

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body held at 17.00 on Tuesday 13 December 2022 via Teams

Members – Full Governing Board

Present

Lindy Stacey	Chair of Governors
Pat Denham	Vice Chair
Iain Springate	External Governor
David Chalmers	External Governor
Andy Champion	External Governor
Dawn Stabb	External Governor
Stephen Wells	External Governor
Katerina Kolyva	External Governor
Richard Bevan	External Governor
Deborah Watson	External Governor
Neil Tanton	Support Staff Governor
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Bella Dash	Student Governors

In Attendance

Joanna Boardman	Governance Advisor and Head of Executive Office
Bill Blythe	VP Finance, Resources and Regional Affairs
Craig Litster	Interim VP Education & Learners
Sheena Murphy-Collett	VP People, Organisational Development and Engagement
Alex Farmery	Executive Officer
Jason Jones	Observing ahead of starting as Deputy Principal in January 2023

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Rob Nicholls with a note that David Chalmers would join later.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 No declarations were made

3. Confidential Items

It was declared that item 11 and 12 on the agenda would be a confidential item and staff and student Governors would withdraw from the meeting prior to this.

There would also be an additional confidential item delivered verbally in Any Other Business.

4. Minutes from previous meeting

22FGB01/02

The minutes from the meeting on 19 July 2022 and the extraordinary board meeting on 28 September 2022 were approved.

5. Items brought forward by the Chair

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

6. Principal update

A verbal update and summary of the first term was received and had been informed by the principal's reflections following the away day. There was some slight disappointment expressed that the college is not yet where the principal would like to see it, however, the focus of the update would be based on their reflections of the year.

- What should be done differently?
- Culture of compliance not very strong
- Data needs to improve
- Average class size is a weakness

Future focus was noted as the following:

- Relentless focus on quality improvement
- Recruitment, reputation, and community
- Leadership, management, and culture
- Sustain and grow Programme

Changing behaviours will be key and that in turn changes learner behaviour and outcomes. The college issued the Learner Success Standards in September 2022 and a faculty on a page report is reviewed and discussed at each College Leadership Team meeting, which looks at all four areas of key focus as shown above. Quality improvement is now at the heart of the college which will mean a much stronger outcome in learner results and therefore produce a reputational improvement.

Recruitment is important and will focus in the coming year on some more incremental changes, recognising the importance of teaching staff getting in touch with potential learners. With the help of the Marketing and Business Engagement teams the college will be sharper with the targeting of its messages and embed within the community.

There will be stronger expectations on the delivery of any actions and more accountability for the Leadership and Management teams. An away day with the college leadership team is planned for January 2023.

The college will need to ensure it becomes lean and agile alongside the challenges being faced in decreased learner numbers and the aim of the Sustain and Grow programme will be to implement any changes that need to be made and for the college to work efficiently. The board was reminded that the desired class size for that to work is an average of 16.

A question was raised by the governors as to what the college will do in terms of the new requirement to focus on the local skills need? What will the progression from Level 1 to Level 2 look like and how does that fit into the current curriculum?

After some discussion the college agreed to produce a position paper to show what the colleges plans are around this subject. The paper would be completed in January 2023 and circulated to the Board by correspondence by the Governance Advisor.

The Board raised a further question as to the actual progression figures and how the college motivates all existing students to maximise numbers?

The college responded that progression figures are currently weak, and there is an action within the Sustain and Grow plan to address this. It was agreed after some discussion that it should be easier to encourage existing students to stay than attract new students in a competitive market.

It was stated by a governor that during an inspection, Ofsted will ask the question as to where the students go, and that the college needs to understand the importance of retaining learners. This was acknowledged by the college.

The Vice-Principal did note that the college runs a progression month every year during March, but with a lot of low skills labour available in the area it is difficult to retain students when the alternative is paid employment and the college sits within some areas of deprivation.

The aim for the college will be to promote the benefits of progression from all levels and to produce a meaningful outcome allowing all learners to be able to progress. This includes increased effort and accountability internally to recognise the importance of progression.

Further questions from Board and answers from the college

Q. Will quality improvement mean extra emphasis on the faculty managers and if so, does the college have the right people and the right support in place?

A. The college has a Learning and Development programme which is aimed at Managers.

Q. Are the right measures in place to monitor progress?

A. The measures were felt to be right but, the college admitted that there is a need to tidy up the data and there is a lack of trust in the data from some staff. It was noted that there are now some new tools in place to look at data differently.

Q. Is there is a lack of confidence in the communication across the college and the organisation and the question is, should the focus be on the top three priorities?

A. The college acknowledged that at times the communications do not seem to reach all audiences and a more sophisticated communication and engagement plan needs to be developed.

Q. In the QIP the red rated items are mostly educational, and the green items are mostly connected to Leadership and Management, how will the college lead and manage people to become more passionate?

A. Encouragement, support, and training followed by monitoring and adjustment to ways of working were noted as plans the college will take up.

Q. Where do the college show any progress made in the papers on any of the multiple projects?

A. The college confirmed it is currently running multiple streams on the sustain and grow programme and a paper with all the progress made will be submitted to the next strategic review committee

Q. Why is the college losing learners year after year?

A. It was stated and accepted that there is no one answer to this question and that a variety of issues, internal and external had been shared and discussed with the Board in the past and through until today. There is a need to understand and resolve recruitment, retention and progression and learners feeling let down or not supported enough by teachers and the college needs to change the public perception. This work was noted as underway through standard methods as well as a recruitment specific working group and the Sustain and Grow programme.

The level of educator engagement in the community was noted as lower and falling in recent years and where the college has started to run Masterclasses with year 10s and the year 11 recruitment numbers are currently up compared to last year. Increasing activity of engagement activities and masterclasses forms part of the Sustain and Grow Plan.

In addition, the student enrichment offer will increase in the coming year to be able to compete with other colleges including a new offer being run with Chelsea football club starting in September 2023.

Actions

- 1) *Produce a specific action plan around retention, progression, and communication for the meeting in January and circulate to the board.*
- 2) *Retention and progression report to be produced for the next Curriculum and Quality committee.*

A thank you was noted at this stage to the safeguarding and SEN teams for their hard work and dedication to support learners with mental health issues by the chair.

7. Curriculum and Quality

22FGB03

All the papers and minutes were received by the board and there was a brief discussion around concerns regarding the overall attendance, Maths and English attendance, Apprenticeships in general and achievement rates. The board requested more data and information on Apprenticeships for the next Curriculum and Quality committee.

Action – Newly appointed Apprenticeship Manager to attend next C&Q committee meeting to give more insight on where the college stands regarding apprenticeships.

7.1. To approve the Study Programme 23/24

22FGB04

It was noted by the VP Education and Learners that the policy was designed to ensure that all study programmes taught at Petroc are compliant with all mandatory requirements. The policy was therefore produced to assist academic and support managers when business planning curriculum for 2023/24. The programme aims to deliver the best learning experience for learners including enrichment and online learning.

Questions from Board and answers from the college

Q. How do the quality systems monitor the achievement of the study programme?

A. It was confirmed that Qualifications are monitored and reported on, and data was provided on each of the different elements across the faculty (such as digital learning, enrichment etc)

Q. Who is responsible for the individual learner that has signed up for the programme?

A. It was confirmed that the Programme Manager and tutorial manager of each area are responsible for the learners and their progress.

Q. During the Learning walk on the strategy day, it came to light that some A Level learners are completing their course after just 1 year, will there be any recognition for that from the college such as a certificate?

A. It was explained that the college would not certify A Level completion after one year; however, the college could acknowledge this at a learners' requests.

The board recommended to approve the Study Programme 23/24.

David Chalmers joined the meeting at this point.

7.2. To Discuss Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

22FGB05

It was noted that the QIP had been updated since the Curriculum and Quality Committee as requested by the committee to add attendance and a RAG rating for all items.

Questions from Board and answers from the college

Q. Will there be a deep dive into Apprenticeships and Attendance? The board would like more details and an overview on this.

A. It was confirmed that Deep Dives have been planned for the Construction area in January 2023 followed by Apprenticeships in February 2023.

Q. Why is the college not seeing an improvement on attendance even though the Learner Success Standards were implemented in September?

A. It was reported that there has been some significant effort from the Faculty Managers and Directors to improve attendance. There were still issues and differences in attendance numbers between the different programmes and it was confirmed that this will be picked up again in January by all Directors. A suggestion was made to recruit an attendance officer as this has shown to make a positive impact at other colleges.

It was pointed out that non-attendance represents a significant safeguarding issue, and it was suggested to offer training to all educators to reiterate these possible issues.

Katerina Kolyva left at this point.

7.3. To discuss Ofsted Preparedness

22FGB06

During the discussion on Ofsted preparedness It was noted that the Self-Assessment Report would provide some information on how the college assesses itself in terms of a possible outcome of an inspection.

It was reported that the Governance Advisor would prepare some guidance for an inspection for all Governors.

A concern was raised on the high number of currently unmarked registers. Registers were confirmed as a legal document and would need to be completed on time. It was reported that all faculties were working on this to reduce the number of unmarked registers.

7.4. To Note the update to the Self-Assessment Report 21/22 (presentation)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KDgDtuJJ4iljw18Gx82iH_OWNncTXpBD/edit?usp=drive_web&oid=110289850488515722837&rtpof=true

The SAR evaluates the performance of the college against the Ofsted criteria and as such was discussed and noted.

The key areas for improvement were noted and the overall judgements scrutinised.

The board requested to see a final benchmarked version of the SAR by the end of January 2023 and for the college to link the SAR with the QIP for 22/23 and to present achievements and outcomes during the next meetings rather than the whole document.

Non-discussion items were noted and received:

7.5. Final Achievement Outcomes and Quality Improvement Plan update 2021/22

22FGB07

7.6. To receive and discuss a Survey Working Group Report

22FGB08

Iain Springate left at this point.

8. Finance and General Purposes

8.1. To receive a Finance Strategy update 22FGB10

The Board received the update, and it was noted that there had been no changes or updates made to the Finance Strategy since the last committee meeting and the Board Strategy away day in November.

Recommendations from Financial and General Purposes Committee:

8.2. To approve HR Annual Report 21/22 22FGB11

The paper was approved.

8.3. To approve the Annual Pay Award 22FGB12

The paper was approved

It was noted that this paper does have a conflict of interest for the staff Governors present, but not for the executive team.

All Non-discussion items were noted.

- Petroc Engagement Letter and Limited Assurance 22FGB13
Engagement on Regularity letter
- Month 12 Management Accounts for 2021/22 22FGB14
- Estates Strategy progress update 22FGB15

9. Audit Committee

All the recommendations from the Audit committee were noted and received

- Minutes from 29 June 2022 22FGB16
- Audit Completion Report 22FGB17
- Annual Internal Audit Report 22FGB18
- Annual Report of the Audit Committee 22FGB19
- Risk Management Update 22FGB21
- KPI update 22FGB22

The committee chair discussed the new Strategic Risk Register presentation and shared the key considerations talked through at the last audit committee:

- Regulatory requirements and the increasing complexity of them that colleges are having to face
- Negative perception of the college which is being looked at within the college currently
- Curriculum where the success rates at level 1 and 2 do not match higher levels
- The changing accountability and regulations around apprenticeships where employers have more power to control the college ratings.
- Transformation – Tiverton is still in progress and Sustain and Grow is yet to be fully realised

- Accountability statements will be due to be completed in 2023 which will hold the college to account on meeting the needs of local employers through Local Skills Improvement Plans

The Board agreed that the above considerations were appropriate and that the college was taking an active role in mitigations. The Board asked that the assurances were looked at in more detail to provide greater clarity to remove any gaps in assurance.

9.1. To approve and sign the audited annual financial accounts 22FGB20

It was reported that the accounts received a level of assurance from the auditors, which is a great testament to the finance team.

The Financial Accounts were approved ready for signature by the Chair and the Principal.

10. Remuneration Committee

It was reported that the Chair reviewed the performance of all senior post holders and would bring more information on this item in the confidential part of the meeting. A benchmarking exercise on all senior post holders' salaries was completed and it was agreed that all Senior post holders were being paid correctly.

11. Governance

11.1. To note Termly Student Governor update (presentation)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CZDwSPH_fhKWgl1Yscbskwr1vwTB5g52/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=110289850488515722837&rtpof=true

The new Student Governor introduced herself to the board and presented an update on the activities of the PSU (Promote, Support, Unite – Petroc Student Union) It was noted by the Board that the PSU had made excellent progress and played an important role on how the community view the college.

11.2. Governor of the Future Programme 22FGB24

The paper was noted by the board. It was noted that the programme had been written to ensure an effective and appropriately skilled board. During a brief discussion it was agreed that it was necessary to gain commitment from all governors to recruit and complete the team and that an extensive training and induction programme for new Governors was important to ensure good Governance.

The Governance advisor reported that some activities are already underway with a meeting scheduled with a potential new governor in the new year. It was recommended to reach out to local primary and secondary schools for potential new Governors and to start the programme as soon as possible.

The paper was approved.

Deborah Watson left at this point.

The Staff and Student Governors were excused at this point.

The meeting concluded at 20.41

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19 April 2023 at the Cotie Boardroom, North Devon Campus