

**Board of Directors, 20 March 2024 (10:00 – 14.25), Bangor University**

**Present**

**Board Members:**

Dr Aled Eirug (Chair)  
Ann Beynon  
William Callaway  
Nia Elias  
Rhys Evans  
John Hayes  
Professor Anwen Jones  
Angharad Roberts  
Llinos Roberts  
Professor Enlli Thomas

**Observer:**

Alan Jones (Welsh Government) (full meeting)

**Officers:**

Dr Ioan Matthews (Chief Executive)  
Gwenllian Griffiths (Director of Policy, Communications and Engagement)  
Dr Dylan Phillips (Director of Higher Education and Coleg Secretary)  
Nia Brown (Governance Officer)  
Mari Fflur (Senior Manager for Strategic Developments)  
Rebecca Williams (Senior Manager for Language Skills and Workforce Planning)

**Apologies:**

Meri Huws, Professor Pedr ap Llwyd

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## Minutes of the 20 March 2024 meeting – full meeting

### 1. Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and introductory matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
1.1	All those present were welcomed to the meeting.		
1.2	Mari Fflur and Rebecca Williams were welcomed to their first meeting as senior managers.		
1.3	Apologies were noted as above.		
1.4	It was noted that Suzanne Lewis (Senior Manager for Corporate Services), Dr Lowri Morgans (Senior Manager for Further Education and Apprenticeships) and Gwenllian Owen (Senior Manager for Higher Education) would be listening in on the meeting.		

### 2. Item 2 – Declarations of interest

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
2.1	Members were reminded of the procedure in which they are asked to note any declarations of		

	interest additional to those already noted in the Register of Interests.		
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### 3. Item 3 – Chief Executive's Report

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
3.1	The Chief Executive's written report on recent activities was received.		
3.2	<p><b>Strategic Plan</b></p> <p>It was reported that work had begun on reviewing the Coleg's Further Education and Apprenticeship Action Plan. There will be an update for the Board in July.</p>	Update on the review for the Board	3 July 2024
3.3	<p><b>Sixth form provision</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg will need to consider sixth form provision as a result of the designation and the establishment of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER). A report was given on discussions held with CYDAG (the association of schools for Welsh-medium education); its Lead Officer has been invited to join the Post-16 Strategic Board.</p>	Agenda item on sixth form and post-16 provision	3 July 2024

3.4	<p><b>Coleg budget 2024/25</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Minister for Education and Welsh Language had confirmed on 11 January 2024 that the Coleg would receive a flat budget from the Welsh Government in 2024/25.</p> <p>It was reported that the additional £840,000 committed as part of the co-operation agreement between the Government and Plaid Cymru to implement the next stages of the Further Education and Apprenticeship strategy would not be available in 2024/25. However, documentation published by the Government and Plaid Cymru indicates an intention to re-profile this funding for the 2025/26 budget.</p>		
3.5	<p><b>Welsh Government monitoring report</b></p> <p>The monitoring report submitted to the Welsh Government (December 2023) was noted.</p>		
3.6	<p><b>The National Centre for Learning Welsh</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre had been signed and would be reviewed annually. A report was also given on the reduction in the funding</p>		

	provided by the Centre, via the Coleg, for Cymraeg Gwaith (Work Welsh) and the consequent changes.		
3.7	<p><b>Higher Education</b></p> <p>A report was given on the planning meetings with the higher education institutions. The purpose of the meetings is to receive an update on the institutions' strategic plans for the Welsh language; to discuss plans for the 2023/24 Welsh-medium premium; and to share research on student attitudes.</p>		
3.8	<p><b>Initial Teacher Education</b></p> <p>It was reported that discussions are ongoing regarding Initial Teacher Education in the context of the Welsh Language Education Bill.</p>		
3.9	<p><b>Welsh as a subject</b></p> <p>It was reported that a meeting was to be organised with key stakeholders to discuss the next steps for Welsh as a subject.</p>		
3.10	<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Anti-racism</b></p> <p>A report was given on the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Anti-racism Strategy, with</p>		

	full details in the report circulated which was provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 28 February 2024.		
3.11	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>A report was given on the internal restructure undertaken to respond to the expansion of the Coleg's responsibility to advise CTER on matters relating to the Welsh language, with full details in the report circulated which was provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 28 February 2024.</p>		
3.12	<p><b>Coleg Solicitors</b></p> <p>It was noted that, following a procurement process, Darwin Gray had been appointed as the Coleg's solicitors for five years between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2029.</p>		

#### 4. Item 4 – Minutes of the 22 November 2023 meeting

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
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4.1	The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting held on 22 November 2023.		
4.2	Following a question from a member of the Board, it was reported that the chair of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (Professor Dame Julie Lydon) and the Chief Executive, Simon Pirotte, had both been invited to the meeting but only the Chief Executive would be attending. It was agreed that another invitation could be extended to Dame Julie Lydon in due course.		

## 5. Item 6 – Chair's Matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
5.1	The Chair reported that he had attended all of the Board's sub-committee meetings, apart from the Academic Board, during the winter term.		

5.2	He reported that he would be meeting the chair of Aberystwyth University Council and the new Vice-Chancellor on 15 May 2024.		
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## 6. Item 7 – Appointments and Governance Standards Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
6.1	<p><b>Minutes (Item 7i)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee meeting held on 17 January 2024 were noted and approved.</p> <p>The Secretary reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on the first meeting for Huw Landeg Morris and Dr Caroline Turner, new members of the committee</li> <li>• that a strategy was discussed for appointing a member to the Board to replace William Callaway who will be coming to the end of his second term in November 2024</li> <li>• on the process to update the information about the Board's skills via the</li> </ul>		



	questionnaire to be circulated on 22 March and the report to be presented to the committee on 24 April 2024		
6.2	<p><b>Governance Document (Item 7ii)</b></p> <p>The governance document, which had been updated to include the new staffing structure following the internal restructure, was received.</p> <p>Following a question about whistleblowing procedures, it was noted that the Coleg's human resources policies had been reviewed recently by the Coleg's solicitors. A report on the policies will be presented to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 12 June 2024.</p> <p>The Secretary noted that work is ongoing to refine procedures to support the Coleg's governance structures.</p>	It was agreed to provide access to human resources policies to Board members, for information, when the review cycle has been completed.	Summer term
6.3	<p><b>Re-appoint a member to the Audit and Risk Committee</b></p> <p>Following consultation with the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, the recommendation of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee to re-appoint Siân Lloyd-Jones for a</p>		

	second term from 1 April 2024 to 31 April 2028 was confirmed.		
	<i>At this point, Nia Elias joined the meeting.</i>		

## 7. Item 8 – Audit and Risk Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
7.1	<p><b>Minutes (Item 8i)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 24 January 2024 were noted and received.</p> <p>William Callaway, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the committee had praised the progress in implementing the recommendations in IT and cybersecurity following an internal audit</li> <li>• on the expertise of the committee's external members in the areas of cybersecurity, accounting and at executive level</li> </ul>		

	It was noted that Ann Beynon had sent comments in advance of the meeting as she was not able to attend the meeting.		
7.2	<b>The Risk Register (Item 8ii)</b> The committee chair gave an update on the Risk Register and the steps to mitigate risks.		
7.3	<b>Re-appointment of Internal Auditors</b> Following a procurement process, the re-appointment of TIAA as the Coleg's Internal Auditors, for four years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2029, was approved.		

## 8. Item 9 – Finance and General Purposes Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
8.1	<b>Minutes (Item 9)</b> The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28 February 2024 were noted and received.		
8.2	<b>Coleg budget 2023/24</b> The Secretary gave an update on the Coleg's budget for 2023/24.		

	It was reported that officers would be monitoring the budget to ensure that expenditure is as close as possible to the income received by the end of the year.		
8.3	<p><b>Investments</b></p> <p>It was reported that there is no intention to draw on income from the Investments for budget expenditure during 2023/24.</p>		

## 9. Item 10 – Academic Board

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
9.1	<p><b>Minutes (Item 10)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 7 February 2024 were noted and approved.</p> <p>Professor Enlli Thomas, Chair of the Academic Board reported on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>updates from officers on the commissioning of health and care resources, a report on student attitudes and language skills data</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring that universities are cascading information effectively</li> </ul>		
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### 10. Item 11 – Post-16 Strategic Board

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
10.1	<p><b>Minutes (Item 11)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Post-16 Strategic Board meeting held on 21 February 2024 were noted and approved.</p> <p>The Chief Executive reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that presentations had been given by student ambassadors and the Education Workforce Council</li> <li>on the intention to review the membership of the Post-16 Strategic Board</li> <li>on the intention to develop the role of the Vice Chair of the Post-16 Strategic Board</li> </ul>		

### 11. Item 12 – Coleg Budget for 2024/25

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
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11.1	<p><b>Draft budget for 2024/25 (Item 12i)</b></p> <p>The Secretary presented a summary of the Coleg's draft budget for 2024/25.</p> <p>It was reported that the draft budget is based on the understanding that the grant from the Welsh Government will be a flat budget from 2023/24 (i.e. without the additional increase of £840,000 which was originally intended in the third year of the 2022-25 outline grant).</p> <p>It was reported that there had been some changes to the draft budget since the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 28 February 2024; the budget had been adjusted to include an additional £200,000 in total for Further Education and Apprenticeship projects.</p> <p>It was noted that, since the papers were circulated to Board members, there had been a change in the timetable for a piece of work to be completed by Estyn, details of which will be included in the Grant Letter from the Welsh Government which is expected soon.</p>		
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	Alan Jones reported on the Welsh Government's decision to establish Adnodd as an organisation to commission resources. A meeting with the Chief Executive of Adnodd will be arranged in the near future.		
11.2	Following a short discussion, the budget was approved.		
11.3	<p><b>List of Higher Education Academic Planning Grants 2024/25 (Item 12ii)</b></p> <p>The Secretary gave a summary of the higher education academic planning grants for 2024/25.</p> <p>He reported on the timetable and the detailed award process.</p>		
11.4	The higher education academic planning grants for 2024/25 were approved.		

## 12. Item 13 – Welsh Government Grant Letter

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
12.1	It was reported that the final Grant Letter was expected from the Welsh Government soon.	Circulate Grant Letter to Board members.	When received

### 13. Item 14 – Constitutional matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
13.1	<b>The Annual General Meeting (the Coleg Court)</b> The Secretary gave a verbal report on the Coleg's annual meeting held on 18 March 2024.		
13.2	It was reported that the Coleg's Annual Report for 2022/23 and the annual accounts up to 31 March 2023 had been approved.		

### 14. Item 15 – Any other business

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
14.1	<b>Board Questionnaire</b> Members were reminded that the Board's questionnaire would be circulated at the end of the week to be completed by 2 April 2024.		
14.2	<b>National Eisteddfod 2024</b> It was reported that the Coleg's space on the Eisteddfod maes will be smaller this year. The		



	timetable will be shared in due course. Dr Siân Rhiannon Williams will deliver the annual lecture.		
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### 15. Item 16 – Next meetings

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
15.1	<p>The dates of the next meetings were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 July 2024, Cardiff Metropolitan University</li> <li>• 20 November 2024</li> <li>• 26 March 2025</li> <li>• 25 June 2025</li> </ul>		
	<i>At this point, Alan Jones left the meeting.</i>		

**Minutes of 20 March 2024 meeting – closed meeting**

**16. Item 17 – Context and advice paper – CONFIDENTIAL**

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
16.1	<p>The Chief Executive presented a paper giving some context on the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER).</p>		
16.2	<p>A report was given on the Coleg's plans to submit initial high-level and ambitious advice to CTER in the context of its statutory duties relating to the Welsh language.</p> <p>It was reported that CTER will be established on 1 August 2024; it is intended to provide initial advice in autumn 2024 before CTER submits its strategic plan to the Welsh Government in December 2024.</p> <p>The Commission's duties in relation to the Welsh language, as set out in the Tertiary Education and Research Act and the Welsh Government's statement of strategic priorities, were outlined and discussed.</p> <p>It was recommended that the Coleg should lead on the development of a sector-wide national</p>		

	<p>strategic plan for the Welsh language in partnership with CTER. The Coleg's initial advice to CTER will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Vision statement</li> <li>ii. Strategic priorities</li> <li>iii. National strategic plan</li> </ul>		
	<i>At this point, Nia Elias left the meeting</i>		
16.3	During the discussion, a number of comments were made, including the fact that it is timely, due to the powers of the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Welsh Language Education Bill and CTER that there is an expectation that equal and appropriate access will be given to bilingual provision.		
16.4	It was agreed to consider the option of arranging a virtual meeting in September to discuss the draft initial advice to be presented to CTER in the autumn.	Organise a virtual meeting of the Board, if required	September 2024

### 17. Item 18 – Presentation by the Chief Executive of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Number	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
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	<i>At this point, Nia Elias and Alan Jones rejoined the meeting. Simon Pirotte was welcomed as he joined the meeting.</i>		
17.1	A presentation on the vision of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research was given by Simon Pirotte, CTER Chief Executive.		
17.2	Following the presentation, Board members asked a number of questions.		
	<i>At this point, Simon Pirotte and Alan Jones left the meeting.</i>		

### 18. Item 19 – Discussion (closed)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Main points of discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
18.1	A number of themes arising from Simon Pirotte's presentation were identified and discussed.		
18.2	Cymen were thanked for providing the simultaneous translation.		