

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2020 from 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: David C Watt (Chair), Jen Anderson, Bob Black, Jade Burnett, Patrick Carnie, Shona Cochrane, Hugh Hall, Carol Hunter, Joseph Harney, Violeta Ilendo*, Amanda Kindness, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Zoe Thomson*, Jim Trail OBE, Tina Vandermotten

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

*Denotes part attendance

1 **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. The Chair congratulated Jade Burnett on her re-election and Sarah Ferguson on her election as Student President for 2020-21. The Chair thanked Carol Hunter for all she had contributed as a Board member and as Student President over the past few years and wished her well in her new role within the Guidance Team. It was noted that Violeta Ilendo's term of office would end on 31 July 2020 and thanks were expressed to her for all she had contributed to the Board and, in particular, as Chair of the Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee.

2 **Minutes of the**

2.1 Previous Meeting: 25 March 2020

2.2 Update Meeting: 6 May 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2020 and the update meeting held on 6 May 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 meeting had been held with College Chairs and the Minister for Further and Higher Education and Science. Funding required for Colleges was the main item discussed.
- A meeting had been held with the Chair of Scottish Funding Council and College Chair. The background of FE and a number of Fife specific issues were discussed.
- Various Employers' Association meetings had been held.
- The Chair had been contributing to meetings where the function of Colleges Scotland was being discussed.



Fife College

- The Chair had attended all recent meetings of College Committees owing to availability in his diary.

5 Principal's Update Report

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

- An update on the response to COVID-19 by Fife College and the sector. Members noted that the response by Fife College had been outstanding. Communications were due to be issued to staff giving updates on arrangements being made for the start of term. These would be forwarded to Board members for information. The overarching principle was health and safety. Sectoral guidance was being reviewed as soon as it became available and plans would therefore require to be updated as the situation evolves. A phased approach would be taken for return at the start of term, ensuring that students would not be disadvantaged. Estates staff were already working on reconfiguring buildings to allow for social distancing.
- Overall performance continued to be positive despite the current situation. The credit target for 2019-20 had been achieved and recruitment for 2020-21 was progressing well. The end of year financial position, whilst being closely monitored, looked set to achieve a modest surplus.
- The Scottish Government had asked the Scottish Funding Council to undertake a "Review aimed at Coherent and Sustainable Provision" and the Principal would sit on the SFC advisory group. Members would be kept updated on progress of the group and commented that they were pleased that the Principal was able to provide insight influence from a strategic level.
- Progress with the new campus masterplan was continuing. An update was given on discussions with Fife Council which related to land acquisition which had not yet been resolved. This had resulted in a delay to the completion of the masterplan from early July to mid July 2020. Concerns were raised that time was being lost and that the College continued to drive the project forward. Board members requested that the College continue to ensure that its own position was protected and that the land allocation allowed for current need and future growth, as had previously been agreed. Student feedback on a shared campus was reiterated. It was noted that Fife Council would require to undertake a consultation, but that this was planned for later in the project.
- Staff Innovation Awards would go ahead but would be delayed until later in the year. The College Heroes Awards were going ahead and the FCSA had won the Education Award for Embedding Mental Health in the Curriculum at the recent NUS Awards Ceremony.

Members congratulated all staff involved in this positive update. They expressed caution about ensuring that the focus remains long-term and that short-term decisions are not made based on the current situation, particularly in relation to issues where other Colleges may not be in such a strong position.

It was noted that the underspend on student support was the same for all Colleges and was directly due to the COVID-19 situation. A request had been made to the Scottish Government to roll this forward as it was likely it would be needed as furlough ends. Some of the underspend was being used to purchase new devices.

Violeta Ilendo left the meeting.



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

- The credit target for 2019-20 had now been met.
- Student recruitment for 2020-21 was on target for the time of year.
- Virtual Open Days would take place week commencing 22 June.
- KPIs had improved across all areas, albeit at a slower rate than previously.
- A surplus was predicted for the financial year-end. It was anticipated that the position might improve slightly on the current forecast as detailed in the paper, as a result of some planned expenditure now being delayed into next financial year.
- Implementation of the new integrated HR system remained on track with the payroll phase having been completed.
- There had been good response rates for the staff engagement survey and staff pulse survey. A group would be set up to look at opportunities for changes to working for the future. Staff generally felt less stressed working from home except for those who also had younger children. Flexible arrangements would continue to be put in place to support staff wherever possible and it was noted that the arrangements put in place by schools may also impact upon this.
- Options for extending the Rosyth lease were being explored, and a bid would be submitted for refurbishment of Glenrothes campus over the summer.
- Significant work had been undertaken by the Digital Services team in supporting staff and students working from home and this had generally gone well. This work has moved progress with the Digital Strategy forward faster than planned. A main area for further development was to upskill staff in supporting students remotely. It was noted that the wireless replacement project had been delayed due to the ability to access buildings but that plans were in place to pick this up as soon as supplier were able to access the building. It was noted that moving forward significantly in online delivery may allow the College to ensure a good provision throughout Fife, including in the North East and the East Neuk.
- The Continuous Improvement programme had been impacted upon negatively due to social distancing, but work was continuing slowly.
- Some KPIs for Marketing had been added to the report. This information was new and trend information would be added in due course. The updated staffing structure within Marketing had been put in place and most posts had now been filled.

Decision: To circulate the paper relating to the staff pulse survey from the recent Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee meeting to all Board members.

Responsibility: Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 18 June 2020

Zoe Thomson left the meeting.

7 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

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

- Adapting to a digital environment
- Recent FCSA Presidential Elections
- NUS Awards
- Engagement activities to support students working remotely
- Online learning opportunities for students



Fife College

- Joint FCSA and Fife College Awards 2020
- Scottish Student Support best practice
- Healthy Body Healthy Mind
- Embedding mental health into the curriculum

A link to the FCSA Annual Review 2019-20 was provided in the report.

Members commended the FCSA on the significant work and progress made, especially during such a difficult period. Thanks were expressed to all involved.

8 Draft Budget 2020-21

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee and the Executive Team had reviewed the paper and had recommended Scenario 2 be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Since the paper had been prepared, the Scottish Funding Council had confirmed some of the assumptions made, in particular that the full grant for 2020-21 would be paid. No adjustments to the paper were required.

It was noted that the College remained in discussions with employers and agencies such as Skills Development Scotland to ensure that opportunities for funding and delivery were maximized. It was suggested that if the Scottish Government required Colleges to be flexible and demand changes, they would require to fund this.

Decisions:

- To submit scenario 2 to the Scottish Funding Council for approval, accepting that the financial situation was fluid and changes were likely.
- To delegate authority to the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee to approve the 3-year financial forecast and thereafter to circulate it to Board members for information.

Responsibility: Chief Financial Officer

Deadline: 30 June 2020

9 Digital Learning Strategy 2020-24

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that this report had been approved by the Academic Quality Committee and was provided to the Board for information. It was confirmed that this was a high-level document and would have action plans with objectives and KPIs sitting below it and that progress towards delivering the Strategy would be actively monitored.

A comment was made that the plan appeared to lack a little ambition with regard to development learning content and how this becomes digitised over the next 4-5 years. This was followed up further by email after the meeting. It was confirmed that staff upskilling was required and that this would feed through in CLPL plans. When launching the strategy, it would be important to ensure that the message given was that the plan was ambitious. It was noted that there was also a Digital Ambition Strategy for the sector as a whole which would give additional support to drive the Fife Strategy forward.



Fife College

10 Update on Governance Matters

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

The Chair advised that annual development meetings would take place over the summer period. He confirmed that there had been a move to spread Board membership so that members only required to attend one Committee. However, opportunities were available for members to elect to join a second Committee and/or to occasionally attend other Committee meetings and requests could be discussed at Annual Development Meetings or with the Director: Governance and Compliance.

Decision: To approve the changes to the remits as outlined in the paper.

Responsibility: Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 1 August 2020

11 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.

12 Self Evaluation 2019-20

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The template would be emailed to members for completion. Results will be collated and discussed at the September meeting.

Decision: To complete the self-assessment template and return it to the Director: Governance and Compliance.

Responsibility: All Board Members

Deadline: 17 July 2020

13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 30 September 2020 at 3.30pm. Venue to be confirmed in due course.

Due to the current unusual and fluid situation, an additional meeting would be convened over the summer if there was urgent business to progress.