

Meeting of the Corporation

Tue 04 July 2023, 18:30 - 20:30

At SGMC

Attendees

Board members

Alastair Owens (Senior Vice Chair), Dave Vasse (Principal), Andy Boucher (Chair), Angela Foster (Member, Non-teaching Staff), James Gould (Vice Principal), John Kirk (Interim Clerk), Marian Orafu (Member), Maurine Lewin (Member), Moshiur Rahman (Student Member), Anastasia Dufie (Student Member), Natalie Firth (Member), Richard Boulton (Director of Finance), Nazia Shah (Member - Teaching Staff), Rosali Pretorius (Member), Sara Whittaker (Member), Tim Stockings (Member), Kay Sandford-Beal (Director of Governance)

Absent: Jamie Davies, Kwame Amoako-Atta

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence, & Quoracy

Information

Apologies received from Jamie Davies

Andy Boucher

AB welcomed everyone.

The meeting was declared quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

Information

None

Andy Boucher


3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings 9 May 2023 and 20th May 2023

Decision

The minutes of the meeting 9 May were approved as a true and accurate record

Andy Boucher

The minutes of the meeting 20 May were approved as a true and accurate record

 Minutes_Development Day_200523.pdf

 Minutes_Meeting of the Corporation_090523.pdf

4. Matters Arising

Discussion

None

Andy Boucher

5. Governance Matters

Information

Update on Meeting Attendance and Member Terminations

John Kirk

JK reported that Stephen Jones had retired with immediate effect 3 July 2023, and that this was the final meeting for both Alastair Owens and Usha Puri-Dewage, who had both served their full terms. There are now five vacancies on the Corporation.

JK further reported on governor attendance at meetings, currently averaging 79.06% overall.

DV thanked SJ for his excellent insight and penetrating and challenging questions.

DV thanked AO for stepping up at a crucial time for the College as interim chair, remaining calm and focused, which was hugely appreciated by all at Monoux. DV had learned much from AO, especially his ability to ask the most pertinent and penetrating questions.

AB seconded these thanks to AO, praising the immense contribution to the College.

AB also thanked UPD for her role as parent governor, though he hoped she would continue to serve the college in some form in the future.

AB also thanked JK for his work over a much longer interim period than had ever been envisaged.

AB also welcomed KS in her new role as Director of Governance.

AO Thanked everyone for their kind comments, and he, too, had learned so much from DV and all of SLT, and other members. The college has been through some very difficult times, mostly now a distant memory, and it is such an encouragement to see where Monoux is now.

6. Principal's Report

Information

Dave Vasse

DV Noted the two main headlines; firstly, the two successful capital bids thanks to the hard work of Chris Card and JG. The T Level funding is a huge boost, as is the improved 14-16 contract in terms of both finance and numbers, both key drivers in the successful growth of direct recruitment.

Secondly, student attendance data, applications and offers are another encouraging area, thanks to the marketing and recruitment team, and AF in particular.

AB Thanked JG for all his endeavours with the funding bids, which are neither simple nor straightforward.

RP asked if we are receiving applications from the right sorts of students for the newer curriculum offer.

DV confirmed that offers are given only to the right students, with fewer being turned away without offers this year than on previous years. All are interviewed by a member of SLT to ensure they are going to progress whilst here, which shows that targeted marketing has paid dividends.

DV noted that current applications include those for BTEC courses, but next year will see more demanding entry requirements, with some students needing a foundation-type year before moving to A Level and T Level

AF concurred that there were very few 'no offers' this year.

AO Noted that attendance issues remain a major concern, and this the subject of a deep-dive in the Quality & Performance Committee.

AB noted that attendance is still an issue elsewhere nationally, both in the FE sector and all of education.

SW asked about the roll out of coaching training next year, after the first group of eighteen have completed the course.

DV noted that not all staff will need to receive coaching training, and the time required for coaching will need to be determined on inspection next year. Feedback from the pilot group will also feed into the future structure and size of the coaching team.

AD questioned whether attendance data of students from ethnic minorities attributed this to any barrier such as economically disadvantaged.

DV noted the data is available in various forms, and the report contains some salient points, all of which comes from external research. It is not possible as yet to apportion the percentage of, say, black students that are from an economically deprived background. It might be an option to request greater detail from the researcher to more detailed information to pinpoint why certain groups have lower attendance.

The Corporation welcomed the Principal's Report.

To include:

7. Strategic Plan

Decision

To receive and approve the Strategic Plan

Dave Vasse

AB noted that file was very large, and not easy to download, but it covered the key objectives, the management of main risks, with hyper-links to allow for greater detail.

DV noted this was a top line document for all stakeholders. The strategic objectives are those agreed at the development day, which remain the key activities for the college. The details around how these will be implemented and delivered, from the estate refurbishment, curriculum offer, and teaching and learning can be found from the links in the document. Subsequent discussions on the plan would be considered alongside the External Review of Governance and the four board-level risk on the risk register. Ultimately the discussion would focus on the mitigation of these risks in line with future outcomes.

TS welcomed the way that this document can be segmented according to the requirements of each audience, with the total providing much more detail than every reader would need. The most important issue will be keeping track of this plan, monitoring progress of the six strategic objectives and the KPIs, and how this can be most effectively communicated to governors in light of the review of governance.

ML asked if there will be updates at each meeting of various elements and strategies, and as appropriate for each committee.

DV noted that in the Role of the Corporation, which aims to meet precisely this question, with each committee monitoring relevant strategies. For the Corporation, a suggestion is to receive quarterly updates, and the Corporation should regularly consider the top four risks, with both data updates and risk updates at each meeting.

AB confirmed that all governors need to be content with the visibility and accessibility of how this is best reported to governors.

AO welcomed that this links very well to the ERG which would be instrumental in how this is best reported to governors.

TS asked if committees will be able to adequately consider relevant aspects in isolation.

AD asked about committee responsibilities, and if there might be occasions where a joint committee meeting would be better to consider certain aspects?

DV welcomed this suggestion as reputation is vital, as is learner voice. the Corporation meeting would be a good place for such discussions, but there may need to be certain joint meetings.

AB agreed that committees should not operate in silos, so this is an interesting idea.

DV noted that Development Days would be also be an excellent forum for such discussions.

AO noted that Deep Dives, as used in Q&P, could be considered in Corporation meetings.

MR asked about the timing of fundraising for entirety of the plan

DV said that by 2027 would be the ideal time to have every thing in place.

MO asked about an action log for such strategies.

DV confirmed that there will be quarterly updates as they progress.

The Corporation approved the Draft Strategic Plan.

8. External Review of Governance

To receive the Report, which will be considered in detail by the Governance & Remuneration Committee 3 October 2023.

AB noted this will be discussed in detail at the next Corporation meeting 10 October.

ML noted that the Governance Committee has lost some key members.

AB agreed that there will need to be a review of committee membership, but Pauline Odulinski, the author, will be at the October meeting to comment on highlights and recommendations, and to answer any questions, as it is important that all members are fully engaged in the way forward on this matter.

AB also noted there will be a governor dinner in the Autumn, date to be announced.

ML noted that there is an urgent need to recruit governors for the five vacancies.

DV asked if the Drapers contacts could be sounded out. There had been a very positive meeting where Drapers had requested to bring The Court (board) to visit the college to gain a better understanding. JG is also doing sterling work with local businesses, which is already showing dividends.

MO asked if the online Employers Engagement Event 13 July could include a question on vacancies.


Information

Andy Boucher

RB noted that he had successfully used both Reach and NuRole in the past to recruit governors. Another option is for senior staff to join the board at other colleges to encourage a reciprocal arrangement.

AB noted that an action plan would be helpful.

The Corporation received the External Review of Governance.

 8.1 External Review of Governance Report 23-05-06 ZO[24].pdf

9. Committee Reports

Andy Boucher

External Relations Committee 5 June 2023

TS Reported that a full agenda was discussed including the skill strategies which is vital regarding agency, and that the Skill Strategy was approved.

14-16 direct recruitment was discussed at length, and noted as a major opportunity for growth, not just for the current ALP but further afield.

KPIs were discussed, with suggestions for lead and lag indicators, and for greater stretch.

L2 to L3 progression measurement was discussed, and there was helpful discussion on how baselines could be better derived in future.

T level progress will need close monitoring, and there was excellent discussion on Work Experience, who and where governors as employers can play a role. There was a request for better and more appealing information for employers on Work Experience.

the Committee Terms of Reference were approved as fit for purpose.

DV noted that government policy is softening regarding work experience, with the 45 days being being split into hours, and spread over different placements.

AB asked about what counts as good work experience.

JG noted that the objectives and descriptions will change to include skills, with ELBA helping in connecting students to relevant organisations.

Quality & Performance Committee 6 June 2023

AO reported the discussions on progress against the College Improvement Plan, with rate of improvement not as good as anticipated, and considered where performance is not as good. Post pandemic issues of attendance were discussed, including student support needs, and staff CPD on these issues. Outcomes in August may not be as anticipated, but the APs are doing much hard work to address these issues.

DV noted all colleges are reminded of the 10% grade inflation from TAGs, and this should be borne in mind in comparing raw marking standards.

NS noted that there was reduced content in A Level last year, so results this year will not be a direct comparison with previous years.

Resources Committee 19 June 2023

AB reported that Management Accounts had usual variances, and current forecast is expected to remain at around £200k over budget.

Energy is suffering strong headwinds, with discussion on how volatility can be mitigated, such is increasing LED lighting.

Questions were asked about the option to lease high-end equipment to ensure we always had the latest models for students.

The Committee recommended approval of the two- year budget forecast and outline estimates of income and expenditure.

As the full papers were not to hand at the meeting,

The Corporation Resolved to approve Chair's Action via email consultation with members, to formally approve the Budget Forecast .

The Electric Vehicle project will initially install 20 charging posts at the rear of the building, subject to final figures from the contractors. There is a grant available for necessary groundworks.

Audit Committee 20 June 2023

SW reported discussion on the much improved Risk Register format.

Internal Audit Reports were welcomed, both received Strong Assurance, validating Anti-Fraud and English and Maths.

There was a suggestion to consider T Level implementation as a need to cover a curriculum matter.

The External Auditors Fee was increased, but this was agreed as justified due to extra new audit requirements. External Auditors were asked if there was adequate staff capacity to work with these new requirements. MHA noted that staff were extremely well prepared and able to comply with the new requirements.

DV noted that purpose of Internal Audit function was essentially to assure the Principal that he is doing the job correctly. Scrutton Bland had agreed to meet with the Principal to ensure the planning was properly carried out, but this had not been done. Subsequently, there has been a meeting requesting an audit of examination compliance, rather than T Levels.

SW noted that nothing had been heard by the Committee from Scrutton Bland in following up this matter.

UPD volunteered to write formally to reiterate the correct process for planning the internal audit.


DV recommended the Committee reminded SB of the correct process.

RP asked when the current contract expires.

This information was not to hand.

The Corporation received the reports from the committees.

 9.3 Resources Committee_190623 Minutes Draft.pdf

 9.4 Audit Committee Meeting 200623 Draft Minutes.pdf

10. Any Other Business

SW asked when the review of committee membership would be completed.

AB said the intention was to have this in place by the Autumn, but there are variables with regard to recruitment. This will be answered in time.

11. Dates and Times of Next Meetings

Tuesday 10 October 2023 6.30pm

Tuesday 12 December 2023 6.30pm

Tuesday 14 May 2024 6.30pm

Tuesday 2 July 2024 6.30pm