

## MINUTES

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Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 9 December 2020 from 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** David C Watt (Chair), Jen Anderson, Bob Black, Jade Burnett, Patrick Carnie, Shona Cochrane, Sarah Ferguson, Brian Fisher, Hugh Hall, Joseph Harney, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Zoe Thomson, Jim Trail OBE

**In Attendance:** Susan Dunsmuir, Dorothee Leslie, Sue Reekie, Marianne Philp, Janet Campbell

### 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. In particular Janet Campbell, from Education Scotland, was welcomed to the meeting and briefly introduced herself to Board members.

### 2 Minutes of the

**2.1 Previous Meeting: 30 September 2020**

**2.2 Update Call: 4 November 2020**

**2.3 External Effectiveness Review Session: 27 November 2020**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 30 September 2020, 4 November 2020 and 27 November 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 Chair gave a brief update on various meetings he had recently attended as Regional Chair of Fife College.

### 5 Principal's Update Report

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

- Strategic sector-wide issues
- An update on the impact of Covid-19 related issues and initiatives being pursued
- College overall performance (covered more substantively under the Business Report and Annual Accounts items on the agenda)
- Progress with implementation of the Workforce Plan and the implementation of the new HR information system
- Recent awards successes



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Congratulations were given to those who had recently won or had been shortlisted for awards. It was noted that this was a low cost and effective way to communicate what we do well.

Members thanked the Principal for this positive report which showed a good position for the calendar year-end.

## **6 Actions from Board Development Session**

### **6.1 Coherence and Sustainability Report Priorities**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated by email were outlined and noted. It was highlighted that Directors had been asked to input into the report, and that three common themes had emerged:

- Continued innovation
- Collaborative arrangements on a wide scale
- Clear positioning towards a coherent policy approach across partners organisations and stakeholders

Opportunities were discussed, including international activity, innovation and involvement in research and development activity.

Members noted that this was a very positive report with lots of areas of good practice identified and would link into the Regional Outcome Agreement and other activity. It was suggested that this item could be a future discussion item for the Board.

### **6.2 Collaborative Arrangements**

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

Members queried whether the College could do anything more to support learners who had been unable to take exams during the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to ensure their achievements were fully recognised moving forward. Links between schools, universities and industry were discussed. It was suggested that the Digital and Estates Strategies could perhaps also be better linked to cover support available in a different way as needs may have changed since these documents were written. The Principal suggested that a hybrid of strategies covering estates, academic and digital may be something innovative that could be developed, and he would give this some consideration. This may be a matter that could be returned to at a future Board Strategy Day.

## **7 Annual Accounts 2019-20**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the accounts had been scrutinized by the Audit and Risk and Finance, Commercial and Estates Committees and were recommended to the Board for approval. A clean report had been given by the external auditors. The accounts showed an underlying surplus of around £1m and there were no issues of concern to highlight.



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## 7.1 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to the Board

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that this report would be sent to the Scottish Funding Council. The going concern issue which had been resolved with the auditors was noted for action and comment in other appropriate forums.

## 7.2 Letter of Representations

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

**Decision:** To approve the Annual Accounts 2019-20, to note the contents of the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report, and to approve the Letter of Representations.

**Responsibility:** Chief Financial Officer

**Deadline:** 31 December 2020

## 8 Estates Update

### 8.1 Draft Estates Strategy

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee had reviewed the draft at the previous two meetings and had recommended the document to the Board for approval. It was noted that the Strategy was to 2024, in line with the College's Strategic Plan and focused on the College's physical estates infrastructure and spend required over the period. It was noted that overall the College's estate required to be brought up to a competitive level and the document could be used to justify any funding that may become available. It was confirmed that Viewfield Campus was not included as the intention was to dispose of this campus.

Members agreed that the document was useful in order to meet the purposes for which it had been drafted, although expressed concern that north and east Fife did not feature significantly in it. They suggested it might also be useful in the longer term to have a document that was more sophisticated and focused on online engagement, remote delivery and society and governance related issues. It was agreed that this may be a useful discussion to have in at a relevant point in the future.

**Decision:** To approve the draft Estates Strategy 2020-24.

**Responsibility:** Chief Operating Officer

**Deadline:** 31 December 2020

### 8.2 Dunfermline New Learning Campus: Progress Report

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

## 9 Business Report

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 College was on course to achieve the five-year KPI targets set out in its Strategic Plan.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, College performance indicators had shown a decline following on from three years of the College PI Improvement Strategy being implemented. However, the College position is still above the last sector data published for 2018-19 so it



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was anticipated the College was likely to remain above sector average when the 2019-20 data was made available.

- Student recruitment for 2020-21 was on target overall and some offers for 2021-22 had already been made.
- The financial position as at end October 2020 was £754k ahead of the year-to-date budget position. The F1 forecast review for 2020-21 had been completed and was included in papers.
- Staffing indicators were all moving in a positive direction. The second Working from Home Staff Survey had recently been issued and results would be compared with the first survey undertaken and reported to the next Health and Safety and HR Committee meeting.
- Digital projects were overall progressing to plan. A query was raised about the return of chrome books and it was confirmed that there had been no issues experienced to date, but that a small amount of write-off was expected to be required moving forward.
- An increased marketing presence was noted now that the new Marketing and PR Team was in place.
- Innovation highlights were noted and linked back to the collaboration report presented earlier in the meeting.
- Sustainability progress was noted as on target.

## Decisions:

- To confirm if student positive destinations could be reported on in terms of the relevance to subject studied.  
**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Academic Strategy      **Deadline:** 31 January 2021
- To add a column to the Marketing and PR chart to include negative feedback as well as positive and neutral.  
**Responsibility:** Chief Operating Officer      **Deadline:** 17 March 2021

## 10 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

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

- FCSA and Fife College Awards on 9 October 2020 (which can be viewed online).
- Support offered via the FCSA Digital Office.
- Several FCSA events that had been held since the last Board meeting.
- FCSA sports and health update. In particular it was noted that Fife College was the first institution in Scotland to achieve the bronze healthy body healthy mind award and the FCSA was now working with other institutions to support them with this scheme.
- A thank you form had been introduced.
- The FCSA Manager had won the CDN College Colleague of the Year Award; and the FCSA had won the Fife College Innovation Award for New Systems Process or Procedure for their work in integrating Teams and Forms to increase efficiency and processes.

The FCSA was once again congratulated on significant achievement and progress since the last meeting.

## 11 Update on Governance Matters

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

- Current Board vacancies
- Proposed Board and Committee meetings dates for 2021-22



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- The final version of the External Effectiveness Review had been received. The Chair's Committee would meet in January 2021 to discuss some of the actions, and the Board would get another opportunity to discuss the report and action plan soon thereafter.
- Some minor amendments to the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation were proposed and approved. It was agreed to review these documents at least every 2 years moving forward.
- The first two Board briefing sessions had been held and those would continue in the new year. The indicative calendar had been circulated by email and would be amended as required.
- Student Elections for 2021-22 were being planned and indicative dates were given.
- The TES subscription had been discontinued following feedback from members on its usefulness.
- The report on Governing a College Using Virtual Meetings had been published and had been circulated by email. Members were encouraged to read this report.

## **Decisions:**

- To delegate authority to the Chair's Committee to recruit to the current Board vacancies.
- To approve the calendar of meetings for 2021-22 and to issue meetings invitations to all members (to include a Teams link and potential venue).
- To send the External Effectiveness Review Report to the Scottish Funding Council.
- To approve the changes to the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation and publish on the website, and to review these documents at least every two years.

**Responsibility:** Director: Governance and Compliance      **Deadline:** 31 December 2020

## **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 17 March 2021 at 3.30pm. Venue to be confirmed in due course.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contributions and passed on best wishes to all for the festive season and for 2021.