Board of Directors Minutes

Meeting held on 14th June 2023 at 2pm
Teams online

Attended:
- Rob Cowan – Director, CEO
- Jules Brookes – Director, Head of Provider
- Anwar Hamad – Director, General Manager (Clerk)
- Mulika Sannie – Non-Executive Director
- Peter Black – Non-Executive Finance Director (Chair)
- Andrew Gower – Non-Executive Director
- Keith Harris – Non-Executive Director

MINUTES

Item

Section 1: Welcome

1.1. Welcome and apologies

1.1.1.   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2. Confirmation of minutes from the previous meeting

1.2.1.   The committee **confirmed** the minutes from the previous meeting.

1.3. Actions update

1.3.1.   The Head of Provider informed the board that no council funding was available for security costs, thus closing the item.

1.3.2.   The CEO updated the board on the creation of a working group including the Head of Marketing and Communications and the Marketing and Communications Senior Manager. Key progress achieved to date include updated blog articles, open day discussions about the expansion, and the creation of 3D mock-ups. The Head of Provider was assigned an action to review the 3D mock-ups and to draft a shortlist of people for the School's opening.

1.3.3.   All other actions from previous meetings were completed, and no further comments were made.

Section 2: Standing Items *(to note unless starred)*

2.1. Head of Provider's Report

2.1.1.   The Head of Provider was pleased to report that the performance of student recruitment has exceeded forecast. The board discussed the specialist provider funding from the OfS which is enabling the School to

deepen it's specialist status in a range of ways, including the hiring of new subject- and sector-specialist staff.

2.1.2. The Head of Provider announced that the DAPs application process has been initiated. It was discussed at the last company meeting and received positive engagement from all departments. The new academic governance process has been implemented with invaluable feedback on the structure provided by the Non-Executive directors. The Head of Provider was tasked to revisit the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with Middlesex University London to clarify the notice period for ending the partnership, and any implications on student registration fees.

2.1.3. It was noted that the NSS and TEF results are still pending, with expected release in Q3. The previous year's TEF score was silver.

2.1.4. Two new degrees, Songwriting and Music Systems Engineering, have been internally approved for launch. They are scheduled for validation in April 2024, with a launch set for September 2024. Feedback regarding the Music Systems Engineering degree in particular has been very positive, particularly from manufacturers, potentially leading to internship opportunities. The Head of Education and Curriculum will check if the possible acronym for the Music Systems Engineering degree - 'MuSE' has been trademarked.

2.2. Premises expansion update

2.2.1. The CEO confirmed that the lease was signed on 12th May and work has begun. The landlord had not finished all the required work, so the remainder is being handled by Point Blank, with costs to be reimbursed by the landlord.

2.2.2. Additional security measures will require an extra £50k spend. Even so, the project is still on budget when including contingency.

2.2.3. No issues regarding damp were encountered, however, the main challenge being addressed is to ensure cost control.

2.2.4. The CEO will ensure a GoPro has been installed to document the build.

2.3. Adopt the Management accounts for the quarter ended 31/03/2023

2.3.1. The management accounts were adopted.

2.4. External audit update

2.4.1. The external audit returned no recommendations, which was a commendable result and a strong indication that the company has solid processes in place.

2.5. DAPS update

2.5.1.   This item was covered in the Head of Provider's report.

2.6. Review report from Academic Board

2.6.1.   The board endorsed the format and focus of the report and commended the author for implementing the feedback from the previous meeting.

2.6.2.   The Head of Provider highlighted the comment around AI and how the School is looking at how to incorporate it administratively to improve processes, as well as in relation to education to minimise the risks it poses when it comes to assessments.

2.7. Review report from Executive Committee

2.7.1.   No comments were raised about the report from the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Items to Decide

3.1. Approve Shareholders' quarterly dividends

3.1.1.   The board unanimously approved the proposed Shareholders' quarterly dividends.

3.2. Developing Research and Scholarship phase 1

3.2.1.   The board welcomed the idea of developing scholarship and research at the School. A Non-Executive Director suggested the creation of a policy for scholarship and research, as well as an operational plan, to provide the rationale and plan for implementation tailored to the subject-specialism of the School.

3.2.2.   The board expressed the need to evaluate the institution's current research activities, potential future initiatives, the plan for implementation, and the associated costs. There was also discussion of the interconnections and mutuality between Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the School's initiative to develop research and scholarship.

3.2.3.   The Head of Provider recommended that the Registrar be tasked to scope the School's Research and Scholarship Policy in alignment with the requirements for DAPs. A Non-Executive Director will send through a policy template to help this action.

Section 4: Items to Discuss

4.1. HE Freedom of Speech bill

4.1.1. The General Manager briefed the board about the recently passed Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. The new legislation reinforces the responsibilities of HEIs to protect freedom of speech and academic freedom on campuses. The Act will prevent universities from silencing individuals who raise complaints of sexual misconduct, abuse, harassment, or bullying using non-disclosure agreements.

4.1.2. The board tasked the Quality and Standards Committee to review Point Blank's external speakers policy and any other related policies to ensure alignment with the bill.

4.2. Discuss any recommendations from Audit and Value for Money Committee

4.2.1. More information was requested about how the Lifetime Loan Entitlement (LLE) will be implemented for 2025 and how this could affect future forecasts.

4.2.2. The committee was also advised to reach out to IHE and GuildHE for any recommendation on servicing an internal audit assignment on the GDPR.

Section 5: Items to Note

5.1. Approval of Academic Governance structure

5.1.1. The Academic Governance structure shared in draft prior to the meeting was approved by the board.

Section 6: Close

6.1. Vote on Shareholders' dividends

6.1.1. The board voted on the issue of Shareholders' dividends.

6.2. Confirmation of next meeting date

6.2.1. The next Board of Directors meeting will be taking place on Wednesday 13th September 2023.

Key Contacts

Chair: Jules Brookes
         Jules@pointblankmusicscshool.com
Clerk: Anwar Hamad
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Actions Table

Action No.	Minute Ref.	Action	Deadline	Responsible Parties
1.	1.3.1.2	Head of Provider to look into 3D renders and see if they can be improved, also to look into people to open the school and create a short list.	ASAP	Head of Provider
2.	2.1.2	To revisit the (MOC) with Middlesex University London to clarify the notice period for ending the partnership, and any implications on student registration fees.	ASAP	Head of Provider
3.	2.1.4.1	Check if the Music Systems Engineering (MuSE) programme title acronym has been trademarked.	ASAP	Head of Education and Curriculum
4.	2.2.4	Check if the GoPro has been installed to capture the premises expansion build.	ASAP	CEO
5.	3.2.5	For the Registrar be tasked to scope the School's Research and Scholarship Policy in alignment with the requirements for DAPs.	Before next board meeting	Registrar
6.	3.2.6	Send through a policy template for developing scholarship and research.	ASAP	Andrew Gower
7.	4.1.4	Review Point Blank's external speakers policy and any other related policies to ensure alignment with the HE Freedom of Speech bill.	Before next board meeting	Quality Standards Committee (QSC)

Board of Directors Minutes. Taken by Anwar Hamad, General Manager. Approved: 16/08/2023