Marketing (in part), Lindsey Styles, Director: CEO's Office (in part).

1.1   There were no apologies as everyone was present. Georgia Pongourou, Student Governor was welcomed to her first meeting and she introduced herself.

1.2   There is a standing declaration from Peter Cox and Gwynneth Tan relating to the IoT. There is a standing declaration from Rebecca Carrington (Director and Principal of Arts1).

2.0   Strategic Priorities 2020/21

Lee Parker was welcomed to the meeting

2.1   Strategic Review (Board Strategic Priority 1) *(Paper 2.1)*

The Board has agreed that the College should undertake a robust strategic review during the Autumn term, to determine the Strategic Plan for the next three years, and that this would be a Board focus for the first three meetings this term.

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Imelda Galvin and Lee Parker presented the proposed vision, purpose, strategic aims, strategic wheel (themes and enablers) and projects and the Board gave feedback / added to the MS Teams chat. There was endorsement for the approach and some specific feedback on wording.

The discussion was minuted as confidential.

It was agreed that the wording would be reviewed in the context of the Board's feedback (and the FE White Paper which should be published in January) and brought back to the next meeting for approval.

The Board endorsed the strategic approach and agreed to defer approval of the Strategic Plan including the vision, purpose, strategic aims, and success criteria / targets until the next meeting.

Lee was thanked for attending and he left the meeting.

Lindsey Styles was welcomed to the meeting

2.2   CEO's Report to the Board *(Paper 2.2)*

Julie Mills referred to her report and drew attention to the appointment of a new EDI Manager from January 2021. For this reason, the EDI topic (which is usually a Board item in February), will be deferred to the May meeting, in order that Arvind can report on progress.

Governors enquired about the feedback from BAME students and staff and Julie and Annie Allen confirmed that this had been mostly positive and included useful insights and helpful suggestions for the EDI Manager to take forward. There are good things happening across the organisation, but these require more consistency / co-ordination. One theme which emerged was that some student enrichment activities (e.g. celebrating different cultures), had been reduced due to funding challenges; this will be a priority for the curriculum vision.

Response to COVID

Lindsey Styles reported on the current position:

- Although it had been expected that restrictions would be eased after Christmas, this has not turned out to be the case. The College is continually re-assessing its response to COVID including the impact on students and staff wellbeing. From the outset, a cautious approach to bring students onsite was taken to ensure the health and safety of staff and students which involved a lot of work and risk assessments. Initially, vulnerable students and workshop sessions were prioritised.

- Students want to be in College, and currently they are now onsite for approximately 75% of their time. If it is safe to do so, this will be increased next term. Some students who are clinically vulnerable are not attending onsite and all their learning is online. The Student Development Team is supporting the best possible student experience given the circumstances e.g. through Moodle, online forums, online student conferences etc.

- There has been a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of students since the second lockdown (e.g. there have been seventeen suicide attempts this half-term), which is being managed but is an ongoing challenge. Over four hundred students have engaged with 'Together All' (a counselling platform for low level anxiety). The College has increased the capacity of its wellbeing and resilience team and is working with agencies across Milton Keynes to support students' mental

health. The College has used government catch-up funding to engage Arthur Ellis (a mental health support service) to build the resilience of the most vulnerable students who are at risk of withdrawing from learning.

- Teaching staff are supporting both onsite and online learning which has increased workloads and has impacted on the wellbeing of some. The People Services team is supporting staff on an individual basis. Adjustments have been made to the end of term and start of next term (for staff) to relieve workloads where possible. Non-teaching staff continue to work from home when they can.

- Student 'bubbles' have been kept separate which means only small groups (in most cases) were affected when quarantining was necessary (numbers are reported in Paper 2.2). The merging bubbles is being considered if it is safe to do so.

- More information is awaited on the announcement this week that schools and colleges will be involved in testing from January, which is an additional workload (and potential expense) for the College.

The Board received the CEO's Report

Lindsey was thanked for attending and she left the meeting.

2.3   Student Experience

a) Campus, IoT and Prisons

Campus Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) *(Papers 2.3A and 4.5)*

Link Governors have given feedback at previous meetings on the rigorous self-assessment process with which most of them were involved. The SAR/QIP reports progress against 2019/20 improvement priorities, overall effectiveness, effectiveness by curriculum areas, improvement themes for 2020/21, achievement, retention and attendance over time including benchmarking against national rates, achievement gaps, English and maths, safeguarding and improvement themes identified for 2020/21.

Sally Alexander and Alex Warner presented the key points from the Campus SAR/QIP which was scrutinised by the CQG at its meeting on 23rd November. Sally referred the Board to Papers 2.3A and 4.5 and highlighted:

- The College has self-assessed as Grade 2 (Good) against all aspects of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

- Achievement data for 2019/20 was positive (noting this includes some College assessed grades).

- English & Maths high grades continue to improve

- KPIs will be presented to CQG on 1st February (and to the Board for approval on 10th February). Due to the pandemic, it is a challenging year to review benchmark data and to develop KPIs.

- The four improvement themes for 2020/21 are:
  o Quality of teaching and learning across all provision
  o Better use of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) to drive improvement
  o Develop the Personal Development aspect of the curriculum (new section of the EIF).
  o Better use of data to drive improvement.

<u>General Update</u>

- Sally, Tracey Matthews and Anna Clarke have met with the DfE Policy Lead, who is responsible for the national skills fund, regarding the NewFutures:MK model. The College was asked for more information to influence the government's spending review. The Policy Lead was also interested in talking to Tracey about new Level 3 offers.

- Paper 2.3 includes an update on the IoT and prison education.

Governors asked:

Where does this self-assessment place the College on its journey to outstanding?

This SAR/QIP provides a good focus for consistency of an outstanding student experience e.g. how we work with partners, how the College is at the centre of the community etc. At a school level, too many schools have self-assessed as good for too long. It requires strong teaching and learning, a strong student experience and clarity on the learner journey so that students reach their intended destination.

What are the implications of MK:U intending to offer a similar product rage to the IoT?

The Board was reminded that Cranfield University is an anchor partner in the IoT and the intention had been that this would transfer to MK:U as MK:U developed. Delays in government spending reviews due to the pandemic mean that any decision concerning significant central government investment is delayed until at least Autumn 2021. In the meantime nascent MK:U provision could be a threat to our HE provision. MK:U is targeting 50 learners (per programme), from September 2021, and these programmes align to our higher apprenticeship offers i.e. cyber security, data sciences and digital technologies.

We are confident in the IoT offer which is already up and running; the January launch of the IoT will be a good opportunity to promote what we are doing.

What will appeal more to potential students – the IoT or MK:U?

Both may offer similar products but appeal to different market segments (but there could be competition e.g. for teaching staff and employers).

The Board noted the update on prisons and the IoT and approved the Campus SAR 2019/20 and the QIP for 2020/21

b)   CQG Meeting 23rd November 2020 *(Paper 2.3B)*

Liz Marr, Chair of the CQG reported that the CQG had scrutinised the SAR and QIP. CQG will be focusing this cycle on the QIP including the schools which have not improved their grades for some time.

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting of 23rd November 2020 and did not identify any additional matters requiring scrutiny by the CQG.

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2.4   Financial Health *(Paper 2.4)*

2019/20

- As reported at the last meeting, the 2019/20 full year contribution was £1.411m surplus (which was £1.183m ahead of budget primarily due to the unwinding of the OLASS4 contract).

- The 2019/20 Accounts were presented for approval at item 3.1.

2020/21 (Period 3 – October 2020)

- Overall College contribution YTD is £153k behind budget (£52k behind budget for Campus and £101k behind budget for Prisons).

- The indicative year end forecast is £879k behind budget however it is a very early forecast, and the leadership team will develop a plan to address this. The delivery of 16-19 provision is c£1.5m (income) above allocation which cannot be recognised without approval of a growth case; this has been raised with the ESFA and will be raised again. There are also £300k of COVID related costs with no indication that these costs can be recovered.

- The main areas which are behind budget are Adult (ESOL), Apprenticeships and IoT apprenticeships. Apprenticeships income is £410k below budget (contribution is 20%-30%). Several apprentices have been made redundant due to COVID which is a national picture.

- Prisons is expected to deliver to budget; the funding model protects the College from COVID implications.

- The cash balance as of 31st October was £7.65m which was better than budget (£5.89m). The year-end cash forecast is £4.74m, slightly better than budget

- The College has received additional funding of £440k for students who have been disadvantaged by COVID (1:1 catch-up tuition) and a £954k capital grant for repairs and refurbishment of the estate.

- The Board approved a Capex budget of £1.401m of which £669k has been spent year to date.

- The College has secured a grant from Milton Keynes Council to deliver the NewFutures:MK initiative. This has started and the agreement should be finalised for approval at the next meeting (the grant value is £698k). This is a low-risk project for the College.

- A recommendation on a staff pay award will be made at the next meeting.

The Board noted:
- *The 2019/20 year-end position.*
- *The financial position as of 31st October 2020, the forecast year end position at 31st July 2021 and the predicted cashflow forecast.*
- *Progress on the Campus Investment budget.*
- *The NewFutures:MK contract*
- *That a staff pay recommendation will be made at the next meeting*

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3.1 Audit & Risk Committee 30th November 2020 *(Paper 3.1)*

Alan Cook, Chair of the Audit & Risk referred governors to Paper 3.1 which is the report of the meeting held on 30th November.

At the meeting, the Committee had reviewed the positive annual audit reports (which is an indicator of good financial control) and the College's financial statements and received assurance on a range of other matters. Due to the assurances received at the meeting and throughout the year, the Committee was able to give its opinion (which was included in Paper 3.1F) that '*in so far as the Committee was aware, the College does have an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for the 'effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets'.*

Governors sought clarification on actions raised at the A&R meeting relating to disclosure of a related party transaction which occurred during the 2020/21 year (but prior to the signing of the accounts) and reference to the IoT in the Letter of Representation. This will be checked with the auditors prior to signing the documents.

Action 1: Imelda Galvin[1]

The Board approved the report from the A&R Committee meeting on 30th November and as recommended by the Committee:

Noted the:
  a) *Regularity SAQ (Paper 3.1A)*
  b) *Internal Audit Annual Report (Paper 3.1B)*
  c) *External Audit Post-Audit Management Report (Paper 3.1C)*

Approved the:
  d) *Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2020 for signing (Paper 3.1D)*
  e) *Representation letter from the College to External Audit for signing (subject to action 1) (Paper 3.1E)*

Approved the:
  f) *A&R Annual Report for 2019/20 (Paper 3.1F)*
  g) *Strategic Risk Register (Paper 3.1G)*
  h) *Four sections of the Financial Regulations (Paper 3.1H)*
  i) *A&R Committee's Terms of Reference for 2020/21 (Paper 3.1I)*

Approved the re-appointment of Buzzacott as providers of the College's External Audit Service for 2020/21

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[1] On 17th December 2020 Auditors confirmed that the Letter of Representation (Paper 3.1E) was complete) and there were no additional disclosures for the accounts.
Subsequently, the Auditors requested an additional disclosure relating to Arts1 and a carry forward from 2018/19; the disclosure was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee and Chair of Governors on 22nd January 2021 and section 21 of the accounts was amended accordingly.

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3.2   Search & Governance Committee 16th November 2020 *(Paper 3.2)*

Stephen Norrish, Chair of the Search & Governance referred governors to Paper 3.2 which is the report of the meeting held on 16th November.

Stephen highlighted that the Committee had:
- Reviewed the IoT governance model (appended to Paper 3.2)
- Made a recommendation to re-appoint a governor for a second term (since approved by email)
- Discussed diversity of the Board and invited the EDI Manager to attend the next S&G meeting in February
- Noted that in the next 3-4 years five experienced governors may retire; succession planning will be a priority
- Agreed a training plan for governors which has since been circulated. This includes mandatory training every three years (on appointment and re-appointment).

The Board:
- ***Approved the report from the S&G Committee meeting on 16th November***
- ***Approved the S&G Committee's Annual Report for 2019/20***
- ***Approved the S&G Committee's Terms of Reference for 2020/21***
- ***Ratified the re-appointment of Rebecca Carrington to serve a second term of office (previously approved by email)***

3.3   PDMG 3rd December 2020 / Sub-Committee Written Resolution 16th November 2020 *(Paper 3.3)*

Peter Cox, Chair of the PDMG referred governors to Paper 3.3 which is the report of the meeting held on 3rd December.

Peter highlighted:
- The IoT legal documents were formally executed on 10th December 2020
- The design team has been re-engaged
- As the capital projects are formally commencing, the PDMG will be meeting monthly from January with a standing agenda.

The Board:
- ***Approved the report from the PDMG meeting on 3rd December 2020***
- ***Ratified the written resolution dated 16th November 2020 relating to signing the legal agreements.***

3.4   Meeting Effectiveness

The Board confirmed there had been sufficient time for debate and apart from any specific items minuted elsewhere, there were no further items requiring additional time at a future meeting / follow-up discussions.

3.5   Agenda items for the next meeting (10th February 2021)
- Curriculum Planning / Tribal Benchmark Report
- Strategic Plan and Targets
- Financial Health / Staff Pay recommendation
- Student Experience – KPIs and in-year progress
- Reports from Finance Group / PDMG / CQG
- Delegation of the Fee Policy

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CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 **Remuneration Committee**
- **Remuneration Committee's Annual Report 2019/20** *(Confidential paper 4.1A)*
- **Senior Post Holders Annual Statement 2019/20 for publication on the website** *(Paper 4.1B)*
- **Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference for 2020/21** *(Paper 4.1B)*

4.2 **Modern Slavery Statement for publication on the website** *(Paper 4.2)*

4.3 **Business Continuity Policy** *(Paper 4.3)*

4.4 **Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 11th November 2020 (***Papers 4.4A, Confidential 4.4B and Confidential 4.4C)*

Matters arising:

Date raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
11/11/20	Respond to the Padlet questions before the Awayday on 19/11	Board	Complete
7/10/20	Update student recruitment numbers with EDI data and re-circulate	MG	Complete (included in Paper 2.2)

4.5 **Campus SAR / QIP (***Papers 4.5)*

Next Meeting 10th February 2021 at 5pm

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