

Board of Governors Meeting

Minutes of Meeting of 18 June 2024

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)
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)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal and Chief Executive)
Blair Stewart (Student Association President)
Shelagh Fraser (Support Staff Member)
Laura Murray (Teaching Staff Member)
Brian Smillie (Unison Trade Union Member)
Chris Wood (EIS Trade Union Member)

In Attendance:

Simon Earp (Vice Principal, People, Performance and Improvement)
Hazel Brady (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Estates)
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)
Joanna Trybura (Student President)
CJ Airlie (Student President)

1 Committee Administration

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Joanna Trybura and CJ Airlie, Student Presidents for the period 2024-2026.

Apologies were noted from Aruna Lopez, Non-executive member, Tom Bates, Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee, Elaine Cook, Non-executive member and Moira Niven, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

1.2 Presentation on College Performance Indicators

In response to requests from Board members to have more information on college sector performance, the Principal gave a presentation on student performance indicators

The Board discussed the Scottish Funding Council college sector performance indicators for 2022-23 and noted West Lothian College's standing in each of the key areas. The Board noted the college's excellent success rate overall and notably in the most deprived postcodes and care experienced categories.

The Board discussed the performance indicators and whether the Scottish Funding Council sets targets for student success. The Board was informed that targets were dropped during the pandemic and with the change in outcome agreements but that these may be reintroduced through the new quality framework.

The Board noted the college has been first in the sector for overall success for the last 3 years.

The Principal noted her appreciation of all staff in the college for the commitment shown for our students.

The Board congratulated staff on their tremendous achievements.

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 19 March 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

1.5 **Matters Arising from the Meeting of 19 March 2024**

There were no matters arising from the meeting of 19 March 2024.

2 Matters for Approval

2.1 **Annual Budget 2024-25**

The Vice Principal, Finance and Estates discussed the trading deficit budget of £304k and confirmed that this budget had been subject to robust scrutiny by the Executive Leadership Team prior to being set. The Finance and General Purposes Committee agreed the budget for recommendation to the Board for approval after extensive discussion.

The Board raised a concern regarding the college's cash position. The Vice-Principal, Finance and Estates confirmed the Scottish Funding Council has been consulted and will work with the college to support recovery of the cash position.

The Board confirmed a commitment to a no compulsory redundancy policy and noted there are no discussions taking place on targeted redundancy. The college will remain committed to reducing costs through natural wastage.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Finance and Estates

To ensure the Board is given regular updates on the cash position.

The Board was content to approve the annual budget for 2024-25.

2.2 Board Development Plan – quarterly update June 2024

The Board discussed the quarterly update to the Board development plan and agreed items for development in 2024-25.

The update was noted by the Board of Governors.

3 Matters for Attention

3.1 Student Association Report

The Student President introduced Joanna Trybura and CJ Airlie as the newly elected Student Presidents for 2024-2026.

The Board noted there have been in excess of 700 enquiries to the Student Association over this academic year. The Student Association is aware that data tracking on enquiries needs to be improved and will be working on this in the next academic year.

Sparkle award winners will be announced at Celebrate Success on 19 June 2024.

The Board noted the good work of the Student Association and recognised the successful achievement of awards including the LGBT+ Gold Charter.

3.2 Chief Executive Report

The Principal introduced the report and noted that negotiations with EIS-FELA are ongoing. The Board noted that Unison have accepted the pay award for support staff.

The Principal informed the Board that 81 nominations for Celebrate Success had been received and awards will be made during the ceremony to be held on 19 June 2024. The Board also noted other student celebrations have successfully taken place over the last few weeks.

The Board thanked the Principal for organising a lovely retiral dinner for the Chair and particularly noted we can be very proud of the high quality of food and service provided by professional cookery students and staff.

The Board noted the report

3.3 **Regional Board Chair's Feedback**

The Chair confirmed Colleges Scotland is lobbying hard to improve the profile of the college sector, particularly in regard to the college sector contribution to economic regeneration.

It is hoped that forthcoming announcements from Scottish Government on the skills agenda will bring good news for the college sector.

The Board noted the update.

3.4 **Strategic Risk Register Review**

It was noted that the Audit Committee had reviewed the process for scrutiny of the strategic risk register for reporting to the Board.

It was agreed the Strategic Risk Register should be a standing item on the Learning and Teaching and Finance and General Purposes Committee agenda and that Audit Committee should receive assurance from both committees on risks relevant to those committee discussions.

Action 2: Chair of Audit Committee

To arrange for all committee chairs to meet to discuss the process for scrutiny of risk management for 2024-25.

The Board noted the risk register review.

4 **Committee Matters for Information**

4.1 **Learning and Teaching Committee Update**

The main point for discussion at Learning and Teaching Committee was college performance indicators which had already been discussed through the Principal's presentation on college sector performance indicators.

The Board noted the update from the Learning and Teaching Committee.

4.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee Update

The Board noted the robust discussion that had taken place on the annual budget and the financial situation.

The Board heard an update on infrastructure projects, noting the decision to go ahead with the motor vehicle canopy. The Board was informed that the professional cookery area remains the next identified priority area for refurbishment.

The Board noted the update on the decarbonisation work that is taking place over the summer period.

It was confirmed that accounting policies have been agreed for 2024-25.

The Board noted the update from Finance and General Purposes Committee.

4.3 Audit Committee Update

The Chair of Audit Committee gave an update on the Strategic Risk Register for 2023-24 and confirmed that Audit Scotland had given assurance there were no significant risks.

Internal and external audit updates were discussed, including sector themes that were highlighted by Audit Scotland. The Board were also informed of Audit Scotland's 6% increase in audit fees.

The Board heard an update on Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure work and was pleased to note the positive feedback received from the Scottish Funding Council visit. The need for ongoing digital training for staff and students was noted in light of recent, reported cyber-attacks. The Board noted the college is seeking to learn from these events and to use that learning to build additional security for our own systems.

The Board noted the discussion on the health and safety report, particularly the uptick of students presenting with challenging needs and the impact on college resources needed to support this.

The Board noted the college's Business Continuity Planning was found to be robust by insurers.

The Board noted the update from the Audit Committee.

4.3.1 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

The Board noted the Audit Committee found the Health and Safety quarterly report to be comprehensive, giving reassurance the college has robust processes in place.

The Board was content to note the update.

4.4 Chairs Committee Update

The Board heard an update from the Chairs Committee that they had approved a cost of living increase to the Principal and Vice Principals as that recently agreed national for support staff.

The Chairs Committee had discussed a paper addressing concerns about the college's ability to recruit and retain managers on current salary levels. The Board noted it was agreed the Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee will meet with the Principal to prepare a proposal for a review of manager salaries to be brought to the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee in September 2024 for consideration.

The Board noted there has been no official announcement on the appointment of a new Chair of the Board.

5 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

6 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The Board was content with the quality of papers presented.

6.1 Board of Governors Self-Assessment 2023-24

The Board participated in a review of board effectiveness during 2023-24 and recorded areas of strength. Areas for development in 2024-25 were recorded for the Board Development Plan.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 24 September 2024 commencing at 16.30pm in rooms G10/G12, Building No.5.