

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting 02 March 2022, 17:00, blended meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

Members of the Corporation in attendance

Stuart Dawkins (Chair), Joyce Black, Bernadette Green, Anas Mohamed, Nisar Navsariwala, Ing'utu Palmer, Philip Parkinson, Jim Phillips, Amrik Singh, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton

Other attendees:

Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson, Sarah Oldfield, Tim Rogers & Rachel Middleton

Apologies:

Wayne Allsopp, Jo Cooke, Jash Maadhavji, Neil McGhee, Jimmy Zachariah

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jash, Jimmy, Neil and Wayne. Jo was unable to attend due to technical online joining issues.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 26 January 2022 were approved as a correct record subject to a minor correction.

The following matters from the action list were completed during the intervening period between Corporation meetings, and subsequently removed from the action list:

- To provide to Governors a description for each of the grades within the Teaching and Learning Matrix
- To send on to Governors an updated report on progress once full data set has been received, including for Year 1 students pursuing Level 3 courses

The following matter was included in the Principal's Update and subsequently removed from the action list:

- To feed back to the Corporation on safeguarding trends as part of the Principal's Update for the March 2022 Corporation meeting

The following progress was reported on these actions:

- To foster an opportunity for a joint discussion about the Leicester Parking Levy with the Chamber of Commerce and Leicester Business Voice – A Governor reported that the Chamber of Commerce had discussed the matter at its last meeting. CD confirmed that the College's response had been compiled and would be shared with Governors. The consultation closes on 13 March 2022 and individual as well as organizational responses can be submitted.

- To promote the External Governor vacancy through dissemination of the Governor Information Pack to professional contacts- two prospective Governors are in the process of speaking to the Chair and Clerk and submitting an application. An interview panel drawn from the Governance & Search Committee will convene and a recommendation will go to the Committee prior to ratification of appointments at a subsequent Corporation meeting.

Arrangements have been made for Governors and appropriate staff to address the following actions from the action list. These actions have now been removed from the action list:

- To share experience of strategies/research relating to the teaching and learning of Pupil Premium students (BW and SO)
- To discuss an organisational approach to using MS Teams for teaching and learning (NMcG and SO)
- To brief JZ on matters relating to the College's work on improving student safety (AW)

JB provided Governors with an update from the SFCA's Governance Policy Committee in relation to the delayed governance competency framework. The proposed external governance review process guidance has also been delayed by government. Further updates are likely in June, which also coincides with the next meeting date for the SFCA's Governance Policy Committee.

GOVERNOR BRIEFING

4. Update on Phase 1b of the Estates Plan (Presentation)

Carolyn Davies

CD provided Governors with a reminder of the specific packages within the Estates Plan. Governors had committed funds and activity in relation to package 1a and were now being asked to consider progression through package 1b.

At the end of package 1a some teaching areas had still not been consolidated into the same buildings, but the majority of works had been completed by the end of the summer break in 2021. The commencement of works for package 1b are planned for summer 2022.

Feedback from staff is that there has been significant benefit in moving curriculum teams together at one site and there has been a request to bring forward the final movement of teams earlier than originally proposed within the Estates Master Plan. Governors were supportive of this.

CD affirmed that part of the package of works for phase 1b would also include replacement of windows, lighting and heating as well as cabling and ventilation improvements at the Regent Road campus and teaching room refurbishments within P Block.

CD affirmed that contractors would need to commence work on 20 June, by which point most second year students will have completed their taught programmes, reducing any impact on teaching and learning at the College.

CD confirmed that the PAGABO framework for procurement has been used and early orders for materials would need to be submitted within the next couple of weeks to overcome any supply hurdles, particularly with regards to steels and windows. CD outlined the fact that funding had been committed to package 1b in the budget for this year and next.

Governors asked whether there were any other projects requiring expenditure which needed to take precedence over progressing package 1B. CD confirmed that the replacement of the lift at the Regent Road campus was in the 2021/2022 budget approved by Governors and will be brought into the works undertaken over summer 2022, as part of the overall programme of refurbishment.

The Chair thanked CD for her work. The Corporation agreed to a commitment up to £100k for advanced materials orders, subject to granular analysis of the financials at the forthcoming Estates & Finance Task & Finish Group. Following the meeting of the Group on 09 March, should there be significant variations in spend, then the matter would return to the next Corporation meeting for approval.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

5. Principal's Update

Paul Wilson

The Principal's Update focused on:

- Covid 19 trends in student populations at the College, compared with the city of Leicester
- A safeguarding update broken down into number and categories of incidents recorded
- A comparison of recorded safeguarding incidents – Jan 2021 compared to Jan 2022
- Data on application numbers and an explanation of the approach to making offers to prospective students
- Teaching, learning and assessment developments
- DfE proposals in relation to HE funding
- DfE/ESFA/Ofqual updates
- A summary of the outcomes from the Governor Conference where T Levels were considered as a pathway

Governors asked questions focusing on whether there had been changes to fast tracking applications, whether there were any changes to the student demographic in light of the pandemic (e.g. balance of students living in the city and county).

Governors requested information on the number of fast-track applications which converted into student enrolments last year. They also requested information on applicant demographics. **Action AW**

The Chair confirmed that the May Governor Conference would consider the matters

raised within the DfE/ESFA and Ofqual updates, and that the Corporation would also discuss the latest position re academisation within the sector, as this is a cyclical standing item for discussion.

Governors requested an update on T Level implementation from the perspective of a College which has undergone the process, as well as any policy and implementation updates at its April or May Corporation meeting. **Action TR**

Governors discussed the trends in number of safeguarding incidents by category and reflected on the national and local rise in reported mental health issues. Governors considered whether the resources invested were adequate to meet continuing need. Governors reflected on the fact that they have asked the lead member of staff whether further resource was required this year at a previous Corporation meeting, and remain supportive of this important area of work, but they request that the Principal revisits the matter as an ongoing standing item within the Principals' Updates presented at Corporation meetings. **Action PW**

6. Quality Improvement Plan – progress on outcomes – Paper 002 *For information and questions*

Tim Rogers

TR highlighted a number of matters within the paper:

- He confirmed that he would be visiting each curriculum team shortly to review the timetable structure to determine if it continues to be fit for purpose. He will also meet with groups of students before the Easter break to seek their feedback.
- A working party looking at vocational performance has been established. The Curriculum and Student Leadership Group will be examining a range of issues.
- Work has begun with the MIS team looking at the implementation of a text messaging system to flag up absences to students and facility for direct automated alerts to their parents. The aim is to roll this out by September.

Governors raised questions focusing on the implementation timescale for data systems, whether there were specific timetabling or reported student absence issues for students pursuing courses on a given day which were delivered at both campuses. Governors queried whether student attendance figures were for morning and afternoon sessions only, or whether attendance was monitored on a lesson- by- lesson basis. College staff confirmed the latter to be the case.

Governors raised questions focusing on the implementation timescale for improved data systems, as well as whether there were specific timetabling impacts creating student absence issues for students pursuing courses on a given day which were delivered at both campuses. Governors queried whether student attendance figures were for attendance on the day only, or whether attendance was monitored on a lesson- by-lesson basis. College staff confirmed this depended on the report as both were monitored. Normally this was the latter, though for the Covid attendance tracking

data reported in the Principals' Updates it was the former, to reflect the reporting required by DfE.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

7. Treasury Management Policy – Paper 003 – *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

The policy was re-approved by the Corporation.

8. Financial regulations – annual review – Paper 004 – *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

CD affirmed there were no substantive changes to this iteration. There were no proposed changes to the limits of spending that staff can approve.

The financial regulations were approved by the Corporation.

9. Monthly management accounts (January) - Paper 005 – *For information and questions*

Carolyn Davies

CD reminded Governors that the EBITDA figure within the revised accounts informs whether the College's financial health can be reported as 'Good'. Good is the aspiration, as agreed previously by the Corporation.

CD informed Governors that the work on making some efficiencies was ongoing and yielding positive reports which can be seen within the accounts.

Governors asked questions focusing on Cyber security costs, rises in energy costs and implications for the budget ongoing, and whether there was a need for a strategic spending review.

10. Staff Disciplinary Policy – Paper 006 – *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

CD confirmed that the policy is reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. This iteration has been consulted on with unions and minor changes have been made as a result. A statement on confidentiality has been added in relation to those involved in disciplinarys.

The Corporation approved the policy.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

11. Student Search Policy & Procedures Update & verbal report – Paper 007 - *For approval*

Aaron Winterton

AW reported that there were no substantive changes to the policy.

AW reported the number of student searches undertaken over the last year was in single figures.

The Corporation approved the policy.

12. Destinations & Progression Report – Paper 008 - *For information and questions*

Andrew Jackson

AJ reported a change in the external organisation collecting information which feeds into the report and that this is a positive step for the College. The new methodology yields richer and more readily accessible data for the College. AJ confirmed that HE destinations data is reported by UCAS.

Governors asked the percentage of disadvantaged students progressing to HE.

Action AJ to provide a report at a forthcoming Corporation meeting.

Staff affirmed that longitudinal information relating to destinations is provided to Governors annually. This is received from HESA.

Governors asked questions about the volume of applicants to Oxbridge. AJ confirmed that a recent appointee would be looking at employability as well as progression of high achievers, as part of their brief. Circa 40 students will be attending Oxbridge tasters. Russell Group university applications have risen.

13. Comparative review of Colleges - Gatsby Benchmarks - Paper 009 – *For information and questions*

Andrew Jackson

At a previous Corporation meeting Governors requested a paper outlining how the College was meeting The Gatsby Benchmarks

The paper outlined areas of strong performance as well as areas for development. The latter will be included in the College's QIP and will be reported to the Corporation as part of the QIP update reports.

14. Student voice:

Emerging priorities for the Student Executive

Anas Mohamed

AM provided a verbal update on the priorities identified by the Student Executive at its most recent meeting:

- Awareness building across campuses in relation to recycling opportunities
- Encouragement of cutbacks on the physical printing of documents to support greener ways of working
- Selecting a single charity to promote and support to gain real traction
- Encouragement through the range of College societies for students to come forward to raise any safety concerns

The Chair thanked AM for his input and affirmed that ongoing Corporation agenda planning will always include consideration of how to enhance the Student Voice.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

15. Conflicts of Interest Policy – Paper 010 – *For approval*

Rachel Middleton

RM affirmed that the template from Eversheds Sutherland had been used to update the policy. This is a trusted legal perspective. Subject to a minor wording change the policy, was approved by the Corporation.

16. Governor Conference

Stuart Dawkins

16.1 Reflection on the February 2022 Governors' Conference – *For discussion*

This item was covered in the Principal's Update. The Chair welcomed Governor feedback outside of the meeting on any suggestions for future conferences in terms of focus and format.

ROUND-UP

17. Confidentiality

Subject to discussions during the meeting, the Corporation considered there were no confidential matters.

18. Any Other Business – *For discussion*

The Chair reminded Governors about the dates and times for the forthcoming Student Outcomes and Estates & Finance Task & Finish Groups.

The Chair informed Governors that the Vaughan Endowment Fund Committee would be convening an extraordinary meeting to review investment risk appetite and possible returns. This will take place on 18 May and the outcome will be reported to the late May Corporation meeting.

19. Next Meeting

Weds 06 April 2022, 17:00

The meeting concluded at 19:04.

Action List

	Actions arising from 26 January 2022 Committee meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
1..	For Governors to set up their insight visits in College, with a view to completing a follow-up Governor Insights reflection form.	All Governors	Before Easter 2022
	Actions arising from 02 March 2022 Committee meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
2.	Requests for information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of fast-track applications which converted into student enrolments last year - applicant demographics 	AW	
3.	Update on T Level implementation from the perspective of a College which has undergone the process, as well as any policy and implementation updates.	TR	April or May Corporation meeting
4.	Report on the number of disadvantaged students progressing into HE	AJ	
	Standing item	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
	To refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee	All Governors	
	To ensure Curriculum Policy is updated if needed once mission/values work with Governors is completed	TR	
	To update the Corporation on progress towards completion of actions within the annual self -review of governance action plan, at a timely point in the business plan	RM	
	To report on the emerging themes around student changing narratives work in the Principal's Update as appropriate from time to time	PW	

Signature:
Chair of Corporation

Date: