

West Lothian College

6 December 2022

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on **Tuesday 20 September 2022** at 4.30 pm in rooms G4/G5 of No 3 on the Square.

Present:

- Alex Linkston (Chair)
- Frank Gribben
- Jackie Galbraith (Principal)
- Richard Lockhart
- Iain McIntosh
- Colin Miller
- Elaine Cook
- Moira Niven
- Tony Sharkey
- Virginia Toyi (Support Staff member)
- Neil Sinclair (Teaching Staff member)
- Rehela Hussain
- Karine Bourdarias (Student Association President)
- Blair Stewart (Student Association President)

In Attendance :

- Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)
- Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)
- Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services)
- Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

1 Committee Administration

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the first formal meeting of 2022-23. Student Presidents Karine Bourdarias and Blair Stewart were welcomed, as full members, to their first Board meeting.

Apologies were noted from Sue Cook, Seonaid Crosby, Sue Stahly, Tom Bates and Abel Aboh.

1.2 Presentation: Health and Social Care Students: Ukrainian Fun Day

The Board of Governors heard an interesting and moving presentation from Health and Social Care students and staff on the Ukrainian Fun Day, a project aimed at helping Ukrainian children who had been recently relocated in Scotland and who had experienced huge trauma. Students detailed how the project came into being and their success in obtaining donations of food, toys and clothing to support the fun day. The day was a great success with visible change noted in the children as

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they relaxed and enjoyed the occasion. House mothers also appreciated the salon treatments offered to them on the day.

The Board praised the project and commended students for their determination to make the project a success and for their ability to motivate and engage so many others in supporting the project.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.4 Minute of Meeting of 28 June 2022

The minutes were approved as accurate with one point of correction to record that Abel Aboh and Neil Sinclair had attended the 28 June 2022 meeting.

Action 1: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor to amend the minute.

1.5 Matters Arising

It was noted the Vice Principal Performance and Improvement will confirm the date for the workshop on Cyber Security early in 2023.

Action 2: The Vice Principal Performance and Improvement to confirm date.

2 Matters for Approval

2.1 Financial Forecast Return

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 3 detailing the college response to the Scottish Funding Council's request for scenario planning based on a given set of assumptions. The Board was asked to note that the College Leadership Team has embarked on scenario planning activities to work towards a balanced budget.

Tony Sharkey endorsed the Vice Principal's comments and commended the paper for the level of detail included and the clear picture presented to the Board for consideration.

The Chair commented on the challenges ahead for the college sector and reinforced the need for targets to be set for the Board of Governors to work towards.

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The Principal informed the Board of Governors the College Leadership Team has embarked on the development of a 5 year sustainability plan, with the first full development day completed. The Principal noted that next steps would be to involve staff in discussions and that drop-in sessions have been offered out to staff week commencing 26 September 2022.

The Principal noted the important part the Board of Governors will play in scrutinizing our thinking and that Board input will be sought through the Board Strategy day in January 2023. The Principal noted there are threats to the college but, with sound risk management, there are also opportunities.

Moira Niven welcomed the open and consultative approach being taken by the Principal and praised the benefits of this approach for the college and students.

Frank Gribben expressed concerns about the possibility of regional change but felt that, as a college, we should face the future with some optimism. The Chair reported on the recent College's Scotland meeting of Regional Chairs and Principals attended by Iain McIntosh. The aim of this group is to work with Scottish Government on sector wide change.

The Board of Governors was content to approve the Financial Forecast Return.

3 Matters for Attention

3.1 Student Association Report

Karine Bourdarias presented the Student Association report and gave an update on the success of the recent Freshers Fair. Blair Stewart gave an update on recruitment of Executive Officers and Ambassadors and informed the Board that students were engaging well to date with clubs and games.

The Principal commented that the Freshers Fair was a great day and had surpassed even the Ukrainian Fun Day. She praised the Student Association Development Officer and both Student Presidents for the success of the Freshers Fair.

The Board of Governors noted the report and also praised the Student Association for their work and successful student engagement to date.

3.2 Chief Executive's Report

The Principal discussed the very busy summer period and highlighted that many lecturers had been in college over the summer working to support students. She also discussed the many developments and stakeholder events that have taken place.

The Principal discussed progress made towards meeting the five dimensions of the Scottish Funding Council's Fair Work Framework. The Board noted the extensive work achieved to date.

The Board of Governors noted the report as detailed and informative and thanked staff for their continuing commitment and motivation.

3.3 Regional Chair's Feedback

The Chair reported on plans to recruit to the current board vacancy by the end of October 2023 and on the need to extend recruitment plans to cover board vacancies to arise in March 2023. The Chair informed the Board that it will be necessary to pull the Board meeting schedule forward to complete meetings while current members are retained.

It was noted that the Board Secretary and Governance Advisor post has been filled and the Chair welcomed the new postholder.

The Chair discussed the teaching union pay claim and noted discussions are taking place with the Scottish Government to support this. It was noted that no claim has yet been submitted by the support staff union.

The Board noted the Chair's update.

3.4 Strategic Risk Register Review

Richard Lockhart presented the Strategic Risk Register to the Board and discussed key risks. The Board's attention was drawn to the heat map and comments were taken.

Frank Gribben commented on the potential impact of risks on the quality of learning for students. Iain McIntosh was happy with the register for now but highlighted the need to keep risks under review and the importance of robust curriculum planning so as not to add to financial risks.

The Chair highlighted the importance of keeping staff informed and motivated as we go forward. The Principal was praised by the Board for her work to build our case linked to government strategy and for her open

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and clear communications with Scottish Government and Members of Scottish Parliament.

The Board agreed that financial risks will be the most challenging and agreed there is confidence other risks are well covered. The Board will continue to review the risk situation on a regular basis.

The Board was content to accept the risk register as presented.

4 Committee Matters for Information

4.1 Learning and Teaching Committee

Iain McIntosh reported on a largely positive meeting with a key area of concern being low performance on HEFT programmes. The Board was informed that a deep dive into the reasons for this will be conducted and reported on to the next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Iain McIntosh informed the Board of concerns around the high number of quality holds imposed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority but confirmed the Committee has confidence that these are being well managed and appropriate steps are being taken to assure quality going forward. He confirmed the Learning and Teaching Committee will continue to monitor this.

The Board noted this update.

4.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

Moira Niven reported on the very exciting presentation heard by the Committee on the ECO House Project. The Committee meeting was positive, noting excellent progress on infrastructure projects and approving further investment for the Faculties of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment and for Business, Creative and Enterprise.

The Financial Forecast Return and Management Accounts were discussed. The Committee heard clear explanations from the Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services and accepted the deficit, based on confidence the situation was being well managed.

The Board noted this update.

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4.3 Audit Committee

4.3.1 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

Richard Lockhart presented an update from the Audit Committee, noting the Health and Safety quarterly report had been discussed and accepted as comprehensive.

The Committee also discussed Internal and External Audit reports and the Board was informed that both reports were positive with recommendations either completed or in hand.

The Board noted this update.

4.4 Chairs' Committee Update

Alex Linkston informed the Board that a meeting of the Chairs' Committee had been held on 26 July 2022 and immediately prior to this meeting on 20 September 2022. The meeting in July reviewed the salary of the Principal and Vice Principals in line with the recent pay award to support staff.

Alex Linkston informed the Board of updated guidance on the inclusion of trade union representative as full Board members and confirmed the college has adopted this in principle subject to receiving further advice from the committee on recruitment procedures.

The Chair noted that development of a sustainability plan would be a feature of the forthcoming Board Strategy Day to be held on 24 January 2023.

The timeline for external review of the Board of Governors has been changed to 5 years. Alex Linkston asked that the audit plan be reviewed to reflect this.

Action 3: The Principal and Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services to review audit plan.

5 Any Other Business

The Principal invited Board members to attend the forthcoming College Development Network awards ceremony as the college has been shortlisted in three categories.

Moira Niven requested that she attend the Parliamentary Presentation.

Alex Linkston noted that a presentation on the sector leading anti-poverty work completed by the college will be made to the December Board meeting. Frank Gribben agreed this work is sector leading and a real success story. The Principal noted we have received funding to put dedicated support in place for students.

6 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

Iain McIntosh requested the inclusion of draft minutes from committee meetings for future Board meetings to give members a better insight into committee discussions and decisions.

Alex Linkston agreed we should consider this but that the Board meeting schedule may have to be reviewed to allow time for papers to be completed.

Action 4: Chair and Board Secretary and Governance Advisor to review and action as appropriate

7 Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be on 6 December 2022 at 16.30 pm.

The Principal proposed the Board meeting be followed by a dinner in the Terrace Restaurant.

The Board was content to approve this event.