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**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on 23 September 2019, in Room O17, Orient House.**

**PRESENT:** Joga Kabra (Chair); Gill Burbridge (Principal); Elizabeth Crump; Helen Davenport; Taiyyabah Ijaz; Alex Jackson; Emily Martin; David Martindale and Mirna Peach.

**In Attendance:** Mike Gallagher (VP, Teaching & Learning); Chris Price (VP, Wider Student Experience); Alan Leak (Director of Finance); Emmanuel Benedetti (Observer).

**Clerk to the Corporation:** Michael Wood

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No Governor declared an interest.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was **received** in respect of Hannah Eaton.

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Emmanuel Benedetti to the meeting as an observer.

**MINUTES**

**01.19** The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2019 were **approved**.

**MATTERS ARISING & ACTION LOG**

**02.19** The Action Log was **noted**.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**03.19** The Chair commented that he had attended a staff end of term event on 10 July and had met with a number of staff. He was pleased to note the high level of motivation and commitment amongst all those he had spoken to. The Board **noted** that the Chair, Principal and Clerk had met over the summer to review the results of the Governor survey (to be discussed later on the agenda).

The Chair further commented that he intended to complete his one-to-one meetings with Governors over course of the next month. It was also **noted** that the Chair was making contact with local colleges regarding sharing good governance practices.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**a) Management Accounts**

**04.19** The Director of Finance introduced discussion of the Management Accounts to 31 August 2019, the following key points being **noted**:

- i) that the accounts and forecast out-turn on the year had not changed significantly since the last Board meeting;

- ii) that the estimated deficit for 2019/20 stood at £66k, but this may be reduced during the year, although a 2% pay award had been budgeted for;
- iii) that the Government had announced a 4.7% increase in the unit of resource from 2020/21 for one year only. It was queried if this increase had been formally approved by Parliament (the Director of Finance to confirm);
- iv) that the College's staff ratio was currently 65.6%, but this would increase as a consequence of increments and pay awards;
- v) that in response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that additional staffing resources had been made available in respect of safeguarding.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT & PRESENTATION**

**05.19** The Principal **reported** on a number of key matters, the following points being highlighted:

### **Results, 2018/19**

- the College had achieved a 99% pass rate at A Level, 100% for Vocational courses;
- five A Level subjects had achieved over 70%, including Photography, French, Italian, Spanish and Urdu;
- overall, the number of high A Level grades had reduced from 38% to 34%, although the College's Value Added (ALPS) score had remained constant at Grade 5;
- significant improvements had been made in Biology, History and Media in terms of their added value;
- subjects which were being closely reviewed included Maths and Business;
- with regard to GCSE English, the pass rate had increased by 5% to 46%, with Maths increasing by 1% to 30%;
- one student had gained a place at Cambridge as last year which was excellent news.

### **Enrolment, 2019/20**

- enrolment was currently standing at 2272 (cf 2289 for the same period last year), although the budget had been based on 2239 students;
- greater efforts had been made with regard to validating enrolments in order to gain a more accurate assessment;
- some late enrolments were still being processed, with some students switching college or school;
- the main threat to recruitment remained school sixth forms.

### **Funding, 2020/21**

- in respect of the proposed 4.7% increase in the unit of resource for 2020/21 it had been estimated that this could result in c£500k additional income for the College, but it was for one year only at this stage;
- the Government had announced a further £35m for targeted interventions and an Advanced Maths premium of £10m;
- it still remained difficult for the College to make long-term changes to its offering given the uncertainties over funding.

## Staffing

- it was noted that 12 new staff had joined the College;
- the results to the 2019 Staff Survey had been reviewed and a number of key themes discussed at the staff conference, student behaviour being the main issue. In this regard, a Student Charter had been introduced for 2019/20;
- the Street had been re-designed with a new seating area adjacent to the Costa coffee bar and staff were being encouraged to use the area on a more regular basis.

## Other Matters

- the College had been featured in a recent Panorama programme which had included students rehearsing for a 'Lockdown' performance. The Chair commended the Principal, staff and students on how such a sensitive issue had been well-handled and presented to a wider audience;
- an eco audit was being carried out and areas identified where the College could be more sustainable (eg reduction in use of paper);
- the Extending Influence theme was to include a re-branding of the College's website to be launched at the end of October;
- arising out of the Governors' survey, key themes relating to strategy, accountability and efficiency had been highlighted
- several new head teachers had been appointed to local schools recently and the Principal intended to meet with as many as possible over the next few months;
- it was noted that some school sixth forms were experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff and that their long-term viability was in question.

The Chair requested that an analysis of the current situation regarding competitors (school and colleges) should be considered at the next meeting. Governors welcomed the positive news on student achievements, 2018/19.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

### a) **Governors' Effectiveness Survey**

**06.19** The Clerk presented a high-level summary of the feedback received in respect of the Governors' Effectiveness Survey, commenting that other areas of focus in addition to those identified by the Principal, included induction, development and risk. Arising out of detailed discussion, the Chair commented that the average score rating of less than 4 was not satisfactory, but was optimistic that as a result of further developmental work significant improvements could be achieved.

**07.19** It was **agreed** that a small Working Group be established to consider both feedback from the governance survey and the new Strategic Plan, the following Governors indicating their willingness to join the Group: Emily Martin; Lizzie Crump; Taiyyabah Ijaz, in addition to the Chair and Principal. The Chair wished to record his thanks to the HR Department for co-ordinating the online survey and presenting the data.

### b) **SAR Process, 2019/20**

**08.19** The Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) presented a report on preparations for the SAR,

2019/20, a detailed timetable of events being tabled. It was **agreed** that an updated schedule of events be circulated to Governors in the near future. The Chair thanked Governors for agreeing to participate so fully in the SAR process.

**c) Annual Safeguarding Report, 2018/19**

**09.19** The Board **noted** the Annual Safeguarding Report, 2018/19, it being highlighted that more staff had been trained, or had their training upgraded during the year. In response to a Governor query regarding suspensions and a correlation to safeguarding and complex family cases, it was commented that there were very few such cases and the situation was closely monitored in this regard.

**d) Annual Suspensions and Exclusions Report, 2018/19**

**10.19** The Board **noted** the Annual Suspensions and Exclusions Report, 2018/19.

**e) Audit Committee Minutes**

**11.19** The Board **received**, for information, the draft unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 10 June 2019.

**PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

**12.19** The Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) provided a report on forthcoming Partnership events, 2019/20, the next Governors' event being scheduled to be held at NewVIC on 7 October 2019.

**COLLEGE EVENTS**

**13.19** Governors **noted** a schedule of forthcoming events, as presented by the Vice-Principal (Wider Student Experience) to which all Governors were welcome to attend, including the full performance of 'Lockdown' on 30 October.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**14.19** The Principal **reported** that the new Student Governor would attend the next meeting, but would attend Governor Development training on 10 October. In response to a Governor question, it was **agreed** that a Governor could attend the Student Council's meeting with the SLT (date to be advised). The Chair advised that he intended to meet with the Student Governor prior to the next Board meeting.

**15.19** Governors were reminded to complete their Register of Interests and to undertake Safeguarding training, if this was still outstanding.

**16.19** As part of reflecting on the meeting, the Chair encouraged all Governors to complete a short feedback form. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.52pm, the date of the next meeting being confirmed as **Monday 16 December 2019**.