MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021, Microsoft Teams
17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2020/21	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	6 of 7	Yes
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	6 of 7	Yes
Alan Cook	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	7 of 7	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Liz Marr	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
David Meadowcroft	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Julie Mills	CEO	7 of 7	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	6 of 7	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Charlynne Pullen	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Aniesa Shah	Staff	6 of 7	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	7 of 7	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	6 of 7	Yes (in part)
Tony Berwick resigned 5/11/20	Independent	1 of 1	
Asad Mir (resigned 11/5/21)	Student	6 of 6	
Georgia Pongourou (resigned 9/6/21)	Student	3 of 4	
Attendance % this meeting		100%	16 / 16
Attendance % year to date		94%	117 / 124

Regular attendees: Sally Alexander (Principal), Annie Allen (CPO), Imelda Galvin (COO), Alex Warner (Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Other attendees in part: Laura Marulanda-Carter

1.1 There were no apologies as everyone was present. Asad Mir and Georgia Pongourou have stepped down as they have completed their respective courses.

Laura Marulanda-Carter was welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 There is a standing declaration from Rebecca Carrington (Director and Principal of Arts1).

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2.0   Strategic Priorities

2.1   CEO's Report to the Board *(Paper 2.1)*

Julie Mills referred to her report.

The uncertainty about the 21st June (Freedom Day) is causing some nervousness but students being back on site is mostly welcomed.

The Students of the Year online event is tomorrow (11th June) and the IoT online launch is next week (17th June).

Governors will recall a discussion about a recognition award for staff. The aim had been to launch the new Strategic Plan and hold an onsite event on 2nd July but in view of the uncertainty, the onsite event is not going ahead. Instead Teams have been awarded £40 per head to hold a team event of their choosing.

'People' and 'Organisational Culture' continues to be a priority and there is a comprehensive update in the report. Annie Allen gave more information on the staff engagement survey (Peakon):
- The survey was launched in December 2020 and is ongoing. There has been good engagement from staff.
- Areas of strategic importance are:
    - Reward
    - Environment
    - Strategy
    - Organisation Fit and Inclusion
- The next phase of engagement will be rolling out soon.

Governors asked questions relating to Peakon and the CEO report:

Is the Peakon data benchmarked?

Yes, against similar organisations (and then adjusted for demographics, length of service etc); we are currently tracking slightly below benchmarks. Peakon measures are built into the Strategic Plan. COVID is having an impact as employees are missing being together.

Was the Peakon survey issued prior to the 2% pay award noting that reward is the lowest score?

No, the survey goes out every three weeks and this is the latest data set. The pay decision was well received but it was in the context of no pay award for several years. It does emphasise that we need to move forward with the Remuneration Project (equity of pay, transparency of pay reviews etc),

We are scoring 1.2 below the benchmark – is this comparing to other FE Colleges?

No. It is against similar organisations (not many FE Colleges use Peakon).

What do we believe is causing the low score for Environment?

There is dissatisfaction from some employees who are working from home. Most staff in our nineteen prisons are coming back on site (as required by the MoJ contract). Campus sites are generally in good condition, but some prison sites are not so good.

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Has there been any comparison between teams? During a Link Governor visit, Peakon was discussed and the differences between Business Partner teams and teaching areas.

This may reflect the different levels of autonomy between, business partners and teaching teams. There are differences between teams on several levels e.g. between campus and prisons and between the 19 prisons. Annie offered a deeper dive into the data for any governors who want this.

Governors asked for prison and campus to be reported separately in future and also to report trends.

Action 1: Annie Allen

In relation to prison procurement and lobbying, has the College engaged with MPs in the areas where our prisons are located?

We will establish from the regional teams whether their local MPs and stakeholders are engaged. We will be engaging with Ben Everitt MP for MK North.

The Board received the CEO's Report.

2.2   **Student Experience: Institute of Technology** *(Paper 2.2)*

Alex Warner and Laura Marulanda-Carter gave a presentation on the IoT and also referred to Paper 2.2 which gives a comprehensive update on curriculum development including contributions from students and Anchor Partners and a fly-through of the proposed Bletchley site. Alex and Laura highlighted:

- Students are currently based in the Andrew Peck Building (APB) which will be incorporated into the Bletchley site of the IoT.
- This is 'Year 0' in terms of DfE student targets (academic year 1 is 2021/22).
- Student feedback is very positive
- There is a shared digital environment with Activate Learning (who will deliver the IoT experience from their sites at Oxford and Reading) i.e. all aspects of the student journey, including learning spaces, will be consistent across the three sites.
- The operating model is based on project based learning with dual professionals involved in the co-design, development, and delivery of modules. Coaches (who facilitate learning) will work alongside the dual professionals.
- The Code Markers Academy is a new employment vehicle to allow employees to be appointed on different terms and conditions e.g. coaches and curriculum developers (whose role includes leveraging the involvement of partners and employers to enhance the curriculum).
- The 'secret sauce', at the heart of the IoT student experience, is shifting the focus from:
    - Qualifications to employers' needs / building a portfolio based on experience of working on real projects (Inclusive Culture)
    - Knowledge transfer to problem solving skills based on live projects and working with dual professionals who have the current industry knowledge and can facilitate, mentor, coach etc (Innovative Curriculum)
    - Teacher / Lecturer to Dual Professionals, coaches and facilitators (Connect Employers)
    - Theoretical knowledge to hands-on skills development from working on live project experiences (Challenge Behaviour)

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Governors asked questions:

What is the expectation of partners and employers?

Employers want to work with us. We have set expectations (which is not merely about providing guest speakers) i.e. we want employers to work alongside us offering real world industry challenges to students.

Dual professional means they have an industry identity but also an education identity. We offer a fast track induction to teacher training to prepare professionals to deliver projects and coaching (onsite and online). Partners are most comfortable sharing real work challenges which is what we want and provides most benefit to students.

If IoT coaches and curriculum developer are paid more than campus based teachers, are we at risk of creating a two tier system?

Based on a total reward statement, the overall package is the same. Although IoT salaries may be higher, they have lower pension contributions (because they do not have to be enrolled in the Teachers' Pension Scheme) and lower holiday pay etc. The cost is the same to the organisation but presented differently (which is more commercially attractive to some and has assisted recruitment from industry).

Can you expand on the marketing strategy and the use of social media?

Alex explained the six personas with underpin the campaign based on targeting students and parents.

Live influencers have not been used yet but will be explored with Microsoft.

Are there any challenges relating to the student experience which the Board should be aware of?

Innovation is a key value and in a large organisation with traditional structures, doing things differently has created some challenges e.g. asking staff to work different delivery hours / different academic year / work alongside employers etc. We have now set the cultural norms and new recruits, will join a progressive team and will have different expectations

Bringing in an industry leader with no prior experience of how education works and requiring them to be a coach, has also posed some challenges.

Finally, ensuring there is a consistent student experience when there are two education partners (MK College and Activate Learning). But this also brings opportunities as our coaches and partners are spread across a wider Thames Valley area e.g. Vodaphone in Newbury.

Will students be local or move locally or study online?

Digital delivery transcends geographical locations however we want to focus on an outstanding student experience hence we are not pushing

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online courses for now. DfE targets are also linked to post codes. It is an opportunity for the future.

Is a MK:U a competitor in offering degree apprenticeships?

We all recognise that there is a need for a university in MK to retain talent. MK:U is launching three degree apprenticeships which align to IoT programmes so yes it is competition but our offer already exists and we have the strong employer relationships.

How are you working with local schools as teachers are key influencers and with our own progression students?

We are currently prioritising Year 13 school students but will target lower age groups in the future.

We are working with current Level 3 Computing and Games Animation students as the IoT is the natural progression. We are also exploring less traditional subjects e.g. Level 3 Business. The IoT curriculum is inclusive at Level 4 and digital jobs are flexible.

What is recruitment for 2021 looking like and is it meeting your expectations? What is the position with the 22 applicants who have not yet received offers?

The challenge is the IoT has no pre-determined data / historic experience to know whether the pipeline is strong at this stage i.e. for 16-18, we have a good idea of how many pipeline students are needed to achieve the target. However we are confident of achieving the target of 80 full or part-time students and 100 apprentices. These are the headline numbers and there are also EDI targets (e.g. 50% female. 35% BAME) to reflect the Thames Valley community. A new data tool on Power BI will allow us to track the student profile.

The reason why 22 applications have not led to offers are varied e.g. too young, change of mind, submitted multiple applications.

Have you had an opportunity to assess the student experience other than the student snapshots? It would also be interesting to know more about the difference between traditional teaching and the coach / facilitator roles.

There are regular student forums and live student voice sessions which has informed decisions on many levels.

There is an open invitation to see the IoT in action, but project based learning is the key differentiator (i.e. a focus on problem solving, self-reflection, building a portfolio rather than assessment focused, not teaching from the front of the room).

Governors thanked Alex and Laura for an excellent and informative presentation.

The Board received the presentation on the IoT

Laura was thanked for attending and she left the meeting.

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2.3   Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Skills and Growth (White Paper) *(Paper 3.3)*

Julie Mills and Imelda Galvin referred to the emerging bidding opportunities, described in Paper 3.3. The College is only investing time in bids / expressions of interest (EOI) which align to the Strategic Plan. It is a competitive process, usually requiring tight turnarounds.

Discussion minuted as confidential.

Delegation of Authority for EOI and Bids requiring Board approval

In view of the tight timescales, the Board agreed to delegate authority for approving bids and EOIs (which require Board approval), to a new Approvals Task & Finish Group. Membership will be (three from) Chair of Governors, Vice-Chair of Governors, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and Chair of Search & Governance Committee. Deputies would be drawn from the Audit & Risk Committee, CQG or Search & Governance Committee. The Head of Governance will draft Terms of Reference. There is a bid which will require urgent Board approval this week.

The Board:
- ***Noted the funding opportunities which are emerging following the White Paper***
- ***Delegated authority to an 'Approvals Task & Finish Group' to review and approve applications which require Board approval between the period 1st June 2021 – 1st December 2021***

2.4   Student Experience

a) Campus progress against targets *(Paper 2.4A)*

Sally Alexander and Alex Warner referred to Paper 2.4 and highlighted:
- The themes from the recent quality performance boards and BRAG ratings of 16-18 students. Compared to the baseline in March, scores have improved at each data capture. The Performance Boards are effective, and teachers know their students.
- The College is supporting students who are at risk of not achieving through interventions.
- Schools with a greater proportion of lower level and / or vocational trades are most adversely affected.
- There has been a significant number of wellbeing referrals.
- Plans for submitting TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades) are on track.

The Board received the update on the Student Experience

b) Curriculum and Quality Group 17th May 2021 *(Paper 2.4B)*

The CQG met on 17th May as reported in Paper 2.4B. Liz Marr, Chair of CQG advised that the CQG is receiving good information and had received a good presentation on apprenticeships. The HE Access & Participation Plan (APP), which pre-dates the IoT, is very bureaucratic and Alex Warner was asked to raise this with the other IoTs. The APP will be revised next cycle.

The Board approved the CQG report of the meeting on 17th May 2021

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2.5   Financial Sustainability *(Paper 2.5)*

Financial Health 2020/21 - Period 9 Management Accounts:

Imelda Galvin referred governors to Paper 2.5 and highlighted:

- Overall College contribution YTD is £70k ahead of budget.

- The College is predicted to come in £58k ahead of budget full year (with an overall contribution of £717k).

- The cash balance was £5.05m at the 30th April which was slightly behind budget (£5.13m). The full year cash balance is forecast to be £5.43m (budget £4.57m).

- The Board approved a campus investment budget of £1.3m for 2020/21 of which £724k has been spent year to date.

- The College has received formal confirmation from the ESFA of an overall 'Good' financial health grading for FY2019/20.

- The budget will be presented for approval at the July Board meeting having been reviewed by the Finance Group on 5th July.

The Board noted:
- *The financial position as of 30th April 2021 including financial KPIs*
- *The forecast year end position as of 31st July 2021*
- *The predicted cashflow forecast as of 31st July 2021*
- *The Campus Investment budget (Capex).*

Governance and Compliance

3.1   Search & Governance Committee Meeting 7th June 2021 *(Paper 3.1)*

Stephen Norrish referred to the report of the meeting.

The Committee is recommending that Liz Marr is elected as Vice-Chair for 2021/22 (since approved by email), and following an interview, that Ian Revell is appointed to the Board.

A governor poll on meetings in 2021/22 was considered and the Committee is recommending that Board meetings are a combination of face to face and virtual meetings, committees and scrutiny groups agree their own arrangements (subject to committees and S&G monitoring attendance to ensure diversity is not reduced), and if a meeting has been designated as F2F, governors should do their best to attend i.e. will not be possible to join a meeting virtually for the time being (this will be reviewed / trialled when the College's technology allows it).

At the last meeting, the College's EDI Manager advised the Board to take a medium / long term view on increasing the diversity of the Board, as part of a whole college approach. The Committee has requested a strategy with interim milestones and KPIs which can be monitored.

The Board discussed the proposal for meetings and agreed that Board meetings should alternate between F2F and virtual (MS Teams).

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The Board:
- *Noted the report from the S&G meeting on 7th June*
- *Ratified the election of Liz Marr to serve as Vice-Chair for 2021/22*
- *Approved the appointment of Ian Revell to the Board for a three year term of office, subject to DBS*
- *Agreed the meeting arrangements for 2021/22*

3.2   PDMG Meeting 11th May 2021 *(Paper 3.2)*

Peter Cox referred to the report of the meeting.

The Group received assurance on project progress, variations from budget and that the vision / design principles were being met. There is still a (pre-tender) risk concerning the cost of cladding at Oxford, but Activate Learning has agreed to under-write the costs.

The tender for the main works at Reading has been issued and is expected to be above the approval limit for PDMG (£500k). The Board was requested to delegate specific approval to the PDMG to review and approve the contract for Reading.

The Board:
- *Noted the report from the PDMG meeting on 11th May 2021*
- *Agreed to delegate authority to the PDMG to approve the contract for the main works for the IoT site at Reading*

3.3   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 discussion.

3.4   Agenda items for the next meeting (14th July 2021)
- Review of Board strategic priorities 2021 and agree priorities for 21/22
- Financial Health - Budget for 2021/22 including cap-ex
- Student Experience - SEND / Safeguarding (Annual report and presentation), forecast achievement, curriculum plan implementation
- Subcontracting 2021/22
- Health & Safety Annual Report
- Freedom of Information / Data Protection Annual report and Policies
- Meeting reports: PDMG 15th June, A&R Committee 17th June, CQG 29th June, FinG 5th July

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1   *Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 5th May 2021* (Papers 4.1)

Matters arising: None

4.2   CFF Bids re Craven College and Northampton College *(Papers 4.2)*

The Board ratified the written resolution delegating authority to the Chair to approve the CFF bids relating to Craven College (data support) and Northampton College (E&M)

Next Meeting 14th July 2021

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