

**REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD**  
**BOARD MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 at 9.30am**  
**Via MS Teams**

Present            Karol Bailey (independent) KB  
                       Colin Baxter (independent) CB  
                       Marcus Clinton (principal) MC  
                       Jane Cowell (independent) JC  
                       Gary Crowe (independent) GC  
                       Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF  
                       Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG  
                       Mike Gorton (independent) MG  
                       Peter Green (independent) PG  
                       Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent) EH *(item 2 onwards)*  
                       Anne McKay (staff) AM  
                       David Pearson (independent, Chair) DP *(item 2 onwards)*  
                       Angela Potter (independent) AP  
                       Professor Eunice Simmons (independent) ES *(item 1 – 8 inclusive)*  
                       Alastair Taylor (independent) AT  
                       Liz Watts (staff) LW  
                       Paul Weston (associate) PW

Attending        Graeme Lavery (vice principal finance and resources) GL  
                       Matthew Gower (vice principal curriculum and quality) MGower *(item 6 onwards)*  
                       Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) PGreenall  
                       Paul Spearritt (assistant principal) PS  
                       Louise Woodman (director of people and culture) LWoodman  
                       Sharon Yates (assistant principal, apprenticeships and business hub) SY  
                       Iain Clarke (assistant principal) IC  
                       Trudie McGuinness (assistant principal) TM  
                       Hilary Hill (assistant to company secretary and head of governance) HH

**PART A unless indicated**

item	Content
<b>1.</b>	<i>DP and EH were absent from the meeting for this item. HH requested and received approval from members for the annual appointment of chair and vice chair.</i> <b>Confirmation of Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>RESOLVED: David Pearson is appointed to the role of Chair of the Board and Elizabeth Harrison is appointed to the role of Vice Chair of the Board for the 2020-21 academic year.</b>

<p><b>2.</b></p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Jon Furber, Malcolm Burns and Chesley Rountree. Angela Potter had let the meeting know that she would be joining slightly late and Anne McKay had indicated that she would need to leave the meeting early.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>DP declared an interest in relation to item 4 on the agenda and took no part in this item.</p> <p>The following interests are noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC as a director of DART Limited and member of University of Chester Council</li> <li>• ES as Vice Chancellor of University of Chester and a member of its Council</li> <li>• PG as a director of DART Limited</li> <li>• JC as a director of DART Limited</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>4.1</p>	<p><i>The Vice Chair, EH, took over the chair for this item.</i></p> <p><b>Appointment of Governor</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED: Paul Weston is appointed to the role of Associate Member of the Board for a period of one year from 12 November 2020.</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record. The rolling action log was received and noted with actions completed or on track.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Part B minutes are not published on the college website or made public and the Search and Governance Committee regularly reviews confidential minutes to ensure that it is justified that these remain confidential.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p><b>Covid-19 Update</b></p> <p>The Principal provided a Covid-19 update, including updates on curriculum delivery, safeguarding, wellbeing and health and safety, student recruitment and finance and staffing including the proposed approach to the staff pay award and Christmas closure this year.</p> <p>Members received the update report with thanks and questions and discussion followed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Members congratulated MC and the team for the phenomenal management of college delivery this year so far.</li> <li>-JC queried the extent of risk on student retention this year. MC acknowledged the risk and provided assurance that MGower and the team are working relentlessly on support and retention of students and communications to students and parents. JC also noted the need to lobby government on the use of retention data this year in relation to next year’s funding and MC confirmed Landex is working on this.</li> </ul>

	<p>-EH commented on the risk of online learning before Christmas with regard to getting students home for Christmas and its impact on student expectations for the new year. MC confirmed that the Covid-19 steering group is currently looking closely at how the college manages this in practice and in terms of the messaging.</p> <p>-PG requested and received assurance on the provision of equipment for students to enable effective remote learning. However MC noted that at the moment the college is re-surveying and checking to ensure that all students are supported well.</p> <p>-DP and MC acknowledged the additional stresses on the staff at the moment in keeping everything going and DP noted that the Board should be aware of this in its requests on executive and management time at the moment.</p> <p>-ES confirmed on the issue of Covid testing that the DfE have not yet communicated with public health on access to testing for students and so it is unlikely that low risk areas will be given any capacity to roll out immediately. She explained that Chester have made an expression of interest as requested but she does not think that either the University or Reaseheath will be selected to take part in this programme.</p> <p>6.3 Members fully supported the college plan to close for two weeks over Christmas and provide a full break for staff after a very challenging year. They also welcomed the update on plans for the Christmas online events and PRIDE awards.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p><b>FE and Apprenticeship performance – Self-Assessment 2019-20</b></p> <p>The Assistant Principal, Performance and Progress, TM presented an overview of college performance for 2019-20, following the internal and external self-assessment validation including the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) self-assessed grades for the college and for each curriculum department. This included key headline data, movement from last year, benchmark data against national averages (and land-based sector averages) key strengths and weaknesses and equality and diversity data in terms of closing any achievement gaps. The session covered the impact of Covid-19 and the lessons learned from online delivery over the year. The session also covered the quality improvement plan for 2020-21. The session was intended as a development session to ensure that all governors gained an understanding of headline college performance, strengths and weaknesses and key improvement areas for 2020-21. Key headline information provided included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key headlines</li> <li>• Key strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• How do different groups perform, any achievement gaps</li> <li>• Improvement plan for 2020-21</li> <li>• Targets/KPIs for 2020-21 with feedback from the Quality and Standards Committee</li> </ul> <p>Members received the presentation with thanks and the following key points were picked up in discussion:</p> <p>-AT commented from the Quality and Standards Committee perspective and from involvement in the external SAR validation on assurance and test and challenge drilling into the detail on FE and apprenticeship performance including the residential care standards aspects in 2019-20. He provided assurance that the Quality and Standards Committee closely monitor those areas requiring improvement this year. He noted the continuing work being done by Quality and Standards Committee on refining the key performance indicators (KPIs). He noted that the Self-Assessment Report would be provided to the Board for formal approval in December.</p>

7.3	<p>-JC added from the discussion at committee level the question of whether the committee should be involved in areas that go to the external self-assessment validation and also the suggestion that the college might think about how the SAR can become more analytical and less descriptive. ES picked up the point noting that staff like to describe what they have done and so this could perhaps be separated and provided as a link. She noted the importance of strategies such as growing your own to tackle staff retention in engineering as well as sharing best practice sharing on SARs.</p> <p>DP thanked governors for their input and feedback and TM for her presentation and noted that the SAR will be provided for formal approval at the Board meeting in December.</p>
8.	<p><b>HE Performance and Strategy</b></p> <p>8.1 PGreenall, Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education provided an update on HE recruitment at this stage of the year for 2020-21 student numbers. He noted the position at period 3 management accounts which showed HE income as down on budget and he provided details of the actions planned and in place for reducing the shortfall in HE income for the current year. CG expressed the support of the HE Committee for the actions set out by PGreenall and highlighted the key part of the process will be improving internal progression. ES expressed her support for work on internal progression and noted the need to respond to the change of behaviour of applicants in seeking content on the website in their own time instead of attending specific online open days at set times.</p> <p>8.2 PGreenall presented the draft Higher Education Strategy and Curriculum Plan that had been provided in advance of the meeting. He gave the context of consultation on the strategy including staff, students and the HE Committee. He then provided an overview presentation on Vision, Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities. CG commented on the strategy development from the perspective of the HE Committee. He confirmed that the committee had held two informal meetings to test and challenge the strategy, which had led to various refinements to the drafting, including a focus on students first, widening participation and access and the close links with further education. Questions and discussion followed:</p> <p>-AT asked how much degree level apprenticeships featured within the strategy. PGreenall confirmed that it is implicit within the innovation strand of the strategy. AT also noted the importance of naming the new curriculum to ensure it is moving with the times. In response to a question from PG, PGreenall confirmed that degree level apprenticeships will be a collaborative approach with the Reaseheath apprenticeships team.</p> <p>-ES emphasised the importance of higher level technical qualifications within the new strategy and she noted that the managers at Chester will work closely with Reaseheath to support the strategy, including on working with the team at Reaseheath on enabling staff to access scholarly activity with the support of Chester colleagues.</p> <p>-PG asked about progress combined work with Chester and MC and PGreenall provided an update with the Food Centre a key part in the food innovation work with current work on the combined offer going well.</p> <p>-JC welcomed the contents of the strategy and commented that the presentation of the document could perhaps be a little more forceful to bring to life the contents a bit more.</p>

	-EH congratulated PGreenall and the team on the achievement, especially over the short timeframe and with managing Covid impacts at the same time and she noted the imagery could consider the Covid context perhaps.
8.3	DP thanked members for their input and noted that the feedback is very positive and the final document will be presented to the HE Committee and the Board for approval later this term.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Approval of Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2019-20</b>
9.1	<b>RESOLVED: On recommendation from the Audit Committee, the Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire for 2019-20 is approved for signature by the Accounting Officer and the Chair of the Board.</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Any items from the meeting discussion to strategic risk register</b>
10.1	Noted: Covid rapid testing commitment by government to be closely watched by the Covid-19 Steering Group and the return in January to be managed carefully.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
	The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10 December at 9.30am.

**The meeting closed at 11.50am**

Approved as a correct record 10.12.20