

Minutes of an electronic Corporation meeting held at 1800 on 10 May 2021.

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| **Present** | Jo Birch | Christine Chisholm | Jan Edrich  (Int Principal) |
|  | Jean Fawcett | Phillip Fulton | Sue Grant  (Chair) |
|  | Kerry Hood | Steph Lawrence  (Items 77/20 on) | Neil Myerson |
|  | John O’Sullivan | Rob Payne | Peter Thompson |
| **In Attendance** | David Alder  (Dir Mar&Ad) | Nicola Caiger  (Dir I&P) | Ralph Devereux  (Clerk) |
|  | Ana Guimaraes  (Dir Curr) | Paul McCormack  (FD) | John McMahon  (TT MD)(to Item 75/20) |
|  | Harpreet Nagra  (DP) | Sian Williams  (Dir Curr) | Amanda Washbrook  (Dir Apps/HE)(to Item 76/20) |
| **Apologies** | Jesmin Haq |  |  |

**PART ONE**

**74/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND OPENING REMARKS**

1. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared.
2. Urgent Business. It was agreed to take an Item of Urgent Business from the Corporation Chair. **(Action 1)**
3. Chairs Opening Remarks. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked all staff and students

for their continued commitment, particularly during the demanding period since the last meeting and for those at the St Albans Campus, which was disrupted by the present building works. The Committee structure had now been implemented with inaugural meetings concentrated during the last week of April, all had gone well. Items would be taken out of agenda order for the convenience of the presenters.

**The information was noted and received.**

**Actions had been identified (Register 88/20)**

**75/20** **TOGETHER TRAINING (TT) (OUT OF AGENDA ORDER)**

An update on TT was considered; the joint venture with West Herts College (WHC) continued to make sound progress. Apprentices continued to receive training on-line with individual additional coaching and mentoring as necessary and the 20% “off-the-job” requirement was being flexibly achieved under direction of the Learning Coaches*.* Progress reviews, including targets and improvement guidance also continued on-line in common with “End Point” assessments. Face to face delivery, particularly for those who required examinations and workshop access was resumed on 8 March with many other learners opting to continue “on-line” at least until term end. Enrolment numbers were above expectation with 100 applications to date and an expectation of a further 30, which had increased the financial forecast annual surplus from £100k to £140k. During the National Apprenticeship Week, the MD had chaired and showcased several live events, which were explained and noted. An invitation to join the multi-agency Safeguarding Apprenticeship trailblazer group was noted and welcomed. Two disabled apprentices were being provided with bespoke training in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Disability Rights (UK). There were 178 apprentices due to complete this year, there would be some Covid related delays, which were detailed in the report. Of the 43 withdrawals 23 were due to redundancies or Covid related influences; this was discussed as unfortunate in many ways and those affected were actively supported by TT on their way forward. The “Levy” arrangements precluded seeking a commitment from employers to continue to the end of the process. The Performance Dashboard was noted as all “Amber” or “Green”, retention had been affected by the redundancy issue considered earlier. During general considerations the non-competitive integrated delivery approach, including cross referrals if appropriate, was explained. The “Green” performance for English and Maths (EAM) was not comparable to mainstream college provision since TT students were strongly motivated and received personal tuition. The growth from 100 to 230 students in 3 years had been professionally managed and impressive, further growth resulting from the “Skills for Jobs” White Paper initiatives and the national £2.5b “Levy” budget, was likely and a national rollout of on-line provision was even possible. Members were reassured that there would be sufficient resources available to cope with projected growth. It was also noted that any profit over and above the budget would be invested back into supporting the joint venture. The positive progress was noted and the MD was thanked for his presentation and he left the meeting.

**The information was noted and received.**

**76/20 OFFICE FOR STUDENTS (OFS) (OUT OF AGENDA ORDER)**

The Office for Students (OfS) had required self-assurance (14.01.21) from individual Higher Education (HE) providers on consumer protection for and communication with students; specific extracts from the OfS letter were in italics in the accompanying paper. The HE Manager and the Coordinator had both been working closely with the University of Hertfordshire (UoH) to ensure student awareness of changes to teaching and assessments; Programme Managers had confirmed that all students were aware of the specific OfS requirement and the HE Committee had been updated on how further requirements had been met. Students had been routinely informed and updated on their teaching and assessment arrangements and options as required; regular meetings had been held with course groups or representatives to obtain re-assurance on these and wider associated issues. Individual 1:1 meetings had also been available. All elements of the HE provision had been delivered and additional support had been available for “at risk” learners. The tracking document, checked during an audit in March confirmed compliance with no remedial action or additional information requested. Essentially;

1. all regulations had been met as agreed by the HE Committee in February;
2. no complaints had been logged or raised; and
3. no refunds had been sought.

Members noted compliance with the OFS requirements and The Director (Apprenticeships and HE) was thanked for the presentation and she left the meeting.

**The information was received.**

**Steph Lawrence joined the meeting.**

**77/20 STANDING ITEMS**

1. The minutes from the Corporation meeting (Part 1) held on 08 March 2021 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 2)**
2. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
3. Actions. Actions from the last meeting were discussed and confirmed as listed.

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| See referenced minute for full detail | | **Status** |
| **Action 1** | 60/20b(ii). New Principal identity to be circulated. | **Complete** |
| **Action 2** | 60/20b(ii). New Principal appointment approved in principle; and Chair delegated to confirm appointment |
| **Action 3** | 61/20. Last minutes (02.02.21) confirmed for signature. |
| **Action 4** | 62/20d. Student survey results tbc to Members. |
| **Action 5** | 63/20. IT helpline information to be publicised. |
| **Action 6** | 64/20a. Amendments to tabulated detail to be completed. |
| **Action 7** | 64/20a. HAS Officer liaison with Fusion to be enhanced. |
| **Action 8** | 64/20b. HAS Policy approved. |

re Action 2. The Chair confirmed that she had used her delegated powers to inform Andrew Slade of his appointment as Principal and Chief Executive. Andrew is currently a Principal of South Thames College with day to day oversight of the two college campuses within Wandsworth and Tooting. He will join Oaklands College in September 2021

1. Committee Minutes. The draft and unconfirmed minutes of the inaugural (excepting AC) Committee meetings were introduced by each Committee Chair and the content was noted to inform considerations.
   * 1. Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) meeting (30.04.21). PF had welcomed the detail and interactive opportunity to “deep dive”, discuss and consider the agenda items. The meeting had gone well, and all Members were thanked for their active participation; Agenda Items 6 & 7 on this agenda had been discussed in detail and the Management Accounts (Item 6) had been recommended to the Corporation at FRC Minute 03/20a. Fusion representatives had recorded minutes for the element of the meeting dealing with capital issues; their minutes were attached and were received.
     2. People Committee (PC) meeting (27.04.21). PT had also welcomed the detail, in particular the marketing information which had not previously been available for consideration. Some of this evening’s agenda items had been considered, Item 11 & 12 in particular.
     3. Curriculum & Quality Committee (CQC) meeting (28.04.21). JF again also welcomed the extended remit of the Committees, which presented an opportunity to drill down into items not previously available to Members. Thanks were recorded to the Deputy Principal and the Director (Curriculum) (SW) for their input, in particular to the A Level Item preparations and discussion; this would be considered later this evening (Agenda Item 9). Action 4 relating to EAM delivery would be considered for removal at the next Committee meeting. **(Action 3)**

* + 1. Audit Committee (AC) meeting (01.03.21). The AC Minutes from the meeting held on 1 March had not been included in the last Corporation meeting papers and they were received.

**The information was noted and received.**

**Actions had been identified (Register 88/20)**

**78/20 PRINCIPALS 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 and was received, items of note were discussed.

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The KPI (Annex 1) were noted; information relating to other agenda items was signposted.
2. Coronavirus Update. Return to face-to-face learning and all associated processes had gone well. Both sites and UCSA, had now almost returned to normal processes but all Covid controls remained established and were operating. Easing of the national requirement for secondary school pupils to wear face coverings prompted consideration of whether that should apply locally. Many staff and most students had not yet been vaccinated and there was strong support that masks should continue to be mandatory in areas common to all, but there may be scope to relax further when in “bubbles”. This was an emotive issue and would require close consideration by all involved, but it was agreed that until firm collective agreement had been reached and implemented there should be no unilateral relaxation. **(Action 4)** Since 8 March c 12,000 lateral flow tests had been delivered with 8 positives, one of which was spurious; the latest advice had removed the need for nose swabs.

Skills and Community Funding and the processes for centre assessed grades were noted, members thanked staff for all their extra work in ensuring assessments and grading’s were completed; the need to change normal summer working practices to accommodate the release of grades and support to students over the summer period was noted.

**The information was noted and received.**

**Actions had been identified (Register 88/20)**

**79/20 FINANCE AND RISK**

Copies of electronic presentations to the FRC on Management Accounts and Budgetary Planning had been included in the papers as information to Corporation |Members.

1. Management Accounts. The Management accounts for the 8 months to 31 March had been fully reviewed and recommended to the Corporation by the FRC. The current situation profiled on past trends or expected timings and tabulated at Annex 1(a) in the Statement of Comprehensive Income (SOCI), was unfavourable with an overall deficit of c(£754k) however that was against the budgeted c(£1,455k) a positive variance of £701k; income was positive by £265k and payroll was holding up well. The balance sheet, at Annex 1(c) remained positive. The CFF at Annex 1d showed a strong cash balance for the College and the St Albans Phase 2 capital development, the balance did not fall below the College minimum requirements. Identified Risks and Opportunities were discussed and noted.
2. Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The Finance KPI (Annex 2) schedule had been updated to account for the recently published updated Further Education Commissioner’s (FEC) financial benchmarks; sensitive areas had been highlighted in red. It was noted that 2 indicators (pay as % of income and operating surplus) were currently exceeding limits. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Financial Heath score at “Good” was welcomed and the possibility of achieving “Outstanding” was noted. Discussion centred on the KPI pay as a % of income and it was agreed that this should be considered further by the FRC. **(Action 5)** The KPIs were noted.
3. Risk Management (RM). The Risk Register, at Annex 4, had been reviewed by the SMT on 1 March 2021 and had not been reviewed by the FRC; the scoring methodology leading to the residual grades’ summary on the “Heat Map” was explained in the document. The “Heat Map” was then scrutinised; there had been no changes since the last meeting. Two Covid related risks “People 1” and “Money 6” had been reduced to green. There were currently 32 Risks associated with the Strategic Themes, 2 Red (High), 21 Orange (Medium) and 9 Green (Low). The RM detail was noted*.*

**The information was noted and received.**

**80/20 DRAFT BUDGET**

1. Budget. The last meeting had considered a “top-down” c£900k deficit budget, which had been challenged; accordingly, the detail had been reviewed and scrutinised at length and in detail by the FRC. The full SOCI was at Annex 1 with a forecast deficit of (£527k). Income streams were prudently based and achievable and together with expenditure was clearly detailed in the report. Depreciation, sensitivities, and opportunities together with likelihood and impact had been identified and discussed by the FRC The Cash Flow Forecast (CFF) showed net generation of £600k, There were sufficient cash holdings to ensure no related issues in 21/22. The capital expenditure budget was noted and welcomed at £1m and projects would be prioritised after individual departmental submissions had been received. The ESFA Financial Heath score at “Good” was welcomed and the possibility of achieving “Outstanding” was noted. A full contribution analysis had been included in the report and had been welcomed by the FRC.
2. 3-Year Plan. Looking ahead the Office for National Statistics detail forecast an increasing potential student cohort with local population increasing by c3%, the detail had been graphically presented together with estimated enrolment detail. The budget would hopefully be back to “break-even” in 2022.23, the detail, tabulated in the 2022/23 SOCI Plan, showed the route and that was discussed and agreed that the detail looked optimistic. At least a “Good” outcome to the forthcoming Ofsted inspection was the key to success.

The FRC had thanked the FD for an excellent presentation and clearly written report, which had led to a much wider understanding of the College financial processes and outcomes. The Committee had been reluctant to agree a deficit budget and efforts to reduce the deficit would continue; the budget would be further considered at the next FRC meeting and presented to the July Corporation meeting for consideration. **(Action 6)**It was also agreed that the capital projects be reviewed by the FRC . Action ??

**The information was noted and received.**

**Action had been identified (Register 88/20 below)**

**81/20 BUSINESS CYCLE 2021.22**

The draft Corporation business cycle for the coming year had been carefully put together by the Principal and the Clerk, taking account of academic activity, the ESFA required submission dates and publication deadlines. Training and strategy opportunities had been included and meetings had been spaced to avoid close sequencing. Since the move to Committee Governance requires that items formerly seen regularly by members would now be spread across Committees it had been suggested that a “Governors’ Monthly Report” would be a useful reference and that was welcomed. **(Action 7)** The business cycle was approved as a flexible guide with the caveat that it would be subject to updating throughout the year. **(Action 8)** That approval would now inform determination of a meeting schedule to be presented to the next meeting. **(Action 9)**

**The information was noted and received.**

**Action had been identified (Register 88/20 below)**

**82/20 A LEVEL PROVISION**

1. Background. The C&Q Committee had considered a suggestion for revision of the present A Level offer driven by the dramatic reduction in numbers; enrolments from 16/17 to 20/21 had reduced from 132 to 54; the result had been small working groups and poor achievement. Having analysed the national and local data, consideration had been given to provision of an amalgam of academic and vocational qualifications; such a package of academically related qualifications would provide more popular and worthwhile provision. The Committee had been concerned that the workload involved in a BTec combined with an A Level would be excessive, whether the combination would be appealing and the possible reputational impact on the College. The impact on students who had already applied for 2021/22 was clearly also a consideration. On balance the Committee had been broadly in support of the proposal.
2. Proposal. The papers explained the proposed offer and listed the key points that had informed the process which would position a suite of “value added” A Levels comprising a suite of traditional and non-A Level but equivalent subjects, thus benefitting from both pedagogies (linear A Level and modular Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and University of the Arts London (UAL) qualifications). The proposal was supported in the paper by detailed national and local researched data, an explanation of the present uptake pattern, student numbers and group sizes. The packages were individually listed and noted. The local and national picture was described and how the new offer would be positioned was clearly laid out and finally the effect on staffing and associated teaching hours was examined.
3. The matter was then generally and confidentially discussed in depth. It was stressed that the proposal did not indicate a withdrawal from A Level provision but was replacing the exclusive qualification with a carefully selected and focused alternative. There was some feeling that the proposal would remove a relatively large number of popular courses, including humanities based, and the mixture of qualifications could practically dilute the overall value and even fail to meet some Russell Group University entrance criteria, which was strongly refuted. The packages on offer had been carefully linked and matched together and would provide worthwhile and meaningful qualifications. There would be no effect on current students since their provision would continue unchanged until completion. For those potential students that had already signed up to A Levels in the next year there would be close individual discussion, a negative outcome for some could be expected and support would be provided to help find an alternative; that would be a sixth form college since local FE Colleges had largely ceased A Level provision. It was generally felt that this represented a sound move forward, “package and point” and could continue to be developed. Most Members endorsed the proposal, and the Senior Leadership Team undertook to discuss fully and individually with those who remained to be convinced.

**The information was noted and received.**

**83/20 APPLICATIONS**

Detail of the enrolment performance informed by a detailed paper was considered and discussed. Since putting the information together, first choice applications and acceptances (Annexes 1 & 2 refer) had risen to 2656 and 1579 firm offers had been made. Comparisons with this point in the previous year were also reassuring, with:

1. 51% of target applications received compared with 39% last year;
2. 52% of offers made compared with 42% last year; and
3. 54% of acceptances compared with 40% last year.

Conversion and progression factors were included in the paper and were noted together with Annex 3; the increased number of applications for A Level courses was noted. The Marketing Strategy development was underway, was welcomed and discussed by Members. Whether there was enough emphasis on the differences between the 2 campuses was discussed. The draft strategy would form an essential element for the forthcoming Corporation Strategy Planning day when it would be fully considered.

**The information was noted and received.**

**84/20 GENDER PAY GAP**

It was necessary to report to the Corporation each year on gender pay gap issues. This report had been based on 6 mandatory calculations at a specific point (the snapshot period); 31 March 2021. Comparative percentages of genders indicated that, as usual across the sector, the lower pay quartile showed 84.73% female and 15.27% male, explained by the disproportionate number of women filling lower paid posts; that issue continued to be under consideration. The other criteria were noted and analysed in the body of the paper. Essentially, a greater proportion of females was employed, including in senior leadership with 5 female and 2 male. Strategies to narrow the (non-discriminatory) pay gap were included in the paper and were noted.

**The information and action plan was noted and approved.**

**85/20 SENIOR POST HOLDERS (SPH) GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The SPH Grievance Policy required Corporation approval, the draft had been noted at the last FRC meeting and Members had passed comments to the HR Director; the Policy was approved for immediate implementation **(Action 9)**

**The information was noted and received.**

**Actions had been identified (Register 88/20)**

**86/20 URGENT BUSINESS**

Having extended for a further year because of Covid related issue the Chair would draw to the end of her term of office in July and she indicated her intention to retire. Accordingly, Neil Myerson proposed, and Philip Fulton seconded, Peter Thompson as the next Corporation Chair wef 12 July and that was carried unanimously. **(Action 10)**

**The information was noted and received.**

**Actions had been identified (Register 88/20)**

**87/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meetings would be:

* 1. Strategy Day at 1000 to 1600 on 14 June 2021; and
  2. Corporation 1800 on 12 July 2021.

**88/20 ACTION REGISTER**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| See referenced minute for full detail | | **Resp** | **By** |
| **Action 1** | 74/20b. Urgent Business agreed. | **Clerk** | **wie** |
| **Action 2** | 77/20a. Last minutes (08.03.21) confirmed for signature. |
| **Action 3** | 77/20d (iii) Reference to EAM to be removed. | **30.06.21** |
| **Action 4** | 78/20b. Face coverings to remain mandatory in designated areas. | **Chair** | **wie** |
| **Action 5** | 79/20b. Pay and percentage of income tbc by FRC. | **FD** | **wie** |
| **Action 6** | 80/20. Revised budget to next meeting. | **FD** | **12.07.21** |
| **Action 6** | 81/20. “Governors’ monthly report” to be introduced. | **JE** | **wie** |
| **Action 7** | 81/20. Business Schedule approved as flexible. | **Chair** |
| **Action 8** | 81/20. Meeting schedule to be considered at next meeting. | **JE** | **12.07.21** |
| **Action 9** | 85/20. SPH Grievance Policy approved. | **HRD** | **wie** |
| **Action 10** | 86/20. PT elected as Corporation Chair. | **Clerk** | **12.07.20** |