

EALING, HAMMERSMITH, AND WEST LONDON COLLEGE FE CORPORATION

Meeting	SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE		
Date	7 October 2021	Time	18.00
Venue	Virtual Meeting using zoom		
Chair	Ian Comfort		
Members: Ian Comfort; Callum Anderson (Chair); Phillip Kerle; vacancy; Karen Redhead. In attendance: Ra Hamilton-Burns –Governance Advisor			

No.	ITEM
1.	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Phillip Kerle.
2.	Declarations of interest There were none.
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020 Correction: Ian Comfort is the Chair of this Committee. AGREED: THE SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2021 WERE A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD.
4	Matters arising Ra Hamilton-Burns offered the following updates: Item 3. Ra Hamilton-Burns and Karen Redhead still have to review board pack solutions and costs and will bring a report to a future meeting. Item 4. The Code has now been published but does not come into effect until academic year 2022/23. Next year's cycle will be amended accordingly, and elements will be put in place this year in preparation. Item 5. Karen Redhead and the team are still investigating technology for effective hybrid meetings. Ra Hamilton-Burns told the Committee that this had been a subject of a long discussion at the AoC London Governance Professional's meeting and people had reported difficulty in all participants hearing the business being conducted.

5	Past year 2020-21
5.i	<p>Board year-at-a-glance infographic 20/21 Ra Hamilton-Burns presented the one-page report of Board activity in 2021 to offer an 'at a glance' overview. The Committee welcomed the format which was useful.</p>
5.ii	<p>Annual Board effectiveness review survey 20/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 members completed the survey (the Board was carrying six vacancies due to staff departures, students leaving at the end of their courses and recruitment for two new external members). • The full summary report is attached to this paper as item 5.ii.a. • The majority of respondents rated all questions as Outstanding or Good <p>Four questions elicited a 'requires improvement' grading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board sets, monitors and reviews the College strategy, and its impact on improving the quality of the student experience and learner outcomes – 1 respondent • The Board reviews the impact of its decisions and makes sure that lessons are learnt from past mistakes? – 1 respondent • The Board ensures learners can make informed choices about their learning programme and that they are well prepared for their next stage of education, training, or employment? – 2 respondents • The Board has been given updates on the Skills for Jobs white paper and emergent Skills and Post-16 Education Bill which will prepare governors for the forthcoming discussions on College Strategy – 1 respondent <p>Members expressed concern that one member is not getting what they would expect from the Board in so many areas. The third bullet point warrants reviewing at this point but 20% is not a significant number which requires an adjustment. It was suggested that a conversation is had with the person who is expressing concern. It was felt that perhaps the person can't differentiate between their own lack of knowledge or experience, and attributes this to a lack of performance by the Board.</p> <p>ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns will contact the member to discuss their views further in order to express the concern of the Committee and offer to discuss it further.</p> <p>The detail which can drive improvement is found in the comments under each question. The most common areas for focus are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be less time spent on finance and more on curriculum The Board agendas have been redesigned to gather all curriculum items under one sub-heading and this will be kept in focus. 2. More opportunities to engage with students The Committee recognised that the pandemic had greatly reduced any opportunity for members of the Board to visit the College and interact with learners. However, Governors commented that, whilst it is good to meet with students, it can only be a snapshot of one particular group and may not drive improvement, however it may help to pick up on pastoral issues. Student voice is critical but comes from diverse input not just from one source. Karen Redhead added that the Board would benefit more from a further developed student voice activity in the College. She suggested that the Board can support the College more effectively by reviewing and monitoring the mechanism for gathering student voice. Members agreed that there needs to be an agreed structure on student engagement. The Committee added that the use of a series of learner 'Vox pops' before each Board meeting had been very useful and well received. <p>ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns to send questions to SW for Vox Pops on the following topics for the 19 October 2021 Board meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment • Settling into programmes • One thing on which the College might improve to make it better for learners

3. The Board should work with, and commission surveys of, learners' understanding of British Values¹ and request more student voice

Karen Redhead will work with James Taylor, and it will come through the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

ACTION: British Value's programme and survey to be reported to C&Q committee.

4. There is a need for staff surveys and voice

This is underway and is being reviewed by the unions and the staff forum. Richard Eastmond, Executive Director of People and Organisational Development will present the outcomes to the Board shortly. Karen Redhead commented that some of the feedback does not make pleasant reading but reflects the morale of some staff at this time.

5. Emphasis should be given to reconnecting with College key stakeholders and galvanise activity to focus on quality learner outcomes in anticipation of imminent Ofsted inspection

Karen Redhead commented that David Warnes has just done a consultation on the strategic plan with key stakeholders which will be reported to the Board on 19 October 2021.

The suggestion that questions be invited in advance of Board papers has been made again and should be discussed and feedback offered. The Committee discussed this and considered it would place an unacceptable burden on the Executive Team. Karen Redhead said she did not feel that discussions in Board and Committee had been restricted by not having the questions in advance. Ian Comfort concurred that the pace and engagement seem correct.

AGREED: THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT THE OUTCOMES OF THE SURVEY SHOULD BE SHARED WITH ALL BOARD MEMBERS WITH ANY RESPONSES AND ACTIONS FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

ACTION: RHB to compile a paper with the survey outcomes and a 'you said, we did' response for circulation to the Board.

Self-Assessment Matrix

This was discussed. The matrix is well-developed, and the activities will continue in-year. The external Board reviewer had commented that the activities were comprehensive. Ra Hamilton-Burns has signed up for the self-assessment session to be hosted by the AoC at the National Conference in November and will feed back any new initiatives. The self-assessment activities of the Board coupled with the external Board review offer members input into the Governance Improvement plan.

Noted: The Committee noted the self-assessment matrix.

5.iii Final report from the ETF external Board review

The College took part in the DfE sponsored external Board review pilot in the summer of 2021. It is expected that such reviews will become mandatory every three years for all FE Boards.

This was shared with all governors in the September Governance briefing.

The summary of the report makes for very positive reading. The report covers and offers positive feedback on many areas of the Board structure, performance and also outlines areas for improvement.

Some quotes include:

'The independent members are high performing individuals in their own professional areas and bring an in-depth knowledge of strategic leadership in commercial, corporate and education sectors to the leadership of the Group. The Board has a strong emphasis on

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-on-promoting-british-values-in-schools-published>

financial expertise and expertise in leadership in education. Recent appointments have also added additional expertise in curriculum quality, with a very strong focus on quality within FE.'

'The Board benefits from an extremely effective and able Chair, who is well respected by other Board members. The Chair undergoes an annual appraisal survey, the outcome for 2021 gave very strong support for the leadership of the Chair. Evidence from interviews, observation and the governor survey support the view that the Chair has the personal skills and professional competencies required to take the College forward and to lead a high support/high challenge board.'

'Although not observed, the minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee evidence the detail of reporting provided to governors and the ability of governors to focus on where issues existed. The Committee was able to show in-depth questioning and also the importance of understanding impact.'

The report recommendations are:

'The Board needs to:

- **Review its Terms of Reference and Standing Orders to streamline both; re-order the consideration of business to reflect priority issues (and ensure that these are reflected in minutes)**

This has been completed and the outcomes are on this agenda. The re-order of the consideration of business has been put in place for future agendas.

- **Review its student governor and learner voice arrangements**

Ra Hamilton-Burns described the process and reminded the Board that the student governor engagement had been affected by the pandemic. This year, extra efforts have been made to offer any interested candidates for student governor, meetings with the Clerk to discuss the opportunities and expectations of the role. Two separate sessions have been held to date. Ian Comfort asked if learners on a curriculum area which might be more related to the work of the Board might be approached. Karen Redhead said that it is important to target different types of learners who are less likely to feel daunted by the Board. She offered to support student services in targeting learners and suggested that the large number of learners on business courses might easily identify the opportunities afforded by becoming a student governor. Ra Hamilton-Burns reminded the Committee that Unloc² provides extensive support and resources both to prospective and elected student governors.

ACTION: Karen Redhead to review and support contact with potential learners in business courses.

ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns to send to Karen Redhead the Unloc materials

ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns to confirm when election date is with Sara Woodward

The process for student and staff governors joining the Board will be reviewed. Governors asked if it is possible to interview and appoint interested parties.

ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns to research options and report to the Board.

- **Consider how it will drive the development of strategy**

Karen Redhead said that the development of strategy is a five-year plan and is an ongoing process which is well embedded into College and Board agendas. The College is refreshing the strategy and the Board has been involved with a report going to the October 19 2021 meeting. The new members will be involved in the development of strategy when the refreshed strategic plan is presented on 19 October 2021. The Board is also attending the IBR workshops – one has taken place for the Estates elements, and more are planned. Another meeting has been

² <https://unloc.online/student-governor-resource-bank>

	<p>arranged on 26 October 2021 at the request of the ESFA, but no documents have yet been received.</p> <p>ACTION: KR will contact the ESFA to chase up the final IBR report.</p> <p>Ian Comfort expressed disappointment about the statement <i>that ‘the College has a strategic plan refreshed in July 2020 where no joint ownership by the Board or Executive is evident. There is no evidence of the governors driving the strategic agenda ...’</i>. The Committee agreed that this statement does not accurately reflect the extensive discussions on KPIs, estates strategy and refreshed strategic plan evidence in the minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Review Board papers (both in content and mode of publishing) to aid understanding and improve access</p> <p>Format of Board papers is under constant review. Executive Team members now produce short cover papers to summarise matters and papers to the Board. Full versions of papers or copies of marked up versions are also provided but in a separate appendices pack for those who wish to drill down further or triangulate statements. Ra Hamilton-Burns will continue work to improve presentation of information to the Board. As already discussed, Karen Redhead and Ra Hamilton-Burns will investigate board paper solutions.</p> <p>Consider how to create a shared culture and ethos with new members’</p> <p>The passage of time will enable new members to develop and understand the culture of the Board. Twilight sessions in between Board and Committee meetings are held to provide accessible and less formal opportunities for governors to meet.</p> <p>The recommendations are accepted by the College and are included in the mutually agreed action plan of the report.</p> <p>The report will be published on the Governance Area of the College website in early October when marketing has the time to make the updates to this.</p> <p>Noted: The Committee noted the external Board review.</p>
5.iv	<p>Governance improvement plan</p> <p>The Governance improvement plan in the appendices was at May 2021 and progress against it is pleasing. As a Board which continually undergoes both internal and external assessment there are additional improvements to be added. Those from the ETF external Governance Review will be added now that the Committee has discussed the recommendations and actions. Improvements and actions emanating from the Skills for Jobs White paper and the new AoC Code of Good Governance 2021 will be added when in force.</p> <p>ACTION: RHB to update the Governance improvement plan for recommendation to the Board on 19 October 2021.</p>
6	<p>Current year 2021-22</p>
7	<p>Membership 2021/22</p> <p>I.Update on recruitment for Estates and People Governors –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal update on progress from Peridot • The search closes on 11 October • Shortlisting meeting on 18 October • Interview date to be agreed <p>ACTION: Ra Hamilton-Burns to reiterate to Peridot the offer of a conversation with the Chair and/or CEO to any candidates who may have questions.</p>

	<p>Karen Redhead told the Committee that Richard Eastmond is working on a major programme to raise awareness of wellbeing, volunteering, corporate social responsibility, and improved culture and this will be reported to the FHR committee.</p> <p>II.Link Governors</p> <p>The Committee had discussed the opportunity and potential need to create other Link Governor roles at its meeting on 10 May 2021 and concluded, on the advice of Karen Redhead, that this would provide no additional benefit to the College. The Committee had also been concerned that this would place more burden on specific governors and may detract others from recognising the duties on the whole Board. The twilight session with Steve Frampton had resulted in a suggestion that the Board might consider a link governor for sustainability.</p> <p>Role description for Link Governor for Sustainability</p> <p>Karen Redhead reminded the Committee that there is a national sustainability framework for Colleges and the College is aiming to get emerging status on this programme. Steve Frampton held a session on Climate and Sustainability for the WLC Board on 8 July 2021 and he suggested that the College might have a Link Governor for Sustainability. The College’s sustainability strategy is being presented to the Board at its October 19, 2021, meeting.</p> <p>Karen Redhead said that the role might be part of the estates governor once appointed but it is too soon to determine this. Governors commented that it is important that David Warnes received support but restated their concern that a specific link governor role might detract from the whole Board considering sustainability as a shared responsibility. The Committee said it would defer such a decision until the need is identified.</p> <p>III.Co-opted governors</p> <p>This matter and the membership of Committees will be revisited once the current vacancies on the Board have been filled.</p>
8	<p>Skills Audit 2021-22</p> <p>This has been sent to current members, but the report is held over until the new members join to make the information complete and relevant. This will be completed immediately the new members are elected and appointed.</p>
9	<p>Governance development and training</p> <p>i. Training record for 2020-21</p> <p>The record of the prior year’s training for governors was extensive and comprehensive. The NLG who conducted the external Board review had been impressed, particularly as it had all been provided remotely. This focus on training will continue in the coming academic year and all new governors will be encouraged to participate as enthusiastically as the current members of the Board do.</p> <p>Esther Mato-Rial has circulated the statutory training requirements and is compiling a record of completion. Ra Hamilton-Burns reminded members that the College accepts equivalent training undertaken by governors elsewhere in order that it does not become onerous and nonsensical.</p> <p>ii. Twilights for coming term</p> <p>The Committee discussed the list of suggested topics and agreed that all were appropriate. It was decided that the Ofsted session should be prioritised.</p>

	<p>iii. KCSIE³ and other training</p> <p>All governors are required to read Part one of KCSIE and report that they have done so. This was the case in 2020/21 and is repeated this year as there was an update in September 2021. The governor briefing of October 6 2021 had also signposted governors to <u>Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u> Debbie Stephenson had also drawn governors' attention to information on the single central record of pre-appointment checks on page 65-67 of the full, and updated, document: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf</p>
10	<p>Cycles of business and terms of reference 2021/22</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and agreed to recommend the following to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle of business • Terms of reference • Policy review and report <p>AGREED: THE SEARCH COMMITTEE AGREED TO RECOMMEND THE CYCLE OF BUSINESS, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND POLICY REVIEW TO THE BOARD AT ITS MEETING ON 19 OCTOBER 2021.</p>
11	<p>Policies</p> <p>I. Standing orders</p> <p>AGREED: THE COMMITTEE AGREED TO DELEGATE APPROVAL OF THE STANDING ORDERS TO IAN COMFORT FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD IN OCTOBER 2021.</p>
12	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Code of conduct</p> <p>Ra Hamilton-Burns presented the new version of the Eversheds Code of Conduct with some WLC additions with specific additional clauses on commitment and relationships to reflect the culture of the Board. The Committee reviewed the document and agreed to recommend it to the Board.</p> <p>AGREED: THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR 2021/22 BE RECOMMENDED TO THE BOARD MEETING ON 19 OCTOBER 2021.</p>
13	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next Search and Governance meeting will be held on Tuesday 18 January 2022.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 19.15</p>