

## CAPITAL CITY COLLEGE GROUP BOARD: 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022

### MINUTES

**PRESENT** Alastair Da Costa (Chair), Amelia Sussman, Anthony Smith, Chris Hyams (via Teams), Sanna Jordansson (via Teams), Sharon Saxton, Toyin Odutayo (via Teams), Asfa Sohail (via Teams), Angela Herbert (via Teams), Nicole Morgan, Vincent Egunlae (via Teams), Weiye Kou, Roy O'Shaughnessy, Desmond Corlis, Chanel Crooks, Susan Benhene (via Teams)

**IN ATTENDANCE** Colin Booth, Graham Drummond (Clerk), Rachael White, Kurt Hintz, Colleen Marshall

Steve Waterston (via Teams) for item 1, Pablo Lloyd (via Teams) for item 7, Jacquie Chapman for item 7, Hilary Moore (via Teams) for item 9

For item 8 (via Teams): Priscilla Nantongo, Tim Milasevicius, Kerry Leprince, Anthony Robinson, Elisha Lashley and Ahsev Merdjan

**APOLOGIES** Sanna Jordansson (for lateness)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None

Chanel Crooks and Susan Benhene were welcomed to their first meeting as student board members.

#### 1. T LEVEL TRANSITION

Action

In line with the Board's training plan a presentation was provided by Steve Waterston, the T Level project lead at the Association of Colleges (AoC). The following was noted:

- The piloted delivery of T Levels started in 2020 and the first cohort of students completed the two years of study in September of this year;
- Their focus is on developing skills for employment and they are equivalent to 3 A levels and combine classroom with practical learning. They also include 315 hours of industrial placement;
- Teaching space should be more flexible in order to allow for practical learning and group work. Equipment should be of industry standard;
- T levels are not re-packaged BTECs and require staff to be upskilled in order for the qualifications to be taught in line with expectations. Consideration will also need to be given to the admissions criteria for these courses as they require a high level of motivation and commitment;
- There is no requirement in relation to GCSE maths or English in order to pass a T level, however in line with the conditions of funding requirements student must continue to study level 2 English and/or maths if they have not achieved at least a level 4.

The Board asked a number of questions, and the following was noted:

- Currently the roll out of T levels does not include Physical Education and Public Services, however there are consultations underway on the possibility of launching T levels in in these areas in the future;
- Analysis of the first cohort at a national level show that success rates for the Digital T levels have been lower than the other piloted areas and the take up for Construction has been low, mainly because entry into the industry does not necessitate a level 3 qualification;
- Of the 1,200 students who achieved a T level in 2022, 50% progressed to University, however currently the majority of Russell Group universities have not yet indicated whether they will accept T levels as part of their admissions criteria.

The Board expressed concern as to whether there were any potential social mobility implications for the take up and the achievement rates of T levels and whether these were lower or higher for students from a diverse background. It was noted that analysis in this regard was not yet available, however when it was, it would be circulated to the Board.

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The Board agreed that an update should be provided at every meeting to ensure that progress with respect to preparation for T level delivery is monitored. KH

## 2. MINUTES / NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes from the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and the notes from the workshop held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were accepted as an accurate record.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that were not included within the agenda.

## 4. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A quality update report which included an analysis of general qualifications outcomes, the national student survey and a summary of the quality improvement plans was considered and received. It was noted that:

- GCSE high grade achievement (9-4) for English and maths was 31.4% and 23.7% respectively, which is above national averages;
- The percentage of students achieving A\*- C at A level was 64.7% which is 15.5% higher than the percentage achieved in 2018/19, which due to the pandemic is the last comparable year. It was further noted that this rate would need to be at or around 70% if achievement is to be comparable to other sixth form colleges not operating within an FE environment;
- The Alps score which is a value-added measure for A levels indicates that City & Islington were 5 and Westminster Kingsway were 8. The validity of this measure is questionable due to the absence of reliable data, however it is recognised that improvement in quality at the Kings Cross site is needed;
- Included within the report was a summary of the National Student Survey which is for prescribed HE students (i.e. who are on loan funded courses) for which only 45 students are within its scope. However, the outcome of this survey indicates that overall satisfaction is below the sector average and has declined over the last three years. Only 29 students had responded and the courses for which 10 students had indicated their dissatisfaction are being taught out, due to low recruitment. It was further noted that it is expected that CCCG will be invited to make a submission for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) awards, for which the threshold for the total number of students includes those studying prescribed and non prescribed courses;
- A summary of the Group's quality improvement plans was provided within the report and full copies had been placed within the reference section of the agenda. For this year functional skills at level 1 and value added for A level are included within the areas for improvement.
- Achievement of external examinations on Vocational Related Qualifications (e.g. BTECs) has been lower than in previous years because students have been unused to sitting examinations (due to the pandemic) and only two attempts are permitted. It was further commented by the staff governor that within the business department in CBAT staff are helping students to prepare for examinations more thoroughly, through an increased use of mock examinations as part of the learning process;
- The Individual Learner Record (ILR) data used to confirm the achievement outcomes contained within 2021/22 self assessment report (SAR) has recently been submitted to the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA). The SAR is indicating that across the Group the majority of teaching and learning is good or better and therefore it contains an overall grade 2 assessment; this is subject to further internal scrutiny and the validation of the quality oversight committee at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November, and the approval of the Board at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December;

## 5. ENROLMENT UPDATE

A report providing an update on student recruitment following the main enrolment period was considered and received. It was noted that:

- Currently, the Group has 8,184 16-18 students which is 86.9% of target. This figure is expected to increase, however even if the best estimate of the final amount which is 8,442 is achieved this is 447 below the Lagged Learner Number for 22/23 (based on 21/22 recruitment). This will have a financial impact of c£2.8m;
- Adult learner recruitment is 94.9% of the previous year's total recruitment which is marginally below the level at the same time last year.
- An analysis of student recruitment indicates that the level of progressing students and applications were higher than in previous years, however there have been significant fewer walk-in enrolments

as compared to previous years. Indications are that 16-18 students are staying at school sixth forms rather than enrolling at college.

Whilst the Board recognised that this recruitment trend is being replicated at many other London based colleges, it is of considerable concern and impacts significantly on the Group's strategic ambitions. Measures to mitigate the financial impact were to be discussed and noted as part of the next agenda, however the Board stressed the importance of using students to act as ambassadors for the promotion of the benefits enrolling at CCCG colleges. The Excellence Awards which had taken place a few weeks previously were also highlighted as effective way of demonstrating the success that many CCCG students experience.

## 6. FINANCE UPDATE

A report providing the pre-audited financial position for 2021/22 was considered and received. The Chief Finance Officer provided a summary of the reports and the following was noted:

- The operating position is reported to be a deficit of £952k (prior to pension adjustment) as compared to the break-even position that had been anticipated at the Board's last meeting in July;
- Since the July board meeting there have been some significant variances in some cost centres e.g. utilities (£693k) and examinations (£900k), which have contributed to this disappointing financial performance;

The Board questioned some of the contents of the report and the following was further noted:

- The budgeting for the exam cost centre had been based on the previous year's expenditure and was not challenged sufficiently as the time of the budget setting process;
- There will be a statutory adjustment within the accounts of £1.6m in relation to the sale of the Marlborough building which was sold below the value stated within the balance sheet.

With respect to the Marlborough building it was further noted that as part of the sale agreement CCCG could potentially receive an overage payment of £25 per square foot on the development of additional accommodation on the site. Any such payment would be treated as a capital receipt and recorded separately within the accounts, as previously agreed by the Board.

RW

Lastly, it was noted that the Educational EBITDA is £7,323k which is above the amount spent on capital investment and therefore the level of cash has increased over the year. A view was expressed that this could be treated as the overall indicator of financial performance as opposed to the operational deficit which included accounting adjustments such as depreciation which did not equate to cash. It was agreed that this idea would be discussed in more detail by the Finance Oversight Group.

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A revised three-year financial forecast was considered and received. The following was noted:

- Included within the report was an analysis of forecast movements in costs and income. Assuming no mitigation, the forecast operating deficit for 22/23 is a deficit of £5.1m and for 23/24 the deficit is forecast to be £8.2m;
- The senior leadership team have been drawing up a savings plan which at the time of the meeting has identified £3.8m worth of savings. Included within this plan has been the identification of 56 roles as being potentially redundant on the basis of them not directly contributing to the student experience; a significant proportion of these posts will be subject to a vacancy freeze with the remaining being consulted upon as part of re-structuring process which will commence after the half term break. It is anticipated that the consultation on these posts will cease by the end of January 2023. The Board further noted that it is estimated that there will be £1.5m worth of redundancy costs associated with this, which will be treated as an exceptional item within the 2022/23 accounts;
- There are some non-teaching areas and management posts which the senior team are still looking to derive savings from, for example within Human Resources and Marketing. It was further noted that the executive team have looked to minimise the impact on learners in deciding which roles are at risk, rather than offering voluntary redundancy to all staff. ~~that voluntary redundancy as the basis to reduce staffing levels, but rather decisions as to which roles are at risk is being determined on the basis of minimising operational risk to the organisation.~~ The need to keep specific staff with key skills has therefore been an important part of this decision-making process.

The Board continued to provide further challenge and it was noted that:

- The level of contingency had been increased within the budget to £3m, however the Board emphasized the importance of having a robust budgeting environment across the organisation;
- A cashflow statement for August and September had not been included within the reports, as the finance team are still working on its contents. Cash however is strong, with there being 85 days of operating cash within the accounts which equates to £27m;
- The Group continues efforts to increase its average class size, which is currently at around 15, however the target of achieving 17 will not be met. It was further noted that the ability of a college to manage costs in line with a decreasing recruitment trend has a lead time of around 2 to 3 years, as a significant proportion of costs are fixed and cannot be varied during the year;
- The decline in recruitment, particularly with respect to 16-18 students is to be treated as a trend and therefore senior leaders should be prudent in their estimates of numbers. For example, it should be assumed that the 22/23 final number for 16-18s will be 8300 and for the following year plans should be based on recruiting 8000, until and unless there is evidence of growth;
- There continues to be opportunities to increase the amount of income derived from adult teaching and learning, as up to 103% of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) can be claimed, although the financial contribution to overheads is less as compared to 16-18 teaching and learning.

## 7. CEO REPORT

The CEO presented his report which included the contents of a review of the 2020/23 strategic plan which had been carried out by the senior leadership team. Whilst the concerns of the senior team and the Board were focussed on the ability to achieve financial sustainability, it was noted that with respect to other aspects of the plan there has been considerable progress, for example the self-assessment process has confirmed that teaching and learning is consistently good across the organisation.

Reports from all three colleges and the training arm were attached to the report and were considered and received.

An update report on Visionnaires was provided by its CEO, Pablo Lloyd. The following was noted:

- 1000 people have now benefited from the programmes, webinars and mentoring provided by Visionnaires since 2019;
- Two additional colleges from the Midlands, BMET and North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College have joined as licensed partners;
- Roy O'Shaughnessy has joined as a board member;
- Visionnaires is currently looking for corporate sponsors, with the aim of making entrepreneurship more accessible to members of the community who lack the social capital needed to make a business successful.

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An update report on 01 Founders was presented by its CEO, Jackie Chapman. It was noted that:

- Discussions with Harvey Nash about potential investment have failed to progress to a final offer;
- In order to ensure the financial sustainability of the 01 Founders, CCCG will be taking on the day to day running costs of 01 Founders, with AEB funding being claimed for first and second year students. With these arrangements in place it is anticipated that a contribution of £300k will be made.

## 8. STUDENT UPDATE

Priscilla Nantongo presented CONEL's student report and the following was noted:

- Over 1000 students attended the freshers fayre at both Tottenham and Enfield. The purpose of the events is to highlight to students the enrichment opportunities available to them, with 31 organisation attending the Tottenham event and 27 attending the Enfield event;
- A total of 15 activities / events were delivered as part of Black History month.

Tim Milasevicius presented WKC's student report and the following was noted:

- Class and student representatives have been elected and appointed across the College, as detailed within the report;

- A freshers fayre has recently taken place organised by student representatives showcasing the enrichment and local support services available to students.

Kerry Leprince presented CIC's student report and the following was noted:

- Not all student representative positions have been appointed to yet, however the process to do so is underway;
- Elections for the student union president position are currently underway.

## **9. SAFEGUARDING**

The annual safeguarding report was presented by the Group's designated lead for safeguarding, Hilary Moore. The following was noted:

- The total number of cases during 2021/22 was 1475, which is similar to the figure reported prior to the pandemic in 2018/19;
- Mental health continues to be the main category of concern for the majority of safeguarding cases;
- All staff are required to complete a safeguarding module prior to joining the organisation.

The link governor for safeguarding, Nicole Morgan meets with Hilary on a termly basis and expressed her satisfaction with respect to the robustness and effectiveness of the Group's safeguarding arrangements.

An updated safeguarding policy was received and approved by the Board.

## **10. REPORT FROM SEARCH COMMITTEE**

A report from the Search Committee was considered and received. It was noted that:

- There continues to be a co-opted vacancy on the audit committee, which has been re-advertised;
- Governor appraisals are ongoing.

A discussion between independent members of the Board took place, for which a confidential minute was taken.

## **11. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

A report was noted and received.

## **12. QUALITY**

A report was noted and received.

## **13. RISK REGISTER**

A report was noted and received.