

Minutes of the Board meeting held at the Welwyn Campus at 1800hrs on 12 November 2018.

Present	Christine Chisholm	Mete Elemekaoglu	Jean Fawcett
	Sue Grant (Chair)	Zoe Hancock (Principal)	Teresa Heritage
	Kerry Hood	Ginny Kerridge	Peter Marshall
	Peter Thompson	Rob Payne	
In Attendance	Nicola Caiger (Dir Curr)	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Steven Fox (Dir HE)(16-19/18 only)
	Paul McCormack (DoF)(16-20/19 only)	Harpreet Nagra (DPQ)	Sean Scully (Dir StExp)
	Sian Williams (Dir Curr)		
Apologies	June Cory	Geoff Lambert	Neil Myerson (Vice-Chair)
	Jay Wheeler		

The meeting was preceded at 1715 by a training session on the curriculum offer at Oaklands College. A comprehensive electronic presentation was delivered by the Directors of Curriculum; all aspects of the full range of delivery and numbers involved were included. All members and attendees were present excepting June Cory, Geoff Lambert, Neil Myerson and Jay Wheeler who had sent apologies.

The Chair welcomed Jean Fawcett (General Member) and Mete Elemekaoglu (Student Member) to their first meeting and to the Corporation and all present introduced themselves; the second Student Member had not been able to attend this evening.

PART ONE

17/18 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION INTERESTS AND MEMBERS

- a. The apologies were accepted.
- b. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no unusual declared interests. (Standing Sue Grant UH/UCSA)

18/18 STANDING ITEMS

- a. Corporation Minutes. the Minutes (Pt1, 2 & 3) from the Corporation meeting held on 10 October 2018 were then confirmed for electronic signature; Clerk to action. (**Action 1**)
- b. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- c. Actions. All actions were complete or progressing.
- d. Urgent Business. There was one governance item of urgent business.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified.** (Table 29/18 below)

19/18 UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ST ALBANS (UCSA) (OUT OF AGENDA ORDER)

A brief verbal explanation of the background and status of the UCSA was provided to inform new members and the report was then considered. Key achievements were listed in the introduction, these were individually explained; despite having to reposition because of the return of the Health programme to the University of Hertfordshire (UoH) a small surplus had been achieved and was welcomed. The current position was at Appx 1, Section 2 and was discussed. Six programmes and five initiatives and developments were now being delivered, student numbers were recovering from the revised Health studies programme and stood 35 lower than the previous year at 150, the soon to be introduced Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) was expected to boost numbers. The CMDA, coupled with the Accreditation of Prior Experimental Learning (APEL), represented an exciting and innovative initiative, which had been accredited by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) (Level 5) and the Institute for Leadership and Management (ILM) (Level 6). There were five listed key challenges, these and the general progress were explained and noted. There was no doubt that UCSA was performing well and “punching above its weight” particularly with respect to degree apprenticeships and in the construction sector.

The information was noted and received.

20/18 HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) ASSURANCE (Out of Agenda order for convenience)

The Office for Students (OfS) required annual assurance that the Corporation had fully considered action for continuous improvement of student experience and outcomes through appropriate methodologies; these assurances would then be scrutinised as part of the OfS Assurance Statements. Comprehensive detail, listed below, fully explained the HE arrangements at Oaklands and each item was considered and discussed:

- a. HE Provision, detailed the separate ownership of HE provision between UoH and the College, governance arrangements and student numbers, all of which were fully tabulated with actuals v targets, and outcomes of student surveys. The latter outcome had shown a dip from the previous year and this was challenged and discussed, HND Music and the Business department had experienced particular difficulties, some personnel centred, and which were now being resolved, additionally wider meetings were being established to spotlight concerns. A few challenges had been experienced with progression from years one to two and these were briefly discussed, a summary and commentary on this issue would be included in the next Report. **(Action 2)** There was general consideration of the fee structure, namely the relative benefit to each partner and margins for courses. Graduation results were heartening although 5% below benchmark and this showed in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); since the date of writing the report, the Chair advised that she had been notified by the OfS that the application to register in the “English higher education providers” had been unconditionally approved, that information was welcomed by Members. The information would be circulated to all. **(Action 3)** The Report, which concluded with a Summary of Key achievements and Areas for Development was noted together with:
 - b. the Annual Assurance Statements (Appx 1), which was noted;
 - c. Survey Data (Appx 2), which was noted and discussed, a particular question was asked whether HE student voice was sufficiently heard, reassurance was provided that each subject now had individual representatives; and
 - d. Pearsons Quality Management Review Notes (Appx 3), which reflected an extremely successful visit.

The written data together with the verbal and positive update led to unanimous agreement that the necessary assurance had been received and the Quality Assurance Statement (Appx 1) was approved for signature. **(Action 4)**

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified** (See table at 29/18 below)

Steven Fox left the meeting.

21/18 FINANCE REPORT

- a. Draft Annual Financial Statements (AFS) 2017/18. The draft AFS were discussed, the audit process had been uneventful and a sound outcome appeared likely. The document comprised a narrative informed by comprehensive graphical and tabulated detail, including full information on all pension commitments, which were explained and considered, the positive surplus was welcomed. The last accounts scrutinised by the Corporation were for the period to 31 May and showed a provisionally determined outturn surplus c£15k, and despite some audit adjustments to the pension numbers that remained unchanged. The Auditors had also suggested inclusion of a discount factor in relation to the Taylor Wimpey arrangements and this was discussed, the College had stepin rights and it was agreed as unlikely to be necessary but the risk should be recognised and it was agreed to note the comments and make an entry on the College Risk Register. **(Action 5)** The previously agreed position on the use of reserves for the capital project was re-affirmed and the minimum reserve of £4m remained. The associated Statement of Comprehensive Income (SOI) (Annex 1) was explained and noted. The full AFS would be considered by the Audit Committee at the meeting tbh on 3 December 2018 and then presented to the Corporation on the 10th.
- b. Management Accounts (Annex 2). The management accounts were presented as a comprehensive narrative supported by tabulated data. The detail accurate to 30 September 2018 was then considered and discussed. The current position was a favourable variance of c£372k against budget; total income was favourable mainly through an over-budget payment in relation to the Adult Education Budget (AEB), by c£146k, which would be repaid at year-end. Payroll expenditure was positive by c£97k, non-payroll costs were also positive and all variances were clearly detailed in the narrative. The accounts were then generally discussed. The balance sheet remained positive with a strong cash entry now split to allow for the St Albans Campus development and that effect on the Cash Flow was also explained. Some pre-meeting electronic questions had been registered, (as agreed, all members had been copied in), these concerned cash flow and additional spend; the detail was at 3.9 and was satisfactorily explained. The accounts were noted.
- c. 2018/19 Risks and Opportunities. Two risks and five opportunities (relating to the 18/19 Budget) had been identified. The risks were associated with payment of all staff bonus and Element 3 (special needs) funding. The opportunities were related to staff utilisation and payroll efficiencies, the rates review, bank interest and again, Element 3 funding.
- d. Quarterly Investment Report. Members were reminded of the Investment Strategy and it was noted that the present position, which was clearly detailed in the accompanying paper, currently compared favourably with the strategic cash reserves requirements however, as explained the cash level would fall before recovery in July 2019. Details were listed for both the College and the St Albans Portfolios. Members discussed and noted the plans, including the favourable interest rates, for 2018/19. Each investment element was clearly listed and were explained individually; the information was noted.
- e. Purchases (Annex 3). Expenditure in excess of £100k required Corporation approval, (generally delegated to the Principal if outside the approved budgets) and accordingly:
 - (i) the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust (£115k) Adult Skills delivery;
 - (ii) Progression 2 Ltd (£250k) Adult Skills delivery;
 - (iii) Registration, Entries, Achievements and Certificates with both City and Guilds and Pearson Education at £200k and £300k respectively; and
 - (iv) Hettle, Andrews and Associates (c£136.8k) Insurance premium.

All were noted and endorsed.

- f. Insurance. In order to meet the statutory requirement to safeguard the college resources all necessary insurance cover was in place with Hettle, Andrews and Associates (partnered with Travelers Insurance Company), the College Broker for a three-year contract established 1 August 2017. The total cost for 2018/19 was £128.6k (2017/18 - £124k), the increase had been prompted by increases to premium for Education and Engineering elements. The portfolio and key elements of cover, detailed in the document were discussed and noted. The single in-year claim had been closed with no payment.
- g. Financial Health Grading (Annex 4). A letter from the ESFA dated 15 October confirmed that the Financial Health for the latest outturn (2017/18) and the current year remained as "Outstanding"; members welcomed and took comfort from the information.
- h. Dashboard (Annex 5). The comprehensive financial health dashboard was discussed and noted, there were no issues raised.

All Items were noted and endorsed. **(Action 6)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 29/18 below)**

22/18 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal's Report had been circulated, the following information was considered in particular:

- a. Funding. The recent national budget had not included any measures to ease the financial strictures on FE. Some small relief with SME apprenticeship fees and easing of regulation relating to levy transfer were really the only relevant issues; and
- b. Student Union. The election campaign for the Student Union (SU) Presidency had concluded, the process had been more popular than ever with more candidates and greater participation.

The information was received and noted.

23/18 SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

Completion of the SAR was a complex and detailed process reflecting the widest possible input and interests to ensure responsive, high quality and relevant provision; the document had been based on the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the narrative was supplemented by a comprehensive suite of tabulated data; the detail was supplemented with a comprehensive electronic presentation by the Principal, which was completely interactive and prompted lively discussion and wide debate. During the presentation issues raised by Members included, but were not limited to:

- a. the relative position of English and Maths (EAM) achievement levels both of which stood above National Average (NA) but level one functional skills had declined and clearly this was a matter of concern and would receive close focus;
- b. Level 2 (L2) High Grades were too low showed variability between areas, this continued previous trends and was under wider scrutiny and intervention; and
- c. 19+ Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR). showed that some performance was below NA and it had been judged that poor attendance had contributed to the issue in GCSE English and maths.

Comparative data tables showed a reduction in the percentage of departments achieving Grade 1&2, this now stood at 60% reduced from 72% in the previous year and supplemented by RAG rated achievement tables. The outcomes were broadly in keeping with the recent Ofsted Inspection findings and the full report was at Annex 1. The report had been informed by moderated individual departmental reports, which had been well attended by Corporation members. The eleven departments, which had been graded as Requiring Improvement (RI) were individually considered. Overall it was agreed that the Grade 3 (RI) assessment was

honest and justified and the SAR was approved (**Action 7**); Key Strengths and Areas for Improvement were listed in the Report at Annex 1, together with student centred College values, Mission, Vision and Aims. QAR RAG rated data tables were discussed. The Staff were generally aware of the need for a focused drive on the identified areas. After approval, the SAR became the source document for the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which would be very similar to the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and focused on raising aspirations and was an essential element in the drive for improvement. Questions and answers on the process included:

- d. whether systematic weaknesses had been identified and whether they could be eradicated? Recently introduced policies including a Departmental Quality Matrix, improved Learning Walks, enhanced teamwork and responsive and rapid intervention were now established and would enable this;
- e. the attitude of teachers to the initiative mentioned above? Experience with recent observations indicated that the low proportion of sceptical reaction was rapidly diluting and the introduction of Quality Assurance Facilitators (QAF) for example, which would identify individual training needs had prompted a positive response; and
- f. how to identify individual students who were at risk of failure? Work on an extensive achievement tracker was almost complete and would be in use this term.

a. The information was received and noted.

b. Actions had been identified. (Table 29/18 below)

24/18 QUALITY

The Quality Update provided information on key matters to widen members' knowledge and understanding of college performance thus enabling informed scrutiny and challenge.

- a. Initial Audits. Initial Audits of all curriculum areas and apprentices had been completed at the start of the academic year to ensure compliance with across requirement, outcomes of the audits completed by QAF had been tabulated and RAG rated by area and were discussed, the aim was that all amber and red rated areas would be rapidly improved on a risk based sequence.
- b. Complaints and Compliments.
 - (i) Complaints. There had been 22 formal complaints received during 2017.18, equal in number to the previous year; the aim was to investigate and reply within 10 working days and 82% were fully or partially upheld (2017.18 – 62%). Most complaints related to Plumbing and Gas, which had suffered from staff issues for some time and a new curriculum manager was addressing the issues. The DPQ would assume first point responsibility for identifying possible trends or patterns and QAF would be involved in the resolution process. The report contained a graphical summary of reasons for and outcome of complaints, which was noted.
 - (ii) Compliments. A graphical representation of the 19 compliments received during the year was noted, particularly that A Level provision had received eight comments.
- c. Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) Policy. Comments in the Ofsted Inspection Report had prompted a revision of the lesson observation policy, which had been widely consulted on and now included independent learning support and assessors. The policy, at Annex One, provided guidance minimum expectations, observation and themed learning walk cycles. The purpose was to identify and rectify weaknesses linked initially to support and development and moving, if necessary to performance management and capability, which processes were detailed. Full explanation was given for the process for TLA observation, Essentially, all staff would be observed and full records would enable the QIP team to complete consequent and necessary risk-based observations. 80% of staff now met college expectations, which prompted an observation that 20% were not, the response was that the risk based approach to the process would improve that number. The present state of progress with the observation schedule was noted, in particular the disappointing EAM results and consequent remedial actions, which were discussed. It was agreed that

attendance continued to be challenging and members commented that mid-November was surprisingly late in the year to have identified such a basic statistic, it was explained that it could take until the half term point to bring this to be reviewed by SLT., Heads of Department and tutors were monitoring routinely and intervention was taking place. Reassurance was provided that the issue was being addressed and that Pro Monitor information was checked weekly to inform progress.

- d. Internal and External verification. Of the 33 external verification from 2017.18, three courses (Sports, construction management and Business) had not met the external awarding body's requirements, that situation had now been satisfactorily resolved. For the current year the Quality Team was introducing a system to improve transparency and consistency by use of "Pro Verify" and a typical printout was noted.
- e. Quality Matrix. The Quality Matrix, at Annex 2, had been introduced to facilitate tracking of all areas against College KPIs and inform SMT meetings to enable remedial action.
- f. PIAP. The PIAP at Annex 3 had been widened to include information on monitoring update, members were reminded of the actions currently set for monitoring, which were self-explanatory and were noted.

The information was received and noted.

25/18 STUDENTS

- a. Involvement. The Student Involvement Programme was popular, evidenced by the high participation in the current year, particularly in the LRC and was aimed at enrichment of out of class activities and experience with an increasing community events calendar. The strong emphasis on student participation ensured that genuine work experience and attendance at high profile recruitment events provided considerable benefit to all. Particular issues from the detailed and comprehensive report were explained:
 - (i) in response to student feedback "Outside the Box" (OTB) had undergone a complete rebranding to "OakExtra", which represented all things for students outside the classroom; composition of the team had not changed; and
 - (ii) the work experience programme was underway and working well to provide meaningful and relevant activities for all members. Full details were in the report and were noted.

A full update on college wide activities was detailed in this valuable report, members were reassured and took comfort from the content and thanks were recorded to those involved.

- b. Behaviour Policy and Procedure. The Behaviour Policy had been attached to inform Members of relevant issues and it was endorsed.

a. The information was received and noted.

b. Actions had been noted. (Table 29/18 below)

26/18 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI. Performance against the challenging 2018/19 KPI (tabulated at Annex 1), was supplemented by textual updates and were discussed and noted. The 2018/19 targets had been agreed at the July Corporation meeting and were at Annex 1, these were noted, and the Corporate Risk Register at Annex 2 was also noted. Detail, under individual headings, was explained and discussed, notable numbers were: overall actual attendance rate at 84% for 16-18 year olds. The Risk Register was considered and discussed, the six "High" and the eleven "Medium" entries, their mitigating actions, ownership and updates were all noted. There was a query regarding the residual Risk Grade and the effectiveness of the mitigation process, which would be emailed to the DoF for response.

The information was received and noted.

27/18 URGENT BUSINESS

a. The Clerk had received a verbal annual assessment from the outgoing Chair, which indicated that all duties continued to be conducted to a good standard.

b. A College events list had been circulated to all members, attendance would be welcomed.

28/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 1700 on 10 December 2018 followed by a Christmas meal:

29/18 ACTION TABLE

Refer to referenced minute for full detail.		resp	date
Action 1	17/18. Minutes (10.10.18) confirmed for electronic signature.	Clerk	asap
Action 2	20/18. Report on HE progression from Years 1 and 2	Dir HE	tbc
Action 3	20/18. HE Registration to be circulated to all members.	Clerk	asap
Action 4	20/18. Quality Assurance Statement to be signed.	Principal	
Action 5	21/18a. Discount factor to be entered on the Risk Register.	HoF	
Action 6	21/18. All report elements noted and endorsed.		
Action 7	23/18. The SAR was approved.	All	wie