

**Unconfirmed Minutes
Board Cobra Meeting
Meeting held on 22 April 2020**



Attending: Geoffrey Crossick (Chair), Lynne Williams, Vivienne Littlechild, Graham Packham, Maria Delgado, Katharine Lewis, Amy Grimes (Minutes)

1. Updates

City of London

Noted: that

- 1.1 The City was taking stock across all three of its funding streams: City Cash, City Fund and Bridge Estates.
- 1.2 The Barbican was facing losses of £2m per month.
- 1.3 City Schools were reporting similar losses to that of the Guildhall School.
- 1.4 Rent holidays were being granted to property tenants
- 1.5 All City departments would be challenged to drive down and mitigate losses and the School might be expected to offer part of its reserves.
- 1.6 The Higher Education sector was awaiting a Government response to the UUK proposals.

Office for Students (incl Governors' responsibilities)

- 1.7 There had been an extension of moratorium on unconditional offers to new entrants for September 2020 but the School had never made unconditional offers, always requiring 2 Es at A-Level. or the equivalent
- 1.8 Otherwise the OfS had been relatively quiet. This might change depending on student tuition fee refund requests and level of student complaints, the latter might mean they would start looking at student protection plans.
- 1.9 The NUS was advocating that students be allowed to re-sit the entire academic year without a single cost. This was not a sustainable option.

School Update

- 1.10 All students had been emailed a programme of study for the Summer term.
- 1.11 Students knew who their student representatives were in case of questions and the student consultation meetings with the Principal were helping in this regard.
- 1.12 The SU president attended a meeting with Emma Harding, shadow FE & HE Minister, who was lobbying for student fee refunds.
- 1.13 CUK – all institutions were holding the line on student refunds. At the School refunds would only be considered on an individual basis where a student couldn't access the on-line programme for reasons outside of their control eg very poor Wi-Fi
- 1.14 Higher Education students were not required to pay fees for the Summer term until 31 August 2020; this was an extension to the usual deadline
- 1.15 In the Under 18s area the School had offered a 25% reduction fees for the summer term due to loss of ensemble activity. The School was leading the sector in this area – other CUK junior schools were now looking at doing the same thing. Engagement was looking positive in CYM London and the regional centres.
- 1.16 The Chamberlain had noted the School's anticipated financial position but there were other departments in a worse position. The School was considering using efficiency savings which had been ring-fenced and were now in reserves. The Chamberlain had questioned some of the decision making:
 - 1) Why had the School reduced the Junior Guildhall fees by 25%?

2) Why had the School let students off paying rent for Sundial Court for the summer term?

- 1.17 Another issue for the School was that a lot of packages which are being offered by the Government were not open to the School due to it being a department of the City of London, a local authority.
- 1.18 Recruitment for September 2020 entry was looking reasonable but withdrawal of acceptances would need to be closely monitored; the possible pinch point would be the deadline for payment of deposits in July
- 1.19 First round Acting auditions were ongoing on-line, second and third round (final recall) arrangements were being considered with last possible date for offers the end of June.
- 1.20 The School was not at this moment considering staggered start dates for different groups of students as it would create an onward programme of catch-up, and would be administratively difficult to arrange given the interdependency of programmes.

2. Current School Issues

Amended Programmes for Summer Term

- 2.1 Amendments to programmes had all been identified with quality assurance compliance and learning outcomes in mind.
- 2.2 Final year music students had been given the option to defer their final recital assessment and some students had been given the option to defer some principal study lessons into the autumn
- 2.3 All programme amendments had been sent to External Examiners for comment and the feedback so far had largely been positive.
- 2.4 There had been a question from an External Examiner in relation to why the School was not using a safety mark. The School had discussed this and it had been decided that if a student did not engage with the provision offered then their mark might be affected.

Pastoral Support

- 2.5 It was felt that the Board should have a general overview of the support in place as well as information on the specific support in place for vulnerable groups identified by the OfS and it was suggested that this could be placed in an annexe.
- 2.6 The School was using the opportunity of online working to get all staff up to speed on IT platforms and online tools for teaching.
- 2.7 Board members noted their gratitude to the SU President's amazing support to students during this time.

Recruitment Scenarios/Financial impact of Covid 19

- 2.8 The financial impact paper had already been to the Senior Management team and had been sent to the Chamberlain.
- 2.9 This paper would be the basis for discussion at the upcoming meeting with Catherine McGuinness and Jeremy Mayhew.
- 2.10 The prospects of mitigation were in the paper but limited.
- 2.11 The strategic plan would need to be revised with income generating projects being brought forward.
- 2.12 Board members felt it was worth signalling in the paper that it was unknown what the creative arts industry would look like after COVID-19 and this had an impact on employability of students after graduating. Many theatres were not planning anything until Spring 2021. It was important that Guildhall were part of conversations with industry on these matters.
- 2.13 There were some inaccuracies in dates throughout the document which needed to be rectified

AGREED: The Cobra group suggested using the financial update paper as a base paper for updates in each meeting.

Reopening of School & Extension of Programme Delivery

- 2.14 The School was now turning its attention to planning for physical re-opening. Many considerations would need to be discussed: welfare of staff and students, room capacities, social distancing measures, facilities, sanitisers etc.

AGREED: That there should be a report on current thinking and detail of unresolved difficulties at the next meeting.

2.15 That the School's BCP meetings would continue for the next few weeks but usual decision making would go back to Senior Management team and Executive team in June.

3. AOB

3.1 No extra business

Next meeting: 6 May 10.30am on teams