

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Wednesday 22 October 2025, 6 pm – Paddington Campus

Members Present: Stephen Davis (CEO), Stephen Grainge, Tanya Rose, Colin Smith (Chair), Grainne Brankin, Serene Stennett (Student governor), Janet Davidson, Tim Ryan, Jessica Amarteifio (Student governor), Nadia Babar (staff governor), Alastair Procter, Ross Mackenzie, Alex Fyfe, Rob Bradley* and Andrew Dowsett*.

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence (Director of Governance), Amanda Thorneycroft (Chief Finance Officer), James Wilson (Principal), Nicola McLean (Interim Vice Principal), Floyd Milligan (Director of Development), Heather Cross (External Reviewer – Observer)

1	<p>PROCEDURAL</p> <p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Franklin Asante, Laura Griffin, Elom Tay and Nick Porzig*. In the absence of the Chair, Colin Smith in his role as Vice Chair chaired the meeting.</p> <p>*denotes co-opted governor.</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>CS reported that Derrick Betts had stood down as a governor and chair to the Audit Committee over the Summer for family reasons. A gift of thanks had been sent to him on behalf of the Corporation. The Chair thanked Derrick for his significant contribution as a governor since 2019. Max Maalimey had also stood down as a staff governor as he was no longer an employee at UCG. The Corporation wished both former members well for their future endeavours.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in the agenda items</p> <p>SD and AT had a conflict in agenda item 9 regarding SPH objectives and left the room for that item as appropriate.</p>
3	<p>I. Governor Appointments</p> <p>ZL reported that recruitment exercises had been taken forward to replace Derrick Betts as a member of the Audit Committee and also internally within the academic staff to fill the staff governor vacancy. The details of how the roles had been advertised and the interview and selection process were included in the paper. Dasha Dockree had been selected to be appointed as a full governor and member of the Audit Committee. Dasha was a commercial financier and has experience of being a governor in the education sector. Airina Gordon had been selected as the new academic staff governor. Airina was a Sports Lecturer at Paddington Campus. ZL sought the Corporation's approval for these appointments. In addition, approval was also sought for Stephen Grainge to become the Chair of the Audit Committee to replace Derrick. The Corporation resolved to approve these appointments to the Corporation.</p> <p>II. Approve minutes of meeting held on 30 June 2025.</p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>III. Matters arising</p> <p>Both matters arising relating to the Standing Financial Instructions and the Staff Discipline Policy had been concluded by Written Resolution.</p>

	<p>IV. Request to raise Grey Box (for information only) items</p> <p>No items were requested. SS commented on the good work being carried out in the Health & Safety report.</p>
4	<p>STRATEGIC <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>I. Corporation Balance Score Card (BSC) 2024/25 Outturn</p> <p>SD presented this paper stating that there had been some slight improvements to achievement data since the paper was issued the previous week marginally reducing the gap between actual and target for 16–18-year-old achievement. Adult achievement exceeded target, though there had been a slight decline on apprenticeships. High needs had also gained 5%. Overall, student achievement was RAG rated as amber. Most of the metrics for People, Culture and Growth had been met and the Corporation discussed the suggestion made at the Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee about creating BSC targets covering all protected characteristics. Queries were raised on how this would be measured and whether it was a helpful target. The consensus was to not pursue it. SD sought the Corporation’s validation of the BSC outturn.</p> <p>II. Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>AT referred to the strategic risk register which had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee. There had been minimal change since the previous version with the majority of the risks relating to the Wembley Park Project which were to be discussed elsewhere on the agenda. The Corporation discussed the framework for risk being used by UCG and the definition of a strategic risk and whether risks beyond the immediate strategic planning cycle should be considered. SD commented how the risk register and process being used was to support the implementation of the current strategy and objectives and the risk of not meeting these and the agreed KPIs. He considered some of the wider comments on external factors to be part of the next strategic plan cycle, that the current risk process was embedded and he was resistant to expending the resources to changing it at the current time. The Corporation noted the risk register.</p> <p>III. Enrolment Update</p> <p>JW set out the current position on enrolment, particularly for 16–18-year-old learners which stood at 3557, 31 learners above the funded target. The number of withdrawals was at the expected level at this point in the year. Fresh start programmes at Willesden were expected to enable the achievement of the growth target. There had been some student behaviour challenges with this age group at Paddington resulting in suspensions and exclusions. A robust approach was being taken with respect to behaviour. Some courses had also been closed so that awarding body and management issues could be resolved. RM asked how UCG compared on enrolment with other London Colleges. SD reported that inner London had not fared as well as the outer London regions, but he was confident that the 16–18-year-old funding was secure if students could be retained until Jan/Feb (R06). SD also referred to a paper that would be prepared for the upcoming TLS Committee regarding alternative approaches to behaviour management and transition from schools or PRUs for students unable to settle in a mainstream FE environment. JD asked about what retention strategies were being used. SD referred to the ELSAs and progress coaches, but also more importantly to high quality teaching and learning.</p> <p>IV. Safeguarding Annual Report and policy review</p> <p>NMc provided a summary of the Safeguarding Annual report detailing the increase in safeguarding referrals in the last academic year, with mental health concerns as the largest</p>

	<p>category. There had also been an increase in the number of sexual abuse/assault concerns. 80 % of students referred to safeguarding were aged 16-18, and there had been 240 esafe concerns. The paper also included the safeguarding priorities for 2025/26. The Corporation noted this report for information. UCG's Safeguarding Policy had been updated to reflect two main changes from Keeping Children Safe in Education which had been re-issued for September 2025. The Corporation resolved to approve the changes to the UCG Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.</p>
5	<p>COMMITTEE MATTERS Property & Infrastructure Committee – Grainne Brankin (Chair) <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i> (See Confidential Minutes).</p>
6	<p>Teaching Learning & Skills Committee – Colin Smith (Chair) <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>I. Student Achievement In the interests of time, JW provided a brief summary of the achievement headlines across provision areas, some of which had improved since the issuing of the paper the previous week. These had also been covered under the balance score card item, and the SAR validation meeting the previous day and would be a main agenda item for the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee on 10 November. AP noted the decline in achievement for ECBE and motor vehicle at Paddington and queried the reference to on-going mismanagement. JW confirmed that the issue was being addressed but did not go into detail to protect the confidentiality of those involved. AP asked if the issues could have been picked up earlier. JW said that it concerned the quality assurance process, and that action was being taken at ground level. RM commented on the impressive turnaround for the business provision and the success achieved by the new AP demonstrated by a significant improvement in the results. The Corporation noted this paper for information recognising that achievement data was still subject to change.</p>
7	<p>Finance & Resources Committee – Ross Mackenzie (Chair)</p> <p>I. EoY Financial Position – July 2025 Management Accounts This paper had been reviewed in detail at the Finance & Resources Committee on 29 September and was taken as read. Governors did not raise any additional questions. The Corporation noted this paper for information.</p> <p>II. Banking Covenants AT reminded the Corporation that the banking covenant which measures the ratio of college borrowings to its adjusted operating surplus was due to be breached and an amendment letter had been agreed with Barclays for approval. This had been discussed at the June meeting of the Corporation and in detail at the Finance & Resources Committee which was recommending the approval of the amendment of the banking covenant to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved for Stephen Davis and Amanda Thorneycroft to be signatories of the amendment letter with the appropriately signed accompanying minute.</p>
8	<p>Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee</p> <p>I. Amendments to the Instrument & Articles of Government ZL requested that some small amendments be made to the instrument & articles of government to reflect changes in nomenclature of policy documents, removal of a clause referring to Secretary of State that was no longer valid, and that references to the ESFA be changed to DfE.</p>

	She also sought that the I&A allow for the appointment of student governors by application and interview as well as election and that the Corporation would decide as appropriate which was used within its function as the appointing authority. These amendments had been reviewed by the Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee which had recommended them to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve these amendments to the Instrument and Articles.
9	Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee (Part 2) (see confidential minutes) i. SPH Objectives ii. Confidential minutes of meeting held on 30 June 2025
10	AoB No items were raised.
12	Date of next meeting Monday 15 December 2025 Meeting closed 9.02 pm

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 23 Oct 2025

SIGNED: **Date:**

Colin Smith (Chair – in the absence of Franklin Asante)

ACTIONS

REF	Action	Lead	Status
05iii	The indemnity document and legal advice for the S106 agreement and side letter be provided to the Corporation for review by Written Resolution.	FM/ZL	Completed