

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board
held on 14th June 2017
at the Sheepen Road Campus**

Present

Christopher Bridge, *in the Chair*
Alison Andreas
Brenda Baker
David Gask

David Gronland
Peter Hempstead
Kevin Prince
Richard Wainwright

In Attendance

Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
Gary Horne	Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development
Shaun McConnell	Executive Director: Human Resources
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

Apologies for absence were received from TJ Collinson, Mark Davies, David Kerridge, Bryn Morris, Karen Tarling and Sue Thompson-Arnold.

1. Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest

None.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2017 (CIC/17/4/1) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

None, other than on the agenda.

4. Chairs Announcements/Action since last meeting

- 4.1. It was reported that the new Dean of Higher Education would take up his post on 1st August 2017.
- 4.2. Meetings with the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) continue. A teleconference was scheduled for the following day.
- 4.3. Security around the College has been increased following the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London. Everyone coming onto campus by car now has to show their identity badges, rather than just the drivers of vehicles. A security adviser has been working with the College on a lock down procedure. A Prevent Strategy Action Group has been meeting regularly and the policy is being developed. It was noted that some HE provision is delivered through two sub-contractors; one which has sites in London, Bolton and Manchester, and the other in which students are located in large sporting centres. The College has to work closely with those sub-contractors to ensure that the security arrangements we are advising our own students about are being replicated, and to look at their safeguarding measures. This has been added to the Risk Register.
- 4.4. The formal launch of the Stem Centre at the College at Braintree is on Friday, 16th June 2017.
- 4.5. The FE Awards ceremonies are on Tuesday, 20th June at Braintree and Thursday, 22nd June at Colchester. The staff annual award winners will be announced on Friday, 30th June.

5. **Principal's Report – April 2017**

The Principal presented her written report (CIC/17/3/3).

- i. It was report that attendance at this summer's GCSE examinations (two English and two maths papers) was better than in previous years. Attendance in maths was around 85%, slightly lower in English, compared to 70% attendance across both subjects last year. This is significant in terms of success data as unlike Functional Skills, which is either a pass or a fail, even the lowest grade at GCSE counts as a pass, although it is hoped that as many students as possible achieve the higher grades. Although the College is pleased at the higher attendance, it is not necessarily good enough. A number of strategies were put in place locally to encourage attendance, such as providing breakfast or snacks.
- ii. It was noted that Anne Milton, MP for Guildford, had been appointed Minister for Apprenticeships, replacing Robert Halfon.
- iii. The College continues to struggle with apprenticeship enrolments. It is felt that this is partly to do with the Government strategy around the reforms. The contract, which is 30-40 pages long, is challenging for a number of employers. Smaller employers who used to get apprentices for free now have to pay and levy payers are not prepared to release staff for a day a week (under the new rules apprentices must spend 20% of their time engaged in off the job training for which they must be paid). If not overcome, this could become real risk for the forward budget and three year plan. A Governor asked about apprenticeships for students who already have a degree. It was confirmed that unlike the old frameworks, students with a degree are able to enrol on the new standards but a number of areas, for example business studies, have not come forward with standards yet. The College would like to put some of its own staff on an apprenticeship standard but is currently unable to do so in some areas for this same reason.
- iv. Governors are welcome to attend the Wellbeing Day being organised for 30th June. The programme will be forwarded when published.

6. **Letter of Variation from Barclays Bank**

Governors were reminded that at the Board meeting on 15th March 2017 they had received a Letter of Variation from Barclays Bank PLC setting out amendments to a facility agreement dated 28th May 2008 and had resolved to accept the amendments. The Letter of Variation required the College to provide security including a first legal mortgage over the Clacton campus on or before 30th April 2017. This deadline was not achieved, and the Bank intends to issue a new Letter of Variation in substantially the same format as the earlier one, with the date by which the College is required to provide a first legal mortgage extended to 31 July 2017. The College had asked for the Letter of Variation to be available for the Board to approve at this meeting, but it had not been received. It was RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Corporation Chair to approve and accept the Letter of Variation on behalf of the Board, when received, and to agree who is authorised to sign the Letter of Variation.

The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development reported that the Bank has agreed a stepped increase in the interest rate margin of 1% with effect from August 2017 and a further 1% in August 2018. As part of the negotiations, the Bank had tried to persuade the College to provide security over the Braintree campus, but the College stood its ground and the Bank came back with the stepped increase without the requirement for security.

7. **Audit and Compliance Committee**

CIC/17/4/4, Minutes of the Audit and Compliance Committee meeting held on 8th June 2017, were received and presented by the Committee Chair, Kevin Prince

7.1. Internal Audit Plan 2017-18

The Committee had discussed with the Internal Auditor the proposed Internal Audit Plan 2017-18. The Committee felt that the proposed number of Internal Audit days (70) was too high and suggested that it could be reduced to 35-40 days. A number of areas in the plan (safeguarding, risk management and governance) had been reviewed on numerous occasions recently with outcomes moving towards greater assurance, and the Committee did not feel they needed to be revisited in the next 12 months. The Principal was asked to review the plan with the Internal Auditor and bring forward a revised plan for review by the Committee Chair prior to going to the July Board meeting for approval.

7.2. Corporate Strategic Risk Register

CIC/17/4/5, Corporate Strategic Risk Register, was received and considered. It was noted that two new risks had been added:

- (i) IT security issues - it was reported that over the last month ten task and finish actions had been implemented and are continuing.
- (ii) Data protection - work is in progress to prepare for the implementation of the EU wide General Data Protection Regulations in 2018. Information will be brought to the Board in due course.

7.3. Policy Review

The Committee had reviewed a number of policies which were being recommended to the Board for approval. The Committee had discussed at length the reasons for some of the proposed changes, for example, extending the reference period for sickness absence pay from 12 to 24 months and were reassured that this is not a change in contractual arrangements. The introduction of the Bradford Factor scoring system for sickness absence was also questioned. This is a tool which helps to identify patterns which involve frequent short-term absences rather than highlighting more genuine long term illness. This has been discussed with the Unions and accepted. Training on the policies for Line Managers is included in the summer staff development programme.

The Board received and noted CIC/17/4/6, executive summary of policy changes 2017 and APPROVED:

- CIC/17/4/7, Sickness Absence Policy
- CIC/17/4/8, Staff Disciplinary Policy
- CIC/17/4/9, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, and
- CIC/17/4/10, Capability Policy for Staff

The Executive Director: Human Resources reported that he was working on a Wellbeing Policy. The draft Policy was not ready in time to take to the Audit and Compliance Committee on 8th June but he would like to take to the Board for approval in July if possible. It was agreed to take the Policy to the Resources Committee on 11th July prior to the Board on 26th July.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 26th July at 4.30pm. The meeting will be preceded with a Board presentation at 4.00pm.

The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development gave apologies for the meeting as he will be required to attend the Tribunal hearing on the Lennartz appeal on 26th July unless the Revenue withdraws.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

There were no items.

PART II – These minutes are not confidential but the associated papers are confidential

10. Part II Minutes

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2017 (CIC/17/4/11) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.