

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday 19th July 2017 commencing at 8.00am in the Room SC109, Easton Campus, Easton, Norfolk

Present

S Bendall	SB	Independent Member & Chair
D Henley	DH	Principal
F Baugh	FB	Independent Member
L Butcher	LB	Independent Member
M Coleman	MC	Independent Member
B Feltwell	BF	Independent Member
D Nunn	DN	Independent Member
M Pendlington	MP	Independent Member
G Pilcher	GP	Independent Member
D Redhead	DR	Independent Member
P Richardson	PR	Independent Member
R Sheasby	RS	Independent Member
E Sweetman	ES	Staff Governor
P Thirkettle	PT	Independent Member
J Whyman	JW	Independent Member

In Attendance

A Daniels	AD	Director of HR
D McAuley	DM	Director of HE
C Nix	CN	Director of Estates
R Robson	RR	Director of Governance
R Storer	RSt	Director for Services to Business
J Townsend	JT	Curriculum Improvement Consultant
J West	JWe	Director of Funding, Reporting Services and IT
M Wilkinson	MW	Director of Finance
L Wilson	LW	Assistant Principal

Action

1. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

SB welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Andy Daniels to members. Apologies were received from Sandra Dineen, Carl Hard, Daniel Noble, and Deanna Provis.

1.2 Timing of Agenda and items of Urgent Business

The Agenda was accepted and no additional items were received.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were declared:

- PR in relation to Morley
- GP in relation to RNAA
- DR in relation to Tex Holdings Ltd

No other declarations were received in relation to items on this Agenda.

1.4 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2017 were **confirmed** as a true record of the meeting for signature by the Chair.

1.5 Actions and Matters Arising

Action 1 – **agreed** complete.

Actions 2 – 4 ongoing

Actions 5 -8 **agreed** complete

Actions 9 - 11- ongoing

Action 12 – **agreed** complete

Action 13 ongoing

Action 14- 17 **agreed** complete

Action 18 – ongoing

RS and MC joined the meeting

2. GOVERNANCE

2.1 Link Governor Visit Reports

The link governor reports for recent visits were received.

SB and JW commented on their recent visit to the farm at Easton, both confirmed that a presentation to the Board on the farm would provide valuable insight for members into the value that the farms provides to the students and to the College overall.

2.2 Recommendations from Search Committee

2.2.1 Appointment of a New Independent Member

SB confirmed that members of the Search Committee had met with Stephen Coby (SC), members received SC's CV. It was noted that SC is an accountant and will provide further experience and expertise on the Board in this area. SB confirmed that the Search Committee were recommending SC's appointment to the Board as an Independent Member with a 4 year term of office.

Resolved: to appoint SC an Independent Member of the Board for a 4 year term. **Unanimously agreed by all**

2.2.2 Reappointment of Existing Members

GP and PT left the meeting room

SB reported that the Search Committee was recommending that both members should be reappointed. Their skills, GP finance, and PT education,

were invaluable to the Board. SB confirmed that GP only wants to take a further 1 year term of office. PT is agreeable to a further 4 year term.

Resolved: to reappoint GP for a further 1 year term of office and to reappoint PT for a further 4 year term of office. **Unanimously agreed by all.**

GP and PT re-joined the meeting

2.2.3 Committee membership, Audit Chair and Link Governor Role

SB confirmed the following additional Search Committee recommendations:

PM and LB to join the Search Committee following the resignation of FB, effective at the end of the meeting.

John Whyman to chair the Audit Committee for 17/18

LB to be appointed as Link Governor for Safeguarding, Prevent and Residential.

Resolved: to accept all recommendations from the Search Committee. **Unanimously agreed by all.**

2.3 Reappointment of co-opted member

SB advised that members needed to consider whether to re-appoint external member Helen Rumsey (HR) to the Audit Committee for the 17/18 academic year.

Resolved: to co-opt HR as an external member of the Audit Committee for 17/18. **Unanimously agreed by all.**

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

3.1 Monthly KPI Report for June 2017

DH took members through the high level summary. He advised that he remained confident that examination results will show better performance than in the last 3 years.

A member asked for further clarity on the concerns around Sport and Countryside provision expressed by DH in his summary. DH confirmed that in Sport there had been a dip in student performance, support was put in place to support those students to complete all necessary assessments. As yet the outturn was unknown. The issues in Countryside came from changes introduced with some areas being slow to adapt, work to ensure confidence in those areas remains ongoing.

A member queried the KPI on offers made, he asked how this compared with the previous year and whether there was a prediction for enrolment. DH confirmed that predictions for enrolment are modelled on previous patterns of conversion. GP emphasised the need for sensible predictions as the budget and forecast were based on these. MW advised that although applications

CD

were down staff were predicting higher numbers through better conversion and better progression.

3.2 Monthly KPI Report for Apprenticeships June 2017

RSt presented the report.

RSt advised that those apprentices due to complete by 31/7 were a current focus. He highlighted the issues in recruitment following the introduction of the Levy, revived interest is now being noticed.

A member asked why student satisfaction was not improving. RSt advised that the survey was being revised. The member challenged that revision; a survey that was changed to ensure the questions prompted the responses wanted would not be a positive step.

3.3 Monthly KPI Report for HE June 2017

The report was presented by DM. He advised that the increase in applications was for new courses, applications remain static for the existing programme. He noted the introduction by the UEA of condonable modules, this had a positive impact on success and retention.

A member asked for further detail on the introduction of condonable modules. DM confirmed that these were not for modules designated as core. This was introduced late in the year by UEA and all modules had been reviewed. This had been done with the UEA ensuring that the regulations had been fairly applied.

A member noted the growth in applications in new subjects, suggesting a refresh of subjects offered had a beneficial impact on recruitment and that this should be pursued further. DM confirmed that this had been the case and that new programmes (Sport) were being developed for validation in Spring 2018 and delivery in September 2018. The member sought confirmation the need for the courses offered was examined, were prospective students and employers consulted on courses being developed. DM advised that industries were keen to develop higher level apprenticeships, level 5 and 6 courses were being considered.

A member enquired if there had been any further consideration of 2 year degree programmes. DM advised that until recently funding may have been prohibitive but this could now be looked into.

A member queried the significant jump in success in January and the reason for that. DM confirmed that this related to assessments at that point in the year. It was agreed that the KPI should be amended to reflect this.

**RR/
KPI**

4. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

4.1 Post Ofsted Action Plan

SB confirmed that the POP group had met and that a second meeting date had been set. The group will meet between Corporation meetings effectively

meaning that the plan will be scrutinised by members fortnightly. Governors will also now be involved in the SAR process, starting with attendance at the Landex led SAR validation meetings in September.

DH noted the changes to the Plan as requested by the POP Group. He highlighted that the Plan was not solely a response to the Ofsted report but also included other issues identified by the College.

A governor expressed frustration at the lack of improvement in the recent past. She sought reassurance that the actions and required outcomes identified in the Plan will be actively pursued with the vigour and pace needed. This view was supported by other members. Members also felt that the right communications with staff were essential to ensure progress and success. JT confirmed that a Comms Strategy was being developed to ensure that this point was covered effectively. SB also highlighted the concerns of staff reported directly to her. A member expressed concern on management presence at the Otley campus. DH noted this but emphasised the need for the senior team to work and function as one to ensure rapid progress.

It was noted that a more detailed granular plan sits beneath this high level summary.

4.2 Validation of HE Courses

DM explained to members the factors involved in the decision not to try again for validation of the Vet Nursing course.

A member asked why the requirements imposed by the RCVS had not been identified before validation was pursued. DM advised that both the College and the UEA had not been aware of the conditions imposed prior to the application. Members agreed that, with hindsight, pursuing validation did not seem appropriate at this point. However members were anxious to emphasise that lessons must be learnt in any future pursuit to offer similar professional qualifications, appropriate Due Diligence was essential at the outset.

DM advised that 6 students initially recruited to the Vet Nursing Course had transferred to other courses.

SB wished DM well in his retirement on behalf of the Board. DM confirmed that an internal appointment of Vicky Cummings as HE CQM had been completed, she would report direct to the new VP.

4.3 Staff Appraisals

The update on the number of appraisals completed was received, now at 92.7% against a target of 95%.

Members expressed concern that this remained an issue. A target of 100% should be targeted. A member asked what sanctions were in place for non-compliance. AD confirmed that disciplinary action would be taken. The need for training for managers was noted, this would be undertaken early in the new academic year

5. ENSURE CONTINUED FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF THE COLLEGE

5.1 Management Accounts for June 2017

MW advised that there remains no material movement in the forecast to the end of the year.

MP left the meeting.

A member asked that the farm accounts be made available. CN noted that some costs could not be realistically apportioned. GP noted the value to students in the gross margin analysis.

MW

A member expressed concern on the forecast in the accounts. MW confirmed this issue would be dealt with under item 5.3.

5.2 ESFA

The most recent meeting was noted

5.3 Budget and Forecast

MW took members through the Budget and Forecast. He highlighted the points raised in the summary and the needs to not be overly optimistic and to reduce the staff costs towards the sector benchmark. He advised that the figures were predicated on a 2% increase in student numbers, this being achieved through better conversion and more particularly through increased progression. He highlighted to members the need to achieve additional savings of c£750k.

A member challenged the 2% growth, particularly in light of the Ofsted outcome. MW reaffirmed that this was based primarily around better progression. Discussion on the potential impact of the Ofsted grade 4 took place. A member raised the concern that the College had a track record of being overly optimistic. JT confirmed that the recent 'KIT' day had been oversubscribed and that internal progression rates were up, she agreed that it was very difficult to be definitive but that indications were good. Members expressed further concerns around the predictions. GP commented that this budget, as presented, would require the savings stated to be achieved; if the student numbers being predicted were not achieved further savings would be required immediately.

DH expressed his support for the Budget and Forecast presented. He advised that he felt the level of savings required was achievable without adverse impact on students and quality improvement.

A member sought confirmation of the position of funds from the future land sale. MW confirmed that this was not included.

Members were asked to vote on the approval of the budget.

Resolved: to approve the Budget and Forecast as presented for 17/18.
Agreed by a majority vote (12 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention)

5.4 Fees and Charges Policy

MW confirmed that there were no material changes to the policy for the new academic year.

Resolved: to approve the Fees and Charges Policy for 17/18. **Unanimously agreed by all.**

5.5 HE Expansion

Members received the report from MW. He highlighted the key issues, that overall student numbers are too low and that the student staff ratio of 8:1 is too low. There is scope for growth with the right products with existing staff numbers, this would have a significant impact on the bottom.

5.6 Report on the College Farm

SB thanked CN for providing the report. She urged any members that had not done so to read the report. This will be followed with a presentation to the Board on the farm in the new academic year along with sight of the accounts.

6. NEEDS OF RURAL BUSINESS

6.1 Employer Satisfaction Survey Results

Members noted the revisions made to the report previously brought to them.

7. AOB

FB advised that she had met with Marie Pacey prior to the meeting and received an update on progress against the Ofsted unannounced visit actions. Arrangements were underway to increase security measures in the residential areas. In addition required policy and procedure updates are being progressed, with training being delivered to staff. FB confirmed that this would be her last meeting as a governor, but that she would arrange to meet with LB to arrange an effective handover of her link governor role. SB thanked FB on behalf of the Board and the College for all her hard work and input over her years as at governor.

DH updated members on the publication of the Ofsted report and the planned statements to stakeholders and the press.

8.. Date of the next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 30th August 2017 at the Otley campus with a 5.00pm start time.

The Chair closed the non-confidential agenda at 10.14am