

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 10th October 2014 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	Philip Bostock Ian McGregor Richard Atkins David Allen Bindu Arjoon David Batho John Bunting Michael Caines Chris Hoar Elaine Hobson James Jefferson Craig Marshall Mark Overton Martin Owen Matt Roach Tim Tamblyn Dave Underwood Emma Webber	Chair all bar 16.2 (part) Vice. Chair for 16.2 (part) Principal
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In Attendance

	Steve Campion	Executive Director Finance and Enterprise
	John Laramy	Vice Principal
<i>Item 6 only</i>	Richard Brine	Head of Information and Learning Services (ILS)
<i>Item 5 only</i>	Emma Fielding	Assistant Principal
	Barbara Sweeney	Clerk to the Corporation

Apologies

Vicki Carah

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Action

The Chair welcomed members to this the first meeting of the academic year. He particularly welcomed James Jefferson, 16-18 Student Governor, who was attending his first meeting as elected Governor. He congratulated David Allen on his new role as Chair of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

Apologies were received.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon declared an interest in item 8, Opportunities and Developments Register and item 9, Property Update, as Assistant Director, Exeter City Council.

Chris Hoar, declared an interest in item 8, Opportunities and Developments Register and item 9, Property Update, as Partner Foot Anstey.

The Principal declared an interest in matters relating to Aplus Training (SW) Ltd as Director

The Chair, Mark Overton and Matt Roach declared an interest in item 16.2, re-appointments for a second term of office.

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2014, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2014, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising which were not elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Appointments

The update was received and at the invitation of the Chair, the Clerk confirmed that despite a number of attempts, no candidates had come forward for the role of 19+ Governor in time for this meeting. The Search and Governance Committee had agreed that there should be continued effort to secure a nomination as it was important that the Learner Voice of the 19+ constituency be heard.

Following recent promotion of the role, several had expressed interest and it was likely that an election would be held. It was proposed that the elected 19+ Governor attend the next meeting on the Board on 12th December 2014.

BHS

The Board noted the update.

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 5 only.

5. Student Outcomes 2013/14

- Results 2013/14
- Student Recruitment 2014/15

The presentation was received and John Laramy, Vice Principal, tabled the most recent data for 16-18 and 19+ outcomes. He confirmed that recruitment was above target despite falling demographics. However, some of the additional learner numbers resulted from in built progression from year 12 to year 13. HE growth had bucked the national trend and apprenticeship recruitment was also positive. The higher entry criteria for Access to HE had affected recruitment nationally and locally. The significant growth of over 500 learners in 2013-14 had been challenging, not least in an Ofsted inspection year, with accommodation, staff numbers, use of agency and a new timetabling grid all contributing. The more modest increase in 2014-15 meant that there were fewer issues. However City centre accommodation was still tight, especially in some specialist areas. There were staff shortages in some subject areas and an imminent HE inspection would also focus resources. The integration of the Aplus faculty into the College required flexibility and a reassessment of some systems and processes. Finally, John reminded the Board of the challenges in English and maths and the requirement to work to a level 2 qualification.

Turning to outcomes, 16-18 success was strong and data for 19+ was the best ever. Apprenticeship and functional skills outcomes were also positive. Value added was more varied with sustained focus required on high grades at A level, and embedding Aspirational Target Grades (ATGs) into target setting. Graphs illustrated the progress in long course 16-18 success performance, and John stressed the robustness of the data which did not rely on short course outcomes. Because of low numbers, adult success performance was more volatile. At all levels, data was above the national average and for 19+ it was the most consistent ever. Whilst apprenticeship success had dipped slightly after sustained improvement, it was still above national average.

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal, highlighted the key issues. For A and AS levels results were outstanding with a pass rate of 99.5% against a national average of 98%. High grades had increased by 2% against a national decline in A* to B grades.

For AS level, there was a 13% increase in learner numbers and retention was 94%. However there was a decline in success by 1%. This would be addressed by a clear focus on high grades, value added and target setting. The right student right course philosophy had been strictly followed at enrolment with exceptions to agreed entry requirements having a far more rigorous process of approval.

A levels has seen significant growth over the past three years. However the additional numbers had not impacted on quality and outcomes. Retention was 94% with success at 97%. An increase in high grades against a national decline was encouraging and the number achieving

straight A* grades had increased. More applicants had received offers from Oxbridge and outcomes from the REACH Academy were strong. In addition to these areas of success, Emma highlighted specific areas of good practice and confirmed that there would be cross pollination to raise standards across the College. She also confirmed that where there were concerns, the intensive care process was operating, scrutinised closely by the Quality and Standards Committee.

Finally Emma confirmed the strong IB results, with a pass rate of 94% and several students aiming to study abroad.

The challenges for the 2014-15 year were summarised. There would be focus on high grades at AS level and on sustaining the current improvement in high grades at A2. The College would work on increasing the proportion of students gaining "C" or above on English GCSE qualifications. Other areas of focus were timely apprenticeship success rates in the new Aplus faculty, functional skills maths results in a small number of faculties and attendance rates on adult programmes.

It was confirmed that outcomes had been scrutinised by the Quality and Standards Committee. The Committee was concerned (and therefore monitoring) the proposed adoption of linear A levels. There was value in having the AS examinations to assess progress. A Labour Government had said that it would not go ahead with the reforms. However the College was preparing in the event of the linear A levels being introduced following the election of a Coalition or Conservative Government at the May 2015 General Election. Analysis of value added data and aspirational target setting would be used to support the 10 subjects planned to change in September 2015. There would also be internal assessment under examination conditions to prepare students, and a RAG rated tracking system. It was likely that the numbers of students and success rates would fall and that different qualifications might be introduced. The impact would be greatest where there was limited provision and there would be a few years of transition.

The Board congratulated the College on a successful year, noting the highlights and the areas for development and agreed to

Note the update.

Richard Brine, Head of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) joined the meeting for item 6 only

6. ICT Strategy

The report was received and Steve Champion, Executive Director, Finance and Enterprise, reminded the Board that it had requested the ICT Strategy 2014-2017 when it approved the updated Property Strategy in 2013. The ICT Strategy had been scrutinised by the Business Services Committee at

its meeting in June 2014 and a number of amendments requested on costings and security. However due to other priorities, approval of the Strategy was deferred at the Board meeting on the 4th July 2014. The revised draft was received at the Business Services meeting on 29th September 2014 with the requested amendments, and was now recommended to the Board for approval.

Richard Brine, Head of ILS, reminded the Board that the way we gather, consume and share information had changed significantly over the past three years. In contrast the infrastructure of the College ICT had not, and that current provision, such as local servers and desktop PCs, was no longer fit for purpose. In addition, the demand for 24/7 support was challenging for the IT team. Users compared College services with that available externally such as Google and Amazon. It was impossible to compete and changes were required to meet the challenge. Government Strategy was to aggregate services and the College needed to be part of that culture. For example, Microsoft and Google offered services and functionality to the sector, so reducing the need for local support and reducing the gap between local and external services.

It was no longer sustainable to keep adding hardware to satisfy increasing demand. The use of personal devices could be used to reduce demand, and whilst desktop PCs still had a use, research and messaging could be achieved on personal equipment. The key was to encourage students to think "mobile first", and to this end the College must make services more mobile friendly.

The ICT Strategy achieved this through ten strands, including adopting cloud, rationalising data centres, maintaining capacity, security, being fit for purpose at the user points and effective procurement. Learners would be encouraged to bring their own devices and to consider them as mobile desktops. A services orientated culture would use technical teams to exploit opportunities.

Steve confirmed that whilst the Strategy was cost neutral, current capital spending on ICT would move to non-pay revenue streams. However there was additional benefit of flexibility and the College would not be left with redundant hardware. The Strategy also needed the buy in of users and modernised 24/7 access. Security and information governance was key, but the balance of this with flexibility would evolve during the life of the Strategy.

The Board asked what buy in had been sought from users and Richard confirmed that the Strategy had been demand led, with users requesting change. The team had had to develop its service to keep pace with demand. Furthermore, the constraints on accommodation had been a strong driver to reduce dedicated ICT space. Hardware could be reduced by better use of cloud technology. There was also confirmation that Wi-Fi

would be expanded, as would the use of enhanced desktop operating systems.

Governors commended the quality and responsiveness of the IT support and agreed to

Approve the ICT Strategy 2013-2017

Vote: Unanimous

7 Bicton Update

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential minutes.

8. Opportunities and Developments Register

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

9. Property Matters

9.1 This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

10. Principal's Report

The report was received and the Principal highlighted the key issues. Whilst there had been growth in student numbers for 2014/15, a downturn in demographics meant that recruitment would be challenging for the next four years, with a steady drop in 16 year olds in Exeter. There was potential impact from a new UTC provider in the county, and schools with sixth forms were working hard to retain students. He confirmed that public sector funding would remain tight for several years to come. Whilst the College was well placed, the Board should be aware of challenges ahead. The Government was looking at cost savings through mergers.

He commended staff for a calm and purposeful start to the year, and updated the Board on College successes with Oxbridge entrants, the UK Skills Finalists and a number of upcoming events such as the AS awards and Graduation ceremony.

The Board noted the report.

11. Student Representatives' Matters

11.1 Student Governors' Report

The report was received and James Jefferson, Student Governor (16-18) highlighted the key points. The Student Representative Committee was considering a number of changes to address negative perceptions and increase involvement. There were proposed amendments to the structure and the recruitment of a Student Experience Leader would help to facilitate the changes. The Board asked how the need for change had been identified

and James confirmed that informal feedback had been sought during enrolment. The Quality and Standards Committee was responsible for monitoring the learner voice and received updates.

James confirmed that it was Mental Health Awareness week, which was being actively promoted. He also updated the Board on the Global Buddy Scheme to support international students and promote exchange of culture and ideas. In response to Governor questions he confirmed that marketing of events required additional effort across the numerous College sites.

The Board noted the report.

12. Corporation Self Assessment

The report was received and considered. The draft Board self-assessment report (SAR) had been aggregated from the Committee SARs and recommended by each Committee. The Clerk explained that because of the change in timing of appraisals, Governor feedback no longer informed the SAR, which was drafted using previous versions and knowledge of the Board and its Committees. However it was for the Board to consider and approve, for inclusion in the College's SAR. Governors felt some of the strengths were too process based and that the Governance SAR documents would benefit from a refresh. It was recommended that a Task and Finish Group be convened to consider and recommend a new format following the Governor appraisals in the Spring. The current format would be used for the 2013/14 review.

The Board agreed to:

a) Approve the Board's SAR for inclusion in the College SAR.

b) Recommend that a Task and Finish Group be convened in the spring to review the Governance SAR format.

BHS

Vote: Unanimous

PART 2: REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

The following recommendations were received and the Chair invited the Chair of each Committee to give a brief update on the Committee decisions.

13. Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee

13.1 Learning Strategy

The Chair, Quality and Standards Committee, confirmed that following recommendations from the Committee, amendments had been made to the style and content of the strategy. With the title "Generation Exe Strategy", the focus was on supporting innovation following the Ofsted inspection,

promoting monitoring and assessment as drivers of performance, and the engagement of learners to ensure continuing challenge. Whilst it was important for the style of the document to be innovative, it must retain its clarity for the target stakeholders.

John confirmed that the Strategy was to be formatted for a student audience by graphics students using the approved copy. In response to Governor questions, it was also confirmed that within the Strategy, innovations and projects were high level, rather than providing specific detail. The Board identified other issues, which whilst implicit, were not covered in detail in the Strategy. However these were included in other key documents such as the Strategic Plan, illustrating the interdependence of high level strategic documents.

The Board agreed to

Approve the Generation Exe Strategy

Vote: Unanimous.

14. Recommendations from Business Services Committee

14.1 Financial Regulations

The report was received and the Chair, Business Services Committee, confirmed that the Financial Regulations had been updated to reflect the change in structure of the finance team and the Principal's role as President of the AoC.

The Board agreed to

Approve the updated Financial Regulations

Vote: Unanimous

14.2 Santander Loan Agreement

The report was received and it was confirmed that indicative Heads of Terms had been reviewed by the Board at its last meeting and that it had agreed to delegate to the Chair of Business Services and another member of that Committee the review of the final version. There had been no changes from the indicative version.

The Board noted the report

14.3 Ted Wragg Resolutions

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

15. Recommendations from Audit Committee **The Board unanimously agreed the following:**

15.1 To reappoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as Internal Auditors for year ending 31 July 2015. BHS

15.2 To approve the Internal Audit Service Annual report 2013/14 BHS

The Chair of Audit confirmed that since the publication of the Joint Audit Code of Practice (JACOP), the Head of Internal Audit was no longer required to give an overall annual opinion. However the report was positive and recommended actions were actively managed and completed.

15.3 To approve the Internal Audit Service Proposed Programme for 2014/15 BHS

15.4 To approve the External Auditor's Audit Plan for the year ending July 2014. BHS

15.5 Risk Register
To approve the updated Risk Register and Risk Heat Map, subject to the following amendment.

The Board considered and agreed that the Business Services Committee should monitor risks associated with the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust. BHS

16. **Recommendations from Search Committee**

16.1 Terms of Reference amendments

Revised Terms of Reference for the Business Services and Remuneration Committees were received. The Terms of Reference for all Committees had been reviewed and approved by the Board on 4th July 2014. Since that meeting the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) Policy has been revised to take in changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme which came into effect in April 2014. During the review it was identified that the Corporation had a role in approving the award of additional pension, given the potential significant cost implications. The Policy, based on the AoC model, stipulated that all additional pension benefits needed to come to the Board. Although such situations should be relatively rare they could have significant cost implications for the College. It was therefore necessary to amend the Terms of Reference of the Business Services Committee to reflect this. Where the pension related to a Senior Post Holder it was more appropriate that the award be considered by the Remuneration Committee. In exceptional circumstances, in order to provide a timely decision, a special meeting would be called. However it was anticipated that this was likely to be rare.

The Board agreed

To Approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Business Services and Remuneration Committees. BHS

Vote: Unanimous

16.2 Re-appointments for a second term of office.

The Governors concerned withdrew for the relevant part of this item.
The Board approved

a) The reappointment of Philip Bostock for a second term of four years from 14th October 2014 to 13th October 2018.

Vote: Unanimous

b) The reappointment of Mark Overton for a second term of four years from 14th October 2014 to 13th October 2018.

Vote: Unanimous

c) The reappointment of Matt Roach for a second term of four years from 7th December 2014 to 6th December 2018.

Vote: Unanimous

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

The following reports and minutes were received and noted:

17. **Reports for Information**

- 17.1 HR annual report and policies
- 17.2 Bursary Update
- 17.3 Forecast Outturn 2013/14
- 17.4 Subcontractor Provision Fees and costs
- 17.5 Key Performance Indicators
- 17.6 Governance Report
- 17.7 Sealing Report
- 17.8 Chair's Actions
- 17.9 Student Experience Update

18. **Minutes for information:**

- 18.1 Business Services Minutes 23 June 2014. *Approved*
- 18.2 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 15 September 2014. *Draft*
- 18.3 Quality and Standards Minutes 22 September 2014. *Draft*

19. **Confidential Minutes for information:**

- 19.1 Business Services Committee Minutes 23rd June 2014. *Approved*
- 19.2 Special Business Services Committee Minutes 4th July 2014. *Approved*
- 19.3 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 15th September 2014. *Draft*

20. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2014/2015
Friday 12th December 2014

Friday	13 th	February	2015
Friday	1st	May	2015
Wed	8th	July	2015