

GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE



THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2014

GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23
January 2014

Author: Clerk

Action: Approve

Status: Open

Present: Judith Doyle
Keith Cann Evans
Emily Cox

In attendance: Emma Moody

G/S537 Welcome/Apologies

Keith Cann-Evans took the chair for the meeting. Apologies were received from Robin Mackie, Ivan Jepson and Bob Bell.

G/S538 Declaration of Interests

There were no interests to declare at this stage but members were reminded that if conflicts of interest arose during the meeting, they should declare them to the Chair.

G/S539 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

G/S540 Matters Arising

The Principal confirmed that the reformation of Board reporting systems would refine the work of each of the committees and ensure that the Board was receiving full and transparent information. The Board was not moving to the Carver model of governance as such, but it was hoped that the new system would ensure that the Board was aware of each aspect of the College's operation.

G/S541 Governor Appointments and Retirements

The Clerk reported that Keith Cann-Evans and David Mitchell had undergone their self-assessment appraisal and their appointments had been re-confirmed by this committee and the Board.

The Clerk confirmed that she wanted committee members to confirm if students and staff members should be similarly appraised. The Clerk also asked members to consider the positions of Kevin Fitzpatrick and John McElroy as they were overdue their appraisal.

In relation to the position of students and staff, members noted that there was a differentiation between their role as a member of Board and their position as a member of staff/student of Gateshead College. Whilst members noted that there

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was little the governors would be able to do if they were unhappy with the students and staff governors due to the fact that they were elected, members agreed that it would be useful to provide students and staff with the opportunity for feedback. Similarly, it would also put the students and staff on a level playing field and, in the Clerk's view, would make them feel a more valued part of the governing body.

It was agreed that, subject to ensuring that the Board appraisal process tied in with the staff appraisal process, that appraisals of staff and students should be undertaken.

It was confirmed that the Principal would speak to Mark Thompson in order to coordinate a suitable process for governors.

There was then a discussion about the positions of Kevin Fitzpatrick and John McElroy.

The record of discussion is 'closed to the public' until such time as it is considered to be no longer commercially sensitive

The Principal confirmed that she would like Nick Hurn to be appointed to Academic Standards Committee with immediate effect and members approved this recommendation. The Clerk would need to engage with Nick in order to arrange his induction process.

It was agreed to arrange for John McElroy's appraisal asap

It was agreed to appoint Nick Hurn to ASC

G/S542 Allocation of Governors to Quadrants

Members then discussed the new Quadrant reporting system.

The revised reporting system would cover the four key quadrant areas. There was a need to avoid duplication and repetition and also a need for the Board to be more forward focussed.

It was hoped that the new reporting system would enable governors to be focussed on strategic issues, rather than the day-to-day management which had to be left in the hands of the management team.

From a review of the skills matrices, it was concluded that the following people would be most suited to leading the quadrants concerned:

1. Students & Learning – David Mitchell/Nick Hurn together with the Deputy Principal Curriculum Quality (when that person was appointed)
2. Audit/Corporate Services – headed by Chris Macklin in conjunction with John Holt.
3. Business – headed by Robin Mackie in conjunction with Mick Brophy.
4. People – headed by Emily Cox with support from Mark Thompson.

It was agreed that we would test the system at the Board Away Day on 7/8 February. During this session, we would ask governors what measures

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should be put in place to measure performance and quality of the reporting system.

Members asked for the “best company survey” to be brought to the Away Day.

G/S543 Board Self-Assessment Systems

Members then discussed the proposed mechanisms for assessing the Board acting collectively. Both the Clerk and the Principal circulated examples of best practice from throughout the sector.

It was agreed, following discussion, to introduce a Board Self-Assessment process into the Away Day on 7/8 February for the Board to decide how it wanted to engage in this process.

G/S544 Governor Appraisal Form

The Clerk presented the finalised and amended Governor Appraisal Form.

The members approved the form.

G/S545 Update on Publication Scheme

The Principal confirmed that she had spoken to Robert Cooper and the College ought to endeavour to ensure that Minutes were published within six weeks of the meeting to which they related.

There was an on-going need to ensure that publication of information was carried out in a timely fashion. **Members agreed to keep this under review.**

G/S546 Governor Workshop Topics for Away Day

The Clerk, Principal and David Mitchell had met to discuss the Agenda. **It was agreed that the Clerk and the Principal would formulate some case study scenarios which governors could work through on the Saturday.** These would be relatively light hearted but would attempt to get governors thinking about strategic issues, rather than day to day management.

G/S547 Any Other Business

Members briefly discussed travel arrangements for Close House. The Clerk commented that there were safeguarding issues around student governors and their transportation to Close House and the Principal confirmed that taxis would be ordered.

G/S548 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed to be 8 May 2014.
[This date was later changed to Thursday 15 May 2014 at 4.00pm and then had to be rearranged to Thursday 12 June 2014 at 2.00pm]

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