

WQE & Regent College Group

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting
Held at the Regent Road Campus on
10 March 2020
Commencing at 5.00 pm**

Members of the Corporation present:

Stuart Dawkins, Chair
Jasmine Andean, Joyce Black, Jo Cooke, Walija Fatima, Sarah Fox, Bernadette Green,
Ing'utu Palmer, Philip Parkinson, Jim Phillips, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

In attendance:

Peter Butcher, Tim Cullinan, Carolyn Davies, Dawn Haywood, Sarah Oldfield & Donna Trusler

Apologies for absence:

Wayne Allsopp, Andrew Jackson, Alistair Lockhart-Smith, Neil McGhee,
Nisar Navsariwala & Amrik Singh

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made to Ing'utu Palmer, the new Teaching Staff Governor. Members were updated on Wayne Allsopp's leave of absence. Members were also informed that Peter Butcher would be retiring from his role as Clerk at the end of September.

1. Declarations of Interest

Philip Parkinson and Jim Phillips declared an interest in item 16b.

2. Minutes – Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held 29 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

STANDARD ITEMS

3. Ongoing matters – Paper 002

The Clerk introduced the report and drew members' attention to the date for completion of the Governor Insight Programme and the details of the College's forthcoming Art and Design Show. The report was received and Governors had no questions.

4. Governor Training and Development

a) Ofsted Inspection Framework – Curriculum Intent Element

Tim Cullinan gave a presentation on this new element of the Ofsted inspection framework, noting that it was intended to ensure that the College had given appropriate thought to creating a curriculum that was coherent and met the needs of local students in

terms of learning and progression. It was noted that a Curriculum Policy was currently being worked on and would be brought before the Corporation when ready.

Sarah Oldfield then gave feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection at Long Road SFC, including information on the areas chosen for 'deep dives' and the overall experience. More detailed information would be emailed out to Governors following the meeting, together with a crib sheet which Sarah had put together from the Ofsted Inspection Handbook.

Members thanked Tim and Sarah for their presentations and requested that they be kept informed as and when further information became available.

b) Future Opportunities

Andrew Jackson would be giving a presentation on the College's approach to work experience at the next Corporation meeting on 1 April 2020.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

5. Principal's Update

The Principal updated the Corporation on the following matters:

- PPM Structures
- Supporting and developing PPMs
- 'A Student Journey' (a marketing video from the University of Leicester featuring a former WQE student)
- Student numbers and funding
- COVID-19/Coronavirus
- Mid-Year Attendance
- Timetable Consultation
- Industrial Relations Update
- Careers and Progression Events

Members thanked the Principal for his presentation and had no questions. The Chair commented on the success of the recent careers event involving mock interviews for students and encouraged Governors to attend the forthcoming Careers Fair if they were able to.

6. Equality and Diversity Annual Report – Paper 003

Donna Trusler introduced the report, noting that the College was seeing a consistent rise in mental health needs of students, to which additional resources were being allocated. In regards to staffing, the rise in teacher applications from females was noted, as was the increasing ethnic mix of staff. Members asked what specifically was being put in place to meet student mental health needs and Donna agreed to bring information on this to the May meeting. Members also requested that in future the report should include details of the backgrounds of staff holding promoted posts. The Corporation thanked Donna for the report.

7. Quality Improvement Plan – Termly Update – Paper 004

Sarah Oldfield introduced the Plan, noting that a column had been added detailing how and when the actions were reported to the Corporation. The progress column had been updated

but would not be reported to the Corporation until the appropriate time. Governors took assurance from this report and thanked Sarah for the update.

STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

8. Destinations and Progression Report – Paper 005

The Principal presented this item in Andrew Jackson's absence. It was noted that WQE students primarily went on to University, often staying local, although there had also been a rise in applications to Oxbridge. There were still some challenges around tracking down student destinations, therefore there were more students in the 'other' column than was perhaps ideal. Governors queried whether there were any comparators from other colleges with regard to the percentage of NEETs and the Principal assured members that 3% was quite low. Members asked that their thanks be passed on to Andrew Jackson for the very clear report.

9. Safeguarding Young People – Serious Incident Policy – Paper 006A

Donna Trusler introduced the Policy, noting that great care had been taken to ensure that it did not cut across anything the College currently did but rather holistically held it all together. The development of the Critical Incident Plan was a much more significant piece of work involving every team in the College and work on this was currently underway using a staged approach. Governors were advised that they would be given access to the Plan online once it was ready. The Corporation was encouraged by the College's response to its requests in regard to this area of work and was pleased with the progress made so far.

The Corporation approved the Serious Incident Policy as submitted.

10. Student Search Policy – Paper 006B

Donna Trusler introduced the Policy, which was an update of the previous 'Stop and Search a Student' Policy. Rather than pat students down, the College wished to move to using search wands and the reasoning behind this was explained. It was confirmed that the College would also continue to invite sniffer dogs in at appropriate intervals when possible. Members enquired whether consideration had been given to installing metal detectors at College entrances. Donna explained that this was not currently felt necessary and that the College was instead working through the PPM programme to ensure a culture of care and safety.

The Corporation approved the Student Search Policy, including the use of search wands, and asked for updates on searches to be included in the Safeguarding Report, including whether any changes in student behaviour had been observed as a result.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

11. Staff Wellbeing Strategy - Development

Carolyn Davies gave a verbal update on progress, noting that the salient points had been included in the Quality Improvement Plan received earlier in this meeting. A working group had been set up and a survey system called 'Pulse' had been purchased to gather staff opinions and inform planning and strategies. The working group contained a good cross-section of staff and would report twice per year to the Health & Safety Committee, which included the Union Health & Safety Representative. The Corporation was informed that it would receive further information as and when it was available.

12. Management Accounts – December 2019 and January 2020 – Papers 007 & 008

Carolyn Davies introduced the accounts, noting that the key point in January was that the revised budget had included £500k of exceptional in-year funding which the College had now found out it would not receive. The forecast whole-year deficit was therefore now £1.2 million and this would be reflected in the next set of accounts. Cash flow remained positive, therefore this would not affect the College's strong cash position. In response to a question, Carolyn stated that this would not impact the College's financial health score to the point where intervention would result. Members thanked Carolyn for the accounts.

13. Financial Regulations – Annual Review – Papers 009A and 009B

Carolyn Davies introduced the document, noting that it was the first set of combined Financial Regulations for the merged College. Changes included an increase in ELT's authorisation limits to agree up to £50k of spend, in light of the College's growth in size. It was noted that this was not out of line with other Colleges of similar size.

The Corporation approved the Financial Regulations as submitted.

14. Treasury Management Policy – Annual Review – Papers 010A and 010B

Carolyn Davies introduced the updated Policy, noting that there were two main proposed changes. The first was an update to the references to money laundering regulations and the second revolved around approval of counterparties. It was confirmed that the College would continue to take a risk-averse approach to investments and choose institutions which it felt would be likely to be supported by the UK Government in a crisis.

The Corporation approved the Treasury Management Policy as submitted.

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

15. Corporation Chair & Vice-Chair – Terms of Office – Paper 011

The Clerk introduced this item, noting that it related to the process of deciding when terms of office should come up for renewal for the Corporation Chair and Vice-Chair. It was suggested that to retain continuity both terms of office should be extended to the end of this academic year, at which point nominations should be sought for both roles.

The Corporation approved the three proposals as follows:

- i) Suspend Standing Order 3.1 temporarily (terms of office not to exceed two years)
- ii) Extend the current Chair and Vice-Chair's terms of office to the end of the current academic year – that is, Friday 3 July 2020
- iii) In line with Standing Order 3.2 an item be included on the 1 April Corporation agenda, providing the Corporation with the opportunity to determine the nomination process for the office of Corporation Chair and Vice-Chair.

Members queried whether they would have to be present at the July meeting in order to cast votes. The Clerk agreed to consider this and include his suggestions in the paper referred to under point iii above which would cover processes and timelines.

16. Search Committee Recommendations

a) Role Profiles – Corporation Chair, Vice-Chair and Governors – Paper 012

Joyce Black advised members that the Search Committee had considered the current role profiles and was of the opinion that they were still fit for purpose and met the Corporation's requirements going forward. One minor alteration had been requested to change the term 'principal responsibilities' to 'core responsibilities' in all profiles. The Search Committee therefore recommended that the Corporation carry the profiles through for the next two years.

The Corporation approved the role profiles for Corporation Chair, Vice-Chair and Governors subject to the amendment detailed above.

Philip Parkinson and Jim Phillips, having declared an interest in the following item, left the meeting during its consideration.

b) Succession Planning – Paper 013

Joyce Black advised members that the Search Committee had discussed succession planning extensively and made the following recommendations to the Corporation:

- i) An External Governor with a financial qualification be sought to fill the current vacancy. This role to be externally advertised, with Governors also asked to alert their networks at the same time.
- ii) Alistair Lockhart-Smith be granted leave of absence from 1 December 2019 until the end of January 2021.
- iii) The following Governors be appointed to their second term of office:
Nisar Navsariwala – 2 years from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2022
Philip Parkinson – 4 years from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2024
Wayne Allsopp – 4 years from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2025
Alistair Lockhart-Smith – 4 years from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2025
Jim Phillips – 4 years from 28 June 2021 to 27 June 2025
Neil McGhee – 4 years from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2025
- iv) The Clerk be tasked to put together a timetable and plan around managing succession planning as a whole in readiness for the 30 June Search Committee meeting.
- v) The temporary appointments of Joyce Black and Amrik Singh to the Audit Committee be extended to 31 January 2021.

The Corporation approved the five recommendations around succession planning as detailed above.

Philip Parkinson and Jim Phillips re-joined the meeting.

CLOSURE

17. Any other business

None.

18. Confidentiality

Item 20.

19. Next meeting

5.00 pm, Wednesday 1 April 2020 at Regent Road.

20. Feedback from the Estates & Finance Task & Finish Group

This item was considered to be confidential and the discussion is summarised in the confidential annex to these minutes.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

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Corporation Chair

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Date

Corporation 10 March 2020
Confidential Annex

- 20. Feedback from the Estates & Finance Task & Finish Group – Agenda Part 2**
Confidential – text removed