

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held via Zoom at 17.00 on 17th May 2021

Present:

Kevin Finan	Chair
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Lindy Stacey	External Governor
Chris Williams	External Governor
David Chalmers	External Governor
Maxine Padgham	External Governor
Lena Marvão	External Governor
Iain Springate	External Governor
Andy Champion	External Governor
Deborah Watson	External Governor
Penny Adams	Student Governor
Holly Milton	Student Governor
Lee Thommen	Staff Governor
Neil Tanton	Staff 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	Development Curriculum and Quality VP
Jon Hardy	Quality VP Curriculum and Assessment
Rozz Algar	Assistant Principal Commercial

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies received from Rob Nicholls and Mark Rogers

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 No declaration of interests were declared.

3. Confidential Items

3.1 No confidential items were noted

4. Items brought forward by the Chair

4.1 The Chair opened the nomination for the Vice Chair role with one applicant having shown interest and no further applications from this meeting. Lindy Stacey was asked to temporarily leave the meeting whilst a vote was taken, which resulted in a unanimous agreement to appoint her to the position of Vice Chair. It was agreed that she will continue her current chair duties for the remaining academic year as well as taking on the chair of the Remuneration committee role.

4.2 A verbal update from the Principal and CEO and Chair was given on the recruitment progress of the new Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality and Learners. It was reported that recruiting to this role is challenging and some discussion with the consultants was proving useful in setting best practice solutions. It was agreed that the current support structure of the Assistant Principals stepping up into Interim roles is working well in the main and that the College will go back out to market for the role.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

20FGB63

5.1 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Governing Body held on the 31st March 2021 were agreed and approved by the Board.

6. Strategic

6.1 Strategic Breakout Session – Petroc Brand and Perception

20FGB64

6.2 It was noted that not all governors had been able to access the link to the video so some were unable to comment fully on the new Petroc Brand.

6.3 The principal initiated a series of breakout rooms for all attendees to discuss and challenge the college approach to the Petroc brand and perception survey results. After the groups returned to the main room the following points were reported back from those breakouts.

- Is the timing of rebrand right or should the focus be on getting the right products for the right markets?
- Does the College understand who it is and who the target audiences are?

- Challenge to the curriculum – does it have enough core structure and enough aspirational elements?
- Rebrand looks luxurious, unique and expensive to the viewer
- Would this include building refresh?
- How involved have the staff been in the process and are they behind it?
- Must work with staff to promote it and feel part of it
- Communication routes into employers and the community are important to embed the brand
- Is advertising in the Barnstaple and the wider area expected as it feels there isn't much at present?
- A Brand that reflects an organisations values is powerful
- Net Promotor Score (NPS) and its value to the College. Should NPS be used as a staff target

6.4 An overall discussion took place regarding the timing of the rebrand and any associated costs set against the challenge from the Board that the College has to complete large pieces of work such as the curriculum strategy and lower student numbers. It was explained that the initial brand change would be digital and therefore no major costs were involved and the roll out of wider branding change would be scheduled to fit with funding availability and strategic need.

6.5 Whilst issues with the video link impacted on the breadth of discussion on the Brand work undertaken, the overall discussion focused on how Petroc could effectively strike a balance between supporting the community by ensuring that there are opportunities for all, and building/promoting Petroc's strong academic base to attract students who may currently view other Colleges as more elite.

Action:

- i) *Any further notes not shared at the meeting are to be sent to the Governance Advisor and all governors are were advised to review the Brand video*

**6.6 Annual Report on the strategic and operational contributions to local and regional plans
20FGB65**

6.7 The Assistant Principal Commercial presented the paper and discussed the number of ways in which Petroc contribute to local and regional strategies. It was acknowledged that to date these have not been systematically collated or monitored, although new methods to support this were in development.

6.8 The College is involved at an International level through its connection to the British Council Interactive Alliance and is working on further connection through the predictive analytics implementation.

6.9 At a national level the college is engaged in policy development and the skills agenda and is connected to a network of Colleges across the country.

6.10 Regionally the College is engaged in regional strategic boards and working groups, playing a leading role in Northern Devon Strategy and is shaping and extending its contribution across Mid Devon and the Greater Exeter region

6.11 The discussion from board focused on the importance of stakeholder mapping and what more the college and indeed the governors could do to drive this work forward. It was noted that the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on this issue is more subjective than others which may

lead to difficulty in tracking progress. It was agreed that tangible outcomes are important as is the college being an active participant in these areas.

- 6.12** The board advised that a ‘scatter gun’ approach was rarely successful and that the college should focus its efforts. Board would be interested in hearing more on areas where the college is actively working to change an external agenda.

Actions:

- i) *A monthly update to governors with key areas that the college is engaged in for them to discuss in their networks.*
- ii) *The college to consider its approach to ensure it is fit for purpose and highlight key agenda items to Board moving forward*

6.13 Principal and CEO Strategic Update 20FGB66

- 6.13** The Principal and CEO presented the paper and current context for the College and the progress of its strategy. The report spoke to the ongoing changes in providing a Covid-secure college, new capital developments and additional workloads for in Teacher Assessed Grading for qualifications to be awarded this year.

- 6.14** Much is happening on the national stage which will influence the future of Colleges and Petroc must ensure that it takes full advantages of any opportunities that present themselves because of this. The College continues to develop all supporting strategies, with consultations and developments in digital, flexible working and property, with the curriculum strategy to be developed before the start of the new academic year.

- 6.15** Board welcomed the report

7. Quality Curriculum and Learners

7.1 Breakout Session – The Petroc Curriculum of the Future 20FGB67

- 7.2** JH, one of the interim Vice Principals for Quality, Curriculum and Learners presented a set of slides to set the scene for the exercise and provided links to ‘Jamboard’ where comments could be recorded and then the group was split into separate rooms.

- 7.3** The session asked the members to comment and challenge on the following areas of the Strategy:

- Create outstanding learner achievement in all areas
- Transform life chances and employment for all
- Boost productivity, innovation and agility of businesses and organisations
- Build community and prosperity within North and Mid Devon and the wider South West of England
- Tackle the Climate Emergency

7.4 Notes were provided to prompt discussion and wide-ranging discussions were held. Feedback and commentary which was collated on Jamboard, will be used by the College in future curriculum design work.

7.5 Higher Education Quality Report 20FGB68

7.6 CL, Interim Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and Learning presented the paper to Board as part of the college and OFS assurance process. The detail was presented to provide the Board the activity that College undertakes to fulfil OFD requirements for Higher Education provision which needs to reflect the size and complexity of the Petroc offer.

7.8 Board noted the presentation and the paper and agreed that appropriate assurance was in place to meet the quality and standards requirements.

7.9 National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) and Mides Sunburst Report 20FGB69

7.10 There are some areas such as NARTs where data will not be available this year due to the ongoing pandemic, however assurance was given that internal monitoring wherever possible would be undertaken.

7.11 Board noted that the retention figures had improved and commended the College for the work undertaken to achieve this. Board also recommended that areas for development are identified opportunities for further improvement sought.

7.12 A point was made by Board around the tourism push of 'North Devon as an Adventure Coast' and asked if anything could be done around that. Other areas were also discussed.

8.0 Finance and Resources

8.1 Month 8 Management Accounts 20FGB70

8.2 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the month 8 management accounts to board and spoke to the key areas of note.

- Concerns remain that the AEB allocation will not be achieved and therefore a clawback may come into effect.
- Apprenticeships targets remain a key risk area.
- The Covid-19 Adult Skills Offer (ring fenced) is showing little prospect of being utilised.
- The 16-19 Tuition – Level up Funding continues to be a challenge to facilitate.
- Fees Income and Commercial activities continue to be tracked and may require further adjustments in the coming months.
- Expenditure budget lines will continue to be monitored and reviewed again over the summer term but it is likely that the College's overall cost base will reduce further in year.
- 2020/21 forecasted cash balances reflect the improved projected year end position and the T-Levels Specialist Equipment Capital Funding receipt. 2021/22 cash flow forecast includes an early budget/capex forecast and includes T Levels Wave 3 and Further Education Condition Transformation Fund (FECTF) capital funding bids which were submitted in March 2021.

8.3 Board discussed the management accounts and noted the challenges that were being faced this year. Broad discussion around the college strategies assured Board that the College were aware of the issues and discussing mitigations for these.

8.4 Subcontractor update including the Fees and Charges Policy 20FGB71

8.5 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the update and the Fees and Charges Policy for Board approval and talked through the key points.

8.6 Board Approved the Policy and noted all updates

8.7 Budget/Funding Position 2021/22 update 20FGB72

8.8 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources presented the Budget and Funding Position for 2021/22 and reiterated that it is difficult in the early stages of the year to predict with great accuracy the detailed financial position of the college. Allocations from the government, detailed business plans and student applications are all still to be finalised. Forecasting in this year has been further complicated as the country moves out of the pandemic and the details of Brexit emerge.

8.9 At this stage of the year application numbers for 2021/22 are lower than ideal, but increased focus from the College is being engaged to maximise interest where possible.

8.10 Overall the college is assured that the predictions of 2021/22 income is within margins with saving levels required holding steady, however business plans are being closely monitored where there may currently be gaps between planned and achieved numbers.

8.11 Questions from the board on the level of matched funding that the College is committed to currently were asked, with details being supplied by the Vice Principal. The amounts that are matched are relatively low currently and do not impact significantly on the budget.

8.12 The finalisation of this work will be presented to the Board in July 2021.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 17th June 5.00pm – via Zoom