

Point Blank Ltd**Minutes of a Board Meeting****Held by digital video conference on Thursday 17th September 2020 at 2pm.****Present:-**

Mr Robert Cowan - Director & CEO
Mr Jules Brookes – Director, Head of Provider, Chair
Mr Peter Black - Non-Executive Director
Dr Andrew Gower - Non-Executive director
Mr Keith Harris - Non-Executive Director

Matters Arising and adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes

There were no matters arising and the previous minutes were adopted unanimously.

Head of Providers Report**Board of Directors**

1. The School is performing well despite the Covid-19 outbreak.
2. This is due to a number of reasons:
 - a) entering Fee Cap means a more diverse range of students can apply for our courses
 - b) student recruitment for the September term has been successful and shows large percentage increases in many categories. See appendix 2.
 - c) the flexibility and agility of our institution in reacting to the pandemic; transferring students online
 - d) giving students a high value experience and gaining positive feedback
 - e) performing well in NSS and scoring 84% in overall student satisfaction
 - f) our staff performing at an extremely high level whilst working from home under difficult circumstances
 - g) an increase in quality of communications to students
 - h) an increase in student services available remotely such as well-being counselling, industry events and masterclasses
 - i) revising of modules which were not initially deliverable online via our validating partner's due processes in time for the April term. All modules are now deliverable virtually

As an aside, the rate of staff recruitment has now begun to pick up again as we fill necessary places in order to cater for increasing student cohorts and the needs of our APP.

September Term

The Head of Provider confirmed that recruitment for the September Term was looking very healthy in terms of student numbers and financial stability, as previously outlined in the Audit Committee report. Assurance was provided to the Board on the confident progress being made in achieving forward plans. Recent feedback to the Head of Provider suggests that the success of online delivery is influencing future students to express their preference for blended delivery, part in-school and part online. As a consequence, in response to student feedback, the School will be rotating the students on alternative weeks, with eight in the classroom and eight online.

According to feedback, we may end up with more than eight online each week. This can be considered an ongoing legacy of the pandemic and not necessarily a bad thing. If we can achieve an equivalent student experience online, we will be able to fulfil student needs in a more diverse range of circumstances.

Academic Performance

The Head of Provider reported a very positive year in terms of academic performance of the students. Showing an increase in the total number of graduating HE students as well as an increase on their grades.

Turnover

To summarise turnover so far, this year the School is on target for £7.135m. This is after the majority of the changes have been made with regards to Fee Cap (although there is still some further adjustment to be made following entering Fee Cap and lowering fees for the accelerated courses etc).

Point Blank Recording Label

Jules reported the successful re-launch of the School's in-house record label for students and that its first release, 'Dreams', had achieved over 230k streams on Spotify in six weeks. This was exciting news and a good opportunity for Point Blank's students to be able to take advantage of as a tool for further enhancing their experience with the School and starting their music careers whilst studying here.

The Head of Provider noted that a dozen more releases were lined up over the remainder of this year and into 2021. He reported that finding that this focus on A&Ring our students is revealing many more talented individuals amongst our student body and that the mentoring process involved is extremely fruitful.

Black Lives Matter

The School has continued its BLM project with two further roundtable discussions for staff members having taken place since the last BoD. More content has been planned for Black History Month and three events are planned for the September term for students to enjoy which will revolve around this theme. Thereafter, the strategy will be to widen the discussions to include other diverse groups at risk of prejudice and bias and to educate ourselves, our staff and students on these important issues and to weave this theme into the School's mission on a permanent basis.

Expansion Project

Rob advised that the intended building premises expansion project which was put back due to the Covid-19 epidemic is now moving forward and, with the co-operation of the Local Authority, it is hoped that all planning issues will be resolved by the end of 2020. As previously reported the plans will change due to the recent experience of flexible learning methods and working arrangements for staff. It is expected that

the project will go ahead next year in anticipation of having the new facilities in use for September 2021.

Review of Report from Academic Board

- The Board had received the report from the Academic Board which met in July 2020.
- The Board reviewed the minutes and noted the continued development of best practice surrounding course delivery under the constraints of the blended learning program. The Academic Board has initiated improvements resulting from student feedback to the booking system for 121 tutorials and to make course notes available throughout the academic year.
- The review of the Foundation Course will be completed in time for the September term.
- The Board were pleased to note the emphasis on the regulatory and compliance timetable with planning being implemented to ensure that accountability, validation and the Quality Enhancement Plan will be ready on time.
- The Board approved the Academic Board's request for funding support to be made available to students from low income backgrounds in order to provide the equipment they need to support their studies. It was agreed funding will be available using the OfS Capital Grant that the college had been now been awarded as a result of entering Fee Cap.
- The Board expressed thanks to all members of staff for their continuing hard work and professionalism shown during the continuing pandemic.

Review of the Report from the Executive Committee

- The Board had received the report from the Executive Committee which met on 19th August 2020.
- The Board reviewed the minutes and noted that the company-wide KPIs had now been revised following the last Board Meeting and that plans were now in place to ensure that monitoring of targets will be implemented
- and reported on at the next meeting. The Board agreed that the KPIs should include recruitment.
- The Board were pleased to note that planning was under way to return to on site working in time for the September Term with staff attending on a rota basis as needed.
- The Board approved the proposed change to the timing of delivery of the two year accelerated degree course to be implemented for courses commencing in September 2021.

Review of report of Audit and Value for Money Committee

The Audit Committee met prior to the Board meeting. Peter, as chair of the Audit Committee, reported to the Board.

He advised that the committee had reviewed the management account pack for the quarter ended 30th June 2020 and that, following discussion, had been adopted by the meeting. He advised that turnover for the three months to 30th June 2020 was down by £204k (9.2%) when compared to budget however when looking at the six month period to 30th June 2020 turnover was down by only 86K (2.1%).

Over the six month period direct costs have reduced by £114k (6.3%) and overheads were within £2k of budget. Profit before other income was up by £26k (1.8%) on budget.

The Board noted that a report dealing with internal control issues relating to student invoicing and credit note procedures had been submitted by the General Manager. It endorsed the decision of the Audit Committee to approve the proposed changes and the timetable to implement by 31st December 2020.

The Board noted that a Risk Assessment had been carried out to ensure the safe return of both students and staff for the September Term. It was agreed that the maximum safe capacity be set at 50% of normal studio class size.

The Board was pleased to note that as a result of entering fee cap the college became eligible for an

annual revenue grant set at £450,000 and a capital expenditure grant of £45,000 for the academic year commencing in September 2020. It was agreed that these funds be ringfenced and earmarked for the provision of enhanced student services and to provide equipment grants to students from low income backgrounds.

Any Other Business

- Andrew thanked the Executive Directors and all of the Point Blank staff for the outstanding performance of the School in all areas under such difficult circumstances.
- The Board considered that following a review of the outlook for the September term it could now re- enact the School's pay policy which had been suspended in March.
- The Head of Provider proposed that the General Manager attend future Board Meetings in the capacity of Secretary tasked to take the minutes. This proposal was approved.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 4pm.



Jules Brookes, Head of Provider & Chair of the Meeting