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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no further declarations made.

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GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Chair advised members that Mr White had been commissioned by the Governance & Search Committee on behalf of the Board to undertake a review into Board governance in line with the requirement to assess the effectiveness of the Board on an annual basis. Mr White introduced himself and gave a brief overview to his background. The Principal explained to members that Mr White had been commissioned to review governance and that the Principal had also asked Mr White to consider the FE commissioner's letter and key points which had been issued very recently with particular consideration of the recommendation on the establishment of a Finance Committee with this being at odds with the view of the processes in place at the School. Mr White highlighted the key points of his report and advised that there is exemplar evidence that the School are meeting the appropriate governance arrangements. He advised that AUB had discussed the School in terms of maturity, confidence, Quality Assurance, noting rigour of systems and processes, the curriculum was built on student experience, learning resources, the work of the Academic Board and confidence in in the full Board. Mr White advised that one of the recommendations was that the website needed updating with specific reference to the "about us" section focussing on governance and that the Board could be more diverse in terms of its membership with regard to gender and other characteristics and there may be value in looking at this. Mr White discussed the great example of succession planning from student governor to full governor but that the Board might wish to consider how they retain student membership. Mr White advised he had spoken with the Office for Students, not particularly regarding The Northern School of Art but did discuss the regulatory requirements as being enhanced as part of the sector transfer and TDAP application process and the level of support and requirements.

With regard to the FE Commissioner's letter Mr White advised that it is about what is best for the Board in terms of monitoring finances and planning the finance and strategic future of the School. Noting that the key is the relationship between the Chair and CEO (Principal) specifically around challenge.

The Chair asked Mr White if he had any tips on recruiting more diversely and Mr White advised that the School might want to consider using an external company to support recruitment of governors outside of the current scope.

The Principal commented that the School are not complacent with regard to the position in relation to the FE commissioner's letter, that we are confident on quality but mindful around issues such as the Augar review and in terms of our size the challenges can be considerable.

The Chair commented that the result of the review would indicate that we are not failing, and asked Mr White if we needed to challenge ourselves, questioning if there are any specific issues Mr White would advise on. Mr White advised that he didn't think there is a sense of complacency and that it is clear that there is ambition to move this forward.

Mr Butchart recommended that the School assess itself against the FE Commissioner's letter with regard to the 10 points, as there is a must do and we need to consider how much notice we should we take.

The Principal advised that a report on financial challenges will be considered at the July Board meeting and this will have the forecast outturn and budget and we should look at the recommendations at that meeting to assess how comfortable we feel given the comments today.

The Chair asked if the FE Commissioner predominately focuses on financial distress only and Mr White advised that finance and quality are inexplicitly linked, the two triggers are financial inadequacy or a failure at Ofsted.

The Corporation Board RECEIVED the external governance review report of the Board

Mr White left the meeting

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EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE 1 AND 2

The Chair introduced Mr J Renyard University Secretary AUB and Mr G McKenzie CEO GuildHE who attended and gave presentations on their individual views of the external environment of the education sector.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Principal referred members to his previously circulated Principal's report of April 2019 and his report which had been circulated with the papers which set out contextual information based upon FE sector including local and regional comparisons.

The Chair thanked the Principal for the information and asked Mr McKenzie and Mr Renyard for their views on the approach of the School. Mr McKenzie informed that the level of uncertainty is such that the approach the Principal is suggesting is right and Mr Renyard discussed that AUB are planning prudently for the next 2-3 years and therefore the approach of the School is entirely sensible.

The Vice Principal Employability and External Relations provided members with a presentation highlighting the updated Strategic Plan.

Mr Bailey commented that he felt that the language was a bit tame, and that we need to be bold with the framework in place to

Principal /
Clerk

Vice
Principal
Resources
/ Clerk

respond to the outcomes of what we have heard. Mr Bailey suggested we be a bit more pragmatic rather than put too much emphasis on what might happen.

Mr Bailey also discussed that the name change might signal that we have dropped the focus on design as it no longer in the title, but it is highly relevant from an employability perspective and relevant to the world today. Mr Bailey commented that creative endeavour fundamentally isn't what the public will read as the answer, they might think science but they will clearly understand design so we need to think about how this fits into our behaviours.

Mr Goldsborough commented regarding "establishing a leading institution", and asked if this is the point of difference we can hang our hat on, creative and the application in this could be something that is really powerful and champion as it's very important.

Mr Butchart referred members to page 2, and commented that we need to define creativity – what does this mean?, designing good products which are sustainable?

The Principal thanked members for their comments and discussed that getting the balance between a high level Strategy and operational detail needs to be resolved.

Professor Rapley referred to the vision statements and suggested that the 4th statement needs further work but that she supported the other three.

Mr Bailey discussed that in responding to demographics he agreed with growth remaining in the objectives but we should be aiming for above demographic level

Mr Bailey also suggested that we need to define what is important in terms of the new FE campus in Middlesbrough. He discussed that we should also be ambitious about the HE campus.

The Vice Principal Employability and External Relations advised that feedback from staff indicates that they feel that the vision and outcomes are more inclusive than previously and that it is a difficult exercise to strike a balance between overview and detail.

Mr Trotter discussed there is something about the language, some of it sounds unambitious and it would be worth having another look at.

Mr Bailey informed that we need to create ourselves a big voice and we have lots of components around this but he didn't feel that the presentation of the updated Strategic Plan brought it together.

Mr Hughes concurred and commented that it is about being confident.

The Principal discussed with members that he had held a useful Academic Board Strategy Day which had discussed the School's approach to strategy including market differentiation and what can we hang on the film studios if they happen as we will be the only institution who have this along with the Acting degree.

Professor Rapley commented that we need to be careful with words such as unique and special, taking into account what else is provided by others. But choose the right things that are special and unique to us.

Mr Hughes agreed and suggested it would be worth documenting what is unique and special to The Northern School of Art.

Mr Butchart thanked the Principal for the update and presentation and commented that it is a good structure and there are many documents that underpin this document and we need to draw these together. Mr Butchart discussed that one of the reasons for today was to address our risk appetite and that this had not been picked up. The Chair suggested that further discussion on risk appetite should come as part of the approval of the strategy at a future meeting.

Mr McKenzie commented student engagement didn't come through as strongly as he would have expected and Mr Renyard commented that he echoed the points on uniqueness, but it might be useful to reflect on place and making more of this which characterises this institution.

The Vice Principal Employability and External Relations commented that the School have already started to reflect this. The Principal commented that there is an issue with place and maybe we need the confidence to say more about this without being unrealistic.

Finally the Principal commented that sustainability is an issue we cannot lose sight of. Members noted that there will be a lot of work looking in detail at the budget prior to the next Board and how we address the financial challenges in the next 2 years. It was agreed that the Vice Principal Resources and Principal bring a financial strategy document to the July meeting.

Principal /
Vice
Principal
Resources

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CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

No confidential items were highlighted.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business. The Chair thanked Mr Renyard and Mr McKenzie for attending and giving their thoughts.

18.135 **REVIEW OF MEETING**
No comments were made.

18.136 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
The next meeting of the Corporation Board will take place on
Monday 1 July 2019 in the BOARD ROOM, HARTLEPOOL.

Signed:

Date: