

## BOSTON COLLEGE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON 14 MAY 2025

---

#### 1. **PRESENT**

David Earnshaw (Chair), Daran Bland, Gavin Booth, David Fannin (from item 2), Claire Foster, Mike Gildersleeves, Nick Hodgkiss, Jurate Matulioniene, David Parnell (from item 2), Katy Priestley, Shruti Trivedi, Sandra Williamson and Fiona Wisberg.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Jen Durrant (Executive Director: People), Debbie Holland (Chief Operating Officer), Tom Hughes (Assistant Principal: Quality Performance and Standards), Abid Hussain (Assistant Principal: Student Experience) and Matt Smith (Deputy Principal).

Apologies for absence were received from Jacob Cawthorne, Heather Lee and Nick Worth.

Meeting attendance: 76%

#### 2. **MEMBERSHIP**

Members received recommendations from the Search and Governance committee for the reappointment of two members, David Fannin and David Parnell. It was agreed to reappoint David Fannin with immediate effect and David Parnell from the end of his existing term for new four-year terms.

David Fannin and David Parnell joined the meeting.

#### 3. **PRESENTATION: LSIP AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT**

Members received a presentation from the Principal.

A discussion took place about the possibility of working with other colleges to deliver the LSIP. David Earnshaw said that there had been meetings with other colleges to look at working collaboratively. Members agreed that it could be beneficial to work with an established set of partners on this. Fiona Wisberg commented that the college had already looked at working with other colleges to deliver short courses. Claire Foster told members that this is very different territory that the college is now operating in.

#### 4. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

##### a) Corporation - 12 March 2025

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

##### b) Audit Committee 27 March 2025

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025 were reviewed.

Members noted the reference to the committee's performance targets which had been approved by the Corporation. Sandra Williamson told members that the committee was looking at assigning ownership of risks to the relevant committees.

c) Search and Governance 31 March 2025

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2025 were reviewed

A discussion took place about potential Corporation candidates.

d) Finance and Resources Committee – 31 March 2025

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2025 were reviewed.

David Parnell told members that the committee continues to maintain close oversight of cash levels and debt.

e) Standards Committee – 23 April 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025 were reviewed.

Daran Bland advised that committee members had undertaken learning walks which have been very helpful. He provided a summary of the matters considered at the meeting.

## 5. REPORTS

a) Principal's

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

Gavin Booth asked what could be done about safety concerns following a road accident on Skirbeck Road and Claire Foster suggested a letter to the County Council. David Parnell asked about engagement with the newly elected local authority members and Claire advised that a letter had been sent to the Mayor about funding concerns. David Earnshaw commented that it would be helpful to be proactive in policy development.

Shruti Trivedi asked how staff were feeling about Ofsted changes. Claire commented that the consultation period was coming to an end and Matt Smith advised that it was not impacting on staff at this stage. Sandra Williamson suggested that risk assessments could be needed for Ofsted and local authority changes.

A discussion took place about the report on Weston College from the recent inquiry. A review of this and its implications for Boston College will be taken to the Search and Governance committee and then on to the Corporation. In response to a query from Daran Bland, Claire confirmed that the SEND peer review was unaffected by this.

b) Annual Accountability Statement

Members received a report from the Principal with a draft of the Annual Accountability Statement.

Mike Gildersleeves asked about increasing construction provision. The challenge of working with employers to provide apprenticeships was acknowledged. Claire Foster advised that the team working with employers had been reshaped and there is a need to help employers balance the costs and benefits of apprenticeships. It was acknowledged that the cost of investment to introduce provision such as civil engineering was significant and cooperation with employers could be a way ahead. Matt Smith commented that opportunities for relevant bids and tenders were being monitored. David Fannin asked where the university Centre of Excellence fitted into the picture and Claire advised that, whilst aware of the university's proposition,, colleges can provide a holistic offer. Shruti Trivedi commented that local skills input needs to be recognised.

The Annual Accountability Statement was approved. Sandra Williamson commented that it needs to be monitored in year to see how actions track back to the strategic commitment. ●

c) Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Members received a report from the Principal with a draft Strategic Plan for consideration.

Members noted that further feedback could be given until the end of the month.

Members suggested that addressing achievement gaps and sustainability needed to be considered and Mike Gildersleeves suggested a reference to decarbonisation rather than Net Zero. David Fannin suggested that political changes could affect the plan during its lifetime.

d) Finance

Members received a report from the Chief Operating Officer which included information on the financial position at 31 March 2025.

Debbie Holland advised that current year performance looked positive but pay costs were high, largely because of agency costs. The cash position is looking healthier. The creation of the 2025-26 budget is very challenging and funding for National Insurance increases is still not known. Members were reminded that they are all invited to the budget briefing at the next Finance and Resources committee meeting

e) Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Student Experience.

Abid Hussain advised members that there were still some frustrations around the production of reports from the new system. Detailed analysis will be brought to the next meeting on whole year performance. It was noted that a new security manager has been appointed. ●

f) Governance

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation.

Committee membership was discussed and it was agreed to:

- Appoint Shruti Trivedi to the Audit committee
- Transfer Nick Hodgkiss from the Finance and Resources committee to the Standards committee
- Transfer Fiona Wrisberg from the Standards committee to the Finance and Resources committee

Meeting dates for 2025-26 were agreed.

g) OfS Reportable Events

Matt Smith confirmed that there was nothing to report.

6. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed progress made against items in the action log.

It was noted that a visit to Haven Wharf had been postponed and other options remained under consideration. The Mayflower building is due to be handed over in mid-August.

7. **MEMBER RESIGNATION**

It was reported that Katy Priestley would be leaving the board at the end of the academic year.

8. **PRINCIPAL**

Claire Foster advised members that she would be retiring at the end of the year. It was agreed that members who wished to join the Selection Panel for the appointment of a new Principal should get in touch with the Chair. ●

89. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporation will take place on 2 July 2025<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently changed to 3 July 2025