

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2019 from 3.30pm in the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Present: David C Watt (Chair), Bob Black, Jade Burnett, Shona Cochrane, Hugh Hall, Carol Hunter, Joseph Harney, Susan Mitchell, Bryan Poole, Jim Trail OBE, Tina Vandermotten

Apologies: Jen Anderson, Violeta Ilendo, Tony Martin, Zoe Thomson

In Attendance: Wendy Brymer, Susan Dunsmuir, Kris Getchell, Iain Hawker, Dorothée Leslie, Sue Reekie, Marianne Philp

1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 23 October 2019

It was agreed that the fifth bullet point of paragraph 7 should be amended to read *“Modern Apprenticeship recruitment was ahead of target with the potential for additional £100k additional income should our projections realise and this be agreed with Skills Development Scotland.”* Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

4 Chair’s Updates

The following updates were given:

- Jen Walls had stepped down as a Board member since the last meeting due to work commitments. The three current vacancies on the Board would be advertised in early January 2020. Members were asked to encourage applications from suitable candidates they may know.
- Comments received on the Elevator Pitch discussed at the Board Development Day had been collated. Following a review of these, it was proposed that the following be agreed: *“The Board of Fife College influences, shapes and monitors the College’s long-term strategy by providing effective leadership and governance, and ensuring alignment to achieve the College’s vision, mission, values and culture.”*
- A meeting had been held with Colleges Scotland and Chair’s Committee members where feedback had been given on the desired role of Colleges Scotland for the sector moving forward.
- The Scottish Government had introduced a mentoring programme to support potential new Board applicants, in particular female. Any Board members interested in participating as a mentee should seek details from Scottish Government.



Fife College

- Since the last meeting the Chair had attended a Colleges Scotland Board meeting, the installation of Sir Paul Grice, the Ex Forces Business Awards Dinner and the National Economic Forum in Glasgow.

5 Principal's Update Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. Highlights included:

- Financial and business performance overall was positive. The credit target was on track to be achieved and the overall student retention rate was improving year on year. Student recruitment for 2019-20 was positive, with the exception of Engineering and Digital
- A business case for capital funding for redevelopment of the Glenrothes Campus was being prepared as it had been identified by SFC as a priority
- The College had won two College Development Network Awards

There was a discussion about steps being taken in relation to improving performance in STEM and how this was being linked into schools activity in order to drive forward improvements. It was noted that influence was needed in S1 and S2 to inform course choices. Links into industry was also suggested as an opportunity, eg Raytheon was opening a new centre for Cybersecurity and training may be required. It was noted that, whilst there were some groups looking at STEM, direct contact with companies was likely to be more successful.

It was noted that student retention had improved due to the targeted action being taken as a result of properly understanding the issues students face. Some remaining issues remain outwith the College's control, such as student funding policy and mental health issues. It was confirmed that work continued across the range of performance indicators to ensure that improvements are sustained and continue to be made.

Members congratulated staff on winning the two CDN awards

6 New Campus Update

Martin Kirkwood joined the meeting for this item.

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Areas for collaboration had been agreed between the College and Fife Council. A document summarising this would be shared with key partners and the Scottish Government before Christmas. Some areas of disagreement continued, and different professional opinions were being cited between the parties. The Principal expressed a view that it was preferable to reach agreement on as many points as possible.

Workstreams and a Governance Group had been established, each of which would continue to agree and progress matters.

The FCSA letter to the Chair giving student views and opinion was circulated and noted. Various practical elements including the complexities of having shared space of different age groups and categories of customers was also discussed.

It was confirmed that a project risk register had been drafted and would be circulated in due course once agreed by the College and Fife Council.



Fife College

Members agreed that learner and academic experience was key, and that the views of students, pupils, parents, businesses, and other stakeholders was important. Based on current discussions members were not supportive of a single building, but were keen to ensure that there was shared resources and space where appropriate.

It was confirmed that the College would continue to remain positive and proactive and work hard to meet all of the Scottish Government's desired timescales.

7 Business Report

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. The bullet points in the Executive Summary were outlined in turn.

An update was given on the continuous improvement work being undertaken. The first Rapid Improvement had been held and was considered to be very positive and successful. Workstreams were being established to take forward the required improvements in relation to recording enquiries, promoting courses on the website, and the application and communication processes. The next projects to be taken forward related to part-time enrolment and the student funding process.

Credit targets had been aligned to take account of recruitment targets to ensure that the overall target would be met. Performance Indicators were improving and academic staff were taking responsibility for driving forward improvements where required. Partial success remains an area of concern and this is being looked at to ensure that where support can be given that will allow learners to achieve, this is put in place.

The F1 financial reforecast was showing an underlying surplus of £130k (budget position had been £99k).

It was noted that part-time HE activity was being prioritised in order to better meet demand, and that the 40% target was a stretch but should remain. The previous activity to promote starting HNCs whilst at school had been changed to starting degrees whilst at school and was proving popular.

Decision: To circulate the paper issued to the Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee on CLPL activity to members for information.

Responsibility: Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 31 December 2019

8 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. Significant activity since the last meeting was noted and the student members were commended on the progress made.

It was suggested that Board members could be invited to relevant events, and also that support from Board members to help students with advice might be useful, eg with business start-ups. FCSA members should contact the Director: Governance and Compliance with invitations or requests for support.



Fife College

8.1 Proposed Amendments to FCSA Constitution

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the only substantive change related to the proposal to elect Student Presidents for 2 years, rather than 1.

Decision: To approve the proposed changes to the FCSA Constitution.

Responsibility: J Burnett / C Hunter **Deadline:** 31 January 2020

9 Annual Accounts 2018-19

9.1 Fife College

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The draft annual accounts had been reviewed in detail at the Joint Audit and Risk and Finance, Commercial and Estates Committees meeting and were recommended for approval to the Board. The accounts showed an operating surplus of £208k. Members confirmed this was a good outcome.

9.2 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to the Board

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members noted the exceptional external audit report which complemented the College on the quality of finance reports and documentation provided. Two recommendations had been made, both of which had now been closed off.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee gave feedback on the private pre-meeting with auditors, which had made similar comments about the quality of documentation and confirmed that no issues had been raised by the external or internal auditors.

9.3 Letter of Representations

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

Decision: To approve the annual accounts 2018-19.

Responsibility: Chief Financial Officer

Deadline: 31 December 2019

10 Learning and Teaching Strategy

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the Strategy had been reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee and recommended to the Board for approval. It was noted that the Strategy encouraged engagement innovative practice and that wording had been carefully chosen. The document would be refreshed annually.

Decision: To approve the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Responsibility: Vice Principal: Academic Strategy

Deadline: 31 December 2019



Fife College

11 Update on Governance Matters

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the external audit report had commented that attendance levels at Board and Committee meetings had dropped when compared with previous years. The Chair suggested that figures were positive and good for the sector. This would continue to be monitored moving forward.

12 Summary of Committee Business

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Links to the full minutes were included in the paper.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 3.30pm, Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline with a presentation on Projects at 3pm.

The Board of Governors Strategy Day will take place on Wednesday 3 March 2020 at 9am. Members were invited to suggest ideas on discussion topics. Faculty Directors would be invited to give a short presentation on the commercial activity within their area.

The Chair wished Board members and College staff best wishes for the festive period.