

# **Wakefield College Corporation**

## **Board of Governors**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March 2021 (Meeting)**

#### **Present:**

Yasmin Ayub, Kaitlen Blacker, Claire Corneille, Julie Craig, Dmitry Fedotov, Andrew McConnell (**Chair**), Ben Porter, Joshua Poole, David Powell, Ruth Sacks, Martyn Shaw, Neil Warren, and Sam Wright (**Principal**)

#### **In attendance:**

Executive Director of HR and OD, Executive Director of Finance and Resources and Executive Director of Curriculum and the Clerk and Legal Officer (**Clerk**)

#### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

1.1. The Chair noted that the Meeting was quorate and declared the Meeting open.

1.2. The Chair noted that there had been no apologies.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1. No declarations of interest were made.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021**

3.1. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 were approved.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

4.1. The Clerk noted the following outstanding matters arising:

4.1.1. On minute 4.1(iii), that he had agreed to arrange a deep dive group to discuss the College's staff cost as a percentage of income following the completion of a report on the same by the College's internal auditors. He explained that the report had been presented to the Audit Committee on 9 March 2021 which had asked for the Executive Team's opinions and that the deep dive group would, therefore, be postponed until such further work had been completed.

**4.1.2.** On minute 8.1(xii), that the Principal had agreed to provide governors with information regarding the format of the summer exams amid the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Director of Curriculum gave the update.

**4.1.3.** On minute 12.2(i), that the Chair had asked the Director of Estates to confirm whether a zero-carbon target date was to be set. He explained that the Director of Estates had confirmed that the College had set a date to be carbon neutral by 2025.

## **5. Minutes of the Committees of the Board**

**5.1.** The Chair asked for a summary of the Audit Committee meeting of 9 March 2021. Julie Craig noted that there had been in-depth discussions regarding the College's staff cost as a percentage of income and the risk register. The Chair asked the Audit Committee to consider ways to escalate key risks to the Board for discussion. It was agreed that this would be considered.

**5.2.** The Chair gave a summary of the Search Committee meeting of 16 March 2021 and noted:

**5.2.1.** That governor development plans had been sent to each governor.

**5.2.2.** That a potential conflict of interest relating to Neil Warren's role as Chair of Audit Committee and Finance Lead Governor had been considered, following conversations with the College's internal auditors, and no conflict had been found.

**5.2.3.** That the committee had proposed to change its name which would be addressed at minute 7.

**5.2.4.** *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

## **6. Chair's Business**

- 6.1.** The Chair thanked the Executive Team and the College's staff for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, one year on from its start, and noted that the FE Commissioner had informed the College of a change to the financial health KPIs which would be addressed at agenda item 11.

## **7. Governance issues**

### **7.1. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:**

- 7.1.1.** The name of the Search Committee be changed to the Search and Governance Committee as had been recommended by the Search Committee.
- 7.1.2.** That the amended Standing Orders be approved to change the name of the Search Committee to the Search and Governance Committee and delete the requirement for annual public meetings as agreed by the Board at its meeting of 27 January 2021.
- 7.1.3.** That the amended Search Committee's Terms of Reference be approved to change the name of the committee to the Search and Governance Committee.

## **8. Student update**

### **8.1. The Student Governors noted the following:**

- 8.1.1.** That a lockdown newsletter had been created to help with student wellbeing for which students had written articles.
- 8.1.2.** That a Valentine's Day quiz had been held to raise money for the British Heart Foundation.
- 8.1.3.** That the student clubs, about which governors had been told at the last meeting, were continuing to run successfully.
- 8.1.4.** That baskets of period products were ready to be distributed in College toilets in support of the Period Poverty campaign.

- 8.1.5.** That a virtual 'safe space' had been initiated with the goal of improving student mental health and helping students to make friends despite a lack of face-to-face interaction.
- 8.1.6.** That students had attended a Parliament Workshop with the MP for Wakefield.
- 8.1.7.** That students were consulting with the Executive Director of Estates regarding the implementation of their ideas for the new refectory.
- 8.1.8.** That students were to have a greater input in their individual learning plans going forwards.
- 8.1.9.** That a student/governor engagement session had taken place the previous week which had been run by the student governors and had been a success. It was noted that suggested improvements regarding the College, which had been raised by the students, during the session had been flagged to relevant staff members and were being addressed.
- 8.1.10.** That students had run a Red Nose campaign to raise money. It was noted that the sum raised, although not available at the Meeting, was good given that students were working remotely.
- 8.2.** Governors asked how strong student participation had been in the activities outlined. The Student Governors noted that attendance at the Students' Union meetings and clubs had been good. Yasmin Ayub explained that lockdown had limited student participation significantly but a range of activities had been provided which had been made as accessible as possible.
- 8.3.** The Board thanked the Student Governors who then left the meeting.

## **9. Principal's business**

- 9.1.** The Principal noted the following:
  - 9.1.1.** The College's COVID-19 statistics.

- 9.1.2.** That students were returning to College on a phased basis and that three COVID-19 tests had been offered to all students prior to their return. She noted that testing numbers had declined after the first round of testing but that the College had heavily promoted the offer.
  - 9.1.3.** That attendance was at approximately 84% which she expected to improve with face-to-face learning. She noted that this represented a decline of only two percentage points against the previous year.
  - 9.1.4.** That retention was strong, and many adult learners engaged better with online learning. However, she noted that there were several at-risk students which the College was working hard to support.
  - 9.1.5.** That student engagement, a measurement of student participation among attendees, had dropped from 90% to approximately 88%.
  - 9.1.6.** That 72% of students were on track to achieve their predicted grade, 6.5% were expected to achieve above their target grade and 14% were projected to achieve less than their predicted grade. She opined that predicted grades were set using teacher assessed GCSE grades which were often quite high and might account for some of those apparently underachieving. She explained that 6% were expected not to achieve and that these students were being appropriately supported.
  - 9.1.7.** That there had been and continued to be a focus on supporting staff and student wellbeing during the pandemic.
  - 9.1.8.** That the College had obtained centre approval for the delivery of T-Levels from its awarding body.
  - 9.1.9.** That the College had been successful in its bid to pilot the Sustainable Futures programme.
- 9.2.** *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

- 9.3. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 9.4. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 9.5. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 9.6. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*
- 9.7. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

## **10. People Strategy**

- 10.1. The Chair noted that the document was in draft, that it would be presented to the Board in final form in July, that he and Claire Corneille had already provided their comments and that governors would have the chance to do the same after the Meeting.
- 10.2. The Executive Director of HR and OD noted the following:
  - 10.2.1. That the strategy had been delayed due to COVID-19.
  - 10.2.2. That she had had useful feedback from the Chair and Claire Corneille, the Lead Governor for HR.
  - 10.2.3. That she welcomed governor feedback.
- 10.3. The Chair noted that he had commented that the kind and caring environment which Ofsted had identified during its last inspection visit should be captured and celebrated.
- 10.4. Claire Corneille noted that she had commented that the ambitious approach taken in respect of the College's students should equally be applied to its staff in the strategy.
- 10.5. Governors asked whether the strategy included considerations to spot and progress talent. The Executive Director HR and OD explained that these matters would be articulated.

## **11. February Finance Report**

- 11.1. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

11.2. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

11.3. *This item is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.*

## **12. Briefing Papers**

12.1. The Chair noted the following:

12.1.1. That there had been no additional questions raised by governors regarding the briefing papers prior to the meeting.

12.1.2. That the Student Support paper, which had been planned for the Meeting, had been removed due to time constraints in favour of a briefing paper but it was proposed that it be the subject of the governor development session on 4 May 2021.

12.1.3. That governor attendance at meetings was very strong.

12.1.4. That the Schedule of Business had and would continue to be included as a briefing paper primarily to prompt lead governors regarding their assurance responsibilities.

12.2. Julie Craig noted that she had met with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss improvements to the Safeguarding Report including the provision of comparison data which would be implemented as it became available.

12.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the briefing papers be noted.

## **13. Review of effectiveness of the meeting and identification of emerging risks**

13.1. The Chair asked for suggestions as to how the Board might evaluate its performance at the end of meetings.

Signed ..... Date.....

## Actions

<b>No.</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.	4.1.1	The Clerk agreed to arrange a deep dive group to discuss the College's staff cost as a percentage of income following the completion of further work.	ASAP	The Clerk
2.	5.1	The Chair asked the Audit Committee to consider ways to escalate key risks to the Board for discussion.	ASAP	The Audit Committee
3.	12.1.2	That a governor development session regarding student support be arranged.	4 May 2021	The Clerk

<b>4.</b>	<b>13.1</b>	The Chair asked for suggestions as to how the Board might evaluate its performance at the end of meetings.	The Board meeting of 25 May 2021	All
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