

**Boston College**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION ON 19 OCTOBER 2022**

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**1. PRESENT**

Peter Cropley (Chair), Daran Bland, David Fannin, Claire Foster, Kelly Harris, Kimberley Jones (from item 2), Heather Lee, David Parnell, Chris Pett, Helen Rumbold, Gerry Tawton, Paul Tomlinson, Sandra Williamson and Nick Worth.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Jen Durrant (Executive Director: People), Debbie Holland (Vice Principal: Finance & Corporate Services), Adrian Humphreys (Executive Director: Business, Innovation & Partnerships), Heather Marks (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Sharon Posey (Interim Head of Learner Services) and Tim White (Assistant Principal: Curriculum).

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Atkins, Ruth Catlett, David Earnshaw and Axel Sedgwick,

Meeting attendance: 78%

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

It was reported that Kimberley Jones had been nominated as a student governor. Members agreed that Kimberley should be appointed as a student governor until the end of the 2023-24 academic year.

Kimberley Jones joined the meeting

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

Members received two presentations:

a) T Levels

Tim White gave a presentation on T Levels and their implementation.

In response to queries from members, Tim explained how T levels are being promoted and the approach being taken to them by other colleges. Nick Worth asked about interest from employers and Tim advised employer buy-in is necessary as T levels carry a big commitment for them. David Fannin asked if T levels carried any financial risk but Tim explained that this was no different to any other qualification.

Claire Foster commented on experience elsewhere and the public transport challenges for placements. Heather Lee advised that there had been issues relating to placement flexibility and it was hoped that this would change. It was noted that there were advantages to not being in the initial implementation phase because there were lessons to be learned from the launch stage experiences. Daran Bland asked about the challenges for teaching staff and support which was available was explained.

Sandra Williamson asked about the arrangements for phased implementation and offered her support if needed. Chris Pett confirmed, in response to a query from Peter Cropley, that there was limited local knowledge in industry about T levels.

b) Start of Year Learner Views

Kelly Harris gave a presentation on early feedback on the learner experience.

4. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed and noted progress made on items listed in the Corporation's Action Log.

5. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

a) Corporation – 6 July 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2022 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

Peter Copley asked about a suggestion of increases in disciplinary activity. Tim White reported that there had been some early incidents but the situation was currently as settled as usual. In response to a query from Nick Worth about disciplinary processes, members were advised that Kelly Harris is leading a team looking to streamline processes.

b) Finance and Resources Committee – 26 September 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 were reviewed.

c) Search and Governance Committee – 26 September 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September were reviewed.

d) Standards Committee – 28 September 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 were reviewed.

Gerry Tawton asked about performance management and members were advised that the key approach was for coaching and continuous development. In response to a point raised by Heather Lee, it was agreed that the acronyms list for governors should be updated and published on Teams. ●

6. **REPORTS**

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal on a number of sector and college issues.

A discussion took place about efficiencies. Chris Pett asked what was being done to reach class size viability. Claire Foster explained that some efficiencies which would not affect quality had already been introduced but there may be more needed in the future. Heather Marks advised that regular meetings to discuss efficiencies were taking place.

It was noted that the trade unions had raised some questions about workload concerns. Claire advised that there had been a lot of union activity nationally and that there were good relationships with the unions locally. In response to a question from Gerry Tawton, Claire commented on levels of union membership which were not significant. Members

were advised that there had been a union vote of no confidence in the college's Executive which was currently being dealt with as a management issue. Sandra Williamson asked if staff surveys had indicated workload concerns and Claire advised that there had not been anything prior to the union's letter.

Members noted that a consultation was underway about reshaping the management structure. The rationale for this is not financial but to build capacity and focus on learning.

b) Finance

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services on a number of financial matters including the 2021/22 accounts, debt write-offs and risk management.

It was noted that the unaudited closing position for the 2021/22 accounts resulted in a Good financial health score. The outcome of the pension scheme valuation had not yet been included as further advice on its treatment was awaited.

In respect of a long-standing international debt, advice on the timeline proposed for a settlement from the company was being sought. Members agreed to the write off a student debt of £5,246.25 which had arisen due to illness.

The contents of the risk register were noted.

c) Governance

Members received and discussed a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on a number of governance issues.

Members noted the updated AOC Code of Good Governance which was recommended for adoption. It was agreed that the Code should be adopted with immediate effect with one amendment removing the requirement for external directors for Eastern Enterprises Ltd.

Members reviewed performance against 2021-22 targets by the Corporation, the Finance and Resources Committee and the Standards Committee. Proposals from the two committees for their 2022-23 targets were approved and it was agreed that the Corporation's targets for 2022-23 should be:

- 80% attendance
- All governors to make at least 1 curriculum or business support visit during the year
- Oversight of the quality of education and how well the curriculum positively impacts on what learners know and can do as a result of their learning
- Oversight of the Horncastle and Mayflower developments
- Monitoring of OfS compliance
- Completion of the external governance review and implementation of its recommendations
- Maintenance of £1.5m cash reserve

Members reviewed papers which had been identified as confidential during 2021-22. It was agreed that the arrangements for release of papers should be changed with

immediate effect so that the status of papers would not be changed but if access was requested information would be reviewed and redacted as necessary before release.

Members confirmed that no changes were needed to decision making processes.

d) Human Resources Annual Report

Members received a report from the Executive Director: People.

Jen Durrant presented information covering the 2021-22 academic year.

Peter Cropley asked if there were any concerns about levels of stress-related illness and Jen confirmed that these were still quite low. Heather Lee commented that there was still a lot of Covid-related absence and it was helpful to have this data specifically identified.

In response to a query from Gerry Tawton, information was provided on HR software changes. Daran Bland asked about exit interviews and it was confirmed that these took place. Claire Foster commented on increased numbers of staff leaving and advised that this was common throughout the education sector.

Sandra Williamson asked about comparison of the college data with its peers but it was confirmed that there were no direct comparisons available. She raised the question about whether changes in sickness levels of staff over the pandemic were mirrored by those of students and suggested that this should be reviewed. ●

e) Health and Safety Annual Report

Members received a report from the Head of Health and Safety which was presented by the Executive Director: People.

Members noted shifts in the approach to fire audits by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and David Parnell and Daran Bland reported similar experiences which could have been influenced by the Grenfell Tower findings. Chris Pett commented on a reduced appetite for risk from insurers.

Heather Lee thanked Jen Durrant and Pete Davy for their work on this over the year. Peter Cropley also thanked the Covid committee for its work.

f) Safeguarding and Prevent

Members received a report from the Interim Head of Learner Services giving an overview and assurance of Safeguarding and Prevent procedures.

Members noted the updated Safeguarding policy and the introduction of a leaflet giving advice on sources of support outside of the college working hours. Sandra Williamson asked if the advice is available in other languages. Provision of a translated version will be considered. ●

Helen Rumbold commented on the increased workload of the Safeguarding team with some significant referrals coming through. It was noted there is to be an increase to the team membership.

Daran Bland asked if there was a requirement to examine the social media history of job applicants. Jen Durrant advised that this was optional and Sharon Posey pointed out that this was a contentious issue.

Members approved the reported Safeguarding developments for 2022-23.

g) HE Access and Participation Plan

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality with a copy of the Access and Participation Plan.

Members noted that the plan had been prepared over the summer and it had been approved by the Office for Students. It was agreed that the plan should be accepted and published on the college's website. This allows the drawdown of additional funding. The follow up actions and possible need for some additional investment around data capture were noted. Claire Foster will confirm the corporation's acceptance to OfS. ●

Sandra Williamson commented on the helpfulness of the information contained in the plan and members discussed some of the data presented.

Chris Pett left the meeting at this point.

h) OfS Reportable events

It was confirmed that there was nothing to report.

7. **FEES**

Debbie Holland advised of a proposal to increase HE fees to reflect inflation. In response to a query about risks relating to this, it was confirmed that the college's fees would still be low in comparison with those charged by universities.

8. **GOVERNOR DECLARATIONS**

Members were advised that requests for rechecks on criminal records and safeguarding would be issued in the near future.

9. **OFSTED PREPARATION**

Claire Foster advised that she would be approaching individual members to work on Ofsted preparations.

10. **TIM WHITE**

It was noted that it was Tim White's last meeting as he was leaving the college and he was thanked for his work over the years.

11. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation would take place on 14 December 2022.