

**Open Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held via Microsoft Teams
16 December 2020 at 17:00**

Present

Carole Stott (CS) Chair
 Victoria Downing-Burn (VDB)
 Erica Draisey (ED)
 Lisa Ford (LF)
 Andy Furse (AF)
 Mike Oram (MO)
 Laurel Penrose Principal & CEO
 Ian Tavener (IT)
 Gary Waylen (GW)
 Julian Young (JY)

In attendance

Jayne Davis (JD) Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality
 Paul Fletton (PF) Interim Finance Director
 Anne Roberts (AR) Head of Governance (Secretariat)

For part of item 5.1 only:

Terence Jagger (TJ) Chair of the Board of Bath Spa University
 Sue Rigby (SR) Vice Chancellor, Bath Spa University

Attendance: 72%

ITEM
1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence
The Chair welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the Board in 2020. Apologies for absence were given from Dan Ball, Paul Blenkinsopp, Jenny Williams and Neil Wilson.
2. Declarations of Interest
The Chair in relation to item 5.2.
3. Confidentiality of Items
The Board agreed that papers relating to 5.1, 5.2, 6.1.2a, 6.3.1], 6.3.3, [6.3.4], 6.4, [9.1] and 9.2 were confidential and marked as (C).
4. Minutes
4.1 Minutes – 19 November 2020
The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record. These would be signed by the Chair by electronic signature following the meeting.
4.2 Actions and Matters Arising

There were no matters arising. The Board considered the action register. All actions had been completed, were on this agenda or scheduled for a future agenda.

5. STRATEGY

5.1 Strategic Partnership Proposal (C)

Confidential Minute

5.2 Chair Succession (C)

Confidential Minute

5.3 Principal & CEO Update

LP provided the following update to the Board:

- The Comprehensive Spending Review had lots of interest for Colleges
- There would be an increase in funding for 16-19 year olds in 21/22
- The Government would continue to pay the teacher pension grant funding for a short period
- Many initiatives had been announced recently and SMT/management were working on these
- The student community chest and Christmas dinners were going well. She thanked BA&NES for their work in supporting this and also thanked AF for his email to B&NES thanking them from the College
- There had been 37 positive cases to date of covid-19 in college (27 students and 10 staff). Colleges were advised yesterday of the testing available to colleges in January which would need planning
- There would be no change to teaching plans for the first two weeks of next term but a review would then take place in relation to blended learning

Members expressed concern about how to ensure a system was in place for testing at such short notice without exposing staff to any health and safety risks. LP stated that no staff would be put at risk and SMT were reviewing the situation and would report back in January.

6. SCRUTINY

6.1 Curriculum & Quality

6.1.1 Quality Dashboards

ED presented the Quality Dashboards 19/20 and 20/21 which had been reviewed by CQWG. Retention in 19/20 was good and above the national average. The data was positive generally, and particularly on English and Maths and for vulnerable students. Staff had adapted quickly to the covid-19 situation in their teaching and support of students and were to be commended.

JD reported that she and the Assistant Principals had developed new strategies to support under-performing areas. A report would be made to CQWG as part of the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) Report in January and would be brought to the Board for discussion. **ACTION: JD**

JY asked for more detail on apprenticeships and their achievements. ED reported that she had attended the Apprentices SAR meeting which had a lot more detail and this would be reflected in the SAR report, including any areas of risk.

Data on retention and progression would be updated on the next version of the Dashboard 19/20 for presentation to the Board. Results of the surveys to learners, staff and employers would be included. Both the Chair and ED recommended governors' attending a Self-Assessment Review to provide greater insight into areas of the College.

6.1.2 Report from Curriculum & Quality Working Group

ED thanked MO for his input on the draft Digital Strategy which would be further worked on by LP for review before coming to the Board.

Safeguarding (C)

JD presented the safeguarding report and the issues underpinning the data. Exploitation in its various forms was on the rise. She reported that the College had a good structures and processes in place and strong links with key partners. The Board noted the changes in safeguarding trends, the structural changes in the Student Welfare Team, the effect Covid-19 had had on the work of the team and the priorities for 20/21.

VDB asked how the quality of support from partners could be assured and the support to BAME students and staff. LF asked whether Covid-19 had resulted in a dilution of numbers coming through. JD reported on the quality checks in place and would look at the diversity data. She reported that whilst numbers were lower in the first few months of lockdown, this had not been a trend and staff were regularly contacting students, engagement was good and the site was open for access. Some students were more comfortable reaching out online, whilst others preferred to come into College.

Complaints & Compliments annual report

Members noted that numbers were low this year and asked whether the College was capturing all the data. It was reported that many complaints were dealt with at Assistant Principal level and therefore were not captured here.

6.2 Finance & Estates

6.2.1 Finance Briefing

PF gave members a finance briefing in relation to the College and the rest of the sector, highlighting financial overview of the sector (18/19), financial health calculation, topical issues and funding and regulation. He particularly highlighted the number of cash days, staff costs, regulation by the OfS and the insolvency regime under which banks now required security on loans. FE funding was very complex, with multiple different streams and rules.

JY asked about modelling financial risks in relation to significant funding bids.

6.2.2 Management Accounts – October 2020

Members considered the October Management accounts which had previously been reviewed by FEWG on 2 December 2020. PF reported on the deficit and the moderation used. The forecast remained the same as the budget. The next set of accounts would reflect the data following the R04 return.

He reported that the work on the depreciation replacement cost valuation for SVC had been completed which supported the carrying value. This would be sent to the external auditors. He also reported that the bank loan had

<p>been sanctioned, the technical breach waived and that the increased credit risk would not be extended beyond August 2021. The indicative terms were now awaited. Members thanked PF for his work in moving this forward. The Board APPROVED the accounts.</p>
<p>6.3 Audit</p>
<p>6.3.1 Internal Audit Annual Report [C] JY, as Chair of Audit Committee, reported that the Annual Audit Committee report would be presented in January as the work of the external auditors had not yet completed. He highlighted the recommendations in the Internal Audit Annual Report which were being progressed. The Board noted the reasonable assurance given on the College's governance, risk management and systems of internal control.</p>
<p>6.3.2 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire JY presented the completed regularity self-assessment questionnaire and Annex which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee. Thanks were given to AR for coordinating the return. The Board APPROVED the signing of this by the Chair and Accounting Officer. ACTION: AR to send the signed return to the external auditors</p>
<p>6.3.3 Risk Register, including Covid-19 Risk Assessment (confidential paper) Members considered the Risk Registers, noting that these had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee. The changes made were noted. The request by Audit Committee to add horizon scanning and inclusion of the Assistant Principals in the Register was noted. JY reported that an updated Risk Management Policy following the internal audit report would come to the January or February Board.</p>
<p>6.3.4 Information Governance Annual Report [C] LP reported on the increase in volume and complexity in relation to subject access requests and FOIs. Members noted that Subject Access Requests had doubled during the year and asked about the impact on finances. LP reported that the requests were very time-consuming and were time limited. The College was looking to appoint a data protection officer to assist with the workload.</p>
<p>6.4 Health & Safety Quarterly update (C) Members considered the latest health and safety update. LP highlighted the areas in the report, including new control measures. One member asked if a focus on stress issues could be highlighted in the next report as the HSE were interested in the risk assessment of this. ACTION: LP</p>
<p>7. GOVERNANCE</p>
<p>7.1 Remuneration Report</p>
<p>AF, as Chair of the Senior Staff Performance & Remuneration Committee, reported on the work of the Committee during the year. The remuneration complemented that in the financial statements which would come to the January Board for approval. The Board APPROVED the report for publishing on the College website. ACTION: AR</p>
<p>8. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL</p>
<p>8.1 Gender Pay Gap</p>
<p>The Board considered the Gender Pay Gap report, noting that the mean gender pay gap had reduced slightly and the median gender pay gap remained the same. The College rates were good compared to others in the sector. One member asked about actions around talent management and succession practices which would be reflected in the HR strategy.</p>

The Board APPROVED the Gender Pay Gap Report for publication on the College website. ACTION: AR
9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
9.1 Audit Committee- 25 November 2020 (C)
The draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee were noted
9.2 Finance & Estates Working Group (FEWG) – 2 December 2020 (C)
The draft notes of the meeting of the FEWG were noted.
9.3 Curriculum and Quality Working Group (CQWG) – 9 December 2020
The draft notes of the meeting of the CQWG were noted.
10. Any Other Business
The Chair thanked LP, JD and PF for all their sterling work and commitment to the College during what had been one of the most challenging years ever and hoped they would be able to take a well-earned rest over the Christmas period.
LP thanked the Chair and the Board of Governors for all their support, enabling the College to be in a strong and positive position.
11 CONFIDENTIAL BOARD – external members only
11.1 Senior Postholders update
Confidential Minute
12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
27 January 2021 at 17:00
Future Meetings
26 February 2021 (strategy day)
29 March 2021
24 May 2021
12 July 2021

Signed (Chair): 

Date: 27 January 2021