

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP

Wednesday 18 December 2019, 6 pm

Paddington Green Campus, London

Members Present: Nick Bell (CEO), Glenys Arthur, Angela Drisdale-Gordon, Lee Horsley, Alex Fyfe, Tony Johnston (Chair), Colin Smith, Norman Whyte, Desmond Bishop, Cathy Bird, Franklin Asante, Matthew Green, Rose Sareami, Stephen Hayes.

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, Amanda Thorneycroft, Stephen Davis, Grethe Woodward.

1	PROCEDURAL Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Laura Griffin, Derrick Betts, Amish Nathwani, Jan Knight, Mary Elliott.	
2	Declarations of Interest in the agenda items None were received.	
3	<p>I. Approve minutes of meetings held on 16 October 2019 & 23 November 2019 The minutes were approved and signed as an accurate record.</p> <p>II. Matters arising The matters arising were completed or covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p>III. Approve Jan Knight as GSR Committee Chair TJ reminded members that the Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee had been established by combining the former Search and Governance Committee with the Remuneration Committee. Initially, there were two chairs for the respective sections. It has since been agreed that Jan Knight would be the single chair going forward and that Alex Fyfe would no longer Chair the Search and Governance elements but would remain a member. Members approved the appointment of Jan Knight as GSR Committee Chair.</p> <p>IV. Membership Update TJ informed the Corporation that Peter Child had stood down as governor on 11 November due to a change in his personal circumstances which was affecting the time he could commit to the role. It was also reported that Fahima Solomon (student governor) had stood down, and an election to replace her had taken place earlier that week. Sukhveer Singh had been elected to the role to replace Fahima from the New Year. Members thanked both Peter and Fahima for their contributions to the Corporation.</p> <p>V. Approve Committee ToR (TLS and Audit) <i>(Draft ToR circulated in advance)</i> These ToR had been reviewed by their respective committees and were now presented to the Corporation for approval before being published in the Standing Orders on the UCG website. The Corporation approved the ToR.</p> <p>VI. Request to raise Grey Box items</p>	

	No items were raised.	
4	<p>STRATEGIC</p> <p>I. CEO Report (inc. KPIs) <i>(Paper circulated in advance – also see Ofsted item 5i)</i> NB provided an overview of his report which included the recent Ofsted Inspection (recorded under item 5i), the Governor Strategy Event on 23 November, and a set of KPIs grouped around the eight strategic themes. Where possible the KPIs included benchmarking data and data from previous years. Some KPIs were still in development which would be added over the next few months, and the RAG indicators would be completed. It was suggested that retention and punctuality be added as KPIs. NB was hopeful it would be possible to provide the data in graphs and charts at future meetings to display trajectories.</p> <p>II. Risk Register <i>(Risk register and action plan tabled at the meeting)</i> AT presented the high-level risk register and accompanying action plans to the Corporation. The risks presented were those with a residual risk of 12 or higher. It was noted that some financial risks had been resolved by the sale of the Queen’s Park Campus and had been closed out. The investment in IT through the provision of laptops and thin client PCs would be in place after the Christmas holidays. AF sought that dates of the risk assessment be included on the risk registers in regard to the movement arrow in the right-hand column. The category level risk registers would be reviewed at a committee level, the full risk register at Audit Committee, with the risks with the highest residual risks coming to Corporation. Members noted the risk register and action plans.</p> <p>III. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> ADG, in her role as EDI governor, reported on the recent meeting and work of the EDI Working Group. To date it had looked at student and staff data, and correlation between areas of lower achievement and ethnicity. 51% of the college staff were from BAME groups, but further analysis would look at where these people sat within the organisation as it was anticipated that these were likely to be in lower ranking positions. The data analysis would help identify priorities, and inform the strategy going forwards. It was considered that the work of the Group was well overdue, and it was pleasing that a project manager, Diane Browne, had been appointed. Increased awareness of EDI had been progressed through EDI training.</p>	
5	<p>COMMITTEE MATTERS</p> <p>Teaching, Learning and Skills</p> <p>I. Safeguarding Policy (for approval) <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> GW presented this policy to the Corporation. She explained that the policy was updated annually to reflect statutory changes made in the national policy document, Keeping Children Safe in Education. In addition to these changes, reference had been made to the safeguarding arrangements for subcontracted provision, and to comply with our insurance, provisions for siblings of students aged under 16 who may come on site. All proposed changes were highlighted in red in the document. The revised policy</p>	

had been reviewed by the TLS Committee and was recommended for Corporation approval. **The Corporation approved the policy.**

RS reported that following the incident in September when a student was stabbed outside the college site, she had seen an improvement in staff responses to disruptive behaviour, and overall, she felt safer. She queried whether first aid was included in safeguarding. This was covered under Health and Safety and would be recorded under that item on the agenda.

II. Safeguarding Annual Report 2018/19

(Paper circulated in advance)

The Safeguarding Annual Report set out the safeguarding activity for 2018/19 and any reportable events of the Autumn term 2019/20. It was noted that Ofsted were satisfied that the safeguarding arrangements were effective. GW highlighted the safeguarding training which had taken place and the records kept of this. 'My Concern' software was soon to be used which would improve data capture and reporting. GA asked how frequently knife sweeps were undertaken. GW said that the knife arch was used at least twice a term and selected a random sample of 20% of students. To date, this term, no weapons had been found. Knife sweeps were also conducted in the vicinity and within the building. It was considered to be important to strike the right balance between safety and perceived criminalisation of students. ADG asked what was meant by organisational abuse referred to in the report. It was advised that this referred to students in a residential care setting and was used infrequently.

TJ referred to an independent audit of the single central register (SCR) which had been conducted earlier in the term. The SCR is a record of all pre-employment checks (DBS, prohibition, qualifications etc.) undertaken on all staff, contractors and volunteers who were involved in any regulated activity with students. The audit had shown significant shortfalls in compliance, which had now been addressed. NB said that the SCR was a critical part of the college's safeguarding practices. He thanked AT for her work on the remedial action. An investigation would start in the New Year to ascertain lessons learnt to prevent reoccurrence. In the meantime, it had been agreed that a termly audit of the SCR would take place which would report to the TLS Committee, plus the level of compliance of the SCR would be included in the safeguarding updates to Corporation. The investigation would report in the first instance to the Audit Committee.

III. Ofsted Update

(Paper circulated in advance)

NB acknowledged and extended his appreciation for the hard work and commitment of all staff who had supported the Ofsted inspection process the previous week. It was expected that the disappointing result of grade 3, which the College had been given provisionally in confidence, might impact negatively on 16-19 enrolment. Resources would need to be redirected to support the necessary improvements. An action plan was being developed which would be shared at a high level at the TLS Committee in January, plus a further update would be provided to governors at the Strategy Event on 25 January. An Ofsted monitoring visit would take place 7 – 12 months following the inspection. It was suspected that this was most likely to be in the early Autumn term 2020 and include the Summer's achievement figures. A further full inspection would take place within 2 years.

Concern was expressed at the poor level of teaching seen by the inspectors for 16-18 provision particularly at Paddington Green. This was largely due to a lack of evidence on planning, sequencing, stretch and challenge resulting in disengagement from some students. Adult provision, including ESOL was well regarded, as was that of high-needs learners, and enrichment. The inspectors had realistic expectations of the student body, 12% of which were from non-traditional routes such as PRUs and home-schooling. Consideration needed to be given as to how teachers can be supported in adapting their methods to meet the needs of those learners. Poor attendance and punctuality and the culture surrounding this was highlighted as an issue.

MG noted the executive's original assessment in the SAR, and challenged what actions were already being taken forward, and that the Ofsted Action Plan should build on the QIP, which had already been drafted. SD acknowledged this but was of the view that more radical actions were needed in view of Ofsted's findings. Teacher engagement was needed to drive the changes. CB asked what proportion of teachers were currently graded good or better. SD said that this was currently around 55%. In general, 85% would be the optimal level to achieve grade 2. CS challenged the observation as an assessment of teaching quality and advised that wider aspects needed to be taken into consideration, including the student's work, dialogue and understanding with the teacher and student. It concerned all learning inside and outside of the classroom.

AF said that she was concerned that this was the first time that the Corporation had been made aware of such low levels of teacher performance. She was aware of the development of the lesson observation programme over the previous few years and challenged why this had not been effective. SD explained that there was a lack of quality assurance of those conducting the observations; it was anticipated that 1 in 4 observations were poorly judged. ADG asked why this had not been addressed previously. Use of agency staff and lack of workforce planning was also highlighted as an issue. DB suggested that it would be useful for discussions to take place with staff to understand what the blockages were. Students and the trade unions would also need to be involved in the journey back to good.

IV. Achievement and Predictions

(Paper circulated in advance)

See confidential minutes

V. A levels

SD reminded members of the current position on A levels, and that the TLS Committee had considered a paper to suspend A levels at its November meeting. The Committee had requested further information on the impact on enrolment, and market analysis of future demand should the A level provision be relaunched in future. Members appreciated the update on this provision but were content for the TLS Committee to further consider the evidence and make a recommendation.

VI. HE QSR Outcome

An inspection of some aspects of the College's HE provision took place in November 2019. The QAA conducted this on behalf of the OfS. The inspection looked at 4 core practices as part of the registration condition B2. At the moment it was unknown when the outcome would be communicated to the College, but it was likely to be in the New Year. The response would be that we have met or not met the required

	standards rather than a grade like Ofsted. It was noted that this inspection took quite a different approach to that of Ofsted.	
6	<p>Finance and General Purposes</p> <p>I. External Auditor’s Report: Financial Statements Audit and Regularity Findings Report 2018/19 <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT presented the External Auditor’s report to the Corporation. She highlighted that the financial statements had been accepted in their entirety with no adjustments. The outstanding reconciliation from the ESFA on the over-delivery of the AEB had been received and the Auditors were content to sign off the report and the accounts. The issues on land registration had been resolved. The F&GP and Audit Committees had received a detailed presentation of the report from the Auditors and were content to recommend it for Corporation approval. The Corporation approved the report.</p> <p>II. UCG/CWC Enterprises Financial Statements for year ending 31 July 2019 <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>It was noted that other than a few very minor amendments the financial statements for UCG and CWC Enterprises were as presented to the F&GP and Audit Committees. Both Committees were content to recommend these to the Corporation for approval and signing. The Corporation approved both sets of financial statements.</p> <p>III. Management Accounts (Oct) <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT explained that it was too early in the academic year to get a real sense of the financial outturn position. She asked members to note the shortfalls on the ESF contract and HE income which were unlikely to recover. Some of the other negative variances were due to timing issues. There was a positive variance on payroll, though this was offset by increased spending on agency staff. Members noted the management accounts.</p> <p>IV. Health and Safety Annual Report <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT presented the report. The ratio of first aiders to the number of people in the building at Paddington was queried. It was requested that this information be included in future reports. CS asked how first aiders were alerted, and what information was available to identify them. AT said that there was a single ‘phone number that anyone could call for first aid, plus the duty manager on a radio. All security and enrichment personnel were first aid trained. Lists of first aiders with their photographs were placed in every room behind the door. These were currently being updated. The Health and Safety Annual Report was approved.</p>	
7	<p>Audit</p> <p>I. Audit Committee Annual Report <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>ZL explained that the report had been reviewed a number of times at the Audit Committee and by the internal auditors. The report, in line with requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, set out the activities of the Audit Committee for 2018/19. The only non-standard item referred to a very small theft from CNWL, following which remedial action had been put in place. The Audit Committee</p>	

	recommended the report to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation approved the report to be submitted to the ESFA.	
8	Wembley & Willesden Project Committee I. Project Risks Update <i>(Project Report provided in advance)</i> See Confidential minutes	
9	AOB Freedom of Information Policy <i>(Draft policy provided in advance)</i> In preparation for the Ofsted inspection, ZL had reviewed this policy which had not been updated for some time. The changes included simplification of the text, and updates to the publication scheme. Consultation with the SLT and internal stakeholders had taken place before being brought to Corporation. The Corporation approved the FOI Policy.	
10	The date of the next meeting 30 March 2020 The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.	

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 19 December 2019

SIGNED:

Date:

Tony Johnston, Chair

ACTIONS

Ref	Action	Owner	Status
4i	For retention and punctuality indicators to be included in the KPIs.	NB	