

Minutes of the February 2024 Board of Directors (Governing Body) Meeting

Meeting subject: Regular Termly Meeting of the Governing Body

Meeting date: Tuesday 20th February 2024 17:00 – 19:00

Note: attendance by Zoom also permitted only where notice has been given in advance. (link to follow)

Date of previous meeting: 31st October 2023

Room: A203

Ex-officio members:	Invitations GAC members:
David Game – Principal & CEO	Jill Bainton (GAC Chair)
John Dalton – Co-Principal	Lindsay Badenoch
Funda Kavi – Director of Marketing & Operations	James Eytley
Dr John Sanders – Director of Higher Education	Philippe Herszaft
Mansour Kaveh – UFP Director (Chair)	Bill Brown
Marie Clark – Non-Executive Director	
<i>Remi Ferguson - Clerk to the Board</i>	

Minutes:

1. Welcome and introduction from the Chair

The Chair has welcomed all those present both in person and online.

2. Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy

PH sent his apologies.

LB sent her apologies as she was otherwise engaged

All other board and GAC members were in attendance

2.1 Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared prior to or at the start of the meeting and none arose during the course of the meeting.

3. Review of minutes from previous meeting, matters arising and actions

The minutes of the February 2024 meeting of the Board of Directors were agreed as a true and accurate record.

The action plan has been reviewed and any items that have been completed/resolved have been marked accordingly.

4. Main Business

4.1 Report from the latest meeting of the College Leadership Group CLG (JD)

The CLG met on 30th January 2024. The minutes have been circulated amongst the board members (paper D. refers). A few significant items arose that were not on the agenda but all departments used this meeting as a chance to share updates, developments and actions. The use of technology across the college was evaluated and it was agreed that the technology committee would convene to finalise any decisions relating to the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) which featured heavily at the CLG. Specifically how AI is used in

lessons and support teachers with their administrative workload. The CLG agreed that there needed to be huge Improvement in how we use technology to supporting teaching and learning as other schools are way ahead of us. The board noted an amendment to an action point which related to the integration of technology in the CLG action plan. This has been amended in the minutes.

4.2 Report from the School Academic Board (JD)

The Academic Monitoring Committee (AMC) met on 25th January 2024 to discuss academic causes for concern. The AMC have developed a framework on how the College will action causes for concern and what interventions are required. There was a focus on understanding who the concerns were, what actions to take, and how the AMC measures the impact of these interventions. The AMC will act as an integrated forum that mirrors, in its operations, the Safeguarding committee but for academic progress instead.

Strategic plans and direction

4.2.1 Boarding School developments (FK/JD)

Currently we have 106 beds in boarding and 52 beds in Drapery Place for 18+ students. BB has advised the Executive that if it thinks that the College will go over the registered numbers (380) then the College should apply for a material change via the Department for Education (DforE). The executive have taken note of this and have thanked BB for his advice.

FK reports that there are more 2nd year and intensive students this academic year. These numbers are increasing which is good because they should have a positive effect on continuing student number for A-Level and Foundation. HoB, Principals and Head of GCSE interviews prove effective. FK has suggested introducing interviews for UFP students beyond the academic interview. FK has shared that next year students who are aged 18 and over will stay in Urbanest City but will have a separate entrance to the boarders. The board will consider the recommendations and will support the UFP in alignment.

FK has shared that the academic summer programme will use the boarding house and campus over the summer period. The junior summer school provider (Academic Summer) will provide the summer school provision. The centre is quite well established. The Board have discussed the safeguarding implications of an external education provider hiring the campus for their own activities. The chair has recommended a separate meeting to address the safeguarding concerns.

4.2.2 DGC Liverpool update (FK)

FK has reported that LILA have been granted their sponsorship licence. There are 15-20 students starting in September 2024 with deposits paid which is extremely good news. There will be a further meeting tomorrow to discuss how LILA Liverpool as a project has developed. MK has proposed that in order for LILA to run the UFP, a franchise agreement should be implemented.

4.2.3 UFP developments (MK)

MK has shared that the UFP are busy dealing with Universities and the complications around providing predicted grades based on term one grades which are the minor modules. The universities are back in contact asking for updates and the volume of enquiries are very high. Staff recruitment exercises have continued with the appointment of a College Progression Officer. He also teaches Politics (maternity cover) and has a lot of SEN experience. A further appointment of an IELTS teacher and Administrator has been made.

MK has asked the Clerk to provide an update on the development of the Intranet which has been positive. MK has raised concerns around the number of offer letters needed to satisfy certain scholarship bodies. The administrative burden is particularly arduous and doesn't always yield positive results. The board have considered these implications and will continue to monitor the situation.

4.2.4 Marketing updates (FK)

This item has been sufficiently covered in previous agenda items.

4.2.5 Higher Education update (JS)

Papers E and E.1 have been circulated ahead of the meeting and refer to this agenda item. The board have reviewed the contents of the papers and accept the report as it was presented. DG has asked how the higher education student numbers compare to that of last year. JS has said that they are similar although sales have stagnated a bit. AW and her team have tried to increase the number of direct enrolments but JS has shared that most students come through agents. The Board have discussed the TEF briefing paper (Paper E.1.). JS has expanded upon his briefing paper and the TEF framework. The Chair has asked if this could affect other universities and their ability to grant progression agreements. JS was not sure however he has written to University of Hertfordshire to ask if they would consider the autonomous brands as separate entities. The Board await an update which they hope to have before the next meeting. The Chair has praised the way that JS has engaged in a dialogue with the OfS, TEF and other regulators as well as the University of Hertfordshire. support study skills.

4.3 Financial Viability and Sustainability

4.3.1 Management Accounts & Liquidity days forecasts (PH/JS)

In the absence of PH, JS has shared his interpretation of the management accounts. The Board have discussed the year end accounts with a view that a full draft set of accounts will be prepared. JS has explained what the definition of liquidity days are to the Board for which they are grateful. There has been a significant increase in income from DGHE which is reflected in the accounts. JS has concluded that we are in a good financial position.

4.4 Operational Risks and Mitigation

4.4.1 Safeguarding (JD)

JD has shared that Safeguarding is an ongoing matter that all departments address and monitor. JD has shared that the Safeguarding committee convenes on Fridays to discuss all cases and developments and that the committee functions exceptionally well. All Designated Safeguarding Leads are aware of who the causes of concerns are. DG raised several questions around Safeguarding on trips and educational visits, all of which JD has responded to. JD also shared that the policies will be updated in line with the relevant timetable.

4.4.2 Risk & Issues (JD)

Paper F. was circulated before the meeting and refers to this item. The Board agree to accept the paper as it was presented. JD has shared that the Risk Register needs to be updated and that any risks associated with any department must remain on the Boards radar. JD has shared that we are now compliant with filtering and monitoring rules and regulations and that reports and health and safety walks have been completed. JD has highlighted that the importance of compliance and has encouraged support from the board

to ensure that all areas are covered. The Board have discussed what arrangements are needed to ensure that the institution is inspection ready. The Board have raised their concerns around the cascading nature of the inspection framework and what wider implications this could have for inspection areas. The Board have discussed how the ISI approach inspections and the potential impacts on policy moving forward. BB has shared some anecdotal evidence around how inspections have been managed in other institutions and the Board thank him for sharing this information.

4.4.3 Prevent (JD)

Paper K refers to the Prevent Risk Assessment and was circulated ahead of the meeting. The Board agree to accept this paper as it was presented.

4.4.4 Inter-departmental impacts

The Board agree that this agenda item has been sufficiently covered in previous discussions.

4.5 Governance

4.5.1 Periodic Review of Governance Framework (JS)

JS has shared that it has been 3 years since the last review took place and that he is working on implementing the next review. An update will be shared at the next meeting.

4.5.2 Nominations and Remunerations Report

Paper H refers to the Nominations and Remunerations Report. The Board agree to accept the paper as it was presented. JE has posed a question regarding the required staffing levels in the boarding house. JB has clarified that LB has experience in boarding and these concerns have been addressed. Since then, the HoB has changed, and improvements have been seen across the boarding school.

4.5.3 GAC Annual Review Meeting Report

Paper I. refers to the GAC Annual Review Meeting Report. The Board agree to accept the paper as it was presented. JB has highlighted the importance of ensuring regular meetings take place and has asked that dates are shared well in advance to ensure maximum attendance. JB commented on the importance of boarding provision and asked that it remains at the top of the agenda. The Board were warm to this sentiment. JB asked if the Admissions criteria has been reviewed in light of the introduction of boarding school provision. JD confirmed that the Admissions criteria has been reviewed and will remain under his and FKs supervision. FK commented on the review of selection criteria and what changes to recruitment processes have been implemented. The GAC feel that this should be reviewed yearly.

JD has asked for a special meeting with DG, the GAC chair and other staff members to consider how responsibilities can be shared to reduce the burden on his remit. The Board discussed how current staff could be better utilised to relieve the burden on senior managers.

The Board have continued to discuss how JDs multiple portfolios could be split amongst the management team and the effect that the management team should be having on the organisations development.

4.6 Building and maintenance services (JD)

FK has shared that a new extractor will be installed in the kitchen.

All other updates will be circulated via email owing to the time constraints.

4.7 Support for 18+ in College Accommodation (FK)

FK has shared that her team and various welfare officers in the College continue to support students in 18+ accommodation. FK has shared that the allocation for 18+ next year will be a bit smaller but we expect to continue with the current support arrangements.

4.8 Bell Cambridge (FK)

DG has shared that good progress was made during negotiations but there are some complications with their managing trust which still need to be addressed. A more comprehensive update will be shared at the next meeting.

4.9 Admissions Consistency (MK)

Chair has asked that a policy be developed to ensure consistency as far as the UFP is concerned. JD has shared that this should be assessed on a case by case basis and that this should be considered when drafting a policy. The Board have agreed to consider this suggestion.

4.10 Franchise Fee for Constituent Colleges (MK)

The Board has discussed this item as far as LILA Liverpool is concerned but the Chair has asked for autonomy when dealing with UFP China. The board have agreed a fee for LILA Liverpool.

4.11 SEND Information Report (JD)

Paper L. refers to the SEND Information Report. The Board agree to accept the paper as it was presented.

5. Any other business

None

6. Date of next meeting – May 2024

The Board have agreed to set an exact date for the meeting in May in due course.

The meeting concluded at 19:14 with thanks given to all members present.