

**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation  
Held at the College at 5pm on Tuesday 21 March 2017**

**Present:** Mr Davies, Mrs Mbubaegbu, Ms Moody (Chair), Mr Rees-Evans, Mr Roberts, Mr Snow, Mr Tonge and Ms Ward.

**Apologies:** Ms Burt, Ms Calderbank, Dr Carter, Mr Craft, Mr Daneshvar, Mr Lawther, Mr Minter, Mr Slidel and Ms Youern.

**In Attendance:** Mr Carter - Head of Higher Education (Min 2584)  
Mr Drudge- Health & Safety Officer (Min 2585)  
Ms Schweitzer - Clerk to the Corporation

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**M i n u t e s**

**Part 1 – Standing Items**

**2577 Apologies for Absence**

Ms Burt, Ms Calderbank, Dr Carter, Mr Craft, Mr Daneshvar, Mr Lawther, Mr Minter, Mr Slidel and Ms Youern sent their apologies.

**2578 Membership**

It was **Agreed** that Mr Snow (Student Governor) join Finance Committee.

**2579 Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2580 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 06 December 2016 were **Agreed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2581 Matters Arising**

**Minute 2560: CRSG:** In response to a question the Principal stated that as previously reported, a legal firm had been instructed and that they had had informal discussions with the state Attorney General who had brought up the matter with the state Governor. The Attorney General did not wish to push the matter with the Governor and the legal firm would therefore proceed to mediation to resolve the issue. The Principal stressed the importance of continuing to pursue the diplomatic route and stated that the British High Commissioner had recently agreed to lobby on the College's behalf and had asked the College for input into a letter to be sent to the Governor. In this contribution the Principal had cited the College's AoC's international charter as well as registering the governing body's concern at the situation. The Principal stated that the College was seeking the full amount as it saw no reason for a reduction, particularly as the contract value had been reduced previously.

**Minute 2561: Final report on Strategic Plan 2014-16 and approval of Strategy Plan 2017-20 including Vision, Mission & Educational Character:** The Principal stated that the forthcoming strategy session would explore College sustainability and core business and that further information on the Operation Plan was set out in the Principal's Report.

## **Part 2 – Items for Decision**

### **2582 Report on Success: 2015/16 Achievement Rates Summary**

Due to time constraints it was agreed that key issues raised in the slides (circulated prior to the meeting) would be considered alongside the Quality Report.

### **2583 Fees Policy 2017/18**

The Principal presented Paper 2266/17/C setting out the 2017/18 Fees Policy. The Principal stated that the policy was very straightforward and had been agreed by Finance Committee at its recent meeting. The Chair confirmed that the policy had been discussed and agreed by Finance Committee and was recommended to Corporation for approval.

The Fees Policy 2017/18 was **Agreed**.

## **Part 3 – Items for Discussion**

### **2584 Quality Report**

The Head of Higher Education (HE) joined the meeting and presented Paper 2268/17/C providing an update on the revised 2017 Operational Targets for Quality.

Quality Operational Targets were based on key areas for improvement identified in the 2015/16 Self-Assessment Report (SAR), namely:

- Some inconsistent performance across Sector Areas;
- Achievement rates for 16-18 year old students are decreasing in the majority of areas;
- Poor achievement rates for SSA01 and SSA05;
- Declining achievement for English and maths;
- Low attendance in the majority of areas;
- Low achievement for Intermediate & Advanced Level apprentices;
- Stability of IT network infrastructure.

**Objective 1: High achievement rates for classroom learning and apprenticeships which are at least 5% above the national average and 10% above the national average for English and maths:** The College had reviewed and improved its processes in support of these key areas, including learning walks, mini observations identifying areas for development, monthly reports for all members of staff to improve teaching and learning and the introduction of 60 minute CPDs including short sessions developed around themes emerging from observations. In response to a question, the Head of HE stated that the CPDs were

voluntary but well supported and that materials were available to those who were unable to attend. One member asked how the College knew the CPDs were effective and the Head of HE stated that previously this had been a gap but now members of staff were asked to rate the impact of the session on their teaching four weeks later. The Principal stated that this information would be captured in the annual Teaching and Learning report considered by Corporation.

The report stated that there continued to be a gap in the retention of students aged 16-18 and 19+, although the gap had narrowed compared to 2015/16. Also although retention of apprentices by level and age was above the national average in all cases, retention of apprentices aged 16-18 was low, particularly in Construction Crafts and New Horizons.

**Objective 2: 85% of graded lessons to be good or better with no inadequate teaching; the proportion of outstanding grades to be at least 38%:** There was a discussion about the observation grade profile by level, with the Head of HE stating that Level 3 had had the most observations as it was an area where the College could be more challenging with students and a lot of good work had been done in that area. A member queried the small number of observations at some levels and asked whether this was the total across the College. Another member questioned the fact that levels 4 and 5 scored less well according to the observation grade profile but performance was better. The Head of HE noted that the relatively small numbers of level 4 and 5 observations skewed the data and that this would be addressed in the second wave of observations. One member recalled previous discussions about the challenges of staff recruitment and retention, particularly at the highest teaching level. The Head of HE stated that the College had introduced initiatives to provide support such as HE peer learning activities to support the exchange of good practice and stated that these initiatives had been well received. The member linked to Teaching, Learning & Assessment through the Governor Liaison Programme stated that she had visited this area twice and they had an enthusiastic and positive approach and that their work was bearing fruit.

**Objective 4: Students will have attendance rates of at least 85%:** Overall attendance was 85.4% and improving, with five areas exceeding the College target of 90%. Members discussed Foundation Learning, Foundation Pathways and Distance Learning which had the lowest attendance rates of 77.3%, 73% and 71.9% respectively, noting that these figures were concerning.

**Objective 6: Robust strategies in place to support staff, students and stakeholders to improve standards to outstanding levels:** The newly created College Quality Council (CQC) brought together members of staff with direct links to quality processes across the College. It was a self-managing group, identifying issues and resolving them quickly and had made significant progress in a short period of time.

Student satisfaction had increased by 2% (96%) compared to 2015, with twice as many students responding. The FE Choices Employer Views survey identified that communication with employers was poor and gave a satisfaction rating of 38%. The Head of HE stated that there had been a

lot of follow up to find out why the rating was so low. The Principal stated that the survey results were very disappointing and that communication with employers had been an issue for a while and was largely to do with small employers on the apprenticeship side of the College's work, with issues including employers not knowing the number of times there would be a review or when the assessor would be coming in. One member noted that timeliness continued to be an issue. The survey had prompted a fundamental review of communication with employers. The way the College ran apprenticeships had previously been reviewed resulting in the introduction of the Academy in January 2016 and a new team was in place, carrying out more tracking of apprentices. The Principal confirmed that the central database was absolutely critical and was still underway.

Corporation **Noted** the progress to date against the 2017 Operational Targets for Quality. One member stated that the executive summary of the report was very good but that the conclusion needed to conclude the analysis of the report and set out the way forward.

The Head of HE left the meeting.

Members turned their attention to the presentation summarising 2015-16 achievement rates, linking to the SAR's key areas for improvement. The achievement headlines were:

- The overall achievement Education & Training was 84.6%. This was 2.3% higher than the national average for General Further Education (GFE) colleges and 2.7% lower than the College's 2014/15 achievement;
- The overall achievement for Apprenticeships was 66.7%. This was 3.3% lower than the national average and 1.7% lower than the College's 2014/15 achievement.
- There was a 9% improvement of timely achievement

Achievement rates were decreasing for 16-18 years olds and were poor for maths, intermediate and advanced level apprentices. One member noted that it was unusual to see a higher number of retained students who weren't successful and the Principal agreed, stating that it was an unprecedented year with a number of issues to blame including students on the wrong programme, IT issues, the English and maths effect (students not wanting to study these subjects) as well as teacher and sector lead problems. The Chair asked about the national picture, but another member pointed out that didn't help as it was about how the College was doing and the fact was that achievement in maths and English had been steadily declining for three years. One member asked if the two most problematic aspects were being explored, namely that staff were being careful about withdrawing non attending students so retention figures were accurate and ensuring recruitment processes were robust so that the students were on the right course. The Principal stated that it had been hoped that the '*swop not drop*' week would take care of that but it was possible that withdrawals were taking place sooner. One member asked if the College had lost students after Christmas and it was agreed that comparable retention figures for December and January would be looked at. One member stated it would be useful to have more understanding of how the split between entry, long and short qualifications worked.

## 2585 Health and Safety Annual Report 2016

The Health & Safety Officer joined the meeting and presented Paper 2269/17/C setting out the Health and Safety annual report 2016. He stated that he had taken over from Ms Green in October 2016 and the department currently comprised himself and a part-time workplace assessment officer.

**Risk Assessments** had been categorised into high / medium / low risks and high risks had been reviewed with the activity owners. Medium risks were being reviewed and low risks would be reviewed in May and June. The risk assessment template had been updated and a risk assessment procedure drafted to ensure a simpler and clearer process. A recent inspection of the **Boathouse 4 project** found equipment in the carpentry workshop failed to reach the required legislative standards (the equipment was not currently in use by students) and the issue of first aid responders was being addressed. **Work placement assessments** continued to be a major daily task, with 210 employer / work placement assessments carried out in 2016 (down 38% compared with 2015). The Health and Safety Officer stated that assessments were carried out according to risk with high and medium risk placements always visited. One member asked whether having a sound risk assessment strategy in place had an impact on insurance policies and asked about the frontier between high / medium and medium / low risks, with the Health & Safety Officer stating that he was currently specifying the criteria. The Health & Safety Officer stated that there were 48 reported **accidents** in 2016 (down from 78 in 2015) and no referrals to the HSE. He was, however, mindful of the risk of underreporting. In response to a question the Health & Safety Officer stated that there was currently no mechanism to capture near misses, but this was being rectified. Another member asked about an issue that was raised at Audit Committee, where on occasion paperwork was not completed on a timely basis. The Health & Safety Officer stated that this issue had been resolved and paperwork was completed on time.

The Chair acknowledged the importance of this issue and thanked the Health & Safety Officer. Corporation **Noted** the Health and Safety Annual Report and the Health & Safety Officer left the meeting.

## 2586 Principal's Report

The Principal presented Paper 2270/17/C updating members on College news as well as national policy updates under the seven priority themes of the College Vision Plan.

The report included a former journalist student recently being appointed editor of The Argus newspaper in Brighton, the 10<sup>th</sup> National Apprenticeship Week, the opening of the Highbury Sensory Room, information on Gazelle in Transition and the launching of an innovation programme for staff to transform Highbury's impact, image and reputation with employers. Policy updates included College Insolvency Plans to be introduced through the Technical and Further Education Bill, the Careers Guidance (access to Schools) Bill and the Spring Budget.

The Principal stated that since Corporation had agreed the College's priority themes in December 2016, senior managers and staff had expressed the view that '*Passion for Portsmouth*' was too narrow and didn't express the College's broader commitment. She therefore recommended that this theme be amended to '*Passion for Portsmouth, Commitment to Global Britain*', thereby providing a link to opportunities beyond Portsmouth and tie in the College's work with the Collab Group etc. This amendment was agreed.

Corporation **Noted** the Principal's Report and **Agreed** that the third priority theme be amended to read '*Passion for Portsmouth, Commitment to Global Britain*'.

#### **2587 Governor Liaison Visits**

Governors' spring term liaison visits were **Noted**.

#### **2588 Minutes of Committees (for information)**

The minutes of the **Audit Committee Meeting** held on 07 March 2017 were **Noted**.

The minutes of the **Finance Committee Meeting** held on 01 March 2017 were **Noted**.

The minutes of the **Search Committee Meeting** held on 20 February 2017 were **Noted**.

### **Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality**

Minute 2589 was confidential.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm.

#### **Self-Assessment of Meeting**

Three evaluation forms were returned to the Clerk. Members agreed that papers arrived in time and were clear and concise, containing sufficient information upon which to make decisions although one member wrote '*Felt a little unsighted of finance – a paper would draw issues out*'. Members felt able to contribute to the debate and decision-making process and all members felt that Corporation challenged and questioned reports sufficiently. Members were satisfied that the decisions arrived at were sound and that the impact of decisions on students and the College was clear. Members felt that the Chair provided effective leadership and ensured that there was enough time for debate and that all Governors were able and encouraged to participate in discussions (one member wrote '*well chaired!*'). Members agreed that the meeting was clerked effectively. Under other comments, one member wrote '*Agree with re-prioritising agenda at start of meeting to pull out key decisions / discussions.*'

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 04 July 2017 @ 5pm.

