

## CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

### CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 2020 AT 4:00 PM, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

#### **Present:**

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Nikki Gray, Emily Staley, Andrea Blanchflower; Jonathan Barnard, Philip Richardson

#### **Attendees:**

Jerry White (Deputy Principal) – agenda items 1-5 only, Martin Colbourne (NES MD), Julia Buckland (Vice Principal, FE Curriculum and Quality) – agenda items 1-5 only, Sue Millions (Administrator)

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#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Denise Troughton, Bree Sherwood and Clare Johnson (Clerk to the Corporation).

#### **2. Declaration of Interest**

In the interest of transparency and in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Corporation, all Governors of the Corporation Board are asked to make a written declaration of relevant pecuniary interests on appointment. Governors were requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

There were no new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

#### **3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 04 August 2020** (Paper 02)

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 04 August 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

#### **4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 04 August 2020** (Paper 03)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 04 August 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

#### **5. CEO's Report** (Paper 04)

The CEO Report from the Principal informed the Board how the College is continuing to operate through the Coronavirus pandemic. The following information was discussed and highlighted:

**Ofqual** – Jerry White updated the Board on the very latest information received by the College, on A Level and VTQ results. It was agreed that the whole process for students, families and staff has been extremely challenging but after the Government agreed to use Centre Assessed Grades this has removed a lot of concerns, and has given everyone a greater sense of clarity. It was noted that the College received a reduction from the CAG of around one third for A level results against a national average of around 40%. On some individuals the impact was significant with a reduction of two or three grades.

It was noted that there was no deviation from the original ranking provided by the College to Ofqual before the algorithm was used. The issues came at a more individual level with no discernible pattern and unevenly distributed across student groups. 58 grades were increased, and these will remain awarded when the CAGs are issued. The College has now issued all Centre Assessed Grades to all students.

The key focus is to now identify those students with HE progression complications and to secure their first choices at University and to provide the support they need.

It was thought that most appeals made to the college will now drop away but some students want to challenge their grades and guidance from Ofqual on the appeal mechanism is still awaited. It was confirmed that there is currently no appeal process against Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs).

It has now been announced that Thursday's GCSE results will be switched to Centre Assessed Grades after the Government agreed not to use the flawed algorithm. Over 3000 students will be reliant on their grades to support enrolment. Corrienne Peasgood suggested that there will be less English and Maths GCSE resits next year. She expected that extra work will be required in the first part of the autumn term to assess which students need assistance to study at Level 3 which might result from being awarded over-generous GCSEs.

BTEC Level 3 vocational qualifications have been withdrawn and Levels 1 and 2 are held up. Part of these qualifications are centre assessed in any case, but a number have external assessment and it is currently not known if these will revert to Centre Assessed Grades. It is expected that further guidance will be received in the coming days.

Jerry White paid tribute to all NES colleagues and in particular the Business Data Team in IT Services as they have had to deal with the constant changes over the last week and thanks should also go to the FE teams who have been tireless in their support of students in an exceptional way. Corrienne Peasgood asked for her thanks to be noted to Jerry White and Julia Buckland for leading the teams. The Chair agreed and it was noted that the Governors are thankful of everyone's efforts throughout what has been an extremely challenging period of time. It was noted that the Student Union will support all students and be available to them at any time.

Andrea Blanchflower said that, and governors agreed, that lessons must be learnt both at the college and nationally to ensure that there is an understanding of what went wrong to ensure that this does not happen again, particularly if there was another COVID outbreak. Julia Buckland said that student tracking must be more resilient, and evidence put in place throughout the year to identify students predicted grades. Ofqual and the DfE are preparing clear guidance for COVID resilient syllabuses for all qualifications in 2020/21. Julia Buckland informed the Board that today she had a research interview with Ofqual about the experience of this year to inform the coming year.

**Student Enrolment** – the process, previously summarised in the minutes from the meeting which took place on 4 August, has now begun. NES teams have developed an electronic system (Passport to Enrolment) and this has been very successful. Staff are happy with the new process and recognise how much work has gone into the preparation. It was agreed that Jerry White would provide an update on expected student numbers for September at the next meeting.

Jerry White and Julia Buckland left the meeting at 4.50 pm.

**DfE / ESFA** - capital funding to support the upgrading of the FE estate was brought forward and the College has now been allocated £1,754,641.58 for the financial year 2020 to 2021 although it is not clear whether this is a DfE year running to 31 March 2021 or the college year running to 31 July 2021. As this funding is for improving estate condition, it can only be used in accordance with the funded activities set out in both the project specific conditions and the DfE's terms and conditions which will be issued in the coming days. The most important maintenance and capital works will be identified for completion.

**Institute of Technology discussions** – please see the confidential minutes.

**Aviation Academy** – please see the confidential minutes.

**Back to College Safely** – the Principal agreed to forward the link to the publication to all Governors. COVID control measures have been distributed to staff and some 250 have completed the on-line training to date. Managers will be meeting weekly to review the working of the control measures as well as weekly site safety meetings.

**AoC** - A group of black FE leaders have sent an open letter to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Education and key sector organisations. The College have been asked to consider becoming engaged and as a first step, add the Principal's name to the letter. Following discussion, the Governors agreed to this and the Principal agreed to talk further with the Leadership Team to provide a smaller group review in the college. Andrea Blanchflower referred to the fact that the UEA Vice-Chancellor is the Chair of a Universities UK group on racial harassment and that there was student activity on this area; there may well be opportunities for some links into this work and some joint working.

**Easton Farm** – please see confidential minutes.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her full and comprehensive report.

**6. CCN Finance Update** (Papers 05-06)

Please see the confidential minutes.

**7. Any Other Business**

The first day of term for HE students is 7 September and for FE students, 14 September.

**8. Confidentiality**

It was agreed that agenda items: Institute of Technology discussions, Aviation Academy and Easton Farm, within agenda item 5 and agenda item 6, will remain confidential.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 01 September 2020 at 4:00pm, via Microsoft Teams.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....  
(Chairman)