

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation Held on 26 March 2018**

at City Centre Campus, Room H102a

Carole Stott	Chair
Andy Furse	Vice-Chair
Laurel Penrose	Apologies
Victor da Cunha	
Erica Draisey	
Tesh Baber	
Paul Blenkinsopp	Apologies
Paul May	Apologies
Jane Shaw	
Gary Waylen	
Neil Wilson	Apologies
Julian Young	(from item 8)

### **In attendance**

Heather Cross	Clerk to the Corporation
Jayne Davis	Deputy Principal
Rachel Hepworth	Director of Finance and Corporate Services

- 1. Apologies and welcome** **ACTION**  
Paul Blenkinsopp, Paul May, Neil Wilson and Julian Young for lateness  
  
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a happy Easter break.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**  
None
- 3. Confidentiality of Items**  
None
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 26 February 2018 and any matters arising**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018 which had been circulated previously were accepted and signed as a true record.

## Matter arising – Gender Pay Reporting

It was reported that the figures had moved more favourably as a result of being able to use actual hourly rates in the calculations (this had been an issue relating to term time only staff). The new gender pay gap mean is 5.1% (from 5.4%) and the median 8.5% (from 8.8%). The upper pay quartile is now exactly 50/50, the upper middle narrowed, the lower middle quartile widened, and the lower quartile narrowed. This report would be placed on the college website.

### **5. Principal's update**

The Chair reported that she had agreed with the Principal there should be a Principal's update included at the start of each meeting from now on. Jayne was acting as Principal currently as Laurel was away and she had agreed with her that a report would be given on current applications.

#### Current applications

Jayne commented that current applications would be reported at each meeting, along with the conversion rate which would be included next time. In comparison to the previous year at the same time, applications were down by 225, with key areas being in arts, media, IT, care and public services. Art had reduced largely because of the effect on the arts foundation programme where Bath Spa had introduced their own. This college was considering a different approach with HNDs and HNCs. Media numbers had increased in the current year and it had been thought that the increase would be maintained, but this was not currently being borne out. IT numbers were expecting to move back to current rates. Sport, leisure and care were down across the board. The sports academy effect had reduced some applications. Hospitality increases were positive and there had been an increase in apprenticeships.

In discussion it was noted that an action plan from marketing had been developed in response, using some tried and trusted marketing techniques. The overall position was 10% down on numbers, although it was acknowledged that figures could fluctuate weekly. The location of the construction centre had been reported as being an issue. Governors commented that if transport was a consideration then action should be taken to enable students to access the college. It was suggested that the longer term connections for construction should be carefully considered. It was understood City of Bristol College was making a bid for a Construction facility and depending on the location for this, it could be seen as a waste of resources and duplication. The College was encouraged to have conversations with the council and with WECA to flag up this potential issue for solution. A new Director of Skills was due to be appointed at WECA shortly, with whom these matters would be discussed.

Discussion followed concerning the use of social media for marketing and it was noted that the courses which were doing well were those which had a presence on Twitter. The College was encouraged to get departments carrying out some of their own marketing by using social media tools. The student governor commented that Instagram and

Facebook were the sites most used by students. It was noted that currently a large proportion of the college's students applied over the summer period and these students tended not to be such strong applicants.

A further report would be made at the next meeting at which governors requested more strategic discussion through considering the available conversion figures, the three year curriculum plan and the marketing strategy together.

## **6. Presentation – Future possibilities for the appointment arrangements for an SU President**

The Deputy Principal and the Student Governor made a presentation, setting out 4 options for the future appointment of a President, as there had been relatively little response to the current advert for the sabbatical President. Tesh Baber spoke about the other non-sabbatical elected posts on the Executive. The President post was elected and the occupant could serve for two years if they wished, but personally she had only wished to serve for one year.

Apart from the current model, the other three options were as follows and the advantages and disadvantages of each one were presented and discussed.

Option 2 - HE student as part-time paid or unpaid role

Option 3 - Current year 2 student takes on an unpaid role

Option 4 - External candidate is recruited in a paid role.

The staffing of the SU space was a key issue for the President post as it needed to be covered full time.

In the current arrangement the SU President was also the student governor. It was felt that neither an HE student nor an external candidate was in the spirit of student participation, unless an HE student happened to be elected.

In discussion governors concluded that the current arrangement remained their preferred option, from which there had been real benefit. There should be more of a recruitment drive and work carried out to persuade students of the benefits in applying. Option 3, with a current year 2 student taking on an unpaid role, should be considered as a fallback position.

A reminder was given that it had been agreed at the recent Awayday that the learner voice should have more prominence and this would be fulfilled through planning in Board agenda items across the year.

## **7. Estates Update**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services gave a brief update informing governors that the architects working with the college had requested detailed room requirements be specified so that they could develop the required scheme. Work to provide this information was under way. It was intended that the updated proposal and fees be

presented to the May meeting. Clear information had come back already from the catering area and was being used to prepare the proposals. Governors reminded college management that space utilisation targets should be built into the proposals in order to maximise space efficiency. It was reported that the timetabling methodology was being changed for the next academic year so that any un-utilised slots would be properly available across the college and for the same reason the recordkeeping was being moved to MIS.

The Finance and Estates Working Group would examine space utilisation as part of its remit.

The Board thanked the Director for the update and looked forward to considering the scheme at the next meeting.

## **8. Quality Dashboard**

It was noted that the circulated quality dashboard had information which was missing – the record of actions as a result of inspection had not been included. The correct document would be loaded onto the MinutePad system as soon as possible. Jayne Davis gave a verbal report on the actions following inspection.

The meeting discussed the current attendance performance, noting that this was above last year's figures currently and the actions being taken to maintain good levels of attendance were discussed. The Quality Working Group had received a report concerning the new system which was being used to review each student to consider their risk level of failing or leaving, which also enabled students to be fast-tracked through their qualifications where appropriate. Governors requested sight of a report at future meetings showing the number of students potentially at risk against the attendance rates, thereby giving a view of the likely confidence in achieving the attendance rate target.

## **9. Additional subcontracting provision**

A report making recommendations for additional subcontracting had been circulated previously. The recommendation was for an additional £50K with the contractor Premier who were well trusted by the college and obtained good results. Further, there was a new contractor proposed, ICCA, which had been recommended by a previous consultant. All necessary due diligence on this company had been carried out. In addition this contractor would work with the college in assisting the conversion of AAT to ACCA qualifications. In answer to a question, it was explained that because this was a new contractor to the college a higher proportion of funding be retained, in recognition of the greater risk (assessed as medium) together with the additional monitoring necessary to verify performance and fully establish expectations in the first year.

Governors asked about the college's proposal to convert accounting qualifications to ACCA and it was commented that feedback had determined this was preferred by employers and the qualification was proposed should be employer-led. AAT provision would remain open

for apprenticeships. Governors satisfied themselves concerning the realism of planned numbers. It was noted that the latest figures in the management accounts assumed the new subcontractor's delivery.

**The proposals presented for further subcontracting were agreed.**

## **10. Management accounts**

The Management Accounts for February had been circulated previously. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services commented on the position given in the accounts. The deficit had been brought down to £480K, which was still behind plan, but showed a significant improvement. Various actions had been taken to address the position, including recalculation of depreciation, review of capital grants release and more accurate accruals for facilities and call-off orders. Work had been undertaken with budget holders to improve the accuracy of pay forecasts and the forecasting of exams costs. The College had been successful in winning a SCIF bid which was factored into the budget, although there was some more work to be done on profiling the associated income. Further work was also planned to examine dilapidations costs and quality related expenditure.

Governors welcomed in particular the information which showed worst case and best case scenario. It was suggested that the inclusion of timelines against when certain aspects should be realised would aid further monitoring and to identify if further actions were necessary.

The cashflow report had been refined. A downward trend currently was noted, with a further dip in April, but then a large injection was for forecast for capital works payments. The position was noted. It was further noted that it was planned to extend the rolling cashflow and then to extend it to 24 months as soon as information allowed. It was noted that the Transaction Unit recommended this action.

## **11. Finance Dashboard**

The updated Finance Dashboard had been circulated. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services commented that most areas of data had now been populated.

The dashboard had been reviewed by the Finance and Estates Working group. It was noted that the college needed to improve its income and expenditure position by a further £85K and plans would be formulated to do so. A fallback position could be to address the creditor position, but the preference must be to improve income and expenditure.

The key priority of keeping bank covenants was endorsed as most important and governors stressed their concern that this was top priority. The covenant position would not be formally tested until year-end and modelling showed that it would be met by then, although the position was not fully certain on current performance. Governors welcomed having clear information provided and emphasised that the

college could only rely on the actions which were within its control to achieve the required position.

It was noted that the financial health score, whilst still satisfactory, had improved to 140 and contribution had improved to 40%, with creditor days also improving.

A capital programme forecast had been included for the first time in the dashboard; expenditure would be limited to what was strictly necessary.

An interest-bearing account had been introduced so there would be interest earned by the year-end.

Governors welcomed the dashboard as it enabled a clear financial picture to be given and actions identified to address issues as required.

## **12. Financial regulations update**

The proposed revised financial regulations had been circulated. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services identified the key changes including the authorisation thresholds, updating of external organisation names, the use of a range of asset life durations, rather than a standard length, the modernisation of processes concerning receipt of goods, strengthened controls re car use, the expectation that budget holders would achieve a target contribution rate and the recognition of electronic registers.

Subsequent to the circulation of the document a governor had suggested that capital and revenue limits be aligned – this was agreed should be included, provided all expenditure remained within approved budgets.

It was further noted that the revised regulations made explicit some matters such that the college credit card could not be used to withdraw cash in any circumstances, the college would not cash cheques, also that the controls relating to car use had been strengthened. Sales ledger processes would include a step to make contact by phone where payments were overdue.

The Board thanked the Director for her work in updating the regulations and approved the revised document, noting that it would be published on the college intranet.

## **13. Risk Register**

The latest risk register had been circulated. This was updated monthly. The document now included updated controls relating to cyber security. Overall the risk scores remained the same as the previous report.

It was agreed that the explicit risk of not meeting bank covenants which was inherent in risk FO2 should be added to the risk description.

The Board reviewed the risk register which was accepted.

#### **14. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Action Plan**

An update report showing the actions being taken and planned in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) had been circulated, further to the report provided to the Board at its December meeting. The College was currently conducting an information audit and following this, the lawful basis for reporting on information could be fully determined. Privacy notices would also then be drafted, for which the DfE had provided a number of models.

It was noted that a number of policies and procedures required update or preparation prior to the implementation date of 25 May 2018; this work had been scheduled. It was considered that Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) would not need to be undertaken, although it may need to in future, for example, if it changed systems. It was therefore planned to produce a policy and blueprint for DPIAs as part of the GDPR action plan.

The College had carried out a self-assessment audit which currently showed an amber rating as actions were in progress but not yet complete. A further year end assurance assessment was requested, noting that a compliance audit by Internal Audit would be carried out in 2019, but the self-assessment audit had not highlighted any omissions from the College's action plan. .

#### **15. Minutes of the Audit Committee held 5 March 2018**

The minutes of the meeting which had been circulated were noted.

#### **15. Notes of the Finance and Estates Working Group held 21 March 2018**

The notes of this working group meeting which had been circulated were noted.

#### **16. Any Other Business**

##### BET Governance Event

An event on 17 April 2018 to which all governors were invited was publicised to the meeting.

##### Temporary membership of the Audit Committee

The Clerk reported that the summer term meeting of this committee would require an additional member. **It was agreed that Tesh Baber be appointed.** The meeting thanked Tesh for agreeing to be appointed.

##### Changed date of the Board meeting in June 2018

After discussion about availability, it was **agreed** to change the date of the Board meeting in June 2018 to 25 June at 5.00pm, as neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair

could now be present on the original date. The Clerk would circulate the revised dates to all governors.

**17. Date of next meeting**

This was noted as Monday 14 May at City Centre Campus.