

The Henley College Board

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board held on Monday 1 February 2021 at 18.00 via remote participation

Agenda Item	Minutes	Action by
<p>BOARD: Trevor Watkins Emma Barklem Rebecca Chandler-Wilde Satwant Deol Brian Fennelly Lizzie Firth Vince Maltese James Lingard Dr Tim Lincoln Vince Maltese Chris Murray Justin Sutherland Andrew Unsworth Robyn Vitty Charles Wiggin Andrea Wood</p>		
<p>Independent Member/Chair Parent governor Independent Member Principal Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Parent governor Staff governor Staff governor Independent Member</p>		
<p>STUDENT GOVERNORS: Abigail Kennedy</p> <p>CLERK: Jacky Gearey</p> <p>SLT BY INVITATION: Tristan Arnison Julian Brinsford Eric Burrow Eamonn Egan Kathryn Mogford Ashok Patel</p> <p>Head of Faculty (HoF) Head of Faculty (HoF) Head of HR Vice Principal (VP) Head of Student Services (HSS) Director of Finance (FD)</p>		
3.1	<p>Opening of Meeting and Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 18.03</p>	
3.2	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from: 1. Alistair Wildman</p>	
3.3	<p>Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interests.</p>	
3.4	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting (i) Minutes of meeting of 7 December 2020 The Board approved the minutes of 7 December 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Confidential minutes (i) Minutes of Special meeting 27 November 2020 (ii) Minutes of 7 December 2020</p> <p>The Board approved the confidential minutes of both the 27 November and 7 December 2020 as an accurate record of the meetings to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Resolved that: (i) the Board agreed that the minutes of the 7 December 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair. (ii) the Board agreed that the confidential minutes of both the 27 November and 7 December 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.5	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes (unless covered by the agenda) Item 2.18 – to disaggregate attendance figures – to be done for QS meeting in March 2021. There were no other matters arising.</p>	

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	<p>Confidential Minutes All actions had been closed</p>	
3.6	<p>Emma Barklem arrived 18.20</p> <p>Principal's Report The Principal gave a presentation to the Board covering :</p> <p>Covid, online delivery and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College was open for vulnerable and Pathway students • Risk assessment has been updated and was ongoing • Testing is taking place weekly • Parents have been contacted requesting volunteers to help testing • Government is currently planning to open colleges after 8 March • Lessons, tutorials and support are being provided online • Careers' department continues to offer information via a fortnightly newsletter and the Careers Hub which is a new online area for students to access. There are virtual talks and meetings taking place during the lockdown period. <p>Survey Results – covering student, cross college and parental surveys The overall student satisfaction rate from the December 2020 student survey was 89.8%, up from 84.2% in 2019/20. The College had improved on several issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students felt that they were treated with respect • the College promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination • tutor support • would recommend the College to a friend: <p>The key area for monitoring were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning goals and target grades with teachers • wellbeing, exams and changes to the scheduled lessons <p>The Principal advised of the Ofqual proposals for the summer exams and that the College had sent their comments in but were waiting for a response. Principal asked if there were any questions:-</p> <p>Based on the information presented, the Board considered the desirability of an independent oversight of the surveys, however the HoF said this was a summary of outcomes as opposed to a detailed report which would be provided later on in the year. The Chair felt that this was a good suggestion and should be considered by the SLT.</p> <p>A discussion then centred on the curriculum Level 3 reforms. The VP explained about the difference between T levels and apprenticeships i.e. T levels and apprenticeships were similar, based upon the same standards designed by employers however, an apprentice spent most of their time in the workplace, learning on-the-job and is paid, whereas a T level student will spend most of their time in the classroom. The first T levels that the College was doing were in health and social care, followed by engineering and digital with the Principal saying that that this was where the demand was. Asked by the Board which of the local employers had shaped the decision for the College to take on the T Level in health and social care, the VP replied that it was the local care sector homes, primary schools and nurseries and it was one of the few qualifications that has a mandatory placement requirement. The Board wanted to know how local employers were involved in shaping the decisions about which T levels to offer and Principal explained that the College had sought out new employers for digital and engineering with Cisco, Softcat and BMW. The Heads of F explained that the range of choice was quite small at the moment.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Principal for her presentation. A further presentation from one of the College's external stakeholders was given by Tyrone Sterry, the Academy Manager from Ealing Trailfinders (ET) covering the elite rugby programme.</p>	

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	<p>The Board were very enthusiastic about this new partnership and both the Chair and Principal thanked TS for his presentation and for all his work especially with the Bucks and Brunel universities. The Board asked why Trailfinders choose to go into partnership with Henley college and TS said it was because the College was very ambitious for its students and this was a driving force.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) the Principal's Presentation was received by the Board</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) the Ealing Trailfinders Presentation was received by the Board</p>	
3.7	<p>Student Governors' Report</p> <p>The student governor covered online teaching stating that the student union was listening to other students' concerns and addressing areas for improvement that could be implemented for the next academic year. There were comments that some lessons had been too focused on individual work, and that students were not receiving the same level of insight from the teachers as before. As a positive, in some courses, there had been in-depth one to one feedback and progress reports from the teachers, which had been very helpful.</p> <p>Student union meetings had discussed ways to increase student engagement weekly to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller group exercises to encourage students getting to know each other and perhaps encourage more attendance and commitment; and • to either in person or via an online survey ask the students what issues they would like to be taught with the rationale that if students learnt about topics that they felt are collectively more relevant, then it was likely that they will be inclined to participate and engage more with the content. <p>The Chair asked if there had been any feedback from the students generally outside of the union regarding the above and the student governor had said there had been none. As an aside the Board asked if the student governors had taken part in the student survey and if they had any feedback. The student governor reaffirmed that she had taken part and concurred with the replies presented under 3.6.</p> <p>Resolved that the Student Governors' Report was received by the Board</p>	
3.8	<p>Approvals:</p> <p>The Chair explained that each of the following policies/codes had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Governance & Search committee in January:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair's job description – these are the normal tasks and duties expected of a Board Chair and Vice Chair – there were no changes but to be approved by the Board as it is shortly to recruit for a new Chair • Policy on Succession Planning – the main changes concerned the provision for an acting vice chair and change in review cycle to every 3 years. • Guidelines and Procedure for complaints against the Corporation, Board Members and the Clerk. – a new policy which sets out the procedure for making a complaint and also outlines the procedure that will be followed in the event of receipt of such a complaint. • Policy for the Appointment, Re-appointment and Removal of a Member - amended regarding section 3 re removal of a board member. The Board asked the changes and 	

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	<p>the Chair advised that this has been done with legal advice to ensure a more straightforward and less complex process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics – minor changes - (i) Data Protection Act (DPA) amended to 2018 and (ii) changes to role title. • Code of Conduct – minor changes - (i) DPA amended to 2018 (ii) EFA and SFA amalgamated to ESFA and references in Appendix 6. • Role of Committee Chairs – specifically to cover the approval of minutes which are now required to be turned around within 7 days of receipt and if not will be deemed as approved by default. • Calendar of meetings for 2021 – 2022 – the Clerk advised that dates can be subject to change. <p>The Chair asked if there were any questions and there were none and the above were all approved.</p> <p>Resolved that the above role descriptions, policies, procedures, codes and calendar were received and approved by the Board:</p>	
3.9	<p>Safeguarding and Prevent</p> <p>The HSS confirmed the continued support for students including learning support, tutor monitoring and student engagement in lessons, There was an increase in the number of students on the safeguarding register and included students involved in social services, looked after children and other significantly vulnerable young people. Additionally the number of students with serious mental health issues had risen significantly.</p> <p>As previously advised the threat of terrorism was “severe” in the country and all students and staff had received Prevent training.</p> <p>The HSS reaffirmed the actions that had been previously verbally outlined at previous Board meetings. namely;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receipt of weekly reports from admissions, stating which students have disclosed mental health or SEN difficulties, exam access arrangements, EHCP or medical conditions on their applications. 2. Peer Mentoring training and a peer mentoring system is now in place. 3. Weekly “lunch club” aimed at ASD, anxious students. 4. Relevant policies have been implemented. 5. A Mental Wellbeing Working Group is being set up to support staff and students. <p>Board asked if Student Services had noticed any particular issues with the recent intake of students in light of Covid. HSS said that it was no worse than in previous years, the only point to note was that the students have had little time to build relationships and friendship groups and of greater concern will be the issues when they comeback full time.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the HSS and her staff for all their work.</p> <p>Resolved that: (i) the Safeguarding and Prevent Report was received by the Board</p>	
3.10	<p>HR Update</p> <p>The survey went out to all staff w/c 16 November 2020 completing on 4 December, using the same questions as the June 2019 survey to allow comparison. A comparison summary of the overall survey results from both surveys was available and would be sent separately to the Board however the key points were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the response level was 77.8% compared to June's response level of 54.6% 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive responses (Agree and Strongly Agree) constituted 56.1% of all responses, an increase from 36% • negatives responses (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) constituted 19.1% a decrease from 41.3% • neutral responses were 24.2%, an increase from 21.2%. <p>Although there was an overall move towards positive responses, there are a few areas where there was little change or a small increase to more negative comments. It was suggested that the mid-point be removed but the Board felt removing the neutral score would skew the agree/disagree responses. The question regarding the confidence in leadership was raised as it had now improved to 55% with 24% neutral and although an improvement it did flag reduced confidence in leadership and that transparency was crucial. The Board said that the surveys should validate findings and the Chair explained that it was essential to get the balance correct in the amount of data to be provided and asked if there was a review meeting after the survey had been completed to address any issues that would have been surfaced. The Head of HR confirmed that one was to be arranged for this particular issue however when previously arranged no one had attended. The Chair asked the staff governor for his views who confirmed that there was a more positive shift in feeling now in the College.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of HR for his work on this.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the HR update was received by the Board (ii) Clerk to send survey results and comparison report to the Board 	Clerk
3.11	<p>Strategic Plan Update</p> <p>The Principal presented a slide with the strategic objectives for 2021 – 2024/25 identifying the following points to be looked at although much of this was based on the two previous strategy sessions that had been held with Sir Frank McLoughlin in the preceding weeks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The future structure of THC; merger or standalone? <p>Objectives - what would success look like?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exceptional Student Experience 2. Engaged, Creative and Collaborative workforce 3. Strong and Sustainable Finance 4. Growth – Develop new markets/courses and increase from existing markets 5. Modernise Curriculum, Estates, Systems and IT 6. Digital First 7. Further Develop Patronships, Relationships and Brand <p>Board was concerned about student attendance/engagement, as affected by the pandemic. Student attendance at classes held on site is 86%, a small improvement on this time last year, in spite of the pandemic. Engagement with students is currently high with almost all student engaged in learning. The Board asked for a summary of how student engagement is being monitored at the next meeting.</p> <p>The HoFs explained that staff were recording all students engaged, this would give an indication of student progression and enable the College to direct students to the correct member of staff for help. Additionally alternative methods of engaging students were being used to engage those students who were having difficulty. The Board appreciated the difficulty in the tracking of such students and asked for a summary of this complex and positive method of tracking for the next meeting. Principal said this would be done.</p> <p>The Principal made reference to the public accounts committee report and comments therein.</p>	

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	<p>Principal provided an update from the strategy sessions and that this would be presented at the March meeting. The Chair felt that this was a good framework to work from and that some areas might need further development in light of the recent FE White Paper. It should be a living document, being continuously developed.</p> <p>Look at strategic objectives 2021-24 Principal asked if there were any others to be added? The Board made reference to the strategy sessions in which there had been discussion with members of the SLT around the inclusion of objectives feedback, employability and the use of a structured skills builder. The Principal said that this would be captured within the documents to be provided.</p> <p>Principal advised of the timescales for providing a strategic plan with the decision regarding the College structure to be signed off at the Board meeting 28 June 2021. The Chair asked the Board Members to provide any feedback before the 24 March meeting to ensure all comments were covered and the Principal additionally requested that should there be any further comments for any Board members to contact her regarding this.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Strategic Plan Update was received by the Board (ii) Principal to provide a summary of tracking student engagement for the next meeting (iii) Principal to provide a prioritised list of objectives to be presented and discussed at the Board meeting 24 March 2021 	Principal Principal
3.12	<p>FEC Recommendations Update Action Plan – Response to FEC (latest report – October 2020)</p> <p>The main action plan which had been set up to provide responses to the FEC recommendations was presented to the Board. Against each recommendation/FEC concern there was an SLT action and completion date. The action plan as presented was for information and discussion with the Principal advising that good progress was being made by the College to mitigate any risks of under-achievement.</p> <p>The Board felt that although this was helpful but that an additional column need to be added for “success measures” added detailing the actions output and who was tasked with the action, currently the document was perceived to be too vague. The Principal said that this would be done.</p> <p>Board Effectiveness</p> <p>The Chair went through the action plan which had been generated from the recent Board Effectiveness Review which he said had been useful. Again it was felt that this ought to have an additional column as above to cover the “success measures”. The report is to be revisited and an agenda item for ongoing improvement to be added together with the strategic plan.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the FEC Recommendations action plan was received by the Board (ii) the action plan to be amended with an additional actions’ output column as per above – Principal to action 	Principal
3.13	Recruitment of Board Chair	

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	<p>The Chair referenced the recent strategy session and the GS committee meeting where it was recommended that the College should enlist the assistance of an external recruitment agency in addition to asking for any expressions of interest from current Board members. The Board felt that it was essential to have leadership skills but that an educational background was not essential although desirable, however in light of discussions regarding the strategic plan, this would have an impact on the choice of Chair. The Chair asked the members to contact him if they had any questions regarding the role. The Board approved going out to an external recruitment agency.</p> <p>The Clerk stated that the Chair's term of office was due to expire at the beginning of April 2021 after consultation with members of the Governance and Search committee, it was unanimously agreed to recommend an extension to the end of the current academic year, July 2021.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) Clerk to go out to an external recruitment agency for recruitment of new Chair (ii) The Board approved an extension of the Chair's term of office until end of July 2021</p>	Clerk
3.14	<p>Reports for information:</p> <p>Governance & Search committee report – GS Committee Chair gave a brief verbal feedback on the meeting which had discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current Board profile, skills requirement and the committee memberships. • three expressions of interest for the vacancy on the Board had currently been received • Board SAR was discussed which highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the issue of balance between Board and SLT members and the role of the governors, both of which were in line with the recent Board Effectiveness Review ○ the feeling of not understanding the learner experience - the Board agreed that this had been impacted by Covid. <p>Ombudsman Report – referred to at a previous meeting, the Chair advised this has now been concluded and all parties informed.</p> <p>Risk Register – this was presented for information and had been reviewed and updated at the last Audit meeting. The Chair asked if there were any comments and there were none.</p> <p>Resolved that the following reports were received by the Board:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) the verbal update of the Governance & Search committee (ii) the verbal update on the Ombudsman Report (iii) Risk Register</p>	
3.15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Board wanted to say thank you to the Principal, SLT and staff who had all worked tirelessly over this very testing period and that they were all to be highly commended. Additionally the Board wanted to express their thanks to the Chair for all his work over such a trying and demanding period.</p>	
3.16	<p>Board Impact</p> <p>The Governors were asked to consider how they had impacted on the College since the last meeting.</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board strategy sessions • Questioning on the actions plans • Independent overview of surveys • Principal's presentation was a positive change and encouraged debate 	
3.17	<p>Board Conduct of Meeting</p> <p>The Board was asked to confirm that the meeting has been conducted in an open manner, that all governors have been able to participate and contribute to discussions and that all members of the Governing Board will have access to non-confidential minutes. The Board so agreed.</p>	
3.18	<p>Items to be taken forward to next Board meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Updated FEC Action Plan (ii) Draft strategic plan (iii) Chair's appointment 	
2.18	<p>Date and Time of Next Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 24 March 2021 at 18.00 2) 28 June 2021 at 18.00 	
	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19.58</p>	
	<p>MINUTES of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair</p> <p>..... on</p> <p>.....</p>	