Becoming a Member of the Board

Barking & Dagenham College

A Truly Great College - Passionate About Success

Barking & Dagenham College is a large general Further Education college situated on the eastern boundary of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, which is located at the heart of the Thames Gateway, approximately 11 miles east of central London.

Offering high level technical and professional training to help local people compete successfully in London's global job market. The College provides a further education programme, and an established degree-level and post-graduate higher education offering.

Responding to London's skills demands and the priorities of the London Enterprise Panel, Barking & Dagenham College is a specialist provider in construction, health and social care, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) sectors and continues to review its offer to meet local and London LEAP priorities.

There has been a continued increase in Apprenticeships and growth in employer sponsored traineeships in Formwork, Dry Lining, Hairdressing and Business Administration. The College is one of the leading training providers for higher level apprenticeships, predominantly within Business, Administration and HR management at Levels 4 and 5 and has developed exceptional partnerships with key stakeholders including CNET, Siemens, Morrisons, Meesoms, Barny Bears, NHS, BBC and Archant as well as external support agencies, Higher Education Institutions and funding agencies.

The Further Education Corporation

Colleges became incorporated as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Each corporation has its own board and may use one of a variety of terms to describe it. These include: Corporation, Board, or Governing Body. For individual members the terms corporation member, board member or governor are used.

What does a Member of the Board of the Corporation do?

Further Education (FE) board members are responsible for overseeing the running of the College and are involved in determining business and financial policy, strategic development and ethos.

Article 3.1 states: (Instrument and Articles of Government 2008)

The Corporation shall be responsible for the following functions –

- Determination of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities;
- Approving the quality strategy;
- The effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and safeguarding their assets;
- Approving annual estimates of income and expenditure;
- The appointment and terms of conditions of employment for senior postholders and the Clerk, and

- Setting the framework for pay and conditions of service for all other staff.

The Board, together with the Principal as Chief Executive, constitutes the highest level of decision-taking in the College and has the ultimate responsibility for all the affairs of the College. The Corporation has certain formal duties, powers and rights in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government. However responsibility for the day to day management lies with the Principal who is also a Member of the Board.

The governing body has powers of delegation but cannot delegate:

- The determination of the educational character and mission of the institution.
- The approval of the annual estimates of income and expenditure;
- The responsibility for ensuring the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and for safeguarding their assets;
- The appointment of the holders of senior posts and the Clerk.

What are the Instrument and Articles of Government?

The Board regulates its proceedings within the boundaries of the Instrument and Articles of Government; these are the documents which set out the framework within which the College operates.

The Instrument and Articles are secondary legislation with powers defined by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (as amended).

The Instrument of Government is concerned with the constitution of The College and explains the arrangements that are required for meetings of the Board and its Committees. The Articles of Government define and describe the powers and responsibilities of the Board and the Principal and set out the basis for dealing with certain financial and staffing matters.

Provided they satisfy the basic requirements established by law, it is for The College to decide how it wishes to conduct their business. This is done through the Board's Governance Policies in accordance with the principles of Policy Governance.

The Board needs to work in partnership with the Principal and senior staff. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the running of the College, taking key decisions and setting objectives, while the Principal and senior staff are responsible for College operational issues.

Who are Board members?

The Board needs to be made up of members with a variety of skills, expertise and experience in relevant areas, such as finance, human resources, public relations, marketing, building, estates/facilities management, professional and vocational training, as well as the various academic areas, and its overall mission.

Regular development and information sessions are arranged to support Board Members and enable them to bring their experience to the Board. Ideally you will also need:

- Experience in dealing with strategic and long-term issues
- to be a good communicator
- an understanding and interest in post-16 education and training.
- the ability to take a strategic overview
- leadership experience 2
- knowledge of business principles and financial management
- the ability to work as part of a team and become an effective part of the Board
- an ability to participate constructively in deliberations
- to develop a clear understanding of the Corporation's strategic responsibilities
- a willingness to exercise authority in a collective manner.
- to maintain confidentiality
- skills to provide challenge and support
- to live, or work (or have formerly worked) in the area, and an understanding of the local community would also be helpful.

Active engagement and attendance at meetings is an important aspect of the duties of a Board Member.

The Board also tries to ensure a gender balance and is always conscious of its age and diversity profile. The College is an equal opportunities organisation and the Board welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

How much of my time will it take?

Members of the Board act in a voluntary capacity and the appointment is for four years. Members may be re-appointed for further terms of office but will not normally serve for more than 8 years unless specifically approved by the Board and the reasons recorded.

A Board Member's workload will vary depending on membership of committees. On average, Members spend the equivalent of roughly a day a month on College related activities. That time will be used to carry out some of the following activities:

- meetings of the Board,.
- meetings usually start at either 4.00 pm (Audit Committee) or 6 pm
- visits to the College to become more familiar with the work of the College
- attendance at selected College functions e.g. prize giving evenings

- attendance at strategy and development events

Under employment law, employees are entitled to 'reasonable time off' without pay for their duties as board members. It is up to you and your employer to agree what is reasonable. Many employers are very happy for their employees to serve as a College Board member as this aids personal development, and some employers provide paid time off for these activities.

Do Members of the Board receive payment for their services?

No. The Governance of the College is a wholly voluntary and unpaid activity.

The Secretary of State does not permit payment to members for their services, although The College will provide reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for Members on College business.

How are Board Members accountable and do they have a legal liability?

As an independent corporation, The Board is authorised by law to act as a single person while maintaining a separate legal identity from its individual members. As such, College Corporations are directly responsible and accountable for the governance of the College. In addition to their legal responsibilities, the Corporation is also accountable to the Skills Funding Agency (from 1 April 2010) for the use of the money they receive and for meeting any conditions attached to that funding e.g. a 3 requirement to prepare and submit annual accounts, or supply information about student numbers, and to meet agreed targets.

The Board, acting corporately are accountable for the financial health and good management of The College and for the proper use of the public funds entrusted to it. The Board's responsibilities and accountabilities, including those for monitoring the effectiveness of the board members' own performance are shared equally by each individual member of the Board.

There is also a theoretical chance of an individual being held liable for his or her actions taken as a board member. The law in this area is unclear but bearing that possibility in mind it is important that individual board members satisfy themselves that all decisions in which they participate are properly made on the basis of adequate information. Insurance cover is in place to cover any charges of negligence.

The central principle is one of individual accountability. No Board Member serves in a representative capacity or may serve mandated by an external body. Each individual serves to promote the overall success and solvency of the College within the relevant statutory framework and Instrument and Articles of Government and its own governance policies.

As an individual board member you must do the following.

- Act in line with the ten principles of public life and the Board's code of conduct.

- Identify your own skills, ideas, experiences and knowledge and work out how to transfer them to the education and skills sector.
- Take an active interest in the work of the college.
- Make sure that you have enough information and advice to make the best decisions possible.
- Work effectively with other board members to take decisions through analysing risks.
- Accept corporate responsibility for decisions taken by the governing body, even when you do not agree with them.
- Check that the minutes of the governing body's work adequately record the thinking behind the decisions taken.

Disclosure

Members of the Board are required to declare all interests relevant to their appointment in a Register of Interests which is maintained by the Clerk and available for public inspection.

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