

**Minutes for the Board Meeting to be held at CRC with option to join remotely  
On Monday 16 October 2023 commencing 3pm for workshop and 4.30 pm for main  
Board A10 College Road Campus**

**Present:**

Mervyn Jones (Chair)  
 Abigail Appleton (Principal)  
 Jennette Arnold OBE  
 John Auckland  
 Professor Robin Baker OBE  
 Judy Balderson  
 Oliver Cameron-Swan  
 Joe Hedges  
 Clive Hodgeman  
 Helen Hurford  
 Dr Kate Mori  
 Tim Newsholme  
 Myfanwy Page  
 Lucy Ramsey (Teams)  
 Dr Russell Roberts  
 Caroline Sedilek

**In attendance**

Charlotte Godsall  
 Justin Gregory (Vice Principal HE)  
 David Hawkins (Vice Principal Student Exp & Bus Dev)  
 Xaviere Hughes (Vice Principal FE)  
 Rebecca Semple  
 Tim Williams (Finance Director)

**Governors' Workshop: New Strategy review and discussion of advanced draft**

Adam Knight (Senior Marketing Communications Manager) joined the meeting for the strategy workshop.

The Principal gave an overview of draft college strategy, commenting that the process had begun in March 2023 with the key purpose being to define direction of travel and distinctiveness for HCA. It would be used as both an internal document and publicly as part of communications.

The Principal tabled a paper which herself and the Senior Marketing Communications Manager spoke about. The Principal added that many elements of new strategy were already being implemented.

The Principal invited the committee to give comment/feedback.

The Chair commented on the statement that teaching is changing and questioned what this meant and how the college fits into that. The Senior Marketing Communications Manager spoke about how some HEIs are now delivering degrees over 2 years and offering more on-line short courses. He added that the strategy highlights the opportunity for lifelong learning.

A Governor commented that it was a good idea to keep the document to one page.

	<p>The committee discussed the section on what happens after art college and thought it was important to highlight options other than studying for a degree i.e. apprenticeships. The Principal commented that three previous FE HCA students are now studying an engineering degree with NMITE.</p> <p>Governor commented that they would welcome the opportunity to discuss and input into the strategy beyond the board discussions.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the timeline for the new strategy to be finalised, which was planned for Board to approve in December. He suggested delaying until February to ensure all parties have had chance to give some input. As it would drive board discussions over the next 5 years it was important to ensure it was fit for purpose.</p> <p>The board spoke about the geographical problems of attracting students to a small city and the need to highlight the positives of that i.e. rural community, safe.</p> <p>A Governor asked whether modular/joint degrees could be something the college considered. Another Governor asked if all courses could have core skills modules i.e. critical thinking, which was a skill that employers looked for.</p> <p>The Principal commented that Governors should see another draft of the strategy and suggested a smaller meeting with those interested to have further discussions.</p> <p><b>Action: Principal</b></p>
	<p><b><u>BOARD MEETING</u></b></p>
1.	<p>I. The Board agreed to appoint John Auckland as an Independent Governor.</p> <p>II. The Board agreed to appoint Rebecca Semple as Clerk to Governors.</p>
2.	<p>I. Apologies were received from Peta Darnley and Charlotte Semus.</p> <p>II. There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3.	<p>I. The Board agreed the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 as a true record.</p> <p>II. The action list was noted evidencing all actions had either been completed or were in progress.</p> <p>A Governor commented that the maths session was well attended and a worthy event.</p>
4.	<p><b>Principal's Report</b></p> <p>I. The Principal highlighted some key points from her written report including the HCA Library which did very well in the NSS results and the partnership between HCA and Meadow Arts who secured funding for a mobile social public art structure. The reduction in student recruitment had been talked about in length at F&amp;GP but was a critical issue so needed to also come to Board. Action being undertaken was detailed in her report.</p> <p>A Governor asked about student voice, to which the Principal responded that the college website now had a chatbox which the graduate ambassadors responded too. The Principal added that</p>

	<p>student ambassadors were currently employed to assist at open days but the college were looking at opportunities for them to also respond to on-line enquiries and sharing student journeys.</p> <p>The committee reviewed and discussed the summer examination results. A staff Governor gave more context on the English and maths results, explaining that over 50% of students have increased their overall grade by at least one grade, with 28% of those increasing by more than one grade.</p> <p>The Principal commented that graduate outcomes data published by OFS in the summer, having been on a gradual upward climb previously, had dropped and would need to be investigated student by student to establish the reasons for this but added it could be a miscoding issue.</p> <p>The board discussed the need for an AI Policy, which should be addressed imminently as students were now writing essays and needed clear guidance. A Governor mentioned that the University of Kent have a Digital Enhanced Education webinar youtube channel which may be useful. The committee agreed that a more detailed discussion on AI in education should be held later in the year (February). <b>Action: Clerk</b></p> <p>The Chair highlighted the responses in the Staff Survey which needed to be addressed. The Principal responded that work was underway and further information will be provided to the December board meeting via F&amp;GP but she had seen some of the verbatim comments which had helped bring some context to the results. She added that main concerns were around communication, pay progression and staff development. The Principal confirmed that F&amp;GP had approved a Staff Development Strategy. <b>Action: Principal to share creative learning days date with Governors.</b></p> <p>II. The Principal confirmed that the paper provides an update on the KPIs that were agreed in the December 2022 board meeting and were the 2022/23 objectives. She highlighted that recruitment onto MAs was particularly poor and would be addressed strategically. The Vice Principal Student Experience and Business Development was looking at a Post Graduate Strategy.</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that the Estates Strategy had been discussed at F&amp;GP. She commented that the lease signing was still not complete but added that the Council is keen to work with HCA to establish future needs for student accommodation.</p> <p>The Principal commented that the Objectives for 2023-24 will include a substantial section on staff development and other concerns and will be discussed with the Board appropriately <b>Action: Clerk</b></p> <p>The Chair asked if there had been any issues raised regarding the Israel / Gaza conflict. The Principal replied that she was not aware of any issues raised to date, but had sent a letter to FE students and parents/carers advising that the college would not tolerate any harassment, etc.</p> <p>III. The Principal confirmed there were no changes to the risk register. The Finance Director commented that he was in discussions with UWTSD regarding fees. A Governor commented about the recent statement made by the Prime Minister about changing education and any likely impact on staff. The Chair responded that the risk register had a generic statement about government policy and the advice from the AOC was to not take action at this time.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Finance Report including summary of student enrolments</b></p> <p>I. The Finance Director advised that the Management Accounts up to 31 July 2023 were reported to F&amp;GP and were included in the board papers for information. The college had a financial health</p>

	<p>score of good and the financial statements audit would be taking place week commencing 23 October.</p> <p>II. The Finance Director confirmed the current budget risks 2023/24 were discussed at F&amp;GP and updates were in red. He highlighted that there was a strong steer to allocate the additional government funding towards staff pay and that trade unions would expect to see a 6.9% increase to salaries in 2024. The committee acknowledged that other financial strains may cause difficulty in allocating the whole amount to salaries but both the Board and SLT were conscious that they'd like staff salaries to be more competitive. The Finance Director commented that he was happy to take questions on his reports from committee members outside of the meeting.</p> <p>III. The Finance Director confirmed that Herefordshire Council had agreed to works on College Road campus including removing asbestos from the basement and that a grant was being received to spend £1.2 million on improvements to the Folly Lane campus.</p> <p>He commented that the Digital Hub at CRC was on target and he was attending an update meeting later in the week.</p> <p>The Chair raised the issue that had been discussed at F&amp;GP around whether a dedicated Project Manager was required to oversee these projects. The group discussed the role of the Operations Manager, who had initially been employed as an IT &amp; Digital Resources Manager and his workload capacity. The committee discussed exploring Service Level Agreements with external companies, particularly for cyber security, to support the Operations Manager and to ensure that critical business areas were not being overlooked.</p> <p><b>Action: Principal/Finance Director to review and ensure workload for Operations Manager is manageable.</b></p>
6.	<p><b>KPIs and objectives 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Principal commented that she had planned to provide a draft 2023/24 document for the papers. It was agreed that this would be carried forward and agreed at December board. The Chair commented that it was not ideal to set targets three months into the new academic year, but accepted that other more urgent business matters, specifically the forthcoming Ofsted review, had taken precedence.</p> <p><b>Action: Principal/Clerk</b></p>
7.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>I. The Vice Principals FE &amp; HE presented a safeguarding briefing which incorporated changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).</p> <p>The Chair introduced the VP FE as the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead and reminded the group that Jennette Arnold was the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding.</p> <p>The VP FE talked about the MyConcern system and how it was used at both FE and HE level. She also highlighted Filtering &amp; Monitoring and its importance, explaining that previously the college would block sites but the changes meant these now had to be monitored instead to check whether students were trying to gain access to them. It was noted that Joe Hedges had been nominated as the Governor focus for Filtering and Monitoring.</p> <p>A Governor expressed the importance and seriousness of safeguarding in the college and the requirement by Board to ensure that safeguarding was on the agenda once a year. It was agreed the timing worked well for October board with the changes that had been made in the KCSIE document.</p>

	<p>A Governor asked what support was available to staff after dealing with safeguarding issues. The VP FE responded that herself, the VP HE and the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager received regular supervision sessions with an external provider. There were helplines available to staff and that course teams all support one another. She added that once staff make a report they are not involved and will only offer teaching and normal pastoral support to the student.</p> <p>The Chair asked about Low Level Concerns. The VP FE commented that staff report concerns via a dedicated e-mail address is received by herself and the Principal only, but is often not used in the correct way.</p> <p>II. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure 2023 was approved by the board subject to an amendment that should the Principal be unavailable to suspend a member of staff, a designated Senior Post Holder can do so in their absence. <b>Action: Principal</b></p>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>I. External Board Review by Mary Malcolm August 2023</p> <p>The Chair commented that the review was part of the recommendation that board reviews are held regularly and future reviews may be one to one meetings between Governors and Chair/Vice Chair or could be in survey format. The actions from the review would be taken up by the S&amp;G and AQ&amp;S (HE) committees.</p>
<b>9.</b>	The committee received the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on 25 September 2023
<b>10.</b>	There were no items for Any Other Business
<b>11.</b>	<p>Date and time of next meeting: <b>Monday 11 December 2023</b> commencing at 4.30pm</p> <p>The Chair commented that the start time may change to 3.00pm due to an extensive agenda.</p>

<b>ACTIONS FROM BOARD MEETING 17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action for:</b>	<b>Update</b>
Governors to see another draft of the strategy and via a smaller meeting with those interested	Principal	<i>Meeting planned for early 2024 – details to follow</i>
Share creative learning days date with Governors.	Principal	<i>Disrupted by Ofsted: 2024 dates to be shared when established</i>
Staff development (highlighted within Objectives for 2023-24) to be discussed with the Board appropriately	Clerk	<i>Tabled for Board Meeting December 11<sup>th</sup> 2023</i>
Review and ensure workload for Operations Manager is manageable.	Principal / Finance Director	<i>Initial review undertaken and will remain under review - some changes in responsibilities planned for 2024</i>
Provide a draft 2023/24 KPIs & Objectives for approval at December Board	Principal / Clerk	<i>Tabled for Board Meeting December 11<sup>th</sup> 2023</i>
Amendment to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure 2023 (amendment: should the Principal be unavailable to suspend a member of staff, a designated Senior Post Holder can do so in their absence)	Principal	<i>In progress</i>

**Signed as a true record of proceedings:** ..... **Date:** .....