

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

Meeting of 26 September 2023

Present:

Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors)
Tony Sharkey (Vice Chair of the Board of Governors)
Sue Stahly (Non-executive Member and Senior Independent Member)
Moira Niven (Chair, Finance and General Purposes Committee)
Richard Lockhart (Chair, Audit Committee)
Abel Aboh (Non-executive Member)
Seonaid Crosby (Non-executive Member)
Michael Greenhalgh (Non-executive Member)
Gavin Hamilton (Non-executive Member)
Rehela Hussain (Non-executive Member)
Aruna Lopez (Non-executive Member)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal and Chief Executive)
Karine Bourdarias (Student Association President)
Blair Stewart (Student Association President)
Shelagh Fraser (Support Staff Member)

In Attendance:

Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services)
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

1 Committee Administration

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Tom Bates (Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee), Elaine Cook (Non-executive Member), Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment) and Laura Murray (Teaching Staff Member)

1.2 Presentations from Staff nominated for College Development Network Awards

The Board of Governors heard three presentations from staff who have been nominated for a CDN College Award.

Craig Moore: Presentation on the Student Survey Tool

The Board were given an insight into the new, bespoke Survey Tool which has been developed in-house. The tool is being used to improve feedback from students on Induction, Withdrawals and the Student

Experience. Response rates have increased to 82% giving the college increased confidence in the quality of student feedback. The survey is now connected to Power-Bi which allows staff to see the data being collected in real time.

The Board heard there is sector-wide interest in the survey tool which may present a commercial income generating opportunity for the college.

Rachel McFadden: Development of a Virtual Reality Module for the Prevention of Infection

The Board was given an insight into the development of this interactive module, focusing on improving outcomes for people in hospital. The module allows students to visualise the transmission of infection in social care and hospital settings and gives a simulated experience of what it will be like for students when they are ultimately working in these environments. Liaison is taking place with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to approve the module for student assessment. There are also plans to expand the module to include a third setting of infection in a crime scene.

The Board discussed the costs of developing such a module and the potential to secure funds for further development. The Board also discussed the potential for income generation from this work.

Caroline Jarvis: Sustainability Development Teaching Event

The Board heard a presentation on the cross-college project on sustainability which gets students involved in promoting UN Sustainability Development Goals. The Board heard that 17 West Lothian schools took part in the week long event that provided opportunities for over 200 students to work with school pupils in various workshops, across many different subject areas including hospitality, construction, engineering, business science and sports. The evidence from this work was mapped to their course assessment.

The Board agreed this is an excellent example of inspiring leadership, cross college learning and teamworking.

The Board was complimentary about the high quality of work evidenced from all three presentations and praised the staff involved.

1.3 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest that were in conflict with any items under discussion during the meeting.

1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 20 June 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 20 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

1.5 Matters Arising

All actions were completed.

The Board of Governors noted that the Withers Report summary was included in the Chief Executive Report.

2 Matters for Approval

2.1 Financial Forecast Return

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services introduced the paper, noting it had been extensively discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

The Board discussed the financial forecast to achieve a break-even position on a trading basis by June 2024, noting the challenging situation for the college. The Board also noted the forecast is based on the assumptions given to the college by the Scottish Funding Council and that the forecast could change if the set of assumptions change.

The Principal noted the college will continue to look for additional income generating opportunities. The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement informed the Board the Children's Hearing Scotland contract has been secured for the next year.

The Board's attention was drawn to the college's intention to manage the financial situation through no compulsory redundancies.

The Board of Governors was content to approve the FFR.

2.2 Board Development Plan 2023-2025

A 2-year draft Board Development Plan was presented for Board approval by the Chairs Committee. The Chairs Committee recommended a change to the timeline for the skills audit to fit with recruitment of new members.

The Board noted that actions included in the Board Development Plan originated from Committee and Board Self-evaluations carried out in June 2023.

The Board of Governors was content to approve the Board Development Plan with the amendment to the skills audit timeline.

2.3 **Revised Committee Remits**

The Board of Governors were informed that revised Committee Remits had been considered and approved by individual Committees in June 2023. Amendments from committee discussions have been made to the Remits.

Finance and General Purposes Committee Remit:

The Board queried whether it was necessary to stipulate two members with Finance experience are required for the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was agreed to let this stand for 2023-24 and review the remit again in June 2024 in conjunction with the recruitment plan for new members.

Audit Committee Remit:

The Board highlighted the requirement in this remit for periodic effectiveness reviews and engagement with board strategy events and queried whether this point appears in all remits and in the Board Development Plan.

Action 1: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor

To ensure there is a requirement for review and engagement with board strategy events in all remits and the Board Development Plan

Chairs Committee Remit:

The Board discussed the Chairs Committee Remit and agreed the changes suggested by the Chairs Committee to remove item 7.4 and include a specific point on re-appointment of members. The Board noted an invitation will be circulated for a member to attend the Chairs Committee on a rotational basis.

Action 2: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor

To circulate invitation to participate in Chairs Committee to Board Members.

The Board of Governors was content to approve the Committee Remits for 2023-24.

2.4 Statement of Board Membership and Attendance for 2022-23

A Statement of Board Membership and Attendance for the period 1 August 2022 to 28 July 2023 was circulated to Board Members for information and accuracy checking.

The Board of Governors approved the Statement for inclusion in the Board of Governors Report to the Scottish Funding Council.

3 Matters for Attention

3.1 Student Association Report

The Student Association Presidents presented the report to August 2023 which shared their experiences during the first year of tenure.

The Board of Governors discussed the Student Association's ambitious plans for 2023-24 and praised the work both Student Presidents have completed during academic year 2022-23. The success of the Freshers Fayre was noted, particularly the inclusion of over 30 college partners in the event.

The Board of Governors noted the report.

3.2 Chief Executive Report

The Principal presented her update report from June to September 2023 and highlighted key projects and achievements during this period. The Board heard the Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment was attending the Parliament Dinner taking place that evening to support our students working at the event.

The Board noted the launch of the ECOHOUSE was successful and attended by the Government Minister.

The Principal highlighted our continuing success with regard to improved student success rates and thanked all staff, including support staff, for their contribution to this.

The Board of Governors commented positively on student results and congratulated the Principal and college staff.

The Board also congratulated the college on the excellent staff conference focused on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Principal noted that work is now taking place to examine how we can encourage more diversity in our staff population.

The Board of Governors noted the Chief Executive Report.

3.3 **Regional Board Chair's Feedback**

The Chair of the Board of Governors gave an update on the continuing industrial action and the Minister's affirmation that no further funds are available to support staff pay claims. The Board noted rising staff costs are the biggest challenge to the college in a climate of flat cash funding,

The Chair discussed concepts originating from Think the Unthinkable Project but noted these are likely to be long term ideas that will not impact on the immediate situation.

The Chair also gave a summary of the key change items within the Government's Programme for Government.

3.4 **Strategic Risk Register Review**

The Chair of Audit Committee and the Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented the updated risk register noting that 10 risks are scored above the tolerance level set by the Board. The recent Business Continuity exercise was discussed and the Board noted the impact of this on risk 6.1. Board attention was drawn to items 2.1 and 3.2 on the risk register heat map.

The Board heard the Audit Committee recognised the business continuity scenario was appropriate as it did not continue to focus on cyber risks and also noted the above tolerance ratings are absolutely where they should be.

The Board queried whether financial sustainability is scored lower than it should be given committee and board discussions and noted the voluntary severance programme should be recorded as a risk mitigation. It was agreed to flag this in the next risk register update.

The Board also discussed risk mitigations to take account of industrial action and asked if more detail on mitigations can be recorded.

Action 3: Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services

To review risk rating and mitigations for financial sustainability and industrial action and amend risk register.

4 Committee Matters for Information

4.1 Learning and Teaching Committee Update

The Board was informed about the presentation given by Student Counsellors on the front-line counselling service provided for students. The Board noted the Scottish Funding Council decision to withdraw funding for this service and the college decision to continue to fund the service, recognising the importance of this support for keeping students well and on course.

The Board noted the committee had discussed the impact of industrial action on student results for 2022-23 and was pleased to note the majority of student results have now been processed.

The Board noted the college credit target was exceeded again in 2022-23 and that recruitment for 2023-24 is positive against target.

4.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee Update

The Board heard the main item for discussion had been the Financial Forecast Return. Discussion had already taken place on this subject and no further comments were made.

The committee also approved the Asset values for the year end accounts and discussed the infrastructure update. A particular point of concern about the delay to the decarbonisation project had been noted by the committee with a request made for a formal response from Amaresco to be brought to the next committee meeting.

The committee noted the management accounts were in line with that expected and demand for places is being carefully managed.

4.3 Audit Committee Update

The committee had discussed the current issue with RAAC in buildings and were pleased to report to the Board the college has no concerns in this regard. The committee also discussed progress on cyber and data work.

(i) Health and safety report

The Board discussed escalation levels noted for incident reporting in the Health and Safety report, whether incidents should be tagged on the basis of seriousness and whether we have a process to deal with more serious incidents. It was agreed to explore this for future reporting.

The Board heard that Internal Audit Reports were positive with few recommendations.

Staff mandatory training and complaints were also discussed. The Board requested more clarity in the Complaints report with regard to colour coding and trend reporting.

Action 4: Vice Principal, Performance & Improvement

Amend Complaints report to include a colour key and trend reporting.

The Board was very pleased to note the long outstanding legal case has now been resolved and has not been upheld. The college was completely exonerated.

4.4 Chairs Committee Update

The Board noted the Chairs Committee recommendation that Gavin Hamilton be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Board approved the appointment.

The committee presented the Board Development Plan for Board approval, highlighting one suggested change to the timeline for completion of the skills audit.

The Board approved the Board Development Plan for 2023-25.

5 Any Other Business

Board members were asked to check and sign updated Register of Interests forms for 2023-24.

The Principal informed the Board of Governors that a dinner will be held in the Terrace Restaurant on Tuesday 5 December 2023 after the board meeting has concluded. The dinner will be to thank members for their continued support for the college and provide an opportunity for team building among board members.

6 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The board agreed that papers were of a manageable quantity and the quality of papers was very good.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 5 December 2023 commencing at 16.30 pm in rooms G4 and G5, No 3 on the Square.

The meeting will be followed by a dinner in the Terrace Restaurant commencing at 18.00 pm.