



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

SEARCH COMMITTEE

Approved minutes of a meeting
Held on Tuesday 2 March 2021
Conducted via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Laura Boutle	(Chair)
Louise Bright	(Corporation Member)
Sophie Chester-Glyn	(Corporation Member)
Sophie Green	(Corporation Member)
David Hagg	(Chair of the Corporation)
Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)

In attendance: Sharon Glover Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies received.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

In agenda item 7, it was noted that Kevin Hamblin is CEO of SGSAT and that Laura Boutle is a Member of SGSAT and that David Hagg acts on behalf of SGS Corporation as a Member of SGSAT.

3. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business received.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 14 January 2021 were approved, ready for signing as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Corporation approval of the following was noted:
- (i) The re-appointment of Mike Croker for a further 4-year term of office, with effect from the end of his current term of office.
 - (ii) The appointment of Ian Woolf as a Director to the Board of SGS Commercial Services Limited, with effect from 1 March 2021.

(iii) The appointment of Catherine Green as a Corporation Member for an initial 1-year term of office, with effect from 1 March 2021.

b) Actions on the action log were monitored and updates provided.

Following the interview of the last two candidates the Chair sought their feedback on the interview process. The very positive feedback received was shared with the Committee. It was proposed that, moving forward, feedback is sought on all candidates interviewed as a means of continuous improvement.

6. **Re-appointment of Corporation Members**

Members were invited to consider the re-appointment of Lynne Craig, whose first-year term of office expires 1 April 2021. Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Clerk reported Lynne's 100% attendance at Corporation and Committee meetings. Also shared with members was the very positive feedback received from her mentor and Chairs of the Committees on which Lynne sits in relation to her valued contribution.

This feedback was endorsed by members of the Search Committee and it was deemed useful to have an individual who had previously operated in an Executive position at another College. Lynne provides a good balance and challenges assumptions/statements and the strength of this appointment was recognised. Her background in the Further Education sector and knowledge of the curriculum has added value to the Corporation.

It was resolved:

To recommend Corporation approval of the re-appointment of Lynne Craig for a further 3-years to complete her first 4-year term of office, with effect from the end of her current term of office.

7. **Succession planning**

The Clerk presented a report on succession planning covering an 18 month look ahead. The Clerk also provided a verbal update on diversity data for the College's learner base.

Corporation: The Clerk reported that there is currently one vacancy on the Corporation. Reference was made to an updated collated skills/experience matrix, the breakdown of external Corporation membership and Committees, having regard to the diversity breakdown of the Corporation. Members concurred that the current composition of the Corporation comprised robust skill sets to support the College and it was timely to revisit alternative diverse channels to be used for search activity. This instigated a full discussion about diversity.

Diversity: The Clerk reported an improvement in the gender and age balance of the Corporation but confirmed that ethnicity and disability required greater representation.

The Chair suggested that the aim of the Search Committee should be to ensure that the diversity of Corporation reflects the diversity of the College's learner base wherever possible. The need to reflect diversity within the College's strategic priorities was also raised. Members agreed that a "diversity for diversity's sake's" approach should not be adopted and that the best candidates should continue to be appointed to the Corporation, but the focus needed to continue to be on providing equal access to opportunities.

Members questioned why interest from ethnicity and disability groups was generally so low and whether current recruitment methods were sufficiently far reaching. Members also wondered whether there was a 'stereotype' view on who (and what) a Governor is that could put potential candidates off. Members concurred that Search Committee needed to extend its reach and, in doing so, clearly illustrate our range of SGS Corporation members.

It was agreed that the appropriate amount of time should be taken to prepare for the next 'recruitment' round so that a diverse pool of candidates could be interviewed. It was acknowledged that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are in demand so it may take longer than usual to recruit. In seeking candidates for the next round, it was felt that there should be a focus on individuals that work or have connections within the local communities served by the College, as opposed to a skill specific requirement. Intellectual diversity and a common-sense approach would also be important.

The Clerk referenced an individual, who had been brought to her attention, from the Inspiring Governance network. This individual had many years' experience of the FE sector and was looking to join a Corporation. Following the diversity discussion, it was agreed to bear this candidate in mind for the next recruitment round in addition to reaching out to diverse networks to expand a pool of candidates to interview. As part of the interview process members suggested the inclusion of some competency-based questions.

Members discussed in detail how to improve the Committee's reach with the use of non-traditional methods. It was agreed that certain community channels and specific types of organisations (including volunteering community networks) would be identified and targeted. A review of the Search Committee's advertisement was proposed, and the Clerk was asked to circulate to members and invite feedback. It was suggested that the advert should be personalised with quotes and photos of current Corporation members with links to College videos to bring the role to life. It was suggested that the advertisement is made available to staff and students in order to attract the interest of parents of under-represented groups and for BAME staff to share the advertisement with their networks. Also use of the College website for advertising was suggested. The possibility of publishing "Frequently Asked Questions" to address any stereotyping of governors was suggested to try and encourage more applications from the diverse communities served by the College.

Unconscious Bias: The need to ensure that search processes do not suffer from unconscious bias was also raised and discussed. The Clerk advised that

this was a topic at the recent National Governance Professionals' conference and she had raised with the Chair of the Corporation and Chair of the Search Committee the possibility of Unconscious Bias training for the Corporation or, as a minimum, members of the Search Committee. This training is being investigated further. One of the members offered to send details to the Clerk of professional consultants that could assist in this respect.

Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate role: Also proposed was a review of the skills needed to fulfil the role of the Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate. Following discussion, it was recognised that this advocate role had grown over the years and that Corporation's view should be sought in relation to whether the role should be split or more Corporation Members identified to share these responsibilities.

Vice-Chair of the Search Committee: The Clerk reported that this would be Sophie Chester-Glyn's last meeting before taking maternity leave and members were invited to appoint a Vice-Chair of the Search Committee in Sophie's absence. It was agreed that Sophie Green is to cover this position in the absence of Sophie Chester-Glyn.

Temporary member of the Search Committee: The Clerk also asked whether consideration should be given for another Corporation member to fill Sophie's temporary vacancy on the Committee in case there are conflicts of interest when recruiting for the SGSAT Trustee. Following discussion, it was agreed that there was no reason to exclude those individuals connected to SGSAT from the interview process for a new Trustee as they are better placed to make recommendations to Corporation and members of the Search Committee are acting on behalf of the Corporation. It was agreed that the Clerk should approach the Corporation Member taking over the role of the Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate to see if she would be prepared to sit on the Committee and, if not, invite Corporation to appoint an individual on an interim basis.

SPG: In relation to a SPG Co-Opted member the Clerk advised that the Chair of SPG felt it would be helpful to retain this position. It was agreed to revisit SPG membership at the next meeting as the CEO & Executive Principal advised that there is currently no urgency to fill this vacancy.

SGSCSL: The Clerk reported that the SGSCSL Board intend to review the skills/experience needs at their next Board meeting in June 2021 and further information will be available thereafter to assist the Search Committee to fill their current vacancy.

SGSAT: Following revisions to the SGSAT Articles of Association the Clerk reported that there is the option for SGS Corporation to appoint a further Trustee to SGSAT Board. The Corporation has requested that an external search is undertaken by the Search Committee for a Trustee. Having consulted

with the Chair of SGSAT Board, members were informed of the skills and experience sought, whilst also taking into consideration the diversity of the Board and the need for experience of governance at Board level. The priority for an individual with secondary school experience i.e. a former Head Teacher or recent governor on a secondary school board was raised. The aim being to search for a pool of candidates, if possible, for recommendation to Corporation as an additional Trustee on SGSAT Board. The CEO & Executive Principal advised that the Board is looking for additional Trustees as soon as possible however SGSAT is holding an AGM on 4 March 2021 at which the future of the Trust is being discussed. If anything arises from the AGM the CEO & Executive Principal agreed to update members. Members asked if a role profile of a Trustee is available and the CEO & Executive Principal proposed that the outcome of the AGM is awaited prior to search activity taking place.

The report was noted.

Action: Clerk.

8. **Procedure for the Appointment, Reappointment, Induction and Training of Corporation Members**

The Clerk presented minor changes to the procedure and any further revisions were invited. It was agreed that feedback on the interview process should be invited from successful and unsuccessful candidates and the procedure updated to reflect this.

It was resolved:

To approve the Procedure for the appointment, reappointment, induction and training of Corporation Members, subject to the further revision agreed at the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business raised. Sophie Chester-Glyn was wished well for the forthcoming birth of her child.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

To Be Advised.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am

The meeting closed at 11.33am

The meeting was quorate.