

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2020 from 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: David C Watt (Chair), Jen Anderson, Jade Burnett, Shona Cochrane, Hugh Hall, Carol Hunter, Joseph Harney, Violeta Ilendo, Amanda Kindness, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Zoe Thomson

Apologies: Bob Black, Patrick Carnie, Gordon Mole, Jim Trail OBE, Tina Vandermotten

In Attendance: Susan Dunsmuir, Brian Fisher, Dorothée Leslie, Sue Reekie, Marianne Philp

1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. In particular, new Board members were welcomed to their first Board meeting.

2 Minutes of the

2.1 Previous Meeting: 11 December 2019

2.2 Strategy Day: 3 March 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting on 11 December 2019 and of the Strategy Day on 3 March 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that been circulated were noted.

4 Chair's Updates

The following updates were given:

- A Board of Governors WhatsApp Group had been created. Members were encouraged to use this for any updates or questions. Teams could also be used for this.
- The Chair had attended the recent CDN Induction session for Board members which had been useful. New members would be invited to attend sessions in due course.
- The Chair had attended various meetings including update meetings with the Principal and Director: Governance and Compliance; most Fife College Committee meetings; the launch of the Cumberford Little Report; the Scottish Government's mentoring group; Julia Belgutay of TES; and a meeting with local Council leaders.

5 Principal's Update Report

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

- An update on the College's response to the COVID-19 situation
- Overall College performance



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- Strategic matters – including the new campus, innovation hub and estates strategy
- Staff matters – including progress with the restructure and the staff engagement survey which had recently been issued
- Recent awards for the College and Fife College Students' Association

Members congratulated the College for the approach taken in response to COVID-19 which had enabled students to be supported by online delivery and staff to work from home in a short period. In addition, support materials had quickly been put in place for staff and students. It was noted that the situation had resulted in some useful creative ideas and a move towards implementing online solutions which had speeded the Digital Strategy forward significantly.

A query was raised as to whether scenario planning had been undertaken for the possible pandemic continuation for longer than anticipated or that there could be waves of disruption over a period. It was confirmed that time had not yet allowed for this as staff continued to respond to urgent issues and prioritise the needs of learners. However as more information on timescales became available, this work could be undertaken. It was noted that the Business Continuity Planning Team had been meeting regularly and would continue to do so remotely.

It was confirmed that the College was discussing with relevant agencies to identify support that could be put in place to assist those most affected by home working. In addition, the Commercial Team was contacting employers in order to offer online CPD and training and to reschedule any face to face training for later in the year.

It was confirmed that the College had supported Dundee and Angus College following their Cyberattack and had reviewed its own arrangements to reduce the risk of a similar situation arising in Fife. More detail had been given on this to the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee.

It was noted that the Staff Innovation Awards event was planned for June 2020. If that was unlikely to go ahead, the College would seek an innovative way to continue with this virtually.

Decision: The Chair to write to staff on behalf of the Board to recognise the additional work and commitment of staff in supporting learners and the superb efforts of all concerned in changing so quickly to working from home whilst the College buildings were closed.

Responsibility: Chair

Deadline: 27 March 2020

6 New Campus Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that discussions had progressed well since the meeting. There was currently an impact on discussions due to COVID-19 but it was anticipated that this was temporary. The planned date for opening remained as summer 2023. Members reiterated their desire for all schools to be considered in the project, not only the two who would be sharing the campus.

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.

It was highlighted that the numbers given were prior to the COVID-19 situation escalating and that the financial position would be impacted in terms of commercial activity, though that is a



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small figure in relation to overall budgets. The Scottish Funding Council had confirmed that there would be no claw back on credits. It was expected that student recruitment for 2020-21 would slow until the situation was more settled, and that marketing activity would be delayed and refocused to maximize its impact.

The Finance Team would be looking at what spend could be delayed compensating for the drop in commercial income. Cash flow would also be monitored on an ongoing basis. Discussions were ongoing with SPS and SDS regarding income. Assurances were given that any loss of income would be absorbed and would not result in staff redundancies.

The new HR information system continued to be implemented and there may be an opportunity to bring work forward while staff were working from home. Focus groups planned would be offered online. A new working from home site was being developed for staff and was due to be rolled out to staff. This would encourage staff engagement, participation in CLPL and would focus on wellbeing.

8 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Updates were given on:

- The appointment of a Cycling Campus Officer
- Participation in the community event "Winter Wonderland"
- Microwaves were now in place at all campuses
- Cross campus and sports events since the last meeting
- Student groups
- Scottish Student Sport Award
- Student Partnership Agreement
- Student Mental Health Agreement
- Sabbatical Officer elections
- Awards
- FCSA Performance Support Policy

It was confirmed that the FCSA were keeping in touch with students online and via social media, which were normal modes of communication anyway. Some fun activities were also being arranged each day to keep students engaged and to encourage them to take a break from studying.

Members commended the FCSA on the progress made since the last meeting and for the recent awards nominations.

Decision: To endorse the FCSA Performance Support Policy for roll out.

Responsibility: Student Presidents

Deadline: 1 July 2020

9 Draft Regional Outcome Agreement

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that this was a final draft document, and that discussions had been taking place with the Scottish Funding Council to get it agreed.



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Decision: To approve the draft Regional Outcome Agreement and delegate authority to the Principal and Executive Team to make any final changes that may be required prior to its submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

Responsibility: Vice Principal: Academic Strategy

Deadline: 30 April 2020

10 Government Draft Budget 2020-21

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

The impression in some quarters that this was a significant increase in FE funding was denied -any additional cash was already allocated to agreed staff and student costs.

It was confirmed that the Finance Team would update the financial assumptions once the actual allocations were received, and that these would also scenario plan considering the COVID-19 impact.

11 Cumberford Little Report

Discussion on this item was deferred to a future meeting.

12 Update on Governance Matters

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

Decisions:

- To note the appointments and re-appointments of members as outlined in the paper.
- To appoint Tony Martin as Depute Chair with immediate effect.
- To appoint Bob Black as Senior Independent Member with immediate effect.
- To approve the Committee membership changes as outlined in the paper.
- To approve the remit for the New Campus Project Board.

Responsibility: Director: Governance and Compliance

Deadline: ASAP

13 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.

14 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 3.30pm. Venue to be confirmed in due course (previous suggestion of Kilmarnock College was not now practical)