

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on
17th June 2024 at 3.30pm
Bedford College, Tower Boardroom**

Present:	Dennis Buckley	Raj Randhawa
	John Butcher	Laura Jane Rawlings
	Tom Dove Wallington	Allan Schofield
	Luke Ferebee	Sheila Selwood
	Yiannis Koursis (CEO)	Luisa Vecchio
	Faheem Mir	Cliff Wragg
	Noor Nazir	
In attendance:	Natasha Stringer (Senior Governance Coordinator) minutes	
	Rachel Nicol (Group Director of Governance)	
	Pat Jones (Deputy CEO Finance)	
	Rob Lawson (External Board Reviewer)	

C/25/24 Apologies for Absence and Declarations

Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Dimpleby, Cathy Barr, Alasdair Simmons, Joe Gallacher and Yasmin Jones.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the matters on the agenda.

C/26/24 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

C/27/24 External Board Review

The Chair of the Corporation introduced the purpose of the meeting, which was to provide the Corporation with the opportunity to consider and discuss the External Board Review.

The Corporation was provided:

- The External Board Review
- Action list based on recommendations from the Board review
- Papers written by the Chair of the Corporation on the Board Review and the implication on governor time estimates
- The Self-Assessment Strategy

Rob Lawson thanked the Corporation for their commitment to the review and time given and summarised the External Board Review, which included:



- A reminder overview of how the review took place, which included a survey, desktop analysis including papers, observation of meetings and one-on-one interviews with governors.
- The opportunity to look forward with a new CEO and incoming chair.
- Impact on the Corporation of having only three scheduled meetings a year was viewed as insufficient (more had been held in recent years), and a recommendation was made to schedule more Corporation meetings throughout the year.
- Outcome, there is evidence that the Board is proficient and has some impact on college strategy, effectiveness and outcomes.

Sheila Selwood, the Chair of the Governance Committee, provided further insight into the discussions held in the Governance Committee meeting on 6th June 2024, when they reviewed the External Board Review. The Governance Committee had a detailed discussion about the review and highlighted that the governing body of The Bedford College Group is at a crossroads. The opportunity is to now look forward and have the incoming Chair, the CEO, and the Group Director of Governance work on work plans, time commitment, the momentum of governance, recruitment of new governors, and the action plan.

The CEO provided his views on the External Board Review, which included communication between the Executive team and the Governors, particularly the Chairs of Committees, increased engagement and communication prior to meetings.

Questions and Discussion

27.1 A member raised the wording of a phrase within the report about focus on the quality of education and expressed concerns over the focus moving away from Finance and Audit. The Corporation discussed the need to increase the Curriculum and Quality Committee meetings to be on the level with the frequency of the Resources Committee. The CEO provided assurances that no focus would be removed from an area but it was agreed more focus was needed on the quality of education.

27.2 The Committee had a robust and detailed discussion on communication and trust. The last Bedford Curriculum and Quality local group had a panel of students in and found it very engaging and left feeling very informed. The student voice is an area that does need more focus.

27.3 A governor asked for more context around the comment within the report about there being a board within a board.

Rob Lawson provided an anecdotal comment on how boards within a board formed during Covid when colleges had to close and adjust to working remotely and the



Corporation reflected on how relationships form and the lack of meetings might not help develop working relationships.

27.4 A governor commented on some points raised within the Chair of Corporation papers, and the Corporation discussed in detail the relationships between governors, the Executive team, and the CEO. Rob Lawson provided further insight into the sector and the implementation of some Boards' having an independent board member the Chair can raise concerns or issues to if needed. It was agreed that it would be important to find a mechanism for this in the future.

27.5 Clarification was sought and given on the recommendation on HR skills; recruitment had taken place after that part of the review which had brought in more skills within that area and it was agreed recruitment would focus on more prominent skill gaps.

27.6 Rachel updated the Corporation on the recruitment drive for new governors that is currently ongoing.

27.7 The Corporation discussed extending the term of office for a Chair of the Corporation and agreed to do so in the future, but not for the incoming Chair due to timing and not wanting to have the Chair and Vice-chair terms of office come to an end at the same time.

27.8 The Corporation discussed student voice and how to increase governors' engagement and hearing of student voice. Rob Lawson emphasised the need to re-establish Chair 1:1s with governors.

27.9 The Corporation discussed online meetings compared to in person and the need to balance getting good attendance and engagement.

27.10 The Corporation agreed to accept the review and take recommendations forward and gave consent to the Group Director of Governance to publish parts as relevant.

The Group Director of Governance welcomed input on priorities.

C/28/24 Any other business

There was no other business.