

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014

1 PRESENT

Mr A Reynolds (Chair), Mr D White, Mr D Hanson

Also in attendance: Miss S Hill (Clerk to the Audit Committee), Mrs A Mosek (Principal), Ms J Lau (Finance Manager), Mr J Creed (Icca Education Training and Skills)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs H Wright, Mr M Standish (Baker Tilly), Mrs J Hemmant (Vice Principal, Corporate Services)

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER

The Chairman asked whether a replacement Staff Governor had been found to replace Mr Mdhlovu, and Mrs Mosek said that there had been interest shown from four staff members.

3. ACTION LOG

The Chairman checked the Action Log and said that a letter of thanks had been sent to RSM Tenon. Audit tracking is to continue and all other items had been completed.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT

Mr Creed presented the Icca Internal Audit reports to the Committee.

a) Pre-Inspection Curriculum Support

Mr Creed said that this report was an advisory piece of work looking at particular curriculum areas with declining achievement. The Audit Plan also looked at how the College could prepare for Ofsted. He said that Ofsted will look at this type of information, at trends, as well as looking for a steady rise in success rates. The Chairman asked if the improvements were good enough and Mr Creed said that they were still a little below benchmark. The Chairman asked if the benchmarks could be added to the charts/graphs as it would be useful for comparison purposes.

Discussion took place regarding the increase in short course enrolments and reduction in success rates. Mrs Mosek explained that changes had been made to the structure of the ESOL courses to improve success rates. Success rates did improve significantly but as the courses are now categorised as short, rather than long, this has had an impact on the overall short course success rate as well as on enrolment numbers. It was pleasing to see an increase in long course success rates and these were regarded by Ofsted as being the most important measure.

It was noted that Ofsted would review poorly performing areas and would want to see what steps have been taken to improve them. Mr Hanson asked if the Management would ever consider removing underperforming areas. Mrs Mosek confirmed that the first step is to try to improve them, but if that is not possible, then cutting courses is an option.

In conclusion, the report was useful to prepare College managers for Ofsted. Mrs Mosek confirmed that it had been a useful report and helpful to Programme Area Managers. The Chairman asked that before the final reports are sent to Corporation members, whether the typographical errors could be amended. Mr Creed said that this would be done.

b) Corporate Governance – Management Information

Mr Creed said that that this report looked at four areas of Key Performance Indicators: financial, funding, quality and strategy. There was an assurance opinion of Substantial, with 5 recommendations of low priority and one is of a medium priority looking at performance of curriculum. Some discussion took place regarding class group sizes and efficiency.

It was agreed that a copy of the report be given to Finance and General Purposes Committee and to carry forward any recommendations considered necessary by Governors.

c) Fundamental Financial Controls

Again with this report, Mr Creed said that the overall opinion was Substantial. There were five recommendations all with low/advisory ratings.

Discussion took place relating to control and monitoring, contracted suppliers and value for money within the College's ordering system. The Chairman commented that it is good to use local businesses whenever possible.

The recommendation on page 57 related to the reconciliation of tuition fees. It was stated that in the past when student contributions were small this was not so much an issue, but now that larger contributions are required from students/employers, the College should ensure that invoices should be sent out promptly to aid cash recovery. Ms Lau advised that a new system was proposed for dealing with this next year. The Chairman asked that the team ensure the new procedure is documented. Ms Lau agreed to this request.

The Committee were informed that all minor issues will be implemented before the start of the new academic year.

Mr Creed said that as far as Icca was concerned, the relationship with the College was working effectively. Mrs Mosek agreed confirmed that this was the case. There had been more debate on some of the audit reports than others.

It was confirmed that Baker Tilly would be sent copies of the reports.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A copy of the audit rolling programme was distributed.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.