

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Wednesday 06 April 2022, 6 pm – By Zoom

Members Present: Stephen Davis (CEO), Alex Fyfe, Tony Johnston (Chair), Laura Griffin, Derrick Betts, Colin Smith, Max Maalimey, Nadia Babar, Amish Nathwani, Grainne Brankin, Temi Alebiosu, Franklin Asante, Angela Drisdale Gordon, Matthew Green (from 6.30pm).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, Claire Collins, Amanda Thorneycroft, Peter Thorne*

*relevant agenda item only

1	<p>PROCEDURAL</p> <p>Welcome and apologies for absence Apologies had been received from Ross Mackenzie, Lee Horsley, Elom Tay, Natalie Dweh, Desmond Bishop, Melek Mandal, and Norman Whyte.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in the agenda items None were declared.</p>
3	<p>I. Approval of Corporation minutes <i>(Draft minutes were circulated in advance)</i> The draft minutes of 15 December 2021 were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>II. Matters arising All matters arising were complete or were to be covered at committee meetings.</p> <p>III. Request to raise Grey Box items Members were asked if they would like to raise any items in the Grey Box which were provided for information. No items were raised.</p>
4	<p>STRATEGIC</p> <p>TJ recounted the activities of the previous week to the Corporation which included two committee meetings, the Ofsted Monitoring Visit, and the 130-year anniversary celebrations for CNWL. On behalf of the Corporation, he thanked the SLT and all the staff involved for their hard work and dedication. The progress made regarding Ofsted would be covered under other agenda items.</p> <p>I. CEO's Report <i>(Report circulated in advance)</i> SD explained that the KPIs, which would usually be included in this report, were still in transition following the Strategy Event in March and would be reviewed by the GSR Committee in the Summer term before coming back to Corporation as a balanced score card. His report set out the progress made under each strategic theme since the previous one in December 2021. He explained that the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit was originally expected in the Autumn term but had been delayed due to Covid. The visit focused on 16–18-year-old provision over 4 main themes. The outcome of the visit was that reasonable progress was being made, however it was noted that this would not be indicative of the grade we would receive on a full inspection. The improvement strategies were shown to be having some impact though it was still inconsistent in some areas of provision. Some of this was due to difficulties in recruiting teachers. There was good data available to be able to demonstrate impact.</p>

LG asked if given the feedback received from Ofsted, we needed to change any of the current plans. SD said that the Learning & Teaching Operational Delivery Plan was in place and that Ofsted welcomed this approach, however it needed to be embedded more including sequencing of provision. The inspectors also suggested that the reward level for attendance be increased to 90%.

AF noted the inconsistencies and asked if the college had in place processes to identify and address these going forward. SD explained that the process of lesson observations, which currently showed that 8 out of 10 lessons were good or better, was consistent with what Ofsted observed. Science and business were two of the areas where performance was less consistent, though there were recognised improvements in English and maths.

CS asked whether the support provided to middle managers since the previous inspection had been effective. SD said that Ofsted did identify some weaker areas, but these correlated with already known areas for improvement. These often related to subject areas with large volumes of students which were more challenging. Some teaching practices also needed to be brought up to date.

SD commented on the other main highlights from his report which included internal communications, internal staff progression, application for accreditation from the National Centre for Diversity, the Wembley project, Cockpit redevelopment, and a review of the current business model. He also referred to the increase in wider stakeholder and community involvement in the college which was showcased at the 130-year anniversary celebrations which the Brent Council Leader and other local people attended.

II. Strategic Risk Register

(Highest risks circulated in advance)

SD explained that he had reviewed the risk management policy following the risk appetite workshop held in the Autumn term. The new policy now included risk tolerance and revised risk categories that should make the monitoring of risks by the committees and Corporation more meaningful. The strategic risk register presented included risks from a bottom-up approach through the departmental risk registers and did not yet include external risks though this was the intention going forward. The new version of the strategic risk register was based on the new risk management policy, though was still transitional at this point. It was noted that some strategic risks were above the risk tolerance level. AN commented that he thought the new strategic risk register was good in principle but needed more time to fully understand the mechanics of the scoring. GB said that huge progress had been made and it was a much clearer presentation of strategic risks which would enable a better sense of priorities. SD said that a risk control group was also now in place to moderate the risk ratings across the organisation. **The Corporation resolved to approve the Risk Management Policy.**

III. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update

(Paper circulated in advance)

CC presented a short paper on the key activities delivered from the EDI Action plan. This included the application for NCD accreditation, the EDI annual report and newsletter and a revised format for the action plan to better track progress. Building on the discussions at the Governor Strategy event, where EDI was a key theme, CC asked for the Corporation's agreement to move to becoming an anti-racist college. She would develop a strategy for achieving this which would be brought back to the Corporation for review. MG fully supported the anti-racist position but enquired if this could be taken further to include all

	<p>other protected characteristics such as anti-homophobia which would be of importance to many of the staff and students at the college. He was keen to see a stand against all other forms of discrimination. CC said that the college was on a journey in addressing these issues and the intention was to begin with anti-racism and then use the model and adapt it for other areas of discrimination which were of equal importance. Some of these issues were being addressed in other ways such as the ‘Love has no labels’ campaign. CC said that she was hoping to create more involvement from staff and students for these activities. MG welcomed this approach and noted the improvements in the EDI Plan. ADG asked about the response rate of the survey. Approximately 50% of staff had responded which was lower than they would have liked but an improvement on the previous survey. Focus group discussion were proving to be the preferred method for these issues. The Corporation noted the report and approved the motion to move to becoming an anti-racist college.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>COMMITTEE MATTERS Property & Infrastructure Committee</p> <p>I. Sale of Wembley & Willesden Campuses <i>(Paper shared in advance)</i> See confidential minutes</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Teaching, Learning & Skills Committee</p> <p>I. Predicted Achievement <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> SD reported that it was currently predicted that achievement for both adult and 16–18-year-old learners would be over 80% this year. The achievement for 16–18-year-olds was likely to be the highest UCG had achieved to date at 83.4%. AF noted that attendance was still an issue and generally had high correlation with achievement and asked what metrics were being used to track engagement. SD explained that attendance was not the only factor, and that engagement and completion of work were also taken into account. AF asked what the issues had been with E&M the previous year. SD confirmed that this had been due to attendance at exams for which measures had been put in place and improvements were already being seen. MM commented that due to lockdown some students had become more accustomed to working from home, which had impacted attendance rates. He thought it would take a bit longer for practices to change back to those pre-pandemic. TJ commented that as Link Governor for English and maths he had been impressed with the approach being taken and the relentless focus on the importance of attendance, and other blended learning approaches. He was confident in the measures being taken. The Corporation noted the report.</p> <p>II. Financial Support / Bursary Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> SD confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee and it was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Financial Support and Bursary Policy.</p> <p>III. Complaints Policy and Procedure <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> SD confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee and it was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Complaints Policy & Procedure.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Governance, Search and Remuneration</p>

	<p>I. SPH Objectives <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>SD explained that a revised process that aligned with UCG’s PDRs was now being used for SPHs appraisal. The SPH objectives included collective and individual objectives which were SMART and had been cascaded within the organisation. LG commented that she was encouraged by the new format and how it demonstrated a performance culture involving dialogue, clarity, and a direct link to strategy and planning. The Corporation resolved to approve the SPH objectives.</p> <p>II. Governor Terms of Office <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>ZL explained that there were several governors whose first term of office was coming to an end during this academic year. Many of these governors had kindly agreed to stand for a second term. The GSR Committee had reviewed these memberships and were willing to recommend that a second term of office be awarded to those listed in the paper. It was noted that LH had decided not to stand for a second term due to a change in his personal circumstances. A recruitment process was underway to appoint to his vacancy. MG was currently unable to confirm if he would be moving into a second term at the moment and would confirm his position following the local government elections in early May. Thanks was extended to those governors for the significant contribution they make and their willingness to stand for a second term of office. The Corporation resolved to approve the second term governor appointments as set out in the paper.</p>
8	<p>Finance and Resources</p> <p>I. Budget Reforecast <i>(Draft paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT provided a summary of the budget reforecast which had been discussed in detail at the Finance & Resources Committee. It was based on the actuals from January and known run rates. The £2.1m of growth funding had been backed out and compensated by other income streams. AT highlighted subcontracted provision, Borough income where there was growth, the risk from staff payroll, depreciation, and the impact on cash. Members noted that despite the removal of the growth funding that the budget position overall was similar to the original. The Corporation resolved to approve the budget reforecast.</p> <p>II. Standing Financial Instructions <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AT confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by the Finance & Resources Committee and was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The draft appendix requiring an EDI statement from suppliers and to also be included in procurement tenders was fully supported. The Corporation resolved to approve the Standing Financial Instructions.</p> <p>III. Staff disciplinary & grievance policies <i>(Draft policies circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>CC confirmed that these policies had been reviewed by the Finance & Resources Committee and they were recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Policies.</p> <p>IV. Tuition Fees Policy <i>(Draft policies circulated in advance)</i></p>

	<p>AT confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and it was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Tuition Fees Policy.</p> <p>V. Pensions Statement <i>(Draft policies circulated in advance)</i> AT confirmed that this had been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and it was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Pension Statement.</p>
9	<p>Audit</p> <p>I. Appointment of Internal Auditors <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> DBetts set out the process taken to select the preferred candidate, Scrutton Bland to be recommended to the Corporation as UCG’s Internal Auditors. He said that Scrutton Bland demonstrated the best offer and approach compared to the other companies and also represented good value for money. The Audit Committee would receive the IA plan from the newly appointed IA at the next meeting. The Corporation resolved to approve Scrutton Bland as UCG’s new internal auditors.</p> <p>II. Risk Management Policy & Procedures <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> This had been discussed under item 4ii.</p> <p>III. Counter Fraud Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> ZL explained how this policy expanded on the requirements in the Standing Financial Instructions, provided an improved policy framework in response to the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, and formed a set of counter-fraud policies with the anti-bribery and whistleblowing policies. The policy had been reviewed by the Audit Committee which was recommending it to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Counter Fraud Policy.</p> <p>IV. Health and Safety Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> AT confirmed that this policy had been reviewed by and was being recommended by the Audit Committee. There were no significant changes from the previous version. The Corporation resolved to approve the Health and Safety Policy.</p>
10	<p>AoB</p> <p>The date of the next meeting 06 July 2022</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.57 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 07/04/2022

SIGNED:

Date:

Tony Johnston, Chair

ACTIONS

Ref	Action	Owner	Status
04i 13/10	A review of the format for KPIs to be undertaken by the GSR Committee	ZL	Complete