

## CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### AGENDA NOTICE

#### Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting

**Date:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Time:** 4.00pm

**Venue:** Online/Hybrid

- 3.1 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence**
- 3.2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3.3 Minutes of the last Curriculum & Standards Committee held 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022**  
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 3.3
- 3.4 Matters arising from the minutes**  
Chair of Curriculum & Standards Committee Appendix 3.4
- Targets**
- 3.5 Annual Operating Statement 2021/22 June Monitoring Point**  
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.5
- 3.6 Student Enrolment Report (F&GP report copied to C&S for information)**  
Report by the AD Learning & Information Systems Appendix 3.6
- Quality**
- 3.7 Progress with Quality Improvement Plans**  
Report by the Directors of Quality Appendix 3.7
- 3.8 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks**  
Report by the Directors of Quality Appendix 3.8
- 3.9 Stakeholder Feedback incl. Learner Voice**  
Report by the Directors of Quality Appendix 3.9
- 3.10 Apprenticeship Action Plan**  
Report by the Directors of Quality Appendix 3.10
- FE**
- 3.11 FE Student Performance Report**  
Report by the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Completion Appendix 3.11
- Safeguarding**
- 3.12 Termly Safeguarding Report**  
Report by the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Completion Appendix 3.12
- HE**
- 3.13 HE Report**  
Report by the Vice Principal HE, Adult & Curriculum Enhancement Appendix 3.13
- Corporate Reports and Policies**
- 3.14 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes**  
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.14
- 3.15 Complaints Policy and Procedures Update**  
Report by the Principal Appendix 3.15

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**3.16 Any Confidential Matters of Report**

Verbal report by the Principal

**3.17 Any Other Business**

**3.18 Date and time of the next Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting**

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Committee

Ms Jane Houzer – Chair  
Mrs G Christie  
Mr N Crippa  
Student Governors  
Professor O Khan  
Mr A Smith  
Ms V Barrett – Principal

In attendance

Mrs H Drewery - Vice Principal Curriculum Development & Industry  
Mr G Gomes – AD Learning Information Systems (for item 3.6 only)  
Mrs R Jenkins – Vice Principal TLC  
Mr L Magee- Vice Principal HE, ACE (for item 3.13 only)  
Ms K Morris – Director of Quality  
Mr R Walker – Director of Quality  
Professor M Earwicker - Ex-officio member  
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to Corporation

## **Farnborough College of Technology**

### **Curriculum & Standards Committee**

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022

#### Present:

Ms J Houzer – Chair (via video conference)  
Mr N Crippa - (via video conference) - *left mid item 3.16*  
Professor O Khan - (via video conference)  
Ms V Barrett – Principal

#### In Attendance:

Professor M Earwicker – Chair of Corporation  
Mrs H Drewery – Vice Principal Curriculum, Development and Industry Placements (via video conference) - *left mid item 3.16*  
Mr G Gomes – Associate Director of Learning Information Systems – *from mid item 3.5 to end of item 3.6*  
Mrs R Jenkins – Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Completion (via video conference) - *left mid item 3.16*  
Mr L Magee - Vice Principal HE, Adult & Curriculum Enhancement (via video conference) – *from late item 3.12 to end of item 3.13*  
Ms K Morris – Director of Quality - *left mid item 3.16*  
Mr R Walker - Director of Quality - *left mid item 3.16*  
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to the Corporation (via video conference)

Quorate: Yes

*The meeting opened at 4.05pm*

#### **3.1/21.22 Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Chapman, Mrs Christie, Mr Smith and the Student Governors.

#### **3.2/21.22 Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

#### **3.3/21.22 Minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.

#### **3.4/21.22 Matters arising from the minutes**

The Committee received the progress report on matters arising.

#### **3.5/21.22 Annual Operating Statement 2021/22 June Monitoring Point**

The Principal reported on Term 2 progress for the Annual Operating Statement 2021/22 starting with target 1 to 'maintain outstanding standards'. The College was still awaiting the publication of the report from the recent Ofsted inspection but the inspection's provisional grading was an important measure of success for target 1. Moving to target 2 to 'devise the College strategy' the Principal noted that consultation regarding the strategy was continuing and had included the Student Conference the previous week and individual meetings with Governors. Within the property plan to support the Sustainable Transformation Strategy (STS) the Board had earlier in the week approved the Hart Centre proposal. Regarding target 5 the Principal reported Scaffolding and Logistics were new areas requested by industry for delivery

from September 2022. Whilst Logistics should be in place in time Scaffolding may take a little longer as this was a resource heavy area but one which also has the support of Rushmoor Borough Council. Under target 6 it was noted that the College continues to work to have less reliance on public funding and is developing its full-cost provision through the online FOCAL platform (Farnborough Online College Advancing Learning). The Gas centre is also now complete and will offer full-cost provision, and learners in Art and Design have set up a College shop to sell a range of products and generated £180 of sales so far.

#### Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted that apprenticeships were highlighted in the text reporting Term 2 progress for target 1 and asked if there was anything else regarding apprenticeships that the Committee's attention should be drawn to? The Principal replied that apprenticeships were on target regarding income and achievement rates were on track to improve. Ofsted had commented that although FCoT's achievement was 20% above national average the national averages were very poor and so the College should focus more upon its poorer performing areas. Whilst there was more of a focus upon data than might have been expected during an Ofsted inspection, it was also noted that the inspection had identified that some employers' skills needs were not being fully met, plus one issue of non-compliance with paperwork requirements. Following the inspection the College had commissioned an external survey with employers to ascertain their unmet needs. Employers reported that some of their needs had changed during the pandemic as for example in Hair and Beauty perming is now an area that employers would like to see included. Action plans to address the findings from the survey were now in place and remedial action is being taken. Governors approved of the steps being taken.

*Mr Gomes joined the meeting.*

Governors noted that the Student Performance KPIs on page 13 of the meeting pack were all green for Apprenticeships and so queried what the poorer performing areas were that the Ofsted inspection had referenced. The Director of Quality Mr Walker explained that Ofsted had looked at how the curriculum was delivered and observed that employers were insufficiently happy with the content and that this might require adjustment. So for example whilst employers nationally had been consulted and devised the Apprenticeship Standards in their area, it was observed that employers were insufficiently consulted regarding FCoT's curriculum and how it was delivered. One observation was that if too many apprentices were leaving a course early did that imply that there might be a problem with the curriculum design? How well was the College analysing this information and making changes? Governors asked what data the Board would have needed to see in order to identify this issue. The Director of Quality Ms Morris commented that following the Ofsted inspection it appeared that the College had not shown the detail behind the headline figures as clearly as it could to enable this and thus a new list of underperforming qualifications and underperforming apprenticeships was being shared with Governors in the appendix to the Curriculum Risks paper item 3.8. This should give greater transparency to the Board.

The Principal noted that financially apprenticeships had performed well and could reach an income of £2.9m by year end. The challenge was to manage growth alongside quality and thus she did not want to grow the College's apprenticeship provision any further but have a year of consolidation in 2022/23. This would enable the College to better resource the area and work on delivering outstanding quality. Governors praised this approach and concluded the discussion noting that many employers had shifted their working practices during the pandemic so it was perhaps unsurprising to see that the curriculum had to be tweaked to better align with their current needs.

### **3.6/21.22 Student Enrolment & Applications Report**

The Principal introduced Mr Gomes, Associate Director Learning Information Systems, to the meeting and explained that with the departure of Mrs Drewery, Vice Principal Curriculum Development & Industry, at the end of the academic year Mr Gomes would be taking over the reporting of this paper. Mr Gomes drew attention to the key points in the executive summary, namely that learner numbers and funded income continues to increase for 16-18 FE, Adult FE and Apprentices in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. For the four main funding streams (FE, Adult, HE and Apprenticeships) funding had increased by £407k in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. There had been a decline in prescribed HE numbers and funding but this was offset by an increase in higher and degree apprenticeships. New government initiatives would support considerable future expansion plans for the College's adult provision.

Moving into the detail of the report Mr Gomes noted that student recruitment had been positive with the current total of students increasing by 83 from 2020/21 to 2021/22 with a total of 5,123 students. He gave the breakdown of figures for T Levels noting a total cohort of 120 first and second year students. For FE adult students he noted that numbers had dipped but the value of the provision was higher and thus the adult education budget would be met. The overall number of apprenticeships was 728 with enrolments higher than initial indications and thus it was predicted that the income budget would be exceeded. HE recruitment was down and the total cohort had reduced from 441 in 2020/21 to 368 in 2021/22 but it was noted that this was primarily due to the majority of provision moving from 3 year programmes to accelerated 2 year programmes. As already reported a growth in higher and degree apprenticeships (from 15 to 68 new starts) meant a growth in HE apprenticeship income with further growth anticipated in 2022/23. Undergraduate HE income was £2.3m with HE apprenticeship income at £202k and predicted to rise to £557k next year.

Turning to applications Mr Gomes reported that 16-18 FE applications were in line with last year but the acceptance rate was much higher with 82% acceptances compared with 69% in 2021/22. Applications for adult/part-time courses were promising and although AEB applications were down on last year the funding value of the provision had increased. Take up of the new free Government funded Level 3 courses for adults was good with 122 applications for 2022/23 compared to 19 learners for 2021/22. Advanced Learner Loan course applicants were also up and full-cost courses had seen a slight increase. HE applications were up but there was a lower rate of acceptances. However, it was noted that more universities were making conditional offers this year so acceptances might increase closer to the start of term. Apprentice applications were slightly lower than last year.

Finally Mr Gomes highlighted the new courses for 2022/23 with a focus upon the partnership the College has with a number of companies to develop professional online and mixed learning content. The new free Government funded Level 3 courses already referred to would see the College's adult provision continue to grow and help learners to reskill or move back into employment. A table listing the new curriculum offer was discussed with Mr Gomes noting that all were in line with the College's new Strategy. The 20 new CPD bitesize courses to be offered via FOCAL were in direct response to requests from local employers.

#### Governors' questions and comments

Governors asked what steps the College takes to keep applicants warm between application and acceptance, and enrolment. Mr Gomes advised that summer school days and taster days were held. Governors noted that it would be helpful in the autumn meeting to look at actual conversion rates and review the success of the College's keep warm initiatives. Governors queried why the table on page 31 of the meeting pack showed that FE offers and acceptances were much lower this year than last and the Principal suggested the data should be reviewed. It was noted that the table did not compare like with like as last years' figures would be end of year and this year's figures were up until late May/early June. Governors concluded their

discussion by observing that it would be useful to review the popularity of the new courses offered in 2022/23.

**Action:** AD Learning Information Systems to report to the November Curriculum & Standards Committee on final conversion rates, success of the keep warm initiatives and the uptake of new courses.

*Mr Gomes left the meeting.*

### **3.7/21.22 Progress with Quality Improvement Plans**

The Director of Quality Ms Morris presented the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) noting that it had been amended slightly following the Ofsted inspection. Most of the areas were rated green but the achievement rate for underperforming courses was amber and would remain so until year end. A new action had been added under 'Leadership and Management' to ensure Apprenticeship provision meets the skills needs of employers. The Committee commended the actions.

### **3.8/21.22 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks**

The Committee Chair noted that she had spoken with the Principal prior to the meeting regarding the new look of the risk register. She praised the clearer approach whilst noting that a final adjustment would be made to the table on the cover sheet showing an overview of Term 2 progress to identify which risks were being referred to. The new register highlights the critical information in a simple sheet rather than the excessively detailed A3 spreadsheets used previously which were untidy and unwieldy. The Principal noted that she had also met with the Chairs of Audit and F&GP Committees to discuss the new risk register which had been developed by adopting FE best practice. The register whilst of great value to Governors was primarily a management tool owned by SMT and had to be suitable for purpose. The register retained a gross score for likelihood and impact but now showed the change from last term and the College response to the risk which was either to avoid, mitigate or accept. The final column on the right hand side which was currently blank can capture any comments from SMT, the Committees or the Board. The cover which accompanies the risk register reports upon how the risks are managed. Governors approved of the changes and noted that the College was on track with the four curriculum risks. The red rated risk 12 was particularly difficult to mitigate as it concerned furloughing, Covid 19 economic downturn, inflation and labour shortages.

The Director of Quality noted that the list of underperforming FE qualifications had been added as an appendix to the risk register paper but that the underperforming Apprenticeship courses had not and so she would circulate this item. She explained that this was the first time the underperforming data had been brought to the Curriculum & Standards Committee. She advised that the courses marked in blue had very small entry numbers and so whilst they were included for monitoring purposes their statistics were skewed by their size. She added that the Quality Managers met with the Programme Managers twice a year to track progress on underperforming courses.

### **Governors' questions and comments**

Governors commented that it was good to see the underperforming data and cautioned that low performing programmes with low numbers were of particular concern and should prompt the College to reconsider the future of such programmes. The Director of Quality agreed but noted that this was last year's data (during the pandemic) and so some assessments could not be completed due to the nature of the course and lockdown restrictions. The Principal added that at the next autumn Committee meeting the Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Completion (TLC) would report on the work undertaken to thin the A Level provision to remove low number/low performing courses.

**Actions:**

- Quality Manager (KM) to circulate to the Committee the list of underperforming apprenticeships.
- Vice Principal TLC to report to the November Curriculum & Standards Committee changes to the A Level provision.

**3.9/21.22 Stakeholder Feedback including Learner Voice**

**and**

**3.10/21.22 Apprenticeship Action Plan**

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The Director of Quality Ms Morris presented the reports highlighting the activities taken to enhance Apprentice voice this year. Coffee mornings were held and a new Apprentice Forum had elected representatives. The Apprenticeship Stakeholder Improvement Plan incorporated all the feedback from different events requiring action including actions arising from employer feedback and is managed by the Director of Quality. An Apprenticeship action plan arises from the Improvement Plan with the actions RAG rated.

Governors' questions and comment

Governors praised the thorough nature of the Apprenticeship Stakeholder Improvement Plan and that it is clearly a live and dynamic document. They observed that it was pleasing to see so many actions arising from the Apprentice voice but enquired how the feedback loop would be closed. The Director of Quality advised that this would depend upon the level of seriousness of the action. Some might require a direct immediate response whilst for others a 'you said, we did' report to next week's second Apprentice Forum would share the issues and actions to date.

**3.11/21.22 FE Student Performance Report**

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The Vice Principal TLC presented the report noting that attendance was currently at 85.1% for 16-18 FE and 80.4% for 19+ FE. Overall attendance was 85% and reflected the focus on attendance by herself and the Programme Managers. Retention was 91.7% overall. Turning to the detail of the report she drew attention to the breakdown of attendance by activity and by Programme Area noting that attendance for the main qualification and tutorials was very good but was slightly less for maths and English. She observed that the College has maintained its strong focus on maths and English and the November resits yielded positive high grades for 16-18 with maths at 26% and English at 25%. For Functional Skills the College was maximising every approach to enter learners for examinations and had held a variety of revision and intervention sessions. The Functional Skills pass rate was already at 23% which was above the City & Guilds national average of 21.4%.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors enquired when results would be issued and the Vice Principal TLC advised 25<sup>th</sup> August for GCSEs with rolling results for Functional Skills about 20 days after the assessment was taken. The Committee asked to be notified of results compared to expectations in late August/early September. Governors felt that the Functional Skills achievement looked promising and noted the impact of catch-up funding here. The Principal advised that the catch-up funding would be in place for another year.

The Principal concluded the discussion by noting that the College's retention figure at 91.7% would be a little lower than in previous years (around 92-93%) but this would be addressed by the changes made to the A Level Programme which would be discussed in the autumn. She also noted that together with the Chair of Corporation she had met with the DfE FE Commissioners' team who had praised the College's improved attendance figures. She thanked the Vice Principal TLC for her focus upon attendance and behaviour.

**Action:** Principal to email the Curriculum & Standards Committee in the autumn reporting GCSE and Functional Skills results compared to predictions.

### **3.12/21.22 Termly Safeguarding Report**

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The Vice Principal TLC introduced the report noting that more Assistant Principals had been incorporated as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) which had been a positive step. She outlined the training for staff from induction and throughout College. To date 528 safeguarding concerns had been raised which was a decrease of 7% compared to the same period last year. Mental health remained the biggest area of concern and the College's counselling service continued to see an increase in the number of learners accessing the service. Feedback from the recent Student Conference found that learners feel very supported by the College and know where to get help.

#### Governors' questions and comments

Governors asked the Vice Principal TLC what her major concern was regarding safeguarding at the College. The Vice Principal TLC replied that the biggest challenge was the strain on external resources and the impact that has on young people. She was positive about the College's safeguarding provision but very aware that waiting times for external agencies were increasing.

*The Vice Principal HEACE joined the meeting.*

Governors praised the comprehensive nature of the Safeguarding report, and placed on record their recognition of the additional time that DDSLs spend dealing with safeguarding matters and thanked them for their work. Governors noted that Universities were also seeing the same trend in mental health issues and asked if the College provides pro-active education to learners regarding their wellbeing. The Vice Principal TLC advised Governors that the College focuses on mental health, wellbeing and resilience starting at induction and continuing through the tutorial system throughout the year. There was a particular challenge however at 18 when learners received a different external response due to their age and the College was working with learners to help them manage their own mental health. The Principal added that such was the demand for College counselling she was having to rethink the level of provision and focus on empowering learners more. Ofsted had been amazed by the extent of counselling provided by the College. This year had seen a number of learners from outside the local area coming to College with a range of mental health issues as FCoT had developed a reputation for supporting students with mental health issues. Some distressing recent incidents had led the Principal to reconsider the risk of supporting so many such students and the overall safety of the student population. She would be installing turnstiles on site from September to reinforce site safety. The College was oversubscribed and priority would be given in future to applicants from Rushmoor and Hart. Students would be required to be explicit in their joining form about any mental health issues. Governors were proud of the care taken by FCoT in supporting students with mental health issues whilst noting that the whole community, staff and students, need to be safeguarded. They acknowledged that it was easier to support students from the local community where more was known about the learner and there was better co-ordination with local external agencies.

### **3.13/21.22 HE Report**

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The Vice Principal HE, Adult & Curriculum Enhancement (HEACE) began his report by discussing withdrawals by course noting that 33 students had withdrawn in year. However 10 of these withdrawals occurred before the end of September and so did not count in the official HESA figures. UCF currently has a continuation rate of 94.9% for 2021/22 which was above the national average of 91.7%. 25 of those withdrawing were male and 8 female and although BAME students make up 17% of the HE student body only 6% of BAME students withdrew. Also fewer students who consider themselves to have LLDD withdrew than would be expected proportionately from the student body. Moving on to projected student numbers these had increased slightly since the production of the report so both applications and firm acceptances had increased.



The Vice Principal HEACE reminded the Committee that in order to be allowed to charge HE Tuition Fees above the fee cap the UCF has to produce a five year Access and Participation Plan to improve participation. This consists of 8 challenging targets and he reported on progress against them. Targets 1 and 2 were both RAG rated red and he noted it was hard to find students in multiple deprivation areas and low participation neighbourhoods but UCF was working with the University of Surrey led HEON group to try to access such students.

#### Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted that as the UCF's numbers were so small it was very hard to increase percentages to meet the APP targets. Governors asked how the targets had been set and the Vice Principal HEACE explained that whilst the College had put together a plan the Office for Students (OfS) had revised their initial targets to make them more challenging. There were potentially stark consequences for not achieving the targets such as the loss of validation support from the University of Surrey. Governors suggested that the College should go back to the OfS with its local demographic data and query how for example target 2 could be achieved with the local profile. Professor Khan advised that there was a 31<sup>st</sup> July deadline for amendment to the APP and so this could provide the opportunity to highlight the demographics of the UCF catchment area and revise the targets.

The Vice Principal HEACE briefed the Committee that the Teaching Excellence Framework was being renewed and he had responded to consultations as part of the AoC HE Group and had been in touch with the University of Surrey about preparations for the new assessment which would take place this autumn. The ratings would be as before, Gold, Silver and Bronze but there will also be a 'Requires Improvement' category. He advised that UCF's continuation and achievement data looked good but progress was harder to measure and the UCF has smaller numbers with incomplete data. Finally he advised that the UCF has successfully bid to be an approved Teacher Training College with approval to start delivery in 2024/25. The University of Surrey will validate the Teacher Training awards.

#### Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted the changes in HE numbers and the increasing popularity of higher and degree apprenticeships, but also noted that with more conditional offers from standard campus based Universities that the UCF might increase its numbers if students do not achieve the grades to meet a conditional offer elsewhere.

*Vice Principal HEACE left the meeting.*

### **3.14/21.22 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee minutes**

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The Committee received the report.

### **3.15/21.22 Complaints Policy**

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The Committee noted the updated Policy and Procedures and recommended it to the Board for approval.

**Action:** Committee Chair to recommend to the Corporation Board approval of the Complaints Policy.

### **3.16/21.22 Any Confidential Matters of Report**

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Before moving into the confidential section of the meeting the Principal expressed her thanks to two members of staff who were leaving the College. She paid tribute to the professionalism and loyalty of Mr Walker, Director of Quality, who had been hired by the previous Principal following his participation in the College's 2011 outstanding Ofsted inspection and who was now retiring. Mr Walker thanked the Principal and noted that he could look back with

satisfaction on a career in education as a life well lived and with meaning. The Principal also thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum Development & Industry Mrs Drewery who had led on curriculum development and who was focused and highly regarded. Mrs Drewery explained that she was moving to the South Banks Colleges Group to pursue her passion for technical education whilst working closer to home. Governors wished her the best in her new role. *Mr Crippa, Mrs Drewery, Mrs Jenkins, Ms Morris and Mr Walker left the meeting.*

The remainder of this item was a confidential Part 2 minute.

### **3.17/21.22 Any Other Business**

The Committee agreed to raise with the Board their discussions regarding underperforming apprenticeships and FE programmes, and the decision to prioritise applications from Rushmoor and Hart students.

### **3.18/21.22 Date and Time of the next meeting**

This would be confirmed after the July Board meeting.

*The meeting closed at 6.13pm.*

Minutes agreed as being a true and accurate record by the Chair.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

### **Summary of action points**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
3.6 Student Enrolment & Applications Report	AD Learning Information Systems to report to the November Curriculum & Standards Committee on final conversion rates, success of keep warm initiatives and the uptake of new courses.
3.8 Monitoring of Curriculum Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Manager (KM) to circulate to the Committee the list of underperforming apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Vice Principal TLC to report to the November Curriculum &amp; Standards Committee changes to the A Level provision.</li> </ul>
3.11 FE Student Performance Report	Principal to email the Curriculum & Standards Committee in the autumn reporting GCSE and Functional Skills results compared to predictions.
3.15 Complaints Policy	Committee Chair to recommend to the Corporation Board approval of the Complaints Policy.