

PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

4 MAY 2016

MINUTES

Present:	David Sherlock (Chair)	External Governor
	Neil Bates	Chief Executive/Principal
	Daniel Bicks	Student Governor
	Bala Mahendran	External Governor
	Peter McKee	External Governor
	Joanne Miller	Staff Governor
	Theo Steel	External Governor
	Ruth Umerah	External Governor
	David Wells	External Governor
In attendance:	Robin Jones	Clerk to the Board of Governors
	Johnathon Bicks	Student (accompanying the Student Governor)
	Neil Warren	Chief Operating Officer
	Stewart Lindsey	Head of Quality (Part of item 225 only)

212 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Board noted that apologies for absence had been submitted by three External Members given other commitments:

- Kini Pathmanathan
- Rachel Richards
- Tom Wilson

In addition, the Board noted the absence of Helen Russell, Director of Business Development, who was not in attendance on this occasion due to illness.

213 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Peter McKee drew attention once again to his involvement with City & Guilds.

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

214 DIRECTOR OF LEARNING

The Chair reminded Members that, since the last meeting of the Board, Katharine Jewitt had left the College. The position with regard to the post of Director of Learning was addressed later in the meeting.

215 STUDENT MEMBER OF THE BOARD

The Board recalled that at the meeting on 10 February 2016 it had been agreed to appoint Daniel Bicks to serve on the Board as the Student Member for the remainder of the current year, 31 July 2016.

It had also been agreed that Johnathon Bicks would be invited to attend meetings of the Board on the same basis as the Student Member other than not having any voting rights.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, welcomed Daniel and Johnathon to the meeting.

216 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 10 February 2016 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

217 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2016

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.

218 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2016

The Board received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Governance & Search Committee held on 10 February 2016.

It was recalled that the recommended appointment of the Student Member had been reported to and considered by the meeting of the Board held later that day.

219 GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE – MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2016

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

220 STAFF MEMBER ON THE BOARD

The Board agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee and to approve the appointment of Joanne Miller to serve on the Board as the Staff Member for the period to 31 July 2017.

221 AUDIT COMMITTEE – MEMBERSHIP

The Board approved the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee that Joanne Miller be appointed to serve on the Audit Committee for the period to 31 July 2017.

222 CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Board approved the recommendation of the Governance & Search Committee that the revised section on responsiveness prepared by the Principal be added to the Code of Good Governance so as to continue the personalisation for PROCAT.

223 DASHBOARDS

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

- Trend Chart
- Strategic Plan Work Strands
- Risk Register

The Dashboards prompted a wide ranging discussion on the current and projected positions as well as the associated planned actions for the coming year and beyond. Amongst the issues addressed were:

- The establishment of a professional culture and being a value led organisation – this involved the display of a number of posters in College with the members of staff featured chosen by staff
- The development and implementation of operational plans for the various areas of the College
- The growing success of the Engineering GTA and the need to launch the Construction GTA with regard to the changed focus of the course offer which, it was thought, was bound to have an impact on the type of employers likely to wish to engage – a date to launch the Construction GTA would be proposed shortly having regard to the other key priorities
- The introduction of the Employers Charter
- The actions to continue to improve Health & Safety – the appointment of the new Health & Safety Manager was starting to have an impact although it was apparent that the College would not be in a position to achieve BSC 5 star accreditation by December 2016 as originally thought
- The importance of stating clear target dates so that actions may be tracked
- The need to have a clear understanding of what “success” looks like in a given setting
- The value of surveys and benchmarking PROCAT against other organisations

The Principal confirmed that College Management would continue to refine the Dashboards in the light of such feedback so that they were as useful to Governors and others as possible and provide an easy to read reflection of progress against targets.

Note: David Wells arrived at the meeting during the review of the Dashboards.

224 STRATEGIC REVIEW SESSION (INCLUDING AREA REVIEWS)

The Board noted that the Strategic Review Session had taken place on 29 April 2016 and a range of important issues had been addressed which would be reflected in future plans and actions.

In terms of the future position of the College and not solely as a response to the forthcoming Area Review Wave 5 process due to be launched in November 2016, as a result of the wide ranging discussion the College would invite the Chairs and Heads of other appropriate organisations to visit PROCAT on 22 June (date to be finalised) to discuss possible partnerships and closer working arrangements.

225 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
- Director of Learning – departure and planned arrangements to make an early appointment
- Self-Assessment and Inspection

- Skills and Enterprise Campus
- Estates Review and Update
- Economic Impact Appraisal – attached to the report
- Aviation Training
- Transitioning to Apprenticeship Standards and the Levy
- Development of Higher Education
- Employer Engagement
- Commercial Business
- GTA Developments
- Student Recruitment
- Capital Investments

The Principal highlighted the actions being taken with regard to estates related matters including looking for a suitable site in Basildon. A comprehensive Estates Strategy was being developed and this would be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

The interim cover arrangements which had been put in place following the recent departure from the College of the Head of Construction were explained.

Members were also advised of the approach adopted to complete the Digital Learning report.

The opportunity was taken to highlight the national position relating to Apprenticeships and the anticipated impact on the College. There was no doubt that there remained a lack of clarity and the College was seeking to explain the new arrangements, including the potential benefits of using the Levy to gain maximum benefit, to employers.

The outcomes from the Employer Survey undertaken by the SFA were not yet known although the initial results from the College's own survey had been reviewed. Members were pleased to see that much of the feedback was positive with, for example, 83% agreeing that PROCAT delivery suited their business and 81% being prepared to recommend the College to other employers. Clearly there was scope for improvement across the board and this was particularly so with construction employers. It was believed that the less than positive comments were attributable to legacy issues. However, the College was going back to those employers to discuss and explain what was now available and the level of service that could be expected.

The Board received a comprehensive presentation on One File by Stewart Lindsay which prompted a discussion on a range of issues including:

- the loss of income where students do not complete their courses and achieve
- English and Maths support and the achievement of the associated qualifications with these being tracked separately to the main vocational programme
- the crucial importance of target setting and tracking throughout the time at College so that both individual learners, the College and, if appropriate, employers were aware and could address any slippage including where this could mean that a course was in danger of not being completed on schedule
- the arrangements put in place in College to seek to ensure that the data held on One File was both up to date and accurate.

Members asked about the ways and means that staff are held to account and the actions taken to support staff to bring about improvements including professional development.

David Wells reported that, from an employer's point of view, the introduction of One File was a helpful tool to track students and provide support.

The students confirmed that they used One File and it provided a useful facility.

The discussion provided the opportunity to explain to Members that the profile of the College had changed considerably over the last five years. For example, in 2009/10 only 15% of the course offer was higher level. Now this was 75% and continuing to increase.

Stewart Lindsay was thanked for an extremely helpful presentation – he then withdrew from the meeting.

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

226 DIRECTOR OF LEARNING

The Board agreed that the Principal should progress, with due urgency, the arrangements for advertising the now vacant post of Director of Learning.

As this is designated as a Senior Post for the purposes of the Articles of Government a Panel will be established by the Chair with other Members (including the Principal) so that a preferred candidate may be identified and a recommendation for appointment presented to the Board (via email if appropriate).

227 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Board received the minutes of the inquorate meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 March 2016.

The proposed arrangements to appoint a new Co-opted Member to join the Audit Committee were noted and it was hoped that, subject a satisfactory outcome to the forthcoming meeting, she would be available to attend the Audit Committee on 21 June 2016.

228 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, had been reviewed at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 17 March 2016 and would be again at the forthcoming scheduled meeting on 21 June 2016.

The particular attention of Members was drawn to those items which had been shaded in grey on the basis that they were no longer relevant for inclusion in the Risk Register such as the loss of the Airport site or that they had been combined with other entries.

Members prompted a discussion on a number of entries and aspects of the Risk Register including:

- Apprenticeships with particular regard to the introduction of the Levy
- Cash flow considerations including those arising from the Apprenticeship Levy

- Area Review and the importance of having a “Plan B”
- Attraction and retention of staff including the importance of developing and growing own staff

The Board agreed to note the current Risk Register and to look forward to receiving updates including following review by the Audit Committee.

229 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD 8 OF 2015/16

The Board received and discussed the Management Accounts for Period 8 of 2015/16.

As noted at the last meeting of the Board 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 £98,000 which was less than the amount reported to the Board on 10 February 2016.

There was an acknowledgement that staff need to understand the importance of income generation and the positive impact of timely success. This would continue to be addressed by the Executive so as to raise awareness across the College.

The Board agreed to note the Management Accounts and the projected end of year surplus position.

230 BUDGET – 2016/17

The Board received and discussed the report prepared by the Chief Operating Officer which outlined the current assumptions behind the Income and Expenditure Budget for 2016/17.

The key consideration related to the dependency of the College on SFA and EFA income – 85% of the income in the coming year.

The position with regard to staff salaries was noted and that account must be taken of the affordability balanced with the pay available elsewhere which may have a recruitment and retention impact. It was suggested that the Board would benefit from data on how PROCAT compares with other colleges in terms of salaries and other benefits.

One of the current activities which would inform the budget in the longer term concerned the preparation of a comprehensive HR Strategy. This would be shared with the Board as soon as possible for consideration.

Members acknowledged the dangers of being too optimistic in terms of the generation of commercial fee income given all of the uncertainties faced by businesses which can impact on the level of investment in staff training and development.

The Board agreed:

- to receive the report outlining the budget assumptions for 2016/17

- to look forward to receiving at the meeting on 20 July 2016 the proposed budget for 2016/17 for consideration and approval when it would be possible to address a possible pay award.

231 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS

The Board received and noted the relevant extract from the Bye Laws with regard to the election of the Chair and Vice Chairs which would be addressed at the meeting of the Board on 20 July 2016.

232 SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT UPDATE

The Board received and noted the Safeguarding & Prevent Update.

The Designated Safeguarding Member of the Board had met with appropriate staff to discuss actions and plans.

The particular attention of Members was drawn to the information on looked after children. Currently 5 out of 7 were still on programme and making good progress.

Staff training continues and this had been extended to cover contractors and associates.

It was noted that to date 2 referrals under the Prevent arrangements had been made by the College.

Members agreed that Jill Terry and the associated team were to be congratulated on the safeguarding practice in place in the College and the Principal was asked to convey the appreciation of the Board.

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

233 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

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

The Chief Operating Officer drew attention to the proposal that a Board Member reviewed the progress of the project which it was hoped would lead to British Safety Council 5* Accreditation – Theo Steele agreed to carry out such reviews.

The Board stressed the wish – shared by College Management – that PROCAT Health and Safety related practice was regarded as exemplary and ingrained in the College culture. There was a recognition that anything less could have negative reputational implications.

The Board agreed to look forward to receiving a further update on Health & Safety at the next meeting.

234 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 20 July 2016 commencing at 2.00pm at Basildon

235 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2016/17

The Calendar of Meetings for 2016/17 was noted to be:

- 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.

236 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Two items were addressed on a confidential basis.

237 ESTATES RELATED ISSUES

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

238 INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The Board discussed a report on proposals for the future organisational structure of PROCAT as set out in the confidential Minute.

Signed: _____ Date: _____