

Board of Governors

Minute of Meeting of the Board Governors held on **Tuesday 20 March 2018** at 4.30pm in the Barbour Suite.

Present: Alex Linkston (Chair)
Sue Cook
Mhairi Harrington
Graham Hope
Morag McKelvie
Simon Ashpool
Tom Bates
Angela Bell
Sarah Kerr
Richard Lockhart
Iain McIntosh
Colin Miller
Alan Morton
Moirra Niven
Claire Probert
Norman Ross

In attendance: Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise)
George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)
Jo Mayes (Shadow Board Member)
Jo Armstrong (Observer)
Karine McNair (Board Secretary)

18.01 Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Jo Armstrong who was here to observe the meeting of the Board of Governors. It was also noted that this was Jo Mayes final Board Meeting as the year of her Shadowing had come to an end. The Chair thanked her for her contribution to the meetings.

Sarah Kerr will be resigning from her position as Student President after the meeting and the Chair thanked her for her contribution to the Board and the College over the past months.

Apologies had been received from Lorna Reid and Frank Gribben.

18.02 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18.03 Minute of Meeting of 12 December 2017

It was noted that on page 9 of the minutes the next meeting should be Tuesday 20 March at 4.30pm and apart from this correction, the Minute of the meeting of the Board of Governors of 12 December 2017 was approved as a correct record.

18.04 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 12 December 2017

All actions were duly completed and noted.

18.05 Chief Executive's Report

The Principal & Chief Executive presented Paper 3 which had a number of themes.

1. College and Stakeholder Activity

The Indicative Funding Allocation for 2018/2019 reflects an increase in funding to meet the costs of National Bargaining and a small uplift for other financial pressures. However, the Regional Outcome Agreement credit allocation has stripped out the additional credits received last year to provide extra childcare places and the College is now expected to provide these places from core activity.

The Principal, Vice Principal Curriculum & Planning and Vice Principal Curriculum & Enterprise had been at a meeting this morning with the Scottish Funding Council to question the allocation on the basis that the relative reduction in credits does not represent the growth required by the College, while putting other courses at risk. The SFC had confirmed that the growth strategy for the College sector was still an active initiative and they also stated that the funding allocation was still in the process of finalising. The Principal felt that they had presented their case well to the SFC and that the SFC understood the position of West Lothian College but was not overly optimistic that they would see any increase in the credit allocation.

The Principal noted that the SFC had a 'Funding Group' and the College should ensure that they had a representative on this Group.

It was stated that in the next 2-3 years there will be a demand for around 300 additional qualified childcare providers. However, the College has 2 limiting

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factors; firstly, attracting sufficient applicants to fill any additional courses and secondly finding enough student placements as this is currently at saturation.

The Principal highlighted many good indicators of progress in the College and acknowledged that work still had to be done for Further Education Full Time students. Regarding the attainment of the FEFT students, there have been a lot of helpful suggestions from managers and on some courses, changes have been made to ensure that the credits required for the qualification are completed as a priority.

2. Learner Activity and Highlights

Primary and secondary schools have been participating in a number of STEM and “Construction Industry” events. On 20 March the College welcomed 140 secondary pupils to the “Big Bang” event which showcased technology in the NHS. Many of the exhibitors had electrical engineering as a base qualification and the Principal noted that if these events inspired the school pupils, it could be to the College’s benefit in a few years’ time.

College staff and students have been to Malaysia, Gran Canaria, Portugal and Berlin for work experience and cultural visits. The work with the Economic Planning Unit in Malaysia has won the College an award for “Sustainable Collaboration”, which attracted good press attention.

3. Staffing Updates

The Principal noted a number of staff changes and wished all those leaving the best in their new positions.

4. Employer Association Update

Locally, there had not been many new developments and the College were working towards timetabling changes to incorporate the 23 hour week.

The Chair of the Board thanked the Principal & Chief Executive for a very interesting and informative report.

18.06 Regional Chair’s Feedback (verbal)

The Chair of the Board commented on the following:-

1. Colleges Scotland

There had been interesting presentations from the Chair of the new Enterprise & Skills Board and Kier Bloomer at the Chairs Briefing event. The Chair noted that the new Education Bill will have an impact on the college sector as more responsibility is delegated to head teachers the College may have to develop

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relationships with head teachers on an individual basis rather than through the Local Authority.

2. Colleges Scotland

The Scottish Government has recently confirmed that colleges in Scotland will have derogation in respect of insurance for the next 3 years thanks to a convincing business case put to them by Colleges Scotland.

3. Employer's Association

The residential meeting had had a very positive impact on improved relations between the EA body and the negotiators. A working group has been set up to review the strategy of the EA.

There are ongoing discussions with Lecturers and Support Staff representatives with the hope of an accepted offer of a 3 year deal to provide some certainty for next few years. There will be a residential meeting with the Support Staff representative to discuss some details in more depth.

18.07 Student Association Report

The Student Association President presented Paper 4.

The Sparkle project has been very successful but has also involved a much higher workload than anticipated. This time last year, the Student Association had the views of 30 students and now it is 929.

A paper has been submitted to the Senior Team for approval of a proposal to have 2 full time members of the Student Association rather than 1 full time President and 7 Vice Presidents. The proposal has been accepted and the elections will shortly be underway in line with the new structure. Class Ambassadors will replace Class Reps and Centre Ambassadors will replace the 7 Vice Principals.

The Student Association President has been involved in the Professional Standards Review group and has used Sparkle feedback as a means of inputting suggestions from students.

The Board raised concerns about lecturer absences resulting in incomplete registers which in turn meant that some students were not receiving payments. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning noted that Centre Heads were now being alerted to absences and ensuring that registers were completed in time and that there was a wider issue of West Lothian College's implementation of the 100% attendance requirement which was being looked into and would be reported to the next Learning & Teaching Committee meeting.

It was commented on that a large number of complaints were in respect of IT issues at the College. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning confirmed that these issues were being addressed and were either short term fixes or longer term investment needs. There is an overall review of the College IT strategy being undertaken and the issues identified in the Sparkle report will be taken into account.

The Student Association President noted that she will be leaving her post on 9 April to take up employment and thanked the Board for the experience and support.

The Chair thanked the Student Association President for her contribution to the Board and wished her well in her new career.

18.08 Shadow Board Member Report on Year (verbal)

The Chair introduced the Shadow Board member by saying that the Board had been very pleased to participate in the initiative to achieve equal gender balance on public sector boards which would become legislation in 2020.

The Shadow Board member made the following observations of the past year:

- It had been enlightening to observe the strict formality, structure and governance of the Board.
- They had obtained a good insight into the education sector in Scotland.
- It was pleasing to see the level of innovative thinking of Board and staff members when dealing with the funding challenges of the sector.
- Staff members had always shown themselves to be well informed and passionate.
- On a personal level, the experience had provided the opportunity to reflect on the time required to commit to Board work while balancing the demands of full time employment.

The Shadow Board member thanked the Board for the opportunity. The Chair wished the Shadow Board member well and appreciated the contribution she had made to the work of the Board.

18.09 Board Development: Report from the Board Secretary

The Secretary to the Board of Governors provided a brief update on development issues which covered the following:-

Annual Review meetings – the Secretary to the Board would contact Board members individually shortly to arrange the review meetings for May and June 2018.

Register of Interests – the Secretary to the Board would contact Board members shortly for the 6 monthly review of the Register and their attention to checking and responding is appreciated.

Personal Contact Details – when reviewing the Register of Interests, the Secretary to the Board will also send a check to ensure that the personal contact details held at the College are correct.

The Chair noted the helpful summary of useful dates in the Board Secretary report and thanked the Board Secretary for the update.

18.10 Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee stated that there were many highlights presented at the meeting and some of the topics of discussion had been proposing for compensation from the Occupational Health service provider, succession planning for staff and revaluation of the Lothian Pension Fund.

It was noted by the Board that the Lothian Pension Fund is a multi-employer scheme and the contribution rates are based on the valuation at the time. The College is simply told of the employer contribution rates and have no overall influence.

The main topic discussed at length by the Committee was the People Strategy paper which had been highly praised by the Committee for being user friendly and engaging. The Committee had raised a number of comments for incorporation into the paper, which would be taken to the next Committee meeting before coming to the Board for final approval.

No other issues or concerns were raised.

The Chair of the Board thanked the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for their update.

18.11 Audit Committee

- i) Update from the Chair of the Audit Committee from draft minute of 8 March 2018

Two internal audit reports had been presented by Scott Moncrieff: Core Financial Statements and Health & Safety, both of which were largely positive and the Committee were happy with progress.

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services had presented a paper regarding the Ransomware Attack which had incapacitated the College's IT systems in the weeks before Christmas. The speedy action of the College IT staff had been recognised as a major factor in stopping the spread of the attack and the Committee had commended the staff for the work they had done during this challenging time.

During the meeting the Committee also recommended to the Board the reappointment of Scott Moncrieff as Internal Auditors. The Board approved the reappointment of Scott Moncrieff as Internal Auditors.

ii) Health & Safety Quarterly Report for information

The Committee had highlighted incident 19 where a first aider had not been immediately available to attend an incident but had now received reassurance that a tighter regime was in place to summon a first aider so a repeat incident would not occur.

The Board were content with the information received.

18.12 Learning & Teaching Committee

i) Update from the Chair of the Learning & Teaching Committee from draft minute of 13 March 2018.

The Chair of the Learning & Teaching Committee explained that due to the College snow closures, the original meeting of 28 February 2018 had to be rescheduled for 13 March 2018 and thanked all the Committee members and staff for their patience and cooperation in finding an alternative date.

In respect of the Engineering presentation, the Committee had noted that it was important to ensure that students made the right choice at the start of the course to avoid later off course transfers, however appreciated that there was a smaller number of initial applicants for some courses.

The Board noted the information presented.

ii) Draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2018-21

It was noted that the draft ROA is a contractual document between the College and the government to which the College is held accountable for SFC funded activity. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise is currently producing a Commercial Strategy document which will be presented to the next Finance & General Purposes committee and will include the details of the overall strategic commercial aims of the College.

The Board expressed concern that a number of the projected figures in the draft ROA represented a significant increase from the current base figures. The Board encouraged management to set stretch targets but stressed that any targets need to be feasible with an action plan on how they will be achieved. The Board suggested that it might be better to focus the large improvements in certain areas rather than have a broad approach and to look at national averages as a reference.

18.13 Update from Chair of Remuneration Committee

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee noted that the Committee had met on Wednesday 21 February 2018 to discuss the recruitment of a new Principal and an amendment to the terms and conditions of the Senior HR Business Partner. The minutes of the meeting are not yet available but will be brought to the next Board Meeting.

In respect of the changes to the role of Senior HR Business Partner, the Committee approved the recommendations put to them and the Principal will be speaking to the Senior HR Business Partner to offer the changes to them.

The Committee had received 4 proposals from external recruitment consultants to assist with the recruitment for the role of Principal. After reviewing all the documents and noting the quality of each proposal, the Committee agreed on balance to approve the appointment of Livingston James as recruitment consultants for the post of Principal.

The Board were asked to approve the composition of a Recruitment Panel to be; Alex Linkston (Chair), Sue Cook, Graham Hope, Morag McKelvie, Student Representative (Lorna Reid) and Independent Person.

The Board approved the composition of the proposed Recruitment Panel.

The Board approved the delegation of the process of recommending a final candidate to the full Board to the Recruitment Panel with the assistance of the professional external advisors, Livingston James.

18.14 Safeguarding & Notifiable Events: Charity Register

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that the College's policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding had been checked. Most were up to date and 2 will be reviewed in the summer. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning is also checking the process in place to ensure that where students have independently sourced a voluntary placement, the placement's policies are also up the same standard as the College's policies.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that there have been no notifiable events to which OSCR needed alerted.

18.15 Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

18.16 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Training Needs

The Board of Governors was content with the meeting and supporting papers presented.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and attention to what had been a very full set of papers.

18.17 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 19 June 2018 noting the Board Strategic Away Day on 17 May 2018.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Secretary to the Board was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed
Chair, Board of Governors

Date