



# UCP Council

## Minutes of Board Meeting

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| Date          | Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2020  |
| Time          | 16:30   |
| Location      | Via Video Conference  |
| Present       | Professor Sir Les Ebdon CBE DL (Chair), Claire Bowes (Staff), Richard Greensmith, (HE Student Officer), Dr Mary Kiernan, Rachel Nicholls (Acting Principal PRC), Matthew Bradbury, Louise Perry, Dr Alison Davies ( <i>Item 2 onwards</i> )             |
| In Attendance | Liz Knight (Interim Chief Operating Officer and Academic Director – UCP)<br>James Larner (Deputy Director – UCP)<br>Roy Bird (Finance Director)<br>Peter Walker (Deputy Principal, PRC)<br>Thomas Pollitt (Eversecretary)<br>Sherrill Duberry (Minutes) |
| Apologies     | Mark Woods, Janet Meenaghan   |

### Decisions taken at the Board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

| Ref | Decision   |
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| 1c  | The appointment of Dr Alison Davies  |
| 5   | Agreement with the proposed strategic direction for higher education within IEG and UCP. |

### Actions arising from the Board meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

| Ref | Action  |
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| 7   | JL to email application investment and progression from local schools to the Board.   |
| 9   | LK to update the Risk Register to include Staff Wellbeing and to develop the risk column statement to signpost what each risk is. |

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| 1a. | <p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b><br/>All were welcomed and apologies were offered as above.</p>  |
| 1b. | <p><b>Confirmation of Eligibility, Quorum and Declarations of Interest</b><br/>TP confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Declarations of interest were:-</p> <p>Professor Sir Les Ebdon; Governor, PRC Corporation Board.<br/>Dr Mary Kiernan; Governor, PRC Corporation Board.<br/>Rachel Nicholls; PRC Acting Principal and Director of UCP.<br/>Peter Walker; Director of UCP and PRC Deputy Principal.<br/>Mark Woods; Trustee of Peterborough United Foundation Trust<br/>Janet Meenaghan; CEO and Principal NCS<br/>Louise Perry; Vice Principal Finance and Resources NCS</p>   |
| 1c. | <p><b>Matters of Urgent Business</b><br/>Dr Mary Kiernan proposed the appointment to the Board of Dr Alison Davies following the recommendation of the Nominations and Search Committee. Dr Davies had a successful interview, has extensive HE experience, knowledge of Peterborough and is Vice Chair of the Peterborough Racial Equality Council. It was reported that PRC had requested that Dr Davies be appointed to the Board as an independent director and that Dr Davies had consented to such appointment. The Council <b>agreed</b> unanimously to her appointment and it was resolved that Dr Alison Davies be appointed as a director of the Council with immediate effect.</p> <p><i>Dr Davies joined the meeting.</i></p> |
| 2a. | <p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting (02/04/20)</b><br/>The minutes were circulated, reviewed and approved for accuracy.</p>   |
| 2b. | <p><b>Matters Arising</b><br/>None</p>  |
| 2c. | <p><b>Actions from the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>Ref 3      PW noted it is not in the agreement with ARU for us to claim Capital Bid funding from ARU and that it was unlikely to be allocated to us this year.</p> <p>Ref 8      KPIs were updated as requested by Board.</p> <p>Ref 9      UCP have increased their online events and contacted local schools to offer support.</p> <p>            Data on where our students are progressing from (last school) was discussed in item 7.</p> <p>Ref 13     The Risk Register was updated as requested by Board.</p>  |
| 3.  | <p><b>UCP Council Status and Governance</b><br/>RN reported that University Centre Peterborough (UCP) is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Peterborough Regional College, soon to be the Inspire Education Group (IEG). HE provisions at IEG will be consolidated into UCP with the Stamford site becoming UCP at Stamford.</p> <p>Appropriate governance arrangements for UCP, including instruments and articles, committee terms of reference and structure have been instigated and Directors have been appointed.</p>   |

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|                  | <p>RN noted that the OfS will be the primary regulator for UCP. RN /JM met with the OfS on 23/07/20 to provide an update on merger, ending of the JV and our intentions moving forward. The OfS are happy with our plans and will be contacting us with a list of requirements around UCP.</p> <p>In order to strengthen our governance it is a priority for the UCP Board to appoint at least one other independent governor. TP noted that the minimum number of governors required is 13 however the Articles permit PRC to waive that requirement by ordinary resolution and it would be prudent for UCP to request that PRC waive such requirement until 01/08/20 when it is expected PRC will merge with NCS. TP further noted it was important that the majority of governors are independent.</p>  |
| <p><b>4.</b></p> | <p><b>Director Training</b><br/>TP circulated and presented a PowerPoint outlining Director duties and responsibilities.</p>   |
| <p><b>5.</b></p> | <p><b>HE Group Strategy</b><br/>LK reported that UCP will become the designated vehicle for all higher education within IEG, with delivery at Stamford being rebranded as UCP at Stamford. This will reduce costs, bureaucracy and ensure clear lines of accountability. UCP also has the right to use the legal title ‘university’. UCP has the ability to market HE offers through the ‘university’ name, register as a university centre with OfS and UCAS and access a wider range of external project funding due to its designation as a HEI / Alternative Provider.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Pearson Higher National provision will continue at both campuses in the short to medium term.</p> <p>The HE Workstream were required to review validating partner benefits and risks compared to Degree Awarding Powers. It should be noted that currently across the group there are 5 validating partners. The rationale for using NDAP has become high risk due to the delayed release of guidance and gatekeeping by the OfS. Details are vague and as an unproven system it has been rejected. The validating partner selected is a good vehicle for an organisation wishing to build a track record for Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) which remains a long term ambition. At this point, it should be noted that, OfS have suspended DAP applications. Reducing the number of validation partners brings better transparency for applicants and strengthens quality oversight.</p> <p>LP queried the timeframe for a HE strategy and LK noted we are currently working on this as part of the HE workstream with the intention of submitting a draft for approval in 6 weeks. MK asked if we have questioned the validator about the range of courses they would offer us. LK confirmed that the type and range of provision has been discussed with them and they are willing to validate a breadth of provision delivered in different modes. It was apparent there was greater autonomy offered by the validator .LK said we are looking to have a Project Manager in place to facilitate the validation process. The goal would be to complete this by April /May 2021. Covid-19 and the restrictions this may pose means an 18-month period is being modelled. LE said that the proposed validating partner seem to be a suitable partner and that the Council recognises the workload on staff.</p> <p>UCP branding will change as part of IEG and was issued to members as part of the stress testing on 12th June 2020.</p> |

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| 6. | <p><b>Academic Director's Report</b></p> <p>LK reported that UCP continue to comply with OfS conditions. Students have been supported, consulted and engaged with and we continue to act in their best interests. Information updates are provided in a number of formats on a regular basis.</p> <p>Students have been informed that delivery for 20/21 will be a blended approach and UCP have been liaising with PRC and the Estates team to ensure a safe return to the site. LK said that timetables are due to be released the week commencing 20/07/20 and that staff are working to identify which days would be face-to-face learning and which would be remote delivery. This is currently being remodelled following the government announcement to reduce the social distancing distance to 1m. RN noted that timetables should be released with the caveat they are subject to change as advice and guidance changes.</p> <p>The Government have set Student Number Caps (SNCs) due to Covid-19. UCP's SNC is 202 and should we go over this there are financial penalties in 21/22. To avoid this we need to carefully monitor applicant status and seek clarification on a number of issues.</p> <p>LK noted that advice and guidelines from the DfE are constantly being updated and we continue to monitor this and act accordingly. Guidance is currently being sought from the AoC and other networks.</p> <p><b>AD queried if a structure is in place to keep track of our numbers for both UCP and NCS.</b> LK noted that we need to determine the SNC for NCS and both institutions are currently responding separately to the DfE but working closely together. JL reported that UCP are in the process of building an automated system to keep track of the numbers.</p>  |
| 7. | <p><b>KPI &amp; Dashboard</b></p> <p>JL circulated the KPI and dashboard and noted that it has been updated as requested at the last meeting. (Monitoring the social impact on KPIs is still in progress.) Key points were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our current numbers are 428.5 FTE which is above the re-forecast figure of 403 FTE.</li> <li>• We have 137 firm accepts which is slightly down on this time last year, however we have 35 pending students as opposed to only 5 this time last year.</li> <li>• We have approximately 25 students due to return from intermission.</li> <li>• Where NCS have low numbers on their courses, we are looking to transfer these students to UCP's Digital Arts and Computing courses.</li> <li>• JL is to email the application investment and details of progression from local schools to the Board.</li> <li>• JL is working with the Student Support Team to establish reasons for withdrawal.</li> <li>• Retention is 95%, reflecting the positive impact of the Student Intervention meetings and the hard work of those involved.</li> <li>• APP 21-25 targets have been submitted to the OfS. Access target groups are; BAME (focussing on Black and Asian applicants), Care Leavers and Polar 4 Quintile 1 applicants. Our Success target is to reduce the attainment gap between white and BAME students. Our Progression target is based on Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of employment and target groups are BAME, Mature and Disabled students.</li> </ul> <p><b>LE queried if we know how many Care Leavers are within our catchment area so that we know if our targets numbers are realistic.</b> RN confirmed that PRC has 120 Care Leavers / Looked after children on their roll so it would seem to suggest that our targets are realistic.</p> |

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| 8. | <p><b>Financial Papers</b></p> <p>RB presented Finance Forecast Four for UCP which shows an overall increase in contribution to PRC for teaching and teaching support of £14k. Key points were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The joint venture with ARU was ended on 05/06/20 and the company is now wholly owned by PRC. All our accounting records are maintained by ARU in Chelmsford, including the bank account. These accounts will be partly consolidated into the ARU accounts (10 months) and partly into the PRC accounts (2 months). ARU will maintain the financial records until 31/07/20 when they will be transferred onto the IEG finance software. Scrutton Bland, ARU's auditors, will audit the accounts for this year and then pass any information on to our new auditors, RSM to enable them to complete the PRC group accounts. We are holding regular meetings with the ARU finance team to ensure a smooth transition.</li> <li>• There is a potential upside for additional income of £74k that is not included in this forecast as it needs to be reconciled with Anglia Ruskin.</li> <li>• A £47k increase in accommodation costs to settle the minimum room guarantee with the landlord has been offset by savings elsewhere. There remains some risk to non-pay from the size of accommodation guarantee that may be due to the landlord Taverners Hall Limited. Negotiations are continuing and the forecast includes an amount of £67k which is still subject to final settlement and is a worst case scenario.</li> <li>• Student headcount is 428.25 FTE. The point of 100% payment of student loans has been passed, so further reductions will not impact on income this year.</li> <li>• A three month extension has been granted to the OfS Challenge Fund project, due to Covid-19, however no additional funds have been allocated to support this. If the three month extension is fully utilised, spend becomes salary based to cover the longer timespan and therefore non pay spend reduces to compensate. The impact on current year spend included in the above reforecast is a £5k reduction in non-pay.</li> <li>• Overall Non-pay expenditure has increased by £14k. The major offsetting saving to this is £15k of Library savings. All other changes net to an improvement of £18k.</li> <li>• Administration Payroll shows an improvement in expenditure of £10k to reflect the delayed recruitment of vacancies.</li> </ul> <p>The budget for next year is in progress. It will include a comparison of cost savings due to merger / consolidation. RN noted that the budget will be reviewed by UCP and recommended for approval to IEG. IEG will then need to approve it.</p> <p>It was noted that UCP Board meeting dates for next year should dovetail with IEG Board meetings as they feed in to them.</p> |
| 9  | <p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Risk Register was circulated and reviewed. LK reported that it has been updated as requested at the last meeting to reflect UCP's status, Covid-19 developments and SNC risks. Moving forward it will include risks related to the wider HE offering post-merger.</p> <p><a href="#">MK requested that the risk to staff wellbeing be included on the Risk Register.</a> It was agreed that although UCP staff are employed by PRC and are covered by the PRC Risk Register, it would be prudent to include this risk on the UCP Risk Register too. LK to update. <a href="#">LP requested that the column describing each risk is further developed to state what the actual risk is.</a> LK to update.</p> <p><a href="#">LE asked about the risk to students in Taverners Hall accommodation who have nowhere else to go.</a> LK said that UCP are working on a revised agreement with Ark to take into account Covid-19 restrictions. Students in halls have been supported throughout this period.</p>  |

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| <b>10</b> | <b>AOB</b><br>LE expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Council and staff for their hard work over the last year. |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Date &amp; Time of the Next Meeting</b><br>September 2020, date and venue to be confirmed.                           |

*Rajesh Devarenu (Secretary) for Sir Les Ebdon (Chair)*






# Final UCP Council Minutes 240620

Final Audit Report

2020-10-01

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