



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31st AUGUST 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

None declared.

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|6d(2) – The KPIs are to be set in conjunction with updating the Strategic Plan which is due for completion in January. The Non-Executive Directors offered to review the preliminary KPIs before final presentation to the Board of Directors in January.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION, DISCUSSION AND/OR RESOLUTION:

4. REPORTS (FOR INFORMATION):

- a. Chair's Report – the Chair has been attending Executive Team meetings at the request of the Principal in order to be more aware of ongoing operational issues. Regarding COVID-19, it was noted that students would no longer be required to wear masks in line with government guidance. It is important that staff opinion regarding the risks of returning to campus-based delivery is gathered, and this was acknowledged by the Principal. The conversion rate from applicants to accepted offers has improved, yet overall recruitment numbers have plateaued. Other methods for widening the pool of potential applicants should therefore be investigated, which could include engaging more closely with schools using practical activities such as demonstrated successfully at the A&P summer school. The Chair met the new Quality Manager who comes to Futureworks from a small specialist Higher Education provider and will be an asset to Futureworks' staff. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]
- b. Principal's Report -
 - i. COVID-19 – Futureworks has planned for a more 'normal' start to AY21/22 in line with government guidance. Mask wearing will not be compulsory but will be encouraged, alongside testing and vaccination.
 - ii. Recruitment/Applications – at the time of the meeting, 156 new students were expected to register in September. An external company is to be used



to make contacts with potential feeder schools, with a view to Futureworks completing a number of school visits by December. A discussion took place regarding recruitment numbers and reasons why they may be lower than anticipated. A market analysis could be useful in determining the potential popularity of current Futureworks programmes in relation to qualifications taken by GCSE/A Level/ FE students. To grow recruitment significantly, it may be necessary to consider restructuring the curriculum and offering different modes of study including micro-credentials or partnering with other institutions. Offering more performance-based programmes was also suggested as a means to attract a wider group of applicants. It was noted that a key to the programme titles should be provided alongside acronyms when presenting programme related data.

- iii. Academic Quality Report – this report was commended and the suggested outcomes were deemed sensible. The report is to be presented to the Academic Board in October.
 - iv. Management away day – the away day held in June focussed on new income streams and DAPs. Four potential areas for income generation were identified, and a list of suggested short courses with micro-credentials (an area of growth in the FE and HE sector) created. Each area was assigned a leader who will provide a preliminary report to the next Executive and Management Committee meeting in October and also the next Board meeting in November. Tier 4 sponsorship was discussed; as the new method of applying is less intensive administratively, it was suggested to be an area worth exploring for Futureworks. UK Visa and Immigration information is to be presented to the next meeting to ascertain whether further investigation is appropriate.
 - v. DAPs gap analysis update – this work is on schedule with further work to be done on sections D1 and E1. The required resources have not altered, notably the need for allocated personnel and time to complete the work.
- c. National Student Survey – the results of the latest NSS survey were presented to the committee, which demonstrated very positive responses about Futureworks. In virtually all areas, Futureworks’ programmes scored higher than national benchmarks, and for 9 questions, the results were significantly higher than national benchmarks. The main areas with lower scores were the student union and the learning resources; Futureworks has only a small reference library which was closed due to COVID-19, and it does not have a student union which is likely to account for the lower scores. These areas are to be investigated ahead of next year’s survey to see if scores in these areas can be improved.
 - d. Marketing strategy – the committee was pleased to receive the Futureworks Marketing Strategy. The Brand usage policy and the Brand Essentials are complete and do not require further work at this time. However, considerable work is to be done on the rest of the Marketing Strategy which will be the key focus of the November meeting.
 - e. Financial Management – the Financial Director presented the Financial Performance update, which included the quarterly management accounts (Q3 to end May 2021), the Profit and Loss Forecast for year-end August 2021, Cashflow Forecast and Reforecasts, the A&P spend and the preliminary budget assumptions for 2021/22. The changes to the OfS recurrent and capital grant have now been finalised and this was reflected in the document. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.] A new purchase system has been implemented requiring the gathering of more external quotes before purchases are signed off; this will help to provide a stronger Value for Money argument.
The Financial Performance update was presented in great depth and the Chair



commended the robust analysis. Consideration could be given to the presentation of financial data going forward.

- f. Fraud and Misconduct statement – this was accepted by the committee.
- g. Student representation at the Board of Directors – two scenarios were presented to the committee:
 1. A Senior Student Partner attending all Board of Directors meetings
 2. Senior/Lead student partners meeting informally with Non-Executive Directors to discuss the work of the Board on a biannual basis.

It was decided that scenario 2 be trialled as a transitional arrangement and the success of the scheme will be evaluated after a year.

- h. Health and Safety report – the report was presented to the committee and the key findings and recommendations presented will be undertaken by the Executive Team. The report is to be presented to ARAC in October and will also form part of the FW Annual Report.
- i. Governance and Management Handbook update – the handbook was commended as a very useful and thorough document. The decision made in 4g regarding student representation at the Board is to be added to the document. A minor clarification regarding a deputy chair on the Executive and Management committee was highlighted.

[Action: Analysis to be conducted to understand the market demand for the current programme portfolio.] (4bii-1)

[Action: Management team staff to present reports on potential new income streams to the Board of Directors meeting in November, including short courses with micro-credentials.] (4biv-1)

[Action: Vice-Principal to report back to next meeting in November with information regarding the UKVI and Tier 4 sponsorship.] (4biv-2)

[Action: FD to work on the Marketing Strategy which will be the key focus of the BoD in November.] (4d-1)

[Action: EO to facilitate the lead/student partners meeting with non-executive directors on a biannual basis. This is to be trialled for one year.] (4g-1)

[Action: Clerking team to add student representation at the Board detailed in 4g into the Governance and Management handbook.] (4i-1)

[Action: EO to make minor clarification in Governance and Management Handbook regarding a deputy chair on the Executive and Management committee.] (4i-2)

5. GOVERNANCE (FOR DISCUSSION):

- a. Institutional Risk Register– it was reported that minor changes had been made to some of the residual risks scores and that there are currently 7 risks marked in the yellow category. More work is to be done on articulating the risk of low student recruitment. New Risk Management Plans are currently being completed by departmental staff and, so far, the risks mentioned are in line with institutional risks. It was noted that the current tenure of Non-Executive Directors is 2-3 years; their re-appointment or replacement is due to coincide with the current predicted timing of DAPs application and review, therefore this is to be looked at ahead of the next meeting.
- b. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]

[Action: VP and FD to work on articulating the risk of low student recruitment.] (5a-1)

[Action: VP to investigate the length of tenure of NEDs and the timing of replacement candidates in relation to proposed DAPs timing.] (5a-2)



ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- a. Update on recent policy reviews:
 - i. Regulations for the Conduct of Students (Draft)
 - ii. Student Complaints Process (Draft)
 - iii. Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (Draft)

All three documents were noted and will be subject to scrutiny by the Academic Board in October.

- b. Update on OfS consultations:
 - i. Funding (recurrent)
 - ii. Funding (capital)
 - iii. Quality and standards

The recurrent and capital funding consultations have now been concluded and the consultation on quality and standards is ongoing. The committee noted the outcomes, and recognised the ongoing lobbying by Independent HE on behalf of small providers in this area.

- c. Minutes of subcommittees to the Board:
 - i. Audit and Risk Assurance – the Chair welcomed the thorough assurances given by the meeting minutes.
 - ii. Executive/Management Committee – minutes received.
 - iii. Academic Board – the Research, Scholarship & Professional Practice Strategy presented at the Academic Board was noted, and will be presented to the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

[Action: VP to present Research, Scholarship and Professional Practice Strategy to meeting in November.] (6ciii-1)

- 7. AOB:**
None.

- 8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION:**
None.

- 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**
Date of the next meeting:
- Thursday 11th November 2021 9.30am.