

West Lothian College

20 June 2023

Board of Governors

Meeting of Tuesday 28 February 2023

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on **Tuesday 28 February 2023** at 4.30 pm in rooms G4/G5 of No 3 on the Square.

Present:

Alex Linkston (Non-executive member and Chair of the Board of Governors)
Sue Cook (Non-executive member and Chair of Audit Committee)
Iain McIntosh (Non-executive member and Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee)
Moira Niven (Non-executive member and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee)
Sue Stahly (Non-executive member and Senior Independent Member)
Frank Gribben (Non-executive member)
Elaine Cook (Non-executive member)
Colin Miller (Non-executive member)
Richard Lockhart (Non-executive member)
Abel Aboh (Non-executive member)
Tony Sharkey (Non-executive member)
Rehela Hussain (Non-executive member)
Seonaid Crosby (Non-executive member)
Virginia Toyi (Support Staff Member)
Neil Sinclair (Teaching Staff Member)
Blair Stewart (Student Association President)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal)

In Attendance:

Gavin Hamilton (Non-executive member from March 2023)
Aruna Lopez (Non-executive member from March 2023)
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 meeting and extended a warm welcome to the new members of the board who will commence from March 2023.

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Apologies were noted from Tom Bates and Karine Bourdarias.

1.2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

1.3 **Minute of Meeting of 6 December 2022**

The minutes were approved as accurate with one point of correction to Richard Lockhart's name.

1.4 **Matters Arising**

All matters arising were noted as completed

2 **Matters for Attention**

2.1 **Student Association Report (including SPARKLE Survey)**

The Student Association President gave an update to the Board on SPARKLE results. The Board heard that the new survey tool used for the survey had successfully improved feedback. The Committee noted the quality of feedback presented and highlighted the value of the appendix on mental health. The Board agreed the Student Association is presenting the student voice very well and is keeping the Board well informed about work done. The Board commended the number of referrals made for students with mental health needs and praised the continuing support being given to students. The Board agreed that an input from one of the student counsellors at a future meeting would be welcomed.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement to arrange an input on counselling provision at a future meeting.

2.2 **Chief Executive's Report**

The principal highlighted that her report focused on the Government strategy for economic transformation and, in particular, the aim of a Fair and Equal Society. The principal noted the podcast links highlighted on page 1 of the report and recommended the Board engage with these.

The principal informed the Board that senior teams of Borders and Dumfries and Galloway colleges are meeting to discuss strategy and resourcing for smaller colleges. The likely deficit of £500K for this year

and the reasons for this were discussed but the principal highlighted this was another successful year for the college in terms of credits. The Board noted that, as charitable trustees, we are faced with additional challenges and more responsibility than other sectors.

The results of the staff survey were discussed and the Board noted there was higher satisfaction reported across the board, with one area of concern flagged with regard to staff time to do their jobs. The principal reported that discussions were taking place to look for ways to address this but that this cannot be resolved through additional recruitment.

The Board encouraged the college to keep providing ways for staff to destress and commented positively on the success of the recent Staff Wellbeing Day. The Board positively noted the use of technology to provide staff training and encourage engagement as well as training for board members. The College Development Network online training module on Governance was noted as being very helpful.

The Board highlighted that we should keep communicating well with government and noted that this college is well managed and well governed.

The Board noted this report.

2.3 **Regional Board Chair's Feedback**

The Chair gave an update on the current situation with regard to pay awards and the position the EIS union is taking with regard to negotiations.

The Board noted the feedback.

2.4 **Strategic Risk Register**

The Board's attention was drawn to items 3.1 and 3.2 on the Strategic Risk Register. Item 3.1 has escalated to high risk with item 3.2 remaining stable. The Board noted that 3.1 is impacted by external conditions and discussed whether we are content with the mitigations put in place. The Board agreed that steps being taken by the Executive Leadership Team to reduce the deficit are positive and we are doing all we can within our control.

The aim of the next Board Strategy Day will be to develop a medium term financial strategy for the college. The principal stressed how important it will be to get Board input at this event.

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The Board was content with the Risk Register.

2.5 Board and Committee Self-Evaluation

The Board Governance Advisor requested that a self-evaluation exercise be included as part of the Agenda for the 20 June 2023 meeting.

The Board was content to include this on the agenda.

3 Matters for Approval

3.1 Revised Committee Structures from March 2023

The Chair reported on the approval of the revised committee structures and the appointment of new Chairs of Committee. It was noted that Tony Sharkey is recommended as Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors, Richard Lockhart as Chair of Audit Committee and Tom Bates as Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Board was content to approve these appointments and the revised committee structures as recommended by the Chairs Committee.

3.2 Chairs (Nominations) Committee: recommendation for reappointment of Board Member

The Board was content to approve the re-appointment of Elaine Cook for a further 4 years.

Action 2: Board Governance Advisor to process re-appointment through the Minister for Higher and Further Education.

3.3 Board of Governors Meeting Schedule 2023-24

The Board was content to approve the meeting schedule.

4 Committee Matters

4.1 Learning and Teaching Committee Update

The Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee updated the Board on inputs from Faculty Directors which are a standing item on the meeting agenda. The Board also heard about the positive discussions that had taken place on the work of the Student Association and SPARKLE.

The Committee reported there were no concerns about quality and that appropriate steps have been taken to address previous concerns. The Committee was content with the work being done on revisions to the curriculum offering.

The Board noted this update.

4.2 **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee reported on the extensive discussions that have taken place regarding the Management Accounts reported deficit and the focus that will be put on developing a medium-term financial plan, including input from the Board at the next strategy day.

The Board noted a review of PFI terminations is being carried out as a cross party project and it may be useful for the college to participate in this.

The Board was pleased to note the £500k additional funding secured for student support and the positive impacts this will have for students.

The Board noted it is proposed to bring an update on the decarbonisation project to the next Board meeting on 20 June 2023.

The Board noted this update.

4.3 **Audit Committee**

The Chair of Audit Committee updated the board on work completed on Cyber Security and IT systems and confirmed the Committee was happy this work is robust. The Board can be assured that systems and mitigations are in place.

The Board noted the Internal audit schedule is agreed for the coming year. The Chair of the Audit Committee informed the Board they can be assured the college is well managed and it is not anticipated there will be significant actions resulting from the internal audit.

4.3.1 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

4.3.2 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Board heard the Health and Safety Quarterly and Annual Reports had been discussed and positively received. Both reports give assurance that the college is a safe working and learning environment.

The Audit Committee have commended IT and Health and Safety staff for their work.

The Board noted this update.

4.4 Chairs' Committee Update

It was noted the Chair's Committee update had already been given during previous agenda items.

4.5 Board Risk Management Workshop

The Board Governance Advisor informed the Board that a Board Risk Management Workshop would be delivered as a separate board event. Further information on this will be sent to Board Members when available.

5 Any Other Business

Board Strategy Day 22 June 2023: Change of Date

The Board discussed the potential to bring this date forward to May 2023. It was agreed to circulate proposed dates to members.

6 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The Board was content with the quality of papers presented and the format of the meeting.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be on 20 June 2023 at 16.30 pm.

The meeting closed with a farewell dinner in the Terrace Restaurant in recognition of the excellent contributions departing members have made to the college over many years.

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

Signed
Chair, Board of Governors

Date: