

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: David C Watt (Chair), Shona Cochrane, Drew Donnelly, Pamela Dobson, Garry Dickson, Brian Fisher, Tali Fisher, Hugh Hall, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Samantha Mowbray, Zoe Thomson, Jim Trail OBE, Emma Wallace

Apologies: Lynn Davis

In Attendance: Susan Dunsmuir, 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:**

2.1 Previous Meeting: 29 September 2021

2.2 Development Day: 2 November 2021

The minutes of the previous meetings were approved as an accurate record.

3 **Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding**

The contents of the paper that been circulated were noted.

4 **Principal's Update Report**

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

Highlights included updates on:

- Strategic sector-wide issues
- Covid
- Education Scotland
- Overall performance
- Estates
- Innovation awards

There was a discussion about the College's position with regard to working from home following on from the First Minister's recent announcement. It was agreed that it was important to take a balanced approach to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone from all perspectives. It was confirmed that the College's position was to continue with the current approach of limited on-site delivery, with other activity taking place remotely. The situation would continue to be monitored and if any new guidance was forthcoming, this would be taken into consideration.



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It was noted that the Education Scotland visit had been extremely positive with lots of good feedback received. The report will be circulated to members once available, and the lead inspector has been invited to attend the March 2022 Board meeting to provide feedback.

In relation to the new campus, it was noted that the land transaction legal documentation had been completed. Whilst the Board had been made fully aware of the land swap arrangements in previous documentation, a paper would be prepared summarizing the arrangements and seeking formal approval of the Board.

The Principal announced that, after a lot of consideration, the Chief Operating Officer had tendered her resignation from post. The Chief Operating Officer advised that she had enjoyed her 3 years in post and hoped she had made a valuable contribution to the work of the College and thanked the Board and Executive Team for their support. She wished the College every success for the future. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Chief Operating for all she had contributed and expressed best wishes.

Decision: To prepare a paper on the land transaction legal documentation seeking formal approval of the Board.

Responsibility: Principal

Deadline: 23 March 2022

4.1 Coherence and Sustainability Report Response Update

It was confirmed that there was no further update on this matter.

5 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Student Board Members outlined the progress made against FCSA aims and commitments, and against the Student Presidents' elected aims. Discussion included:

- The importance of the FCSA keeping in touch with students who are learning remotely or who are transitioning back onto campus
- Links between the College, FCSA and external bodies in relation to environmental issues and the importance of addressing issues collectively
- New working arrangements for FCSA Presidents has been beneficial in supporting a positive work life balance.

The FCSA was commended for the amount of work undertaken since the last meeting, and the Student Board Members were thanked for the helpful update provided and for the valuable support provided to students.

6 Business Report

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. The bullet points in the Executive Summary were outlined in turn, with the following main points discussed:

- Student attainment for 2020-21 had decreased by 3% due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and this was believed to be in line with the sector overall, although the sector report had not yet been published. In particular full-time FE activity had been impacted mainly in subject areas with a practical element. Faculties were looking at the detail for their areas and a further review would be undertaken once the sector report was available.



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gas. The drop in electricity was due to decarbonisation as opposed to the College burning less electricity. Comparisons with two other Colleges in the sector showed a similar trend.

Initial studies where opportunities had been identified were discussed and noted. It was confirmed that there were some funding opportunities that had been used to fund some initiatives and that moving forward more funding was available to support initiatives that may take more than one year to complete.

Members commented that whilst the College had to reduce carbon, this had to be balanced with financial costs and resourcing which was a challenge particularly where the college had older building. It was noted that further feasibility studies would be undertaken to look at the best options for the College, and this was done in partnership with other organisations where this was beneficial. Members also noted that the additional funding secured for the new campus would also help significantly, and that the College would be sector leading in this regard.

It was confirmed that offsetting was also being investigated, however the priority was to reduce carbon and then consider offsetting as a secondary issue.

Challenges such as the increase in home working and grey fleet were also discussed. It was noted that recording and reporting of data needed to be improved and that this was being actively considered. It was also noted that to be successful, support was required at all levels of the organization, and systems and behaviours needed to change to support initiatives. It was confirmed that sustainability modules had been built into the curriculum to raise awareness of students in these issues.

It was confirmed that updated sectoral information was due in April 2022 and further comparisons with other colleges could be undertaken then and provided to the Board for information.

The Chair thanked John Wincott for attending and for the detail provided in his report and presentation and confirmed that the Board looked forward to future reports on progress in relation to this important area of work.

9 Board Updates

9.1 Chair's Updates

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Chair advised that the Awards Ceremony in the Glen Pavillion should have been included in his report.

9.2 Governance Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Attention was drawn to the Learner Voice Framework, which was an action from the External Effectiveness Review which had been discussed by Academic Quality Committee and was included for information.

It was noted that Board meetings from 2022-23 would be held on a Thursday rather than a Wednesday in support of Wellbeing Wednesdays.



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9.3 Dunfermline New Campus: Progress Report

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

9.4 Summary of Committee Business

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

At the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee, the Chair had agreed to raise a point at the Board meeting in relation to the risk of staff in key areas potentially being at risk of leaving the college for jobs as a result of wage increases, which looked set to continue. Management advised that they had investigated this matter following on from the meeting and advised that this was not an issue currently within the College as the overall package offered was attractive to staff in that flexibility and holidays were more generous than could be offered by commercial companies.

9.5 Regional Outcome Agreement

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members were pleased to note in particular the section on Economic Recovery and Social Renewal.

9.6 Wellbeing Strategy

Final presentational changes were being made to this document, and it would be circulated to Board members once available.

10 Review of Meeting

Members were invited to provide feedback to the Director: Governance and Compliance on any aspect of the meeting. The volume of paperwork was noted and opportunities for reducing this would continue to be explored. The Chair commented that the presentation on decarbonisation had been incorporated in response to the External Effectiveness Review report suggesting the Board should be better informed on strategic issues and have the opportunity to discuss these.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 3.30pm

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and passed on his best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.