

# Minutes of the Search Committee (Via Video Conference)

**Date: 20 October 2020**

**Present:** Mr N Chohan (Principal)  
Mrs J Beaumont (Chair)  
Mr J Egan  
Dr C Forrest  
Mr P Webley (External Co-option)

**In attendance:** J Stott (Clerk)

**Apologies:** -

**Meeting commenced:** 17.30

**Meeting closed:** 18:50

---

**08/20 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest**

John Egan declared that he is a neighbour of one of the applicants.

**09/20 To agree agenda and order of business as circulated**

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

**10/20 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**11/20 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**12/20 Performance Review**

**a) To consider the analysis from the 2020 Corporation Performance Review Questionnaire**

The Clerk reported an overall score increase from 4.4 up to 4.61 but with Q10 again scoring the least re the makeup of diversity and ethnicity. Discussions then took place on each section. In terms of the volume of papers, the Principal added that he didn't want to overload governors with too many papers to allow time to encourage debate and effective questioning. It was queried if we should increase the length of meetings to 2.5 hrs in case we needed the time and it was agreed to add the potential for meetings to run for longer if required.

A member commented that he felt it unusual that the full Risk Register is not reported to the Corporation. The Clerk confirmed that it is shared electronically

with members each year and uploaded to the Corporation Portal.

It was queried if there is sufficient ability for governors to state what issues they want to concentrate on as a priority in the year ahead and whether it was worth a debate. The Principal responded that agendas are set by College cycle rather than particular themes but that should a governor want to add something, then we would always pick that up and remain flexible, adding or updating reports where required. The new 1:1 meetings being introduced would be another way of addressing this.

**ACTION:** For the next training session, the Clerk was asked to produce a list of the ways in which governors can interact with College life eg. walkthroughs, Student Council meetings, Safeguarding roles, CV Coaching etc with a few lines about what is involved to inform all governors.

**b) To consider the analysis from the 2020 Committee Performance Review Questionnaire**

The Clerk highlighted the very high scores from this review and went through each section for comment. It was noted that there was no mention of the move to video conferencing. A member informed the committee of an AoC report on the impact of virtual governing which will be interesting and should be available to read by Thursday. Some feel it could be the way forward running on-line meetings, though the consensus seems to be a blended approach. For the college, it feels we have had a smooth transition to online meetings.

**13/20 To consider:**

**i) The outcome of the 2020 Skills Audit**

The Clerk presented the outcome highlighting that we currently have 3 vacancies. The two key areas identified from the audit were the need for a member with an accountancy background and one coming from a large employer for potential awareness of the district and regional aspect of where education and training is going. After a discussion it was agreed that we do not need to necessarily focus on a large employer as smaller companies could also have a lot to offer. It is more about the person's engagement with education and networking as opposed to the size of the company.

**ii) Individual Record of Mandatory Training**

The Clerk was pleased to report that all external members are up to date with their training.

**14/20 To consider where we are at with filling the vacancies on the Corporation**

The Clerk reported on the large scale recruitment campaign at the start of the year where we filled 2 vacancies, but still have another 3 to fill and maybe 2 more by the end of the year. We have received 4 enquiries of interest to decide if we want to interview via a video conference. After a short discussion it was agreed all applicants look strong on paper so would be invited for an interview.

**ACTION:** The Clerk to arrange some suitable dates in November.

**15/20 To consider the draft Chair/Vice Chair Meetings with Individual Member Template**

At the last Search meeting it was agreed to consider individual meetings but with Covid it has been put on hold. These could potentially take place via telephone or video conference. The Clerk then asked members for comment on the template.

As discussed earlier, it was suggested adding something about whether there are any issues or themes anyone may want covered in Corporation or Committee meetings. Under Personal Ambitions, it was agreed to change this to Personal Development as a heading. Another suggestion was to make each governor's responses from the questionnaires available to both themselves and the Chair to help form discussions which was agreed we could do. Also to make governors' action points part of succession planning for the board as a whole so people can be ready to step into positions if they become available. Under Value Added, it was agreed to add something about how each takes value from being a board member at the College and to emphasise this more.

A discussion took place around student governors and how they are empowered to take on the status of the position. Support is available to them from NUS funding through ETF, but could we add something about bringing out the student voice.

It was agreed to introduce individual meetings from the change of Chair at the start of next year and share with the December Corporation the new structure.

**16/20 To consider the 2019/20 Individual Member Attendance Report**

The Clerk reported excellent member attendance this last academic year, that we were well above national average in benchmarking, and how good it is to see this level of engagement despite the pandemic.

**17/20 To review the Governance Risks, mitigation and levels of assurance within the Risk Register**

The Clerk invited comments on the governance risks we have identified and the mitigations in place. On failure to have a diverse board, it was queried if we should add this as a risk to the register so we have a recurring theme to concentrate on and it was agreed a good idea. We could also add something about Covid-19: the transition has been smooth, but it may be we want to acknowledge the transition. An area to consider with on-line meetings is the impact to new members who may find it harder without established relationships in place. As some human connection has been lost, it was agreed to build into meetings a 15-20 min general catch up before the meeting starts.

It was felt the main risk with online meetings is in maintaining proper governance: eg enabling engagement; scrutiny; participation and confidence to speak up.

**ACTION:** The Clerk to build some extra time into meetings and add the ideas discussed into the risk register to circulate for comment.

**18/20 To consider for recommendation to the Corporation the re-appointment of Members whose term of office expires during the academic year 2020/21**

There are 4 members whose term of office is up this academic year: Colin Forrest, Phil Hunter, Kerry Robinson and Catherine O'Connor. We will be asking staff for nominations for the two staff members whose term of office is also coming to an end.

Colin Forrest announced that he would not be putting himself forward for another term of office. He expressed how greatly he has valued his time and involvement with the college and it is with sadness that the College will be saying goodbye to Colin.

<p><b>It was agreed to recommend the reappointments of Phil Hunter Kerry Robinson and Catherine O'Connor for a further term of office.</b></p>
--

**19/20 To consider a Review of the Code of Governance for 2019/20, including planning to review the Corporations 'Public Value Statement'**

The Clerk confirmed he and SMT have been through and updated the evidence with any new text set out in red. Members agreed it looks comprehensive.

**20/20 To review the Committee's Terms of Reference**

This is looked at annually and only a few changes have been made which are highlighted. As C Forrest is stepping down, members were asked if they wanted to revert back to 4 members. It was agreed the committee would prefer a broader panel and to therefore recruit another member if we can.

**21/20 To review the composition and balance of the Corporation at September 2020**

The Clerk reported that from the annual review of diversity of the Corporation we are aware we are lacking in ethnicity, female and younger age groups. Some of the new applicants may fill some of these gaps. It was noted that the Equality Monitoring data does not include areas such as sexuality and disability so it was agreed to look into this.

**22/20 To receive, for information, the percentage turnover of members during 2019/20**

The Clerk confirmed a turnover of 22% and that we continue to refresh and fill vacancies. We therefore feel comfortable that we have some members with us for a number of years offering a balance of experience and new blood.

**23/20 Any other Business**

- i) The Clerk passed on a query from the Vice Principal Curriculum regarding the Staff Development Plan and Governor mandatory training and if there are any other elements for future training topics and it was agreed that something on

Devolution, the FE White Paper and consideration given to whether training is needed for C&Q on the annual theme.

**ii) Date of next meeting:**

To be arranged when needed with interviews to be set up for November.

As this is Colin Forrest's final Search meeting, the Chair took the opportunity to thank him formally for all his valuable contributions.

**iii) To consider which recommendations/proposals are reported to the Corporation**

- **Minute 12/20** on the Corporation and Committee Performance Reviews
- **Minute 14/20** on the receipt of new applications with interviews scheduled for November
- **Minute 16/20** to thank members on their excellent attendance record
- **Minute 17/20** on the update to the Risk Register
- **Minute 18/20** on the re-appointment of members