

PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

10 FEBRUARY 2016

MINUTES

Present: David Sherlock (Chair) External Governor
Neil Bates Chief Executive/Principal
Bala Mahendran External Governor
Peter McKee External Governor
Rachel Richards External Governor
Theo Steel External Governor
Ruth Umerah External Governor
David Wells External Governor
Tom Wilson External Governor

In attendance: Robin Jones Clerk to the Board of Governors
Helen Russell Director of Business Development
Neil Warren Chief Operating Officer
Katharine Jewitt Director of Learning
Josh Burrage Marketing Officer (presentation – item 197 only)

185 RACHEL RICHARDS – ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING VIA PHONE

Members noted that Rachel Richards was participating in the meeting via phone.

186 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Board noted that apologies for absence had been submitted by Kini Pathmanathan, External Governor, given other commitments.

187 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Peter McKee drew attention to his involvement with City & Guilds and Tom Wilson with GTA England.

The other Members present confirmed that there were no declarations of interest relative to the issues set out in the published agenda.

188 KATHARINE JEWITT – DIRECTOR OF LEARNING

The Chair, on behalf of Members, welcomed Katharine Jewitt to her first meeting since taking up the post of Director of Learning.

189 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2015

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 9 December 2015 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

190 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2015

The Board agreed that, at this time, there were no items arising from the minutes of the last meeting requiring attention over and above those set out in the published agenda.

191 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2015

The Board received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Search & Governance Committee held on 9 December 2015.

It was recalled that the issues had been reported to the meeting of the Board held later that day.

192 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – 10 FEBRUARY 2016

The Board noted that a meeting of the Governance & Search Committee had taken place immediately before this meeting of the Board to consider the proposed appointment of a Student Member.

193 STUDENT MEMBER ON THE BOARD

The Board agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee and to approve the appointment of Daniel Bicks to serve on the Board for the remainder of the current year, 31 July 2016.

It was recalled that at the meeting on 9 December 2015 Members had agreed to welcome the suggestion that, in addition to appointing a Student Member to serve on the Board, attempts would be made to identify a second person from the student body who could attend meetings with the Student Member.

The Board agreed that Johnathan Bicks (Daniel's twin brother) would be invited to attend meetings on the same basis as the Student Member other than he will have no voting rights.

194 DASHBOARDS

The Board received and noted the updated versions of the following:

- Trend Chart
- Strategic Plan Work Strands
- Risk Register

The development of One File was highlighted and it was agreed that a presentation of the system would be provided at the meeting of the Board on 4 May 2016.

The One File system had the benefit of enabling employers to check for themselves the progress of their Apprentices and, therefore, to see if there was any outstanding work.

The importance of timely success was recognised by Members – indeed this was acknowledged in the approved SAR as well as the fact that the College needed to take urgent action including improving initial recruitment and assessment. The pre incorporation legacy issue had been addressed in a number of ways including the removal of provision where it was not thought to be possible to bring about the required improvements in student success outcomes.

The Dashboards prompted a review of the engagement with employers and specifically the recent invitation to get involved in the development of new courses to be delivered by the College.

It was explained that the construction industry continued to change to the extent that it was understood that there were no other Construction GTAs operating in the country.

The PROCAT GTA for Engineering continued to develop by making direct contact with firms so as to build momentum.

The national changes in the apprenticeship arrangements and specifically the introduction of the levy provided the College with a focus to engage with employers to explain the schemes and the opportunities available for firms of all sizes.

It was recognised that there may be merit in establishing a separate GTA for Transport and Logistics. This would be returned to at a future meeting.

The position with the development of the Higher Education provision was noted to be amber and, given the importance in terms of providing progression routes and meeting the needs of employers, Members asked that a report be presented to the Board on 4 May 2016.

Members welcomed the presentation of the updated Dashboards as they provided a clear indication of the progress being made in enabling the College to be recognised as outstanding by 2018.

Note: David Wells arrived at the meeting during the early part of the review of the Dashboards and Rachel Richards ended her participation via phone towards the end of the related discussion.

195 AREA REVIEWS

The Principal provided an overview presentation on Area Reviews.

The Board agreed that there would be value in arranging an additional Strategic Review Session before the next scheduled meeting of the Board on 4 May 2016 to discuss the potential implications for the College from the Area Review process due to start in Essex in November 2016 although it was known that, elsewhere in the country, there had been some slippage in the planned timescales.

It was recognised that such a session would provide an opportunity to discuss a number of other emerging issues.

The Board agreed following discussion:

- to note the report of the Principal on the Area Reviews
- the Clerk to determine the availability of Members to attend the proposed Strategic Review Session with due urgency so that a date may be set
- that an Area Review Group be established to progress the related preparations for the College and to keep the Board apprised
- the initial membership of the Area Review Group to be the Vice Chair of the Board (see also item 196 below), at least one other member of the Board (to be appointed), the Executive Team and the Clerk

- the College commission an independent Economic Impact Assessment to measure the contribution made by the College to employment, regeneration, productivity and skills at a local, regional and national level
- a budget of up to £10k be allocated for the purpose of the Economic Impact Assessment

196 SECOND VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

The Board agreed to the principle of the appointment of a second Vice Chair in recognition of the number of issues to be addressed including the forthcoming Area Review.

Peter McKee was proposed by Theo Steel and seconded by Bala Mahendran and appointed unanimously by all Members present as the second Vice Chair with immediate effect for the period to, at least initially, 31 July 2016.

197 PRINCIPAL'S AND EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Board received and discussed the comprehensive report prepared by the Principal and the members of the Executive on a range of issues including:

- A general overview with an indication of the main priorities and activities since the last meeting of the Board
- Mission Critical Indicators
- Establishment of the College Quality Improvement Implementation Team
- Recruitment and enrolment
- Restructuring of the senior team
- Skills and Enterprise Campus
- Group Training Association – Employer Committees
- Web shop
- Commercial Training
- Curriculum and Capital Developments
- Employer Communication
- Quality and Performance
- Staff Development

The Principal outlined current thinking on the proposed development on the site next to the Basildon Campus and agreed to circulate the Feasibility Report for the information of Members prior to further deliberations.

The Board also noted that the College had submitted a bid to the LEP under the Growth Fund initiative.

The Board gave particular attention to the paper prepared by the Principal on the role of the Board in terms of the five proposed Mission Critical Indicators:

- MCI 1 – Quality
- MCI 2 – Finance
- MCI 3 – Employer Engagement
- MCI 4 – Higher Level Programmes
- MCI 5 – Network of Colleges of Advanced Technology

It was agreed, following discussion, that there was merit in having a lead from both the Executive and the Board with MCI 3 having two Board Members given the GTA arrangements. These were confirmed as follows for the remainder of 2015/16:

- MCI 1 = Director of Learning and Ruth Umerah
- MCI 2 = Chief Operating Officer and Peter McKee
- MCI 3 – Director of Business Development and David Wells and Rachel Richards
- MCI 4 = Director of Learning and Tom Wilson
- MCI 5 = Principal and David Sherlock

The Teaching and Learning Balanced Scorecard for December 2015 was received and this prompted a number of questions from Members so that there was complete clarity and understanding. It was agreed that the Scorecard would continue to be refined in the light of experience so that it was a useful reference source for both the Executive and Board Members.

The Board received a comprehensive presentation on enrolment by Josh Burrage, Marketing Officer, which provided Members with an excellent understanding of the student profile and the year on year changes. The Board recognised that a little more could be said about ethnicity and deprivation in the context of the local and regional characteristics and the main recruitment areas.

Finally, the Board received with great interest the STEM Manifesto for PROCAT which, it was recognised, did not attempt to cover all aspects of STEM but rather to concentrate on the College's strengths so as to support the economy and the needs of employers.

The Principal and the Executive were thanked for the comprehensive and informative report.

198 ENGLISH & MATHS DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Board received and considered the proposed English & Mathematics Delivery Strategy for the period 2016 – 2018.

The Strategy recognised in paragraph 11.6.1 that PROCAT needs to work closely with employers to help them understand the benefits of English and maths skills and developing a positive attitude towards learning in the workplace.

The Board agreed, following discussion, to approve English & Mathematics Delivery Strategy and to look forward to receiving progress reports on the impact of the approach in terms of improving student success outcomes and the approach of employers.

Note: Ruth Umerah left the meeting at this point

199 LEARNER FIRST STRATEGY

The Board received the proposed Learners First Strategy which was thought by Members to be a comprehensive document covering a range of issues including the level of student satisfaction – currently 78.8% with the intention for this to improve to 85% by September 2016.

Key initiatives for the College included:

- Seeking to identify what employers were looking for in 2020 so that the College can play a part in making young people work ready
- The importance of conveying the clear message that students need to aim high
- Providing opportunities for students to make use of the College facilities via the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network
- Making use of Student Focus Groups and publishing actions taken as a result – You Said, We Did posters etc
- Promoting employer surveys as and when it was thought to be appropriate

The Board agreed to approve the Learners First Strategy and to look forward to receiving updates at future meetings.

200 RISK REGISTER

The Board received and reviewed the full Dashboard earlier in the meeting

It was explained that the Risk Register as one element of the Dashboard would be reviewed at the forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee scheduled for 17 March 2016.

A key consideration concerned the facilities at Southend Airport and that it had become apparent that there was insufficient employer demand to justify further investment in avionics in Southend and, therefore, there was no intention to relocate back to the Airport.

Finally, the Board noted that a reference to Area Reviews had been added to the Risk Register.

The Board agreed to look forward to receiving the updated Risk Register following the review by the Audit Committee.

201 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD 5 OF 2015/16

The Board received and discussed the Management Accounts for Period 5 of 2015/16.

Members welcomed the more comprehensive approach to reporting financial performance and looked forward to the addition of the cash flow forecast.

In terms of performance to date and also the projection to 31 July 2016 the Chief Operating Officer highlighted a range of factors impacting on income and expenditure as well as the associated risks.

The projected bottom line position was noted to be an end of year surplus of £350,000.

On related budget setting matters, the Board noted the following:

- the key assumptions and risks impacting on the budget for 2016/17 will be an item at the Board on 4 May 2016
- the proposed Income & Expenditure Budget for 2016/17 and the associated Financial Plan for submission to the SFA are scheduled for presentation to the Board on 20 July 2016

202 SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT UPDATE

The Board received and noted the Safeguarding & Prevent Update.

The particular attention of Members was drawn to the information on looked after children. It was recognised that across the sector as a whole looked after children perform less well than those in the same age group. This said there are success stories at PROCAT. Additional support is provided as and when it is thought to be appropriate.

Staff training continues with a plan in place to ensure that all associates are also trained.

To date there has been one referral under Prevent. This person is now working with a Counsellor.

Further updates on Safeguarding & Prevent will be provided at all future meetings of the Board.

203 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

The Board received and noted an update on Health & Safety.

The Chief Operating Officer drew attention to the impact that the new Health & Safety Officer was beginning to have on the College. The intention was now to undertake a gap analysis assessing the College against the British Safety Council 5* criteria. An action plan would then be prepared including timescales and target audit dates.

Members received with interest a report on a recent fire evacuation which went with all staff and students leaving the buildings within three minutes.

204 FE COMMISSIONER – ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The Board received and noted the FE Commissioner's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Members recognised that the Annual Report – like the letters and reports on individual colleges – provided an invaluable insight of the experience elsewhere in the sector and what to avoid and address if the difficulties of others were not to be seen at PROCAT. As in the previous year there were a number of indications of good practice to be taken into account when reviewing local practice.

205 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

The Board approved the Freedom of Information Policy for PROCAT as the basis of providing a signpost to the availability of information having regard to the Model Publication Scheme issued by the Information Commissioner.

206 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 4 May 2016 commencing at 2.00pm at Basildon

The subsequent meeting of the Board is planned for Wednesday 20 July 2016

207 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2016/17

The Board approved the Calendar of Meetings for 2016/17:

- Friday 21 and Saturday 22 October 2016 (Strategic Review Session to include a formal meeting of the Board)
- Wednesday 7 December 2016
- Wednesday 8 February 2017
- Wednesday 10 May 2017
- Wednesday 19 July 2017

Members recognised that there may be a need to change and/or add additional meetings given other factors including the impact of the Area Review process.

208 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

At this point the Staff and Student Members on the Board would have been asked to withdraw but they were not present on this occasion. It is, however, mentioned as the associated papers will not be available to such Members in the future.

209 ESTATES RELATED ISSUES

The Board discussed issues associated with the College estate as set out in the confidential Minute.

210 POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Board discussed a potential partnership opportunity as set out in the confidential Minute.

211 SCENARIO PLANNING

The Board received an update regarding recent discussions about scenario planning as set out in the confidential Minute.

Signed: _____ Date: _____