



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Minutes of the Board meeting held at the St Albans Campus at 1800hrs on 10 February 2020.

Present	Christine Chisholm	June Cory	Jean Fawcett
	Philip Fulton	Sue Grant (Chair)	Zoe Hancock (Principal)
	Kerry Hood	Peter Marshall	Neil Myerson
	Rob Payne	Peter Thompson	
In Attendance	Laina Baftjari (Dir Curr)	Nicola Caiger (Dir I&P)	Ronnie Davison (Dir HR)(46-48/19 only)
	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Ana Guimaraes (Dir Curr)	Harpreet Nagra (DP)
	Paul McCormack (FD)	Amanda Washbrook (Interim Dir (Q&App))(46-50/19b only)	Sian Williams (Dir Curr)
Apologies	Ginny Kerridge	Tinashe Mutanhu	Victoria Robertson

The meeting was preceded by a Corporation training session on Safeguarding/Child Protection delivered by Abi Clay the Interim Student Services Manager. The session comprised a comprehensive electronic presentation followed by an animated interactive question and answer session. Abi Clay confirmed that in her view (as a consultant who has experience of many FE College) students were kept safe and their well-being was looked after. The Chair thanked Abi who then left.

PART ONE

46/19 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND OPENING REMARKS

- a. The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared.
- b. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained that, as she was unable to be at the next meeting the Vice-Chair would substitute; the pre-meeting training would be a repeat of the popular "speed dating" format of exchanges with students. She thanked all for the additional Learning Walks that had been completed and urged all to continue. She reminded Corporation that their role was as observers and that any issues or concerns should be directed to the person accompanying them on the learning walk, not individual students or staff members. The process was mutually enriching as it directly improved individual Members knowledge and also raised the Corporation profile around the College. For this meeting Agenda Items 7&8 would be taken first, for convenience of the Dir (HR).

The information was received.

47/19 PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

- a. Investors in People (IiP), The IiP team had visited in November 2019 and had accredited the College at Silver level; key findings were listed in the paper together with 6 recommendations for further improvement. In response to a question it was explained that upgrading to Gold standard could be sought in 2 years' time.

- b. Pulse Survey. A Pulse Survey for those who had scored low staff engagement in the full Staff Survey (May) had been completed in December 2019; the results had been detailed by department in the document and were noted as improved. The next full annual survey would proceed in May.
- c. Staff Statistics. Staff statistics had been tabulated and were noted; turnover and sickness were noted and informed a general discussion. The use of performance management was noted.

The information was received and noted.

48/19 POLICIES

There were two Policies to consider, both had been updated for routine changes and there was nothing of note to bring to Members attention:

- a. Whistleblowing. (Public Interest Disclosure (PID)) The Whistleblowing Policy was approved. **(Action 1a)**
- b. Disciplinary Policy for Senior Post Holders (SPH) The SPH Disciplinary Policy was approved. Members were reminded that there was currently only one SPH – the Principal **(Action 1b)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Register 57/19)**

The Dir (HR) left the meeting.

49/19 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Minutes from the Corporation meeting (Part 1 & 2) held on 09 December 2019 were confirmed for electronic signature. (Delegated to Clerk) **(Action 2)**
- b. Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee (S&G) held on 10.02.20. (Verbal). The proceedings of the meeting held earlier that day were explained by the Chair, the Committee had interviewed an applicant immediately before the start of this meeting, unfortunately her skills set did not fit with the current requirements and she was entered on the reserve list. Additional members were still required and Members were asked to stay aware and notify the S&G Chair of any possible candidates. **(Action 3)** All were reminded that gender, age, ethnicity, nationality and socio-economic background should be particularly considered in order to increase the diversity of the Corporation.
- c. Matters arising. There were no matters arising from either meeting.
- d. Actions. There were no actions outstanding from the previous meeting.

See referenced minute for full detail.		
Action 1	31/19b. PF welcomed as a general member (09.12.21)	Complete
Action 2	32/19b. HE Assurance through IAS audit in 2020.	
Action 3	33/19. Last minutes confirmed for signature.	
Action 4	33/19d(iv). IAS Annual Report to be circulated electronically.	Progressing
Action 5	34/19a. Mapping data to next meeting and the Ofsted pack for Corporation members.	
Action 6	34/19a. Members to complete more learning walks.	Complete
Action 7	34/19a. The QIP approved.	
Action 8	35/19d. OfS risk added to Register.	Complete
Action 9	35/19e. ACAR noted and approved.	
Action 10	35/19f. See Action 4.	Complete
Action 11	35/19f. Detail of further Funding Audit to next meeting.	
Action 12	35/19g. AFS Approved for Signature	Complete
Action 13	35/19i. 3-year Financial Plan to next meeting.	49/19

- e. There were no requests for urgent business.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified (Register 57/19)**

50/19 QUALITY UPDATE

The Report was in two parts: presentations (both attached to the file copy of these minutes, and uploaded to Diligent) and the formal report.

- a. An electronic presentation on Apprenticeships was delivered by the interim Director Quality and Apprenticeships and considered the groundwork leading to the detail from December. The changing systems and associated administrative and enrolment environment were explained; associated key challenges were detailed, discussed frankly and improvement tactics and the associated timeframe were presented. The content prompted a lively question and answer session. The Chair thanked Amanda for the honest presentation and she left the meeting.
- b. an electronic presentation leading into the Quality narrative was presented by the Dir Curr (SW) leading into consideration of the November GCSE exam resit results (High Grades), students' review boards and the teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) profile.
- c. November GCSE Resit Results. Attendance for the exams had been 87% for both English and Maths (EAM). High grades had been 15% overall (18/19 – 9.8%): 13% for English (18/19 – 11%) and 16.4% for maths (18/19 8.5%); 21 results had been referred for a remarking and accordingly these overall percentages may increase. For those who did not achieve, the Head (EAM) had analysed the results and had implemented additional actions, all detailed in the paper. Members noted that the outcomes were up compared to previous years but that there was still work to be done.
- d. Student Review Boards (SRB) Ten outcomes and related actions from the SR were listed in the paper; each was explained and considered individually.
- e. Quality of TLA.
 - (i) Lesson Observations. To date 208/315 staff, including all teaching staff had been observed and work continued with Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and Assessors to complete full coverage. Members took comfort that currently 87% “met expectations”.
 - (ii) Curriculum Audits. Eight Curriculum Area Audits had been completed, selected through a risk based approach, these were generally discussed. Four had not “met expectations”, generally not through classroom teaching but with important peripheral activity such as those associated with lower achieving learners, course sequencing between teachers and assessment effectiveness. Two external audits had resulted in positive feedback and few recommendations for improvement.

Members noted the work being undertaken towards a 'good' outcome at the next inspection.

The information was received.

51/19 FINANCE

The management accounts accurate to 31 December 2019 (Annex 1) were then considered and discussed.

- a. The situation was favourable, a reforecast overall variance of c£12k against budget; income was forecast lower than budget by £410k with all variances clearly explained, payroll expenditure was positive c£372k; non-payroll costs had been profiled against last year's actuals and showed a saving of £50k.. The balance sheet remained positive with a strong cash balance. The CFF had been adjusted to account for the Discovery Centre cladding work and the year-end forecast adjusted accordingly. Centrally controlled capital expenditure was £590k/£1m. Identified Risks and Opportunities were listed and individually

discussed. The accounts were **noted**. Reforecast indicators, listed in the paper were explained and **noted**.

- b. Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The recently revised KPI schedule (Annex 2) was considered and discussed. Financial Health was expected to remain at “Outstanding” for the current year with 250/300 points.
- c. Risk Management (RM). The Risk Register, at Annex 3, had recently been reviewed by the SMT and the scoring methodology leading to the residual grades summary on the “Heat Map” was explained in the document. The “Heat Map” was then scrutinised and the 3 changes (M2, M3 & M13) were explained and noted. There were currently 25 Risks associated with the Strategic Themes, 3 High, 17 Medium and 5 Low, the information was noted. The RAG ratings were discussed and the RM detail was **noted**. Discussions on the risk environment generally led into consideration on the basic cause of the Discovery Centre fire, which had been students disregard for the smoking regulations. Should the possibility of further such action be included in the Register? It was fully accepted that remedial action into the fire incident had been speedy and effective but the chance of a mirror incident through indifference to regulations over a wide spectrum should be considered. It was agreed that the SMT would fully consider this issue at their next RM discussion and report back to the Corporation. **(Action 4)**
- 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, compared favourably with the strategic cash reserves requirements. Each investment element was clearly listed and were explained individually; the information was **noted**.
- e. Purchases over £100k. There were 2 Purchase Orders (PO) over £100k detailed in Annex 4, Blakedown Sport and Play Ltd and Ricardo AEA Ltd, both of which were explained, approved for payment and **noted**.
- f. Budget Parameters. Budget Parameters for 2020/2021 were considered and discussed, the final budget for consideration would be presented to the Corporation on 6 July and the aim for capital expenditure of £1m and a surplus of £100k was discussed. There was some feeling that this year’s reduced enrolment which would determine next year’s income, could motivate against the surplus and it was agreed that the £100k surplus number would be registered as aspirational; with this caveat the parameters were approved. **(Action 5)**
- g. Capital expenditure for 2020/21 was considered and discussed and approved at £1m. **(Action 6)**
- h. 3-Year Plan. The lower than expected 16-18 enrolments in the current year and the associated notable income reduction had prompted an early draft of the 3-year plan, that fortuitously coincided with the introduction of the ESFA Integrated Financial Model (integrating several financial plans and documents) to be submitted by 28 February. The 3-year Plan at Annex 5a took the 2019/20 forecast as the base and then predicted outcomes for 2020 and 2021. The Plan was in line with the College’s financial objectives:
 - (i) break-even;
 - (ii) maintaining reserves in line with the strategy; and
 - (iii) minimum of “Good” financial health.

Key planning information, including detailed and associated details was fully explained in the accompanying paper and informed close discussions. The staff pay rise proposal for an increase to 1.5% in year two, then reducing to 1% was discussed and it was agreed to re-examine that issue before submission and consider associated budgetary issues at the strategic planning day. **(Action 7)** This plan, assumptions and numbers would be the base for the Financial Model for submission at month end and the SLT would continue to enhance the 3-year plan and present regular updates to the Corporation; the processes and the Plan as agreed were approved. **(Action 8)**

- a. **The information was noted and received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified** (Register 57/19)

52/19 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal's Report updated on points not included on the agenda or considered elsewhere, the report had been circulated well in advance of the meeting which was received but of particular note was Annex 2 the "Measures of Success" to be included in the Strategic Plan 2019-23. The Plan was discussed and agreed as ambitious and forward looking. Members were asked to consider the list and send any comments or suggestions to the Principal electronically; this would allow the proposal to be amended before detailed consideration at the strategic planning day. **(Action 9)** An immediate suggestion was, whether the quoted percentages in the "People" section should all be the same.

- a. **The information was noted and received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified** (Register 57/19)

53/19 **STUDENT INCLUSION AND PROGRESSION**

The report would consider issues directly related to students.

- a. **Safeguarding and Wellbeing.** Consideration of this element of the Report had been informed by the presentation immediately prior to the meeting. Student Services had been restructured in June 2019 and had been reviewed; one element was the revised staff structure, effective on 15 February, which was fully detailed in the accompanying paper and was explained. Regular full safeguarding briefings were now presented to ensure familiarity with process and training was continuously provided, the new IT system had been agreed for full introduction by the Easter break. Information cards would be provided to help site visitors. Early help for students was being widened and the initiatives were explained. Mental health continued to be a wide concern and partnership with "Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)" was providing direct help; a video related to mental health experiences had been produced by students in time for the mental health weeks. (27 Jan-07 Feb) There had been 126 referrals for wider external support and the detail in the report informed concerned discussions and the arrangement with the local police, which was working well, and focus on Welwyn had been enhanced; regular meetings with the police would continue. Particular responsibilities towards the 176 "Looked After Children" (LAC) were discussed. Work of the Student Advisers had been praised by the Students Union (SU). Four recent incidents had resulted in the regrettable but unavoidable exclusion of 7 students.
- b. **Residential.** Attendance from residential students was 92% and had been closely discussed by the Residential Management group, whilst most absence was due to sporting injuries, the performance for EAM had reduced from 80% to 78% and remedial action had been agreed between the RMG and Heads of Departments (HoD). A breach of curfew rules was explained and had been dealt with internally.
- c. The Director of Inclusion and Progression had recently shared an evening meal with students and the residential officers and the Corporation safeguarding lead had also completed a similar exercise. An external evaluation had recently been completed and the report had noted improvements since the previous visit and had rated the provision as "Good" with potential to achieve "Outstanding", accordingly the Head of Residential will work on this as a target in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The Chair asked about the audit recommendation that detailed planning had not yet started for the new build. The Director of Inclusion and Progression confirmed that detailed planning was now taking place. The Report was at Annex 2 and a summary included in the paper was noted.
- d. Performance against the Industry placements and work experience was noted.
- e. 14-16 student performance was explained in the paper and the wide range of activities and opportunities was noted and welcomed.
- f. Student voice considerations would be considered at a later date.

The Corporation safeguarding lead confirmed that she had had a number of meetings with the teams and confirmed the observations of the independent advisor that the college was undertaking its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and were proactive.

The information was received.

54/19 MEMBERS

a. Peter Thompson's term of office had expired on 11 February 2020 and he was unanimously re-appointed for 2 years wef today. **(Action 10)**

b. The Chair had appointed:

(i) Christine Chisholm to the Remuneration Committee wef 21 January 2020 (RC02/19 refers); and

(ii) Jean Fawcett to the Audit Committee wie. **(Action 11)**

c. Peter Marshall would be leaving the College, the next meeting would be his last and an election would be arranged. The chair thanked him for all his input and support during the period of office and wished him well in his new job. **(Action 12)**

a. **The information was noted and received.**

b. **Actions had been identified (Register 57/19)**

55/19 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

56/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 1800 on 9 March 2020.

57/19 ACTION REGISTER

See referenced minute for full detail		Resp	Date
Action 1a/1b	49/19a. Both Policies approved for implementation.	Dir HR	wie
Action 2	49/19a. Last minutes confirmed for signature.	Clerk	
Action 3	49/19b. Additional members sought.	All	
Action 4	51/19c. Adherence to regulations in the RR.	SLT	asap
Action 5	51/19f. Assumptions for 2020/21 budget approved (amended).	DoF	
Action 6	51/19g. Capital expenditure approved.		
Action 7	51/19h. Pay rise sequencing to be re-examined.		wie
Action 8	51/19h. Detail for IFM approved 3-Year plan to Strategic day.	All	asap
Action 9	52/19. Comments on Measures of Success to Principal.		
Action 10	54/19a. PT re-appointed for 2 years.	Clerk	wie
Action 11	54/19b. CC and JF committee membership effected.		
Action 12	54/19c. Election for Staff Member to be organised.		asap