

**MOULTON COLLEGE**  
**CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 9.30 am**

**Present:** Mr C Matts (In the Chair), Mr A Clarkson, Ms S O'Connor, Mr A Eastland, Mr B Hansford, Mrs C Harris, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr I James, Ms L Knapp, Mr T Neville, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford

**In attendance:** Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mr G Davies, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr R Plantier, Mrs K Riley (ESFA observer) and Mr J O'Shea

**PART 1**

**SECTION A – ROUTINE AND GOVERNANCE ITEMS:**

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**19/214 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**  
Apologies for absence were received from Mr D McVean and Miss L Watson.

**19/215 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**  
Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 7 and 12.

**19/216 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**  
The minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chair of Corporation.

**19/217 Actions outstanding from the last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**  
**Action 143, FEC Recommendation: Skills Audit**  
An update would be provided as part of Agenda item 5. (Closed)

**Action 145, TLA and quality**  
Eight governors had volunteered to take part in governor learning visits which would be incorporated into a schedule and would be completed in mid-November 2019. (Closed)

**Action 149, Safeguarding**  
The Safeguarding Governor Champion was meeting with the VP Curriculum and Quality later that day to discuss a number of themes around this priority. (Closed)

All other items were progressing in line with agreed timelines.

**19/218 Governance update (Agenda item 4)**  
The Vice Chair of Corporation provided a summary of the discussions held at that morning's Search and Governance Committee:

- Work was being undertaken to recruit governors to address skill shortage areas in higher education (HE), human resources (HR) and education and quality. Four individuals had been contacted to date and responses were awaited.
- The Committee had supported a recommendation to include the governor self-assessment report (SAR) as part of a suite of evidence that would be considered in an internal audit of governance in early January 2020. This would provide a clear direction for any further governance actions that may be required as well as an external validation of the SAR.

- A draft governor professional development plan was agreed and a copy would be circulated to all governors. (Action 157a: **Clerk** – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)
- A draft programme for a governor training day on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 was approved and a copy would be circulated to all governors. (Action 157b: **Clerk** – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)
- The Committee agreed with a proposal to recommend that agendas for Corporation meetings and Committee meetings should be streamlined. There would be a single agenda item for confidential items.

**Resolved:** The following recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee were approved:

- The internal audit of corporate governance to include the governance SAR.
- To ensure that meeting agendas were streamlined to focus members' attention on key priorities.

Mr G Davies arrived

19/219

### **Health and Safety (Agenda item 5)**

#### **a. College report**

Emphasis this term had been on making sure no lecturer went in front of a student unless they'd had a health and safety induction. The other focus had been making sure that every practical activity had a risk assessment in place. Some staff development was being completed in some areas where risk assessments were not as rigorous as the team would like. There had been 2 RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) accidents.

#### **b. Governor champion**

Mr Wakeford reported on his continued interest with cultural change in relation to this priority area within the organisation. He was pleased with the role of the champions and reported that the quality of the health and safety meetings was much improved. Mr Wakeford had held discussions with the Deputy Principal to explore how governors can further support cultural change. This would be subject to a separate report at a later meeting.

**Resolved:** To receive the health and safety reports.

## **SECTION B – QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE:**

19/220

### **Principal's update including Key Performance Indicators (Agenda item 6, Paper C)**

The Principal highlighted a number of key points in the report. Quality and finance remained the two priority areas. A positive FE Commissioner stock-take visit had highlighted the pace of change. Finance was still a major issue and would need a continued relentless focus. The systems and procedures that had been put in place for quality were good and should bring about the required improvements. This remains our priority. An Ofsted monitoring visit had been reasonably positive. The report highlighted the need for more evidence of impact from improvements to teaching, learning and assessment.

In terms of finance, 16-18 figures were down. This would have an impact on finances next year due to lagged funding. The proposed increase in base rate would result in an increase in income of c.£350k. Any shortfall would be addressed through some in-year growth. Curriculum planning was

progressing well and a new offer would be available from September 2020. Members were informed that where ESFA funding was concerned, there was a threshold of 200 students whereby if this number was exceeded during a year, the college can make a business case for in-year funding. In the event of any student growth below this figure, the college was expected to absorb the extra costs.

**Challenges from the Corporation (responses in italics):**

- a. Where are the additional students coming from? *Northampton is an area that is growing and so the demographic is improving. We need substantial in-year growth which will be achieved from the local area. There is also a need to fill residences. We will completely refresh the curriculum and ensure we are delivering courses that a specialist college should deliver; employers' needs will also be met.*
- b. Is this growth realistic? *Yes, for a range of reasons. We have a much better marketing team in place. We have got another open morning in a couple of weeks. A 100 people ready to come to that compared to 70 last year. We have robust plans in place to ensure our existing student cohort can progress. This did not occur last year and had we progressed our own students, we would have hit the target. We are offering a lot more HNC and HND and should be able to progress more students into HE*
- c. You are also hoping to make up any shortfall with commercial income? Is that realistic? *We will be making it up with commercial and, catering and residences. It will be a challenge. We have got KPIs which will form the basis of KPI workbook for governors and must be user-friendly.*
- d. When is the SEMLEP bid due? *The short one is due on the 4<sup>th</sup> November and that will be for anything that is investment ready and we believe will be completed by March 20-21. There is another call for January which we hope to put in a bid. We must also make sure that anything we do is linked to our curriculum offer.*
- e. There is a proposal to market a course for NEETs (not in education, training or employment). A lot of those courses are very English and Maths heavy. What assurance can you give the Corporation that there will be extra training and staff will be qualified to deliver English and Maths? *We have given this considerable thought and spoke to the ESFA yesterday. We plan to go down a Prince's Trust route with a specialist course. There will be lots of personal development and welfare and some English and Maths. We will go ahead with a small cohort. This will be a great opportunity to work with the Prince's Trust; great for students who are not coping with their current course; and, offer the College some progression with students from September 2020.*

**Resolved:** To receive the Principal's update report including KPIs.

19/221

**Key discussion points for the Corporation from the TLA Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 (Agenda 7, Paper D)**

- **TLA Committee self-assessment:** Agreement that the feedback was a fair reflection of the Committee's performance. Members would redo the questionnaire in late November to measure distance travelled in terms of the changes that were occurring with the reports and data now received as well as what would be seen in the classroom as part of learning walks.
- **Risk management:** Acknowledged that risk management was subject to a review and would be revised by the SLT and presented to the next Audit

Committee in November 2019. Two areas were highlighted as needing addressing. These would be forwarded to the Chief Finance Officer.

- **FE Performance 2018-19:** A comprehensive report outlining the findings from external verifier/external examiner visits. Future versions would be RAG rated. Only two high-risk areas identified. Internal verification and external verifier visits would be incorporated into the quality calendar.
- **HE College Performance 2018-19:** Student enrolment had been extremely disappointing. HE would now be subject to the same quality processes and procedures as FE. Disappointing NSS (National Student Survey) results. Student voice would be a priority in 2019-20. General support for proposed actions by the College Executive; an update would be required at the next meeting of the Committee.
- **TLA:** The Committee scrutinised the KPIs. These now included data from the monthly performance management panels. The Committee was more confident that the process was robust. Scrutiny given to observations of TLA and the Committee was encouraged that all staff had been observed by the end of this week. This was a significant improvement compared to last year.
- **Safeguarding:** A helpful report which could be developed further in the future to include more analysis around impact on the learner to satisfy the Committee that the support being provided had an impact.

Mrs Hawkesford reported on a recent governor link scheme visit. This had included attending a programme management board (PMB) and taking part in two learning walks. The PMBs were rigorous with lots of challenge and questioning. All governors were encouraged to attend one.

#### **Resolved:**

- The report from the TLA Committee was noted.
- The Safeguarding annual report would be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

19/222

#### **Data dashboard (Agenda item 8)**

##### **a. Pre-Board preparation (Paper E)**

##### **b. Presentation**

Members had received a copy of the data used as part of the recent PMBs. That same data had been extracted from a data dashboard that governors had access to as part of a live demonstration. The Principal explained the importance of having access to this dashboard as governors would be able to scrutinise the range of data available to them. This included attendance, retention and achievement at course level. A question was raised about the accuracy of the data that had been input. The VP C&Q explained the importance of creating an environment that was supportive to encourage staff to be as accurate as possible. The regular meetings with Heads of School and PMBs offered opportunities for further challenge and to ensure accuracy. Other challenges raised by governors related to:

- Any correlation between attendance and achievement.
- Impact of retention upon overall achievement based on current data from each curriculum area.
- English and maths and factors that may affect achievement rates.
- The strategies being employed to change the mindset of students so that there was a better appreciation of why English and Maths was important.

Members were informed that the next report for November would include a value added grid and include English and Maths. This would be circulated

prior to the meeting so that governors had time to access the governor data dashboard, prepare questions in time for the next meeting.

**Resolved:** The data dashboard report was received.

19/223

**Safeguarding (Agenda item 9)**

**a. College report (Paper F)**

The report had been subject to detailed scrutiny and challenge at the TLA Committee earlier in the week. The VP C&Q drew governors' attention to the messages from the report together with the actions to be taken to ensure a shared understanding by the whole Corporation. These included:

- The significant increase in the number of reports in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. This was likely to continue in the current academic year.
- More referrals during the first term compared to the total figure for 2018-19. This placed enormous pressure on the College and its staff.

**Challenges from the Corporation (responses in italics):**

- a. Are we getting better at recording incidents? How do we know it is really worse? *It is a combination of things. We have highlighted the support system that we have in place to the student body so they are aware of that. People are being sent to us because of the support the College gives. Schools are encouraging students with these needs to come to our College.*
- b. Sixteen hours a week for a counsellor, is that enough? *We do need to review our staffing. Administrative support has now been made available. We have asked Landex to complete a mock inspection on our residential provision and also asked them to look at the staffing around that.*
- c. Further work was required around impact. How many people who are in receipt of this support are able to move away from the support and continue on their programme and how many leave as a result? It is a cost benefit analysis. *Agreed.*
- d. The report is only on safeguarding. A report is also needed on Prevent. *Agreed, further links are required to safeguarding and health and safety. (Action 158: VP C&Q – TBC)*
- e. From a student perspective, it is great to have this support. There could be more about promoting culture on health and wellbeing. For students who are leaving home and learning to look after themselves and not just relying on a system. *We can do more of that in the tutorial session. Pastoral officers can do more.*

**b. Governor champion**

Mr Hansford confirmed that he did not think the report was negative and it gave a good insight into the work associated with this priority area in 2018-19. The report raised a number of questions including the extent to which the College was doing enough and whether it was targeting existing resources? Was the College creating a need? The need to ensure that teaching staff were clear about their pastoral responsibilities towards students.

Mr Hansford confirmed that these questions were areas that were subject to further discussion in his meeting with the VP C&Q later that day. There was a need to understand the underlying issues. A report to the

Corporation would be prepared for the next meeting. (Action 159: **Governor Safeguarding Champion**, November 2019)

**Resolved:** To approve the report.

## **SECTION C – FINANCE:**

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19/224

### **Minutes of the meeting held on:**

#### **a. 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 (Paper G)**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 had been circulated previously. Any issues from that meeting had been taken forward to the meeting held earlier in the week.

#### **b. Key discussion points for the Corporation from the F&R Committee held on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

- Future F&R Committee reports would be considered under a 1-part agenda to reduce the level of repetition and duplication as well as aiding the flow of information. There would be a single agenda item for confidential items.
- **Risk register:** There was a need to address the disconnect between those risks prioritised as 'housekeeping' or 'contingency' to be linked across to fully reflect the College's situation. Recruitment income was a key risk for finance and must be included in the register.
- **Management accounts P2:** The Committee was keen to understand the projected outturn for year ending 2020 and registered its concerns. The Committee challenged the actions that were being taken for each income stream and emphasised the importance that detailed discussions were undertaken with each budget holder. The CFO confirmed that these issues were being 'flagged' for attention and work was underway by the finance team to update the forecast in P3.
- **Strategic Business KPIs:** Agreed KPIs that related to all aspects of the Committee's responsibilities including HR and Health and Safety.
- **Use of consultants:** A summary of expenditure on consultants in 2018-19 and the previous year. A reduction of over 50% compared to the previous year.
- **Award of student bursaries:** A total of £509,348 awarded to students; a total of 547 awards made. To date, evidence showed that achievement was 2% better for those students in receipt of a bursary.

19/225

### **Management Accounts (Agenda item 12, Paper I)**

The Corporation reviewed the management accounts for September 2019. The accounts included items of a confidential nature and the minutes of this discussion are recorded in a confidential annex at the end of this document.

**Resolved:** To receive the management accounts.

## **SECTION D – RESOURCES:**

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19/226

### **Commercial and Marketing activity (Agenda item 13, Paper J)**

The Director of Commercial and Marketing drew governors' attention to a number of key points:

- Improving 16-18 student recruitment was a priority. Initial results from the latest open event were promising. Future events would be supported through more targeted campaigns. Increased support would be provided for school liaison activity and taster (discovery) days.

- Part-time courses would be promoted through ‘course specific’ digital campaigns using email, social media, search marketing as well as direct mail in the College’s catchment area.
- Work to improve the financial performance of the Commercial Enterprise Units was underway with planning meetings with all unit managers separately and as a team.
- Work had begun on the development and definition of Business Advisory Groups.

**Challenges from the Corporation (responses in italics):**

- Are the numbers achievable? We have heat maps that show us where we are attracting people from. We are using targeted marketing to attract more students; we are using all digital platforms. Following a recent email campaign for a forthcoming open event, we received 3 times more pre-registrations compared to the same time last year.*
- What is happening with the College website? This was built around 5 years ago. Work is currently underway to make a number of improvements so that it is student, stakeholder and business friendly. That process will start in January 2020 and there will be a College-wide working group.*
- What plans do you have to raise the profile of the College? There is a very positive story that needs to be shared and this is the function of marketing. We will use existing video content on all the digital platforms that our client base uses, YouTube, Spotify, etc.*
- It is important to understand why a student chooses Moulton rather than somewhere else. We are in a very competitive environment and it wasn’t clear to me how this would be addressed in your report? Two points here. One about ensuring students understand not only what we do here at Moulton but how it is different and how this would be a better institution for those students. We are also impressed with the distance that our students are prepared to travel and we are keen to further understand the reasons for this.*

The Vice Chair closed the discussion by explaining that one of the priorities of the Board was to manage the risks of the College. The fact that the College was not marketing itself due to a number of factors was a risk. The report gave the Board some confidence that this risk was now being managed and would look forward to further reports over time.

**Resolved:** The Commercial and Marketing report was noted.

**SECTION E – POLICY APPROVAL:**

19/227

**Information Security Policy (Agenda item 14, Paper K)**

The new policy was developed following an internal audit of information security and IT disaster recovery in which the College received ‘Reasonable Assurance’. The policy would meet best practice and was in line with the recommendations made.

**Resolved:** The Information and Security Policy was approved.

**SECTION F – CLOSING ITEMS:**

19/228

**Any other items of urgent business (Agenda item 15)**

The Vice Chair of Corporation had been given delegated authority by the Chair to sign a lease, deed of surrender and licence in relation to the veterinary practice on his behalf.

**19/229**

**Date of next meeting (Agenda item 16)**

Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 in Kelmarsh at 9.30 am

Ms S O'Connor and Mr A Eastland left the meeting.