

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held via Zoom at 17.00 on Tuesday 13th July 2021

Present:

Kevin Finan	Chair
Lindy Stacy	Vice Chair
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Rob Nicholls	External Governor
Chris Williams	External Governor
David Chalmers	External Governor
Iain Springate	External Governor
Deborah Watson	External Governor
Andy Champion	External Governor
Neil Tanton	
Harrison Burke	Student Governor
Joanna Boardman	Governance Advisor and Head of Executive Office

In Attendance:

Bill Blythe	Vice Principal Finance and Resources
Sheena Murphy- Collett	Director of HR and Organisational Development
Craig Litster	Interim VP Curriculum and Quality
Jon Hardy	Interim VP Curriculum and Quality

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies received from Lena Marvao and Lee Thommen with Mark Rogers sending in apologies after the event.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No declaration of interests were declared.

3. Confidential Items

- 3.1 One confidential item noted for Remuneration Committee Minutes and an AOB from the Director of HR and Organisational Development

4. Items brought forward by the Chair

4.1 None

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising 20FGB83

5.1 Minutes and actions of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on the 17th June 2021 were agreed and approved by the Board.

6. Strategic

6.1 Student Voice – Presentation & Breakout session

6.2 The Head of Student Engagement and one of the Interim Vice-Principals for Curriculum, Quality and Learners delivered a presentation on the future of Student Voice aims and plans at Petroc which was followed by a breakout session. During the breakout sessions 'Jamboard' page was completed with comments and feedback to support the team in moving forward. These will be collated and shared by the Governance Advisor.

6.4 Principals Termly report 20FGB84

6.5 The Principal and CEO presented a termly report to Board highlighting key areas. These included the increase in some risks relating to the Curriculum areas. These had been Recently reviewed by the Interim Vice-Principal and it was determined that the mitigations in place within the year had been insufficient. Deeper focus and more targeted resolutions are planned.

6.6 The Key Performance Indicators were showing some significant improvements in achievement areas although and work is going well on developing the Tier 2 and Tier 3 KPI's.

6.7 A question was raised to ask if the dashboard development was a new software that had been purchased. The Principal explained that it was an in-house development and was in addition to Petroc Performance and Civitas predictive analytics.

7. Quality Curriculum and Learners

7.1 Compliments and Complaints 2020-2021 20FGB85

7.2 CL, Interim Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and learning presented the report, speaking to key highlights. It was noted that there had been a decline in both complaints and compliments. It was discussed that this may be pandemic related where other areas of life had taken priority for people, although a comment was made that in other businesses these had actually increased especially around complaints.

7.3 It was questioned if Petroc undertook regular reviews of this area and it was confirmed that in addition to this annual report that the Quality office monitors and manages the system and presents feedback to the College throughout the year. At this stage there have been no particular patterns identified and the creation of Service Level Agreements may have helped to manage expectations. The College was congratulated for its work in this area.

7.4 Safeguarding Annual Report 20FGB86

- 7.5** The Interim Vice-Principal presented the paper drawing Boards attention to the key areas of significance. It was noted that whilst one area of non-compliance was noted in the report around training this was an issue with the provider content and another provider had been sought and new training was beginning.
- 7.5** The rise in numbers of students presenting to the Safeguarding team has increased significantly through the period of the pandemic, however it was discussed that cases were on the rise before COVID began. A lot has been done to break down barriers for young people to report on safeguarding issues and problems that they are facing in their lives as well.
- 7.6** Whilst a reduction in the number of Prevent cases has been noted, there is a suspicion that cases are being under-reported currently due to isolation. With the increase in on0line activity it is likely that prevent related interactions have increased digitally, but not been reported.
- 7.7** Similarly the cases of sexual abuse may have increased due to isolation at home and a lack of challenges against behavioural norms.
- 7.8** The rise is significant, but there is an expectation that cases must plateau however not in the short term.
- 7.9** Board asked if demographic and other data sources could be added to the report to try to identify any particular learner groups against specific issues where targeted support or intervention at an early stage would be beneficial. The College confirmed that some data was collected and analysed and OFSTED undertook some of this as well, but that they would look further into the possibility.
- 7.10** Board challenged that fact that there was no longer a safeguarding governor due to a resignation. The Governance Advisor confirmed that a meeting on all link governors was scheduled for August and the safeguarding link would be discussed then ahead of the next safeguarding meeting.
- 7.11** Board asked if an increase to the value or number of bursaries available would be helpful. The College responded to say that it had been looking into this, but was not convinced that cash was the best support or motivator. They were looking into other options which may be of more tangible benefit to the learner such as improved free transport.
- 7.12** A gap in staffing within the safeguarding team this year was noted, which was now resolved. The addition of a counsellor within the team is expected to be of great benefit.
- 7.13** **FE Choices** **Verbal**
- 7.14** It was reported to Board that the FE Choices survey which is usually undertaken by IPSOS MORI had been cancelled for the second year running. The College has undertaken its own survey using the same questions and the results have recently come in. The analysis will be seen by the Executive in the first instance and then presented to Board at the next meeting.
- 7.15** A brief first look shows that response rates are down and results appear to be down as well. A deeper analysis is required though which should include some deep dives into faculty specific results.

Month 10 Management Accounts (to note)
Budget and Financial Forecasts (for approval)
Financial Regulations Review (to receive)

8.1 Month 10 Management Accounts

8.1 The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the College has returned to a small surplus in 2020/2021. The projected year-end operating position before pension charges adjustment has improved and the position will continue to be monitored leading up to the year-end.

8.2 Overall income YTD is behind the original profile for £851k and 50k lower than the same time last year. A breakdown of specific areas was discussed.

8.3 Board noted the improving position in regards to the surplus.

8.4 Budget and Financial Forecasts

8.5 The operating surplus shows some income growth, but it is heavily influenced by projects such as 'Level Up' and 'Catch Up'. At this stage the level of 'Catch Up' funding has not been announced.

8.6 The improvement in cash balances and comfortable levels of working capital reserves means there should not be any additional credit or rolling balance facilities needed.

8.7 An expected growth in income from commercial activity should occur in 2021/22 as the cafes, restaurant and hairdressing facilities fully open.

8.8 There is still a concern around the growth in HE however it was noted that the summer period is always a volatile time for HE recruitment so much won't be known until later in the year.

8.9 It was noted that the Barclays documentation will be signed on behalf on Board by the Principal and CEO and Board were happy with this

8.10 The Board asked if the College has reviewed the recent review around ventilation and the potential need for certification. The Vice-Principal assured Board that reviews are ongoing around this issue, but that nothing was certain yet. It is unlikely that funding would be given in support of this if buildings had to be changed so the College will continue to monitor the issue.

8.11 Board asked if the College was satisfied with the current surplus or should it be aiming for more. The Vice-Principal acknowledged that this was a live debate within Executive at the moment alongside the future Estates Strategy and how to finance that moving forward.

8.12 Moving into the next year reports will come through the new Finance and General purposes committee which will set out the ongoing Financial Strategy

8.13 Board approved signatory rights to the Principal and CEO

8.14 Financial Regulations Review

8.15 The main changes were detailed to the Board:

- Budget uplift to £50k for the Director of Finance and Resources
- Details the new Committee Structure
- Cheque processes
- No longer bound by the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)

9.0 Our People

9.1 HR Spring Report

20FGB88

9.2 The Director for HR and Organisational Development presented the HR Spring Report as read with one additional note that clarified that at the time of the report there were more long sickness cases. Some of those had now been resolved so the staff sickness levels were now lower.

9.3 Board were asked to give opinions and comments on two questions from the Director to aid in some strategic thinking underway within the College.

9.4 Question One with feedback: What experiences/ideas do you have for engaging and motivating staff teams?

- Work within the KPI's – some experience shows that those teams most engaged with their KPIs meaningfully achieve things.
- Ensure that the Executive and Senior management are visible 'walking the floor' and checking in with staff
- Clarifying why the college wants to do things and what it wants to achieve and clearly communicate that
- Ensure you have a clear purpose
- Communicate – where are the 'win-wins', use IT developments, Social causes, Conferences and surveys
- Remind staff of the benefit packages already available
- Have conversations with a recruiter. It is a competitive market for staff at the moment and they may have some suggestions on attractive benefits
- Develop staff portfolios in non-executive roles.

9.6 Question Two with feedback: How does an organisation offer flexibility to a diverse workforce whilst meeting their needs

- Should sit within any blended learning
- For non-academic staff flexible working can be a great offer
- Set out ground rules
- Could 'anchor' each staff member to a site and ask for minimum attendance there once a week (within a 90-minute drive)
- Could improve recruitment opportunities
- Any opportunity for blended classrooms across sites?
- Don't try for a 'one size fits all'

9.7 Governors were asked for forward any other ideas or suggestions to the Governance Advisor

10 Governance

10.1 Student Governors Update

Verbal

10.2 The Student union President for 2021/22 gave a verbal update on the work undertaken by the Student Union this term.

10.3 There have been a number of community focused projects around litter picking and clearing out the River Taw (which discovered 40 trollies and 150 tyres).

10.4 Whilst the Student Enrichment programme was unable to fully engage with the students due to the pandemic some activities such as roller skating and paddle boarding had been run.

10.5 The challenge for student wellbeing has been high in the agenda and workshops and hubs have been run with plans in the new year to help students adjust back in to a social environment.

10.6 The student Union is looking to build on links with employers including seeking sponsorship for a student ball.

10.7 There has been a recent push on racism and equality and diversity following the backlash in the recent football tournament.

10.8 The board thanked the President and wished them good luck in the coming year

10.9 Petroc Student Union Constitution (to approve)

20FGB89

10.10 The Student President presented the updated constitution to Board for approval and stated that this was a more stable and effective constitution which was focused with clear aims.

10.11 Board approved the constitution

10.12 GDPR Annual Report and FOI Requests (to note)

20FGB90

10.13 The Governance Advisor presented the report as read to the Board noting that the main issue again this year was staff error, but that no serious breaches had been made. Further training and the purchase of an updated GPDR module for the essential training suite of programmes will take place to mitigate the issue further.

10.14 It was noted that the number of FOI requests this year had been lower than previous years and that whilst on the report two requests were outstanding, both had now ben completed.

10.15 The Board noted and approved of the reports and stated that both areas were well controlled.

10.16 Audit Committee Minutes and Recommendations for Approval (to approve) KPIs and Risk Management (to update)

- 10.17 The Chair of Audit Committee spoke to the minutes from the meeting from 17 March 2021. Key issues were highlighted as the swap over from an audit on subcontracting to staff absence and that actions were being resolved on the action list.
- 10.18 Whilst a more recent meeting had brought forward further updated on Risk and KPI's Audit Committee were satisfied that with the progress on both areas.

11 Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Principal and CEO extended his and the Colleges thanks to Jon Hardy, who is leaving the College and this meeting would be his last. The Board offered congratulations for his new role and their thanks for his input and contributions to Board.

The Student and Staff Governors were excused from the meeting

11.2 AOB – Confidential

Minutes are held as confidential

The Executive members were excused from the meeting

12 Confidential Items

- 12.1 To approve minutes and recommendations from Remuneration Committee**

Minutes are held as confidential

Date of Next Meeting – 7th December 2021