

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2021, MS Teams, 17:00 – 18:10

Committee Members	Attendance Record 2020/21	Present at this meeting
Julie Mills Charlynn Pullen Stephen Norrish Manish Verma	2 of 2 2 of 2 2 of 2 2 of 2	Julie Mills Charlynn Pullen Stephen Norrish Manish Verma
Total Percentage attendance (this meeting)	100 %	4/4
Total percentage attendance (year to date)	100 %	8/8

In attendance: Arv Kaushal, Equality Diversity & Inclusion Manager, Karen Brown

PROCEDURAL

- 1.1 Stephen Norrish welcomed Arv Kaushal to the meeting
- 1.2 There were no apologies as everyone was present.
- 1.3 There were no declaration of Interests relating to this agenda.

BOARD PERFORMANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

2.1 Board Composition

a) Board Membership

Membership of the Board is 'up to 19' including 'between 9 and 14' Independent Members. The Standing Orders allows for two additional Independent Members to be appointed for succession planning. There are currently 13 Independent Members.

There are no Student Governor or Staff Governor vacancies.

b) Board re-appointments and Succession Planning

When making a recommendation on appointments and re-appointments this Committee considers the balance of skills and experience, diversity of current members, any selection criteria agreed by the Board and the Board's strategic priorities. There is a rotation of skills e.g. three new members were appointed last cycle.

Ruby Parmar (*Confidential Paper 2.1A*)

Ruby Parmar has completed her first term of office and has applied to serve a second term.

Having reviewed Ruby's application form, previous attendance, contribution at the PDMG and Remuneration Committee, Link Governor role (People Services) and representative of the Board at the APSG, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that Ruby be appointed to serve a second term. Ruby also co-hosted the Students of the Year awards in 2020.

David Meadowcroft (*Confidential Paper 2.1B*)

David Meadowcroft has completed his second term of office and has applied to serve a third term.

Having reviewed David's application form, previous attendance, leadership as Chair of Governors, contribution at the PDMG, Finance Group and Remuneration Committee and Link Governor role (Apprenticeships), the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that David be appointed to serve a third term. David was elected as Chair of Governors in July 2019 for a three-year term.

Liz Marr (*Confidential Paper 2.1C*)

Liz Marr has completed her third term of office and applied to serve an exceptional fourth term.

The usual length of governor service at MK College is three terms of three years (9 years in total). In exceptional circumstances, the Board's Standing Orders allow members to be re-appointed for a fourth or in very exceptional circumstances, a fifth term of office. Exceptional circumstances could include the member's particular area of skills and expertise and the specific needs of the College at a point in time e.g. if a member uniquely provides critical skills or input, which is not provided by another member. The Search & Governance Committee will clearly define these exceptional circumstances in any recommendation to the Board.

Liz has worked in UK Higher Education c30 years and has a long history of engagement with the widening participation agenda in the UK. Her knowledge and experience of the OfS and Quality Assurance Standards for HE is particularly valuable as the College is currently developing higher level qualifications through the IoT and this knowledge and experience is not provided by another member.

Having reviewed Liz's application form, previous attendance, vice-chair role, contribution as chair of the CQG, membership of Remuneration Committee and Link Governor role (HE, SEND and Safeguarding), the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that Liz be appointed to serve a fourth term.

The Head of Governance was asked to seek approval of the three re-appointments by written resolution (email) and if approved, the re-appointments will be ratified at the March Board meeting.

Action 1: Karen Brown

Succession Planning

Short Term

Stephen Norrish completes his fourth term of office in October 2021 and has confirmed that he will not be applying to serve a fifth term.

Medium Term (2-3 years)

Four governors are due to complete their third / fourth terms between July 2023 and March 2024. This includes the Chair of Governors and three Committee Chairs. Succession planning will be a priority for this Committee.

The Committee noted the Board composition and made the following recommendations to the Board for approval:

- a) ***Ruby Parmar is re-appointed to serve a second term (February 2021 – February 2024)***
- b) ***David Meadowcroft is re-appointed to serve a third term (March 2021 – March 2024)***
- c) ***Liz Marr is re-appointed to serve a fourth term (March 2021 – March 2024)***

2.2 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Table 1: EDI position as of February 2021

	Independent Governors (13)	All Governors (18)
Gender		
Male	8 of 13 (62%)	9 of 18 (50%)
Female	5 of 13 (38%)	9 of 18 (50%)
Ethnicity		
Indian Asian or Asian British	2 of 13 (15%)	2 of 18 (11%)
Pakistani Asian or Asian British		2 of 18 (11%)
White - British	8 of 13 (62%)	11 of 18 (61%)
White - Other European	2 of 13 (15%)	2 of 18 (11%)
Chinese	1 of 13 (8%)	1 of 18 (6%)
Disability / Health Conditions		
Yes – Physical / Sensory Impairment	0 of 13	0 of 18
None	13 of 13 (100%)	18 of 18 (100%)

Arv Kaushal, the College's EDI Manager had been invited to this meeting to discuss ideas on how the Board could improve its diversity profile. Ten (77%) of independent governors are White-British or White-Other which does not reflect the student cohort.

The discussion included the following:

Strategic

- The Board's diversity challenge is reflected across the sector and addressing under-representation is included in the FE White Paper (item 2.4). The AoC will be surveying member colleges shortly on EDI (MK College governors were surveyed in 2020 at the request of this Committee).
- The diversity of Milton Keynes is increasing and representing the student profile and the MK community must be aspirational. In the short term, the Board should focus on recruiting the right skillset and build connections in other ways e.g. Friends and Allies Network for the longer term.

- The College's new strategic plan is centred on creating fairer futures with inclusion at the heart. College strategies and operational plans will include EDI and the College will be developing business and community links in ways which help to increase diversity. Governance and recruitment of governors should not sit outside other college strategies and should be embedded as part of a whole college approach. Promoting diversity in every aspect of the College's work, will lead to more contacts with more people who could be potential governors.

Process

- Currently there is an open invitation to express an interest in governance on the College website and the College is registered with 'Inspiring FE Governance' (a matching agency for colleges and volunteers). There are also referrals from local business networks with whom the College has a profile e.g. MK Business Leaders.
 - The College has not approached specific networks but has been proactive in contacting specific individuals. Some communities may not contemplate a governance role and if they do, may believe it is the same as school governance.
 - Making a direct approach and then not appointing as part of a selective process has been challenging, however this should not be the case providing that candidates know it is a competitive process. Entrepreneurs may not be used to an interview process.
 - The role and time commitment, even though the role is voluntary, should be made clear. Governors who have left the Board mid-term have given family and work commitments as the reason. Shadowing / associate positions with a lower-level commitment could be considered to gain an understanding of the role. Governors may be co-opted to committees.
- Conclusion

Actions agreed:

- Do not focus on recruiting BAME governors in the short-term because it could lead to tokenism. Accept the current position and have a longer-term plan as part of a Group initiative and culture.
- Consider a Link Governor role to champion EDI (fairness and equality agenda).

The Committee discussed diversity of the Board and will consider a new EDI Link Governor role

2.3 Themes from Governor Reviews

The Chair and Vice-Chair met with every governor in the autumn term and the S&G Chair carried out the Chair's review. The reviews were generally positive, and the emerging themes reflected the self-assessment completed by governors in 2020 (the subsequent action plan was agreed by this Committee). Themes included:

Meetings:

- Ensure that everyone can speak. The ELT should introduce items by summarising the key messages (i.e. do not just invite questions). Involve a range of presenters at Board meetings who can enthuse, speak with passion, educate the Board

Board Effectiveness

- The size and structure of the Board is appropriate but broaden the diversity and share the workload equally (e.g. meeting commitments).

Board Development

- Governors have time issues and limited opportunity for personal development. Plan in Board development at / around Board meetings e.g. items suggested were apprenticeships, IoT curriculum, OfS requirements, safeguarding (governors' responsibilities). Consider whether governors would be prepared to give additional 20-30 mins for development sessions?

Link Governor Feedback

- The Committee discussed feedback from Link Governors and concluded that feedback could be circulated by email and will only be discussed at meetings by exception (e.g. if there is a specific point to raise). If there are any questions relating to curriculum, these should be raised with Sally Alexander.

The Committee noted the themes from the 2020 governor reviews.

2.4 Sector Developments

a) Code of Governance for English Colleges (the Code)

There is to be a minor review of the Code. The AoC will be consulting shortly, and the intention is to publish the updated Code in March/April.

b) ETF Governance Training Framework

The framework is an integral feature of the Governors Training Plan (agreed at the last meeting) for which there is now a charge. The College will sign up for an annual subscription of £200 which will allow all governors to access all the units.

c) Skills for Jobs – FE White Paper

The 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth'¹ (FE White Paper) was published in January 2021 and included a section on governance i.e.

- Higher expectations of governance through clearer requirements, reviews, and training.
- Clear expectations for boards on recruitment, retention and development of principals and board members. A refresh of existing guidance on leadership appointments.
- A published framework of skills and competencies to improve development of governors and governance professionals once in post.
- A new requirement for an annual board self-assessment and regular external governance reviews.
- More support for boards to develop capacity and build a diverse membership that better reflects their local areas e.g. board recruitment guidance to set clear expectations on the skills and experience needed for effective governance, such as financial and budget management expertise, post-16 education experience, and business and estates management skills.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf

- Identify ways in which industry professionals and others with these skills and experience can be encouraged to join college boards including groups currently underrepresented e.g., people with disabilities, and people from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds.

The AoC is considering the recommendations and will provide further information in due course (implementation by 2025 has been suggested).

The Committee noted the sector developments

CONSENT AGENDA

3.1 Minutes of the last meeting held on 16th November 2020

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020

Matters arising:

No.	Action arising 16th November 2020	Action Owner	Current status
1	Update the APSG ToR and recirculate	KB	Complete
2	Add the additional paragraph about reputation risk when issuing RC's reappointment letter	KB	Complete
3	Obtain feedback from the Chair / Vice-Chair following the governor reviews	KB	Complete
4	Circulate the training plan to all governors	KB	Complete

NEXT MEETING: 7th June 2021