



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15th JUNE 2021 @ 10.00 via Teams and at FUTUREWORKS
FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

Present: **Prof. Rob Campbell, Chair**
Chris Mayo, Principal
Alan Doyle, Member
Prof. John Brooks, Member
Gwyn Arnold, Member

In attendance: **Ben Norris, Vice Principal (Clerk)**
Kate Sayer, Secretary

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Tony Tyrrell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair is continuing his work with UKCBC. This does not form any conflict of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a. Board of Directors
 - i. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting (doc3a-i) – the minutes were approved in terms of content and accuracy.
 - ii. Action Plan
 - [BoD]Oct-20| 5c-i(1) – Feasibility study - this item had been addressed and it was found that changing facilities would not be possible because no suitable alternatives were available. The contract has been renewed at Media City, and this item will be marked as complete on the action plan.
 - [BoD]Oct-20| 6j (1/1) – Nominations and Remunerations committee is to develop processes for external appointments – a meeting is to be scheduled in July for this work.
 - [BoD]Oct-20| 4ai(4) – it was noted that an away afternoon is to take place on 18/06/21 for the management team.
 - iii. Indicative Work Schedule for AY2021/22 –the sign-off of the audited accounts has been allocated to the February meeting of the Board of Directors. If necessary a single-item meeting in January may be scheduled for this purpose. The work schedule was approved by the committee.
- iv. Committee Dates for AY2021/22 – the dates were accepted by the committee. In the future it may be necessary to hold four Academic Board meetings, which would synchronise more effectively with the timing of the Board of Directors.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION, DISCUSSION AND/OR RESOLUTION:

4. REPORTS (FOR INFORMATION):

- a. Chair's Report – the Chair explained that under ordinary circumstances the Strategic Plan and progress against its KPIs would be reviewed at this meeting. However ongoing work on DAPs and the impact of COVID-19 has delayed this work.
- b. Principal's Report -
 - i. COVID-19 – Futureworks has been fully compliant with all processes related



to safe working practices and testing. On-site testing was carried out successfully and this process has now been completed. Government grants received in February 2021 for students affected by the pandemic were distributed as per official guidance, and a further grant received from the Office for Students (OfS) in May is to be distributed imminently. Exam boards took place in the week beginning 07.06.21 and submission rates were on a par with pre-pandemic years, with the exception of FTVM students who required extra time to complete practical work as anticipated.

- ii. Recruitment/Applications – to date 139 students have accepted places for AY2021/22 start. Acceptances are higher than last year despite applications being lower, due to a strong conversion rate of approximately 1 in 3 applicants being offered and accepting places at Futureworks. The student CRM system is being implemented which should allow much closer tracking of marketing communications to applicants, reaction to email and text messages, tracking of school liaison etc. It should help facilitate a more strategic approach to interacting with key schools and will automate what is currently a labour intensive and time-consuming manual system.

Open days were discussed and it was noted that the Discord server used on the Applicants Day proved beneficial, allowing potential students to talk to staff and to each other in advance of starting their studies. A survey by UCAS found that 60% of students across the country did not like the online open day experience, which underlined the importance of onsite open days to demonstrate Futureworks' studios and facilities.

A discussion took place regarding how to maximise the number of applicants to Futureworks. Diversifying the current portfolio of programmes, offering part-time or short courses and utilising alternative delivery methods were suggested. This is to be a topic for further discussion at the upcoming away afternoon. The Vice Principal reported on a recent meeting of Independent HE members, which highlighted current recruitment performance within the higher education sector. It was noted that small providers offering full-time campus-based programmes were struggling to recruit as successfully as in pre-pandemic times, whereas providers offering online courses including post graduate programmes were in some cases receiving unprecedented numbers of applicants.

- iii. NSS Update – the NSS survey closed on 30th April and Futureworks' final response rate was 77.27%, much higher than the previous year. Heads of School were thanked for their assistance with this. The results are to be published on 15th July 2021.
- iv. HR Update – the Natwest MentorLive system is now running with all staff registered on the site. This includes training programmes available to all staff members. Staff appraisals will be commencing in due course.
- v. DAPs/Strategic Plan Update – the appointment to the AQE role is key for progress towards DAPs (see 4bvi). Staff development/training courses will follow on from the staff appraisals (see 4biv) and this has been accounted for in budget planning. After staff development has taken place any skill gaps can be identified and if necessary external expertise could be sourced.

Futureworks' digital infrastructure is currently being upgraded, starting with the implementation of the CRM system (see 4dii) and with the QUERCUS system to follow in due course. The main provisions required for DAPs preparation are now all in progress, with the Principal leading this project. COVID-19 has impacted on the speed of this work, but steady progress is now being made. Strong audit processes are now embedded at Futureworks, demonstrated by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Academic



Board.

- vi. Appointment to AQE role – a part-time appointment has been made for this role, due to commence on 25/06/21. The successful candidate has relevant experience in a similar position within a small HE provider. Job advertisements are also being placed for some administrative support at Futureworks.
- vii. Other business – [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]

[Action: Feedback is requested from the Principal after the management away day which is taking place on 18/06/21.] (4b-1)

- c. Financial Management – the Financial Director updated the committee on the quarterly management accounts (Q2 to end February 2021), the cashflow and the preliminary budget assumptions for 2021/22. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]
The Board of Directors commended the tight control that has been maintained over Futureworks' finances, and were happy for the financial pack to be submitted to the Office for Students.
- d. Analysis of Fit and Proper Persons Declarations – this process has been completed and was accepted by the Board of Directors.
- e. Analysis of Conflicts of Interest Declarations – there were no conflicts of interest from members of the Board of Directors.
- f. OfS Proceed Metric – this document was discussed and Futureworks' data was compared with that of the other providers documented. It was noted that Futureworks' Proceed Metric was comparable with other providers, with the highest scoring provider having a 7% higher progression rate into employment. No further information about this metric and its potential implications have been published as yet. The Board requested feedback from the Academic Board in regard to how the Proceed Metric could impact Futureworks' portfolio of programmes. The risk register has been updated to include the Proceed Metric as an emerging risk.
- g. OfS Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Statement – the OfS statement is advisory and includes guidance regarding the expectations of governing bodies in regards to harassment and sexual misconduct. Futureworks are currently revising their in-house policies in this area, which should be updated by September 2021. Additionally, the MentorLive training includes related modules which will be taken by staff members later in the year.
- h. 'Many Hands project' – the Board of Directors congratulated the proposal team on successfully receiving funding for this collaborative project.

[Action: Feedback is requested from the Academic Board in regard to the potential implication of the OfS Proceed Metric on the portfolio of programmes at Futureworks for the meeting in August.] (4f-1)

5. GOVERNANCE (FOR DISCUSSION):

- a. Institutional Risk Register/ Risk Management Strategy – the Risk Management Strategy has been modified to include a risk tolerance statement in section 3.4. Only one third of risks should fall within the amber residual risk category, and any with a red residual risk rating should have a clear path defined as to how to upgrade them to amber or green. Currently there are eight risks with an amber residual risk rating (therefore above the tolerance level of one third) however plans are in place to mitigate a number of these later in the year, reducing the number to six or less. In order to embed risk management into Futureworks at School level, a



straightforward risk management plan is being implemented (see doc 5a-3). This plan is to be completed by each School at the start of the year and reviewed on a termly basis. The risks identified by this process will be held centrally on the Institutional Risk Register.

It was noted that the Audit and Risk Assurance committee are very happy with how risk management is being embedded into the institution, and stated the importance of regular timely updating to the governance committees of any changes to risk. Two emerging risks and suggested mitigation had been added to the Risk Register – the OfS Proceed Metric (see 4f) and the potential of a reduction in student fees.

- b. Updated Scheme of Delegation – small adjustments had been made to the Scheme of Delegation which was accepted by the committee. The next review will be carried out later in the year by the Audit and Risk Assurance committee, in tandem with the Financial Regulations.
- c. CUC Mapping Exercise – a mapping exercise had taken place which demonstrated that Futureworks was in alignment with many areas of the CUC Code of Governance. Some of the non-compliant areas were deemed not relevant for an institution of Futureworks' size, however it was noted that there were some parts which Futureworks may wish to work towards in the future. It was therefore suggested that specific areas be reviewed periodically.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

6. MEETING MINUTES

- a. Minutes of subcommittees to the Board
 - i. Audit and Risk Assurance – the Chair welcomed the assurances given by the meeting minutes and was delighted that the committee now included four external members. It was also noted that UNIAC were to regularly attend future meetings.

7. AOB:
None.

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION:
None.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
Date of the next meeting:
- Tuesday 31st August 2021 10am.