



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meeting Board of Governors

Date 14 June 2018

Time 15.30 – 18.00

Venue Equator, 124 Tabernacle Street, EC2A 4SA

Present **Governors**

Althea Efunshile	Chair
Bryan Raven	Vice Chair
David Pitcher	Principal (P/CEO)
Alex Fowles	
Catherine Large	
Claire Paul	
Fern Potter	

In attendance

Felix Adenaike	Interim Vice Principal Finance (VP:F)
Elaine Kelt	Director Curriculum and Quality (DCQ)
Melissa Drayson	Interim Clerk

Apologies Kim Bromley-Derry (Governor)
Marcus Davey
Jamie Jefferson

Quorum (4) The meeting was quorate throughout

- | Item | Action lead |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Preliminary Business | |
| The Chair welcomed governors and staff to the meeting. | |
| 1.i Apologies for absence | |
| Apologies were accepted as listed above | |
| 1.ii Declarations of interest and urgent items of other business | |
| Claire Paul and Catherine Large declared an interest in item 9i: Governor reappointment. | |
| David Pitcher declared an interest in item 10i: extension of Interim Principal contract | |
| Melissa Drayson declared an interest in item 10ii: Clerk’s contract | |
| 1.iii Urgent items of other business | |

There were no items of other business

2. Minutes of the meeting on 13 April 2018

i Approval of Minutes

The Minutes, including confidential minutes, of 13 April 2018, were approved as an accurate record.

ii. Matters arising and outstanding actions

Supporting paper by the Clerk

The Board noted the items that were completed, not yet due or on hold

It was reported that the meeting between the DCQ and the safeguarding governor, Kim Bromley Derry, had been rescheduled.

Following the Backstage Centre Board meeting the previous week, work was planned in July to develop a joint approach to future use of the BSC. This should ensure that the curriculum needs of the College were met whilst maximising income from bookings. Central to this was the need for an experienced course leader who understood the sector.

It was noted that GDPR roadmaps had been developed and that an update on implementation was due to come to the July Board.

AGREED: that a progress report on the development of the Backstage Centre/National College joint plan be brought to the July Board meeting

3. Principal and Chief Executive Report

Supporting paper by the Interim Principal

A confidential minute was taken of parts of the discussion on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.

Positive developments since the last meeting included:

- Establishment of contact with the Director of the ESFA Apprenticeship division, who was seeking a meeting with the Chair and other key governors.
- Encouraging conversations with JJ regarding the website redesign

AGREED: that a meeting date would be found for governors with Keith Smith of ESFA

Clerk

4. Whole College Quality KPIs

Supporting paper by the Director of Curriculum and Quality

The Board welcomed the oversight of performance against key targets. The positive forecast outcomes for English, Maths and Apprenticeships were noted and the turnaround in apprenticeship achievement was particularly commended.

Governors asked how much of a concern the red rated areas were.

- Classroom-based forecast achievement reflected high number of drop-outs at the beginning of the course. This had been caused by enrolment issues before September 2017 rather than quality. All remaining learners were expected to pass the course. The Board asserted that the pattern next year must be different, with work done to ensure that enrolments were appropriate in the first instance, and that learners were kept on course.
- As previously discussed, the number of enrolments to classroom based courses in September 2018 was vital. Of the offers made so far to FE Learners, candidates for the Level 4 course were considered particularly strong. The college was currently offering experience days as part of its 'keeping warm' strategy.

It was queried the current grade for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. This was because pastoral care had not been consistently applied for apprentices in the workplace. Governors noted that mental health had become a significant issue for many colleges.

5. Finance, Audit and Risk

i Finance Scrutiny Committee report and recommendations

ii Management accounts and cashflow report – April/May 2018

Supporting papers: minutes of meeting on 31 May; College and Backstage Centre management accounts

A confidential minute was taken of some of the discussion on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

It was confirmed that the FS Committee had looked in detail at the management accounts and cashflow forecast and the VP Finance and Chair of the FSC gave an update on key issues.

6. Quality and the Learner Experience

Supporting paper: Updated college position statement

Governors noted the updated overall judgements, which although still conservative, reflected positive progress made on:

- re-establishing good relations with employers, with the Employer Steering Group due to be relaunched in mid-late July. New business was currently being developed through direct employer approach to the College, with no proactive marketing taking place as yet;
- ensuring consistency in Individual Learning Plans
- the recruitment of a Functional Skills tutor to enable the completion of overdue and current learners in a timely manner
- The recruitment of a dedicated Internal Quality Assurer from the end of August to ensure Awarding Body compliance
- A planned review of safeguarding with safeguarding lead governor

Governors expressed their desire to help to raise support for the College within their networks but asked for a half-page 'script' to ensure that key points were being covered.

AGREED: that governors should be provided with a script containing key selling points for the College. DCQ

7. DfE/ESFA Update

Covered in Chair's intro and item 3.

8. Business Plan – Phase 1 implementation

i Draft Student Recruitment Strategy

It was noted that recruitment would be the core responsibility of the new Business Development Manager and that recruitment to this post was a priority. As previously noted, targeted recruitment activity had been stalled by the delay to finalisation of future funding.

The need for the College to develop its employer database was also agreed, along with developing its influence with policy makers. Ultimately, governors expressed an ambition for the College to be recognised as a leader on the development of qualifications, rather than simply a provider.

AGREED:

(i) that a meeting should be set up between the Chair and the Chair and new CE of CCSkills.

Chair

(ii) that governors should assist with the development of the employer database.

DCQ/Govs

ii Draft Financial Plan and Budget

Supporting paper by the VP Finance

The draft plan included a range of income assumptions. Governors noted that the actual income would depend on the balance between 16-18 students and FE loan funded students.

The low-points in cash balances in Feb-March 2019 were acknowledged, and that contingency plans would be developed to ensure sufficient cash during these months.

Governors asked for clarification of the capital expenditure budget. This would mainly cover IT infrastructure, including website.

The Board recognised that the budget was extremely tight and contained limited scope for contingencies. A clearer picture would emerge once confirmation had been received on funding.

AGREED: that the final budget 2018-19 and financial plan be brought for approval to the July Board meeting.

VPFIn

iii Draft Operational Plan

The key focus of the draft plan was on learner recruitment and quality improvement. These targets linked to the new Professional Development Review cycle.

Governors asked for a high level of summary of the main areas of progress during the past six months.

- The quality of curriculum and apprenticeship delivery, linked to the learner journey, had improved considerably with more positive feedback from student focus groups
- Highly knowledgeable apprenticeship assessors
- Relationships with employers had been improved, and new markets explored in London and Liverpool.

The main challenges related to the lack of staff capacity, the amount of staff time spent dealing with government, and low morale caused by uncertainty.

9. Governance

Supporting paper by the Clerk

i Skills Audit and governor recruitment plan

The current skills mix of the Board was considered, and future needs discussed.

RESOLVED: that the following recommendations be approved

- To delegate to the Chair, Clerk and one other governor the selection process for two further governors, one with a finance background to be the future Finance Committee Chair, and one with a background in and understanding of the Further Education sector**
- To reappoint Catherine Large and Claire Paul for a second three year term of office** (*CL and CP left the room for this decision*)
- To set in motion procedures to appoint a staff governor on a two year term of office from 1 Sept 2018**

ii Board Action Plan

It was noted that the draft Action Plan was an organic document which would be reviewed throughout the year. There was discussion of the following:

- The Employer Steering Group meeting had been deferred to mid-late July
- It was agreed that a new Point 14 would be added around Board teambuilding in the autumn
- The Development Committee will be relaunched, with a clear focus on external messaging and raising money from diverse funding streams.

AGREED: That, with the above addition, the interim action plan and the timeline for Board self-assessment be ratified.

Clerk

10. Leadership Team recruitment

Supporting papers by the Clerk

i. Extension of the Interim Principal's contract

Resolved: That the Interim Principal's contract be extended to 31 July 2018.

ii Permanent CEO Recruitment

Governors considered the indicative timeline and, rather than start the process immediately, agreed upon further interim arrangements of six months, with recruitment of the permanent postholder late 2018. As the CEO would need to have credibility with both the industry and the DfE/ESFA, it was agreed that the search should be broad. Both strong commercial and industry experience and further education experience must, however, be represented within the College's senior management structure.

The composition of the Selection Panel would be agreed once a start date for the Selection Process had been set.

The case for using a specialist executive search agency was considered, alongside indicative costs and it was agreed that this should be explored further.

The benchmark figures were considered. There was no direct comparator for a start-up college of similar annual turnover, so the average of the closest in size was taken.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a further six month interim Principal appointment should be made following the current interim's departure,**
- (ii) That the recruitment process for a permanent Principal should commence in September**
- (iii) That tenders from three recruitment agencies should be sought**

iii Senior management structure

The Principal proposed the structure, which had a triumvirate of senior posts, with the Finance and Curriculum and Quality posts on an equal footing. The proposal that the Board should designate posts as Senior Postholders, thus strengthening accountability directly to the Board, was discussed and agreed.

The line management of the Manager of the Backstage Centre was discussed, with governors feeling that this line should be to the senior postholder with the commercial brief, and line management should, therefore, be agreed once the CEO/Principal was appointed.

The immediate appointment of the Business Development Manager would be critical to the successful achievement of the College's plans. This person should have both the credibility and ability to engage with employers on a highly professional level, plus an understanding of education and how the college curriculum might be developed to meet employer need.

It was also agreed that the recruitment of a high-quality course leader for the classroom based curriculum was a priority.

RESOLVED:

- (iv) That the Director of Curriculum and Quality should be renamed Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality
- (v) That both the VPCQ and Vice Principal Finance and Operations should be designated as Senior Postholders.
- (vi) That recruitment for a Business Development Manager commence immediately

iv Clerk contract

RESOLVED: that the current Clerk be directly employed by the College, and authority be delegated to the Principal to negotiate terms.

11. Other urgent business - none

13. Dates of future meetings

12 July @ 15.00 at Purfleet

4 October 18 @ 16.30 in Central London

13 Dec 18 @ 16.30 in Purfleet (preceded by 'meet the student' activity)

Signed (Chair):

Dated: 12 July 2018