

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 29th April 2021 at 12.15 pm via Teams

- Present:** Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mr A Clarkson, Mr B Hansford, Mrs C Harris, Mrs P Hawkesford, Dr P Jones, Miss L Knapp, Mr M Knibbs, Mr C Matts, Mr T Neville OBE, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford
- In attendance:** Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr S Parkes (ESFA Observer), Mr J O'Shea and Mrs C Smith

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND GOVERNANCE ITEMS

- 21/32 Apologies (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Mrs S Ijewsky, Mr I Jones, Mrs P Prow, Miss S Frederiksen and Miss E Cohen Neighbour. Mr S Parkes confirmed he would need to leave the meeting at 1.50pm.
- 21/33 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr Neville declared an interest in agenda items 7, 11, 12 and 15.
- 21/34 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
The minutes of the last meeting held on the 25th March 2021 had been circulated previously and were approved as a true and accurate record.
- 21/35 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
Actions 165 and 166: The minutes of the Investment Advisory Appraisals Group held on the 31st March 2021 had been circulated previously. Members' attention was drawn to two key points. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) was leading a tender for a strategic estate's partner. There was also a priority to upgrade the current Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure whilst minimising cost.
- The remaining actions were progressing in line with agreed timelines.
- 21/36 Health and Safety (Agenda item 5)**
The CFO confirmed that students were now home testing; a questionnaire had been circulated to all students to gather feedback on levels of engagement. The Health and Safety Committee continued to meet and the CFO assured the Corporation that mental health and wellbeing were part of this group's remit as well as being a standing item on the College Intervention Management Team (CIMT) agenda. The College was fully compliant with compliance testing and the team was regularly reviewing Government guidance in relation to Covid-19. The team awaited announcements in May and June 2021 that may require further action.
- The Board sought further clarification about mental health and wellbeing in terms of gaining a better understanding in relation to numbers, availability of staffing and impact on the College. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality (VPC&Q) confirmed that students had a much better understanding of reporting procedures. Numbers at the end of the year would likely show an increase on last year. Increased numbers had had an impact on staffing in terms of increased workloads. Due to predicted student growth for next year,

staffing levels would remain the same. The Chair of Teaching, Learning and Assessment confirmed that this Committee regularly scrutinised the data in relation to this. All reports were uploaded to Teams for governors to review.

Resolved: To receive the report on Health and Safety.

21/37

Risk Management (Agenda item 7, Paper C)

The Chair confirmed that a dedicated session for the Board to reflect on risk management appetite would be arranged for July 2021. The CFO and Chair of Audit would run the session. The Chair of Audit reminded the Board that since the last risk management workshop, there had been a number of positive changes including further student growth. Such changes needed to be considered in the context of any changes required to governance in its approach, for example, the use of Advisory Groups. A suggestion was made to consider some of the questions raised in a commercial paper that would be discussed later in the meeting. What risk appetite was the Board willing to take? The CFO confirmed that an additional risk had been added to the current list following a meeting of the TLA Committee earlier in the week: *The rapid predicted growth has meant that the College might have to cap student numbers resulting in reputational damage*. The Chair of TLA welcomed this addition and asked if the risk could be adapted to factor in the current staff recruitment exercise in terms of appointing individuals who would maintain high levels of quality in the classroom. Consideration may also need to be given to managing risks around student experience and any potential loss within the first 42 days. The Chair emphasised the importance of the need to carefully manage the short- and medium-term risks once agreed.

Resolved: To receive the Risk Management report.

SECTION B – STAFF AND STUDENT VOICE:

21/38

Student voice (Agenda item 8)

Student governors would be asked to present an update on their experience at the next Corporation meeting in July 2021 (Action 177 – student governors).

21/39

Staff voice (Agenda item 9)

The staff governor confirmed that he continued to make good progress with meeting other governors as part of his induction. Since the last meeting, he had met with Mr Hansford and Mrs Hawkesford and now had a much better understanding of their priority areas. The Chair asked the staff governor to think about any other ways in which the Board could assist with his induction, for example, by buddying with another experienced governor (**Action 178** – staff governor). In a wider discussion, the Chair confirmed that it was the intention of the Board to gather feedback from staff about governance: had staff had any engagement with board members; what was that like; had any member of staff met the Chair or Vice Chair of Corporation. It was important for the Board to lead by example.

Resolved: To receive the report from the staff governor.

21/40

Equality, diversity and inclusion (Agenda item 10)

The Link Governor confirmed that there had been a very helpful discussion about EDI in his breakout room with a number of actions that would be taken forward. A College meeting was planned where the EDI action plan would be reviewed. The next stage was really around the development of a more

detailed EDI plan to be developed by lead staff member alongside the committee and signed off by SLT. The Chair made 2 suggestions: whether a 'deep dive' should be organised for the Corporation (**Action 179** – Clerk); and, if other governors were needed to support the link governor in what was a huge priority area (**Action 180** – Link Governor).

Resolved: To receive the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report.

SECTION C – PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

21/41

Strategic Plan and KPIs update (Agenda item 11, Paper D)

The Principal highlighted a number of key points:

- Good progress was being made with planning the centenary event.
- There were no major issues with the key performance indicators (KPIs) with the exception of maths and English where attendance was lower than expected.
- In line with strategic aim 2, the Principal had been invited to join 2 other principals to join the Secretary of State in a round-table discussion. Governors were thanked for their feedback to date which would be incorporated. The Principal was now also chair of the FuSE skills strategy group; a principals' group for the local education partnership (LEP).
- Members were informed of a number of funding opportunities that were being considered. A growth case had also been submitted to the ESFA.
- Focus was on the new academic year where the College was likely to experience unprecedented growth. As a result, priority was being given to ensure that the College had adequate, highly competent staff in place, at all levels of the organisation. This had to be affordable in the first 6 months of the year until growth was funded.

In response to a question whether any modelling had been completed should the College not receive any growth funds, the Principal confirmed the latest cash flow to the end of July 2022 had just been submitted to the ESFA and this was being closely monitored by the Finance and Resources Committee. All reports were available on Teams for all governors to have access to. In addition to this, the Chair suggested that a session on how college finances operated could be delivered in-house to ensure everyone had a shared understanding (**Action 181** – Clerk/CFO). Clarification was also sought around any cut-off points when maximum capacity was achieved in any curriculum area. The Principal confirmed that at the moment, there was likely to be one curriculum area where maximum capacity would be achieved this year due to predicted student growth. Where other areas were concerned, although there was capacity, numbers would need to be capped due to the number of staff required in the first 6 months. A question was raised about what would happen to any student that might not be able to get a place at the College. The Principal confirmed that every attempt would be made to support each of these students and ensure each individual would get a place at another institution. In view of the predicted growth and the importance of maintaining quality, the Corporation agreed that it would be prudent to delay attempts at joining the register of apprenticeship training providers until after the College had been inspected.

Resolved: To receive the Strategic update and KPI report.

SECTION D – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT:

21/42 Meeting of last TLA Committee (Agenda item 12, Paper E)

The draft minutes of the TLA Committee held earlier in the week had been circulated previously. Detailed scrutiny had taken place with reports from 5 areas that provided the greatest risk to the College. This included the Quality Improvement Plan where 70% of the outstanding actions were showing as resolved. This was a significant increase on the previous year. The Chair of TLA requested that there needed to be greater emphasis for discussions at future meetings to reflect closer links between the curriculum team and human resources and, in particular, how to plan investment in staff CPD in the future. This action should be recorded in the minutes.

a. OfS Consumer Protection Law (Paper E.1)

The College must demonstrate that it would fulfil its obligations in ensuring that its students were aware of their rights under consumer protection. The Committee considered a self-assessment which included activity in relation to staff training; its recording; and, the information given to students to ensure compliance. The Corporation was required to approve that the College was compliant. The Committee had received assurance that the report provided the type of information that would be helpful to raise awareness of staff and students. Additional checks were suggested including a review of: the website, marketing materials, model specifications and prospectuses. It was agreed that an action plan would be prepared for future years to be monitored by the SLT. This would support the systematic checking that was required.

Resolved: The Chair of TLA to have delegated authority to sign off the additional evidence to support the Board's compliance with Consumer Protection Law; and, the minutes of the last TLA Committee were noted.

SECTION E – CORPORATION PRIORITIES:

21/43 Commercial: Apprenticeships and Income Generation (Agenda item 13, Paper F)

The report provided details of the commercial growth 5-point plan; a brief update on progress; and, detailed live opportunities for discussion with and engagement of governors. The Executive Director Commercial explained that each of the 5 points would be supported by an action plan. In agreeing the 5 areas of commercial income, key questions related to: Intent, Implementation, Impact and Inclusion. Detailed feedback from governors on each of the 5 areas can be found in Appendix 1.

Resolved: To receive the report on Apprenticeships and Income Generation.

Mr M Knibbs left the meeting.

SECTION F – GOVERNANCE:

21/44 Accommodation (Agenda item 14)

Members noted the College Corporation seal had been affixed to a deed and supporting documentation in relation to granting the additional security over assets as part of agreeing further revisions to loan covenants agreed in January 2020. This was authenticated by David McVean, Chair of Corporation and Corrie Harris, Principal and CEO on the 30th March 2021.

21/45

Access and Participation Plan (Agenda item 15)

Members noted that in line with an agreement from the Board dated 12th April 2021, the Access and Participation Plan was finalised and submitted to the Office for Students on the 16th April 2021.

SECTION G – CLOSING ITEMS:

21/46

Any other items of urgent business (Agenda item 16)

- a. **Solar Panels:** the land registry had requested a slight change to the lease agreement for the solar panels. There were no implications to the legal agreement with the supplier. The Board agreed that the slight change could be initialled by the Principal and CEO.

21/47

Date of next meeting (Agenda item 17)

Thursday, 8th July 2021 at 9.30 am 8th July book. Assuming Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted, the meeting would be held at Higham Ferrers. Arrangements would be made for anyone wishing to attend remotely. Mr A Thomson sent his apologies for the meeting due to a prior engagement.