



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Minute of the Board of Management of Dundee and Angus College meeting held on Tuesday 25 September 2018 at 5.00pm in Seminar Room 5, Arbroath Campus

PRESENT:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| A McCusker (Chair) | G Robertson |
| G | M Williamson |
| S Mill | D Fordyce |
| S Watt | T Pirie |
| G Ritchie | C Clinkscale |
| P Milne | G Bisset |
| D Humphries | |

IN ATTENDANCE:

- C Blake (Vice Principal)
- S Taylor (Vice Principal/Secretary to the Board)
- S Hewitt (Vice Principal)
- H Young (Stirling University)

1. WELCOME

A McCusker welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Helen Young from Stirling University, and Diane Humphries and Chrissie Clinkscale to their first full Board meetings.

A McCusker noted the sad loss of Josh Gregory over the summer and paid tribute to the contribution he had made to the Board. A McCusker highlighted that Mike Galloway would be leaving the Board at the end of September and expressed the thanks of the Board for his service to the College.

2. STIRLING UNIVERSITY ESRC GOVERNANCE PROJECT

H Young was in attendance as an observer of the meeting as a part of the ESRC funded research project in respect of good governance in further education.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from M Galloway, A O'Neill and R Walker.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 12 June 2018

5.1 Adoption

The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 12 June 2018 was signed and approved as an accurate record.

5.2 Matters Arising

All matters arising had been progressed or were included within the agenda.

S Hewitt provided a summary of the pre Board development session and highlighted work to be done to finalise the Service Design Academy business plan. It was agreed that a short-life working group be created to inform this business plan. **S Hewitt to progress.**

6. STRATEGIC ITEMS

6.1 Good to Great Strategy

G Ritchie summarised the update report provided in respect of Good to Great developments, highlighting that good progress was being made across the range of project themes and activities.

Developments around the creation of the Help Points, the new website, the Students' Association website, enacting the digital strategy, and progressing the curriculum review were noted. S Hewitt advised that over 600 staff had now completed their digital self-assessment. The coverage across different staff groups was queried and it was noted that this covered all types of staff, with facilitated sessions offered for those groups that make least use of ICT systems.

G Ritchie noted significant developments in cross-curricular work and highlighted that curriculum changes had resulted in an increase in average class sizes, with similar recruitment to 2017/18 but 65 fewer class streams running.

G Ritchie noted that there had been improvements in learner retention and outcomes in 2017/18 and that, whilst it was difficult to attribute this to the Good to Great strategy, it was felt that Good to Great had had a positive impact on overall performance.

G Robertson asked if there were clear links for this. S Hewitt stated that it was difficult to show an exact correlation, but that he felt that the improvements in retention could be linked back to the Good to Great initiatives and focus.

G Ritchie noted work progressing on staff and student wellbeing and highlighted positive feedback received on this.

G Ritchie noted that a more detailed progress report would be brought to the December meeting.

D Fordyce asked if a list of advisory boards could be made available. This was agreed. **S Hewitt to progress.**

The metrics for curriculum development were discussed and S Taylor confirmed that the % figure noted the proportion of courses where two or more units had been updated from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

The update, and progress being made, was welcomed.

6.2 Good to Great Revised Budget

C Blake summarised the paper outlining the planned changes to the Good to Great budget to better reflect the key project themes and activities.

A McCusker noted that the overall spend to date was relatively small. C Blake recognised this and advised that the key budget elements were committed and that this would be spent over the coming months. The possible roll-over of some of this spend into session 2019/20 was noted and C Blake advised that a revised spending profile would be provided for the D&A Foundation. **C Blake to progress**

G Robertson queried the costs associated with the Help Points project and C Blake advised that these costs reflected additional staffing to support the first year of Help Point operation.

A McCusker noted that the additional funding was very welcome but highlighted the need for developments to be sustainable after the funded period, with this visible within the final evaluation report. G Ritchie noted that a key part of the work progressing was to create sustainable approaches that improved the way the College worked, but were also efficient. C Blake stated that one of the key challenges in this would be the Help Points, but that this would be looked at overall with other service changes.

6.3 Strategic Development Day

A McCusker noted that good discussions had been held on the recent strategic day. G Ritchie summarised these, highlighting positive input from Paul Smart from the Scottish Government on the future direction of the sector and useful discussion on the College's 2025 strategy and vision.

G Ritchie summarised discussion on the future estates plans for the College and the necessary change in direction in respect of the redevelopment of the Kingsway campus. This was discussed and it was confirmed that a Board twilight session in November be organised to consider future options and finalise the revised strategy. **G Ritchie to progress.**

6.4 Regional Outcome Agreement Timescales

S Taylor outlined the timescales and arrangements for production of the Regional Outcome agreement, highlighting that Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance had not yet been made available to the sector. The planned timescales were approved.

7. PRINCIPALS REPORT

G Ritchie summarised his report, highlighting the positive position in respect of current year recruitment and 2017/18 outcomes.

G Ritchie noted that overall recruitment was almost identical to session 2017/18 with the College having a slightly lower credit target. It was noted that feedback across the sector was that colleges were generally down on recruitment.

S Hewitt stated that the D&A Pledge to offer a place to all school leavers had helped to support recruitment.

G Ritchie summarised the improved student outcomes and noted that these were improved across all measures/modes and reflected improvements in retention and a reduction in partial success. The positive results were noted and A McCusker noted her thanks to all staff for their contribution to these results.

G Ritchie summarised thoughts in terms of the planned restructure of academic roles and the rational underpinning this. S Mill asked if plans were likely to cost or save money.

G Ritchie stated that overall there should be a saving, but that that may be minimal in the early stages due to pay conservation costs.

G Robertson asked about the possibility of piloting approaches in one area prior to rolling them out across the whole College. S Hewitt stated that the changes would impact across a range of roles and would require different inputs from a number of services. As a result it was not felt that a pilot approach would be possible.

M Williamson asked about the possible impact of changes to promoted academic roles through national bargaining. G Ritchie stated that these changes would be taken into account and did offer some scope for a bigger mix of roles than was currently the case.

It was confirmed that the Human Resource and Development Committee could be kept informed of restructure plans and developments.

G Ritchie noted the opportunities developed through receipt of c£200k of funding through the Scottish Government Child Poverty Fund.

Recent awards shortlist success was noted, including 5 shortlist places in the College Development Network Awards and 3 in the SQA Star awards. The stage 2 success in the UK beacon awards was welcomed alongside the recent UK enterprise awards success.

8. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

D Humphries summarised the range of work being undertaken by the Students' Association. (see enclosed report).

9. FINANCE ITEMS

9.1 Audit Scotland Report – College Position

C Blake noted that the paper presented had been discussed in detail at the recent Finance & Property Committee and Audit & Risk Committee meetings. It was noted that the paper summarised the position of the College in 2016/17 in respect of its underlying operating position relative to others within the sector.

C Blake stated that there were no surprises in terms of the information relating to the college itself, but that the position relative to others in the sector had been a surprise.

C Blake noted that the financial picture for the College had already underpinned the savings plans developed and reductions in staff overall. A McCusker stated that she was aware of the range of work undertaken to support financial security. She stated that there was a need for this to be visible and understood by Board members. C Blake noted that this was recognised and highlighted some of the complexities in being able to show this on a clear or consistent basis.

G Bisset noted the need to look at financial performance alongside student outcomes. This was recognised.

G Ritchie summarised the factors underpinning the overall financial position, including the number of promoted roles and the impact of 'unfunded' harmonisation post-merger.

The range of colleges in receipt of support from SFC and identified as being in 'special measures' was discussed and it was noted that D&A College had not been questioned or approached with regard to this as SFC was aware of both the financial position and the steps being taken to address this.

C Blake noted that the figures related to 2016/17 but that the underlying position for 2017/18 would not improve due to costs associated with VS, but that the position for 2018/19 and thereafter would improve.

The current financial position and cash balances were discussed alongside developments and challenges associated with comparative benchmarking between colleges.

P Milne noted the impact of low staff turnover on the ability of the College to reduce and change cost bases over time.

M Williamson stated that the positive merger transition and harmonisation had supported the College in terms of results, and that it was recognised that this came at a cost. She stated that she was comfortable with this and with the steps that had been completed and were planned to support future financial sustainability.

The report, and actions being taken, were noted.

9.2 Financial Forecast Return (FFR)

C Blake summarised the work undertaken to develop the FFR and highlighted that a number of the assumptions and figures were different to those included in the College's own Financial Strategy. Key changes in respect of the opening position for 2018/19 alongside the impact of assumptions in respect of future salary settlements were noted.

S Mill noted that an initial draft of the FFR had been considered by the finance and Property Committee, with discussions held since then to discuss the final draft. S Mill confirmed that he was comfortable with the approach taken to develop the FFR presented.

S Mill noted the range of ratios outlined within the FFR document and stated that these would be of value for comparison purposes. This would be picked up with SFC. **C Blake to progress.**

The projected cashflow position was discussed and S Mill noted discussions held to support contingency planning should any of the 'downside' risks crystallise.

The treatment of capital funds within the FFR was discussed, as was the low likelihood of funding for any future cost of living increases.

The links and differences between the assumptions within the FFR and those within the Financial Strategy were discussed and it was agreed that the Financial Strategy would be updated for the next meeting of the Finance and Property Committee. **C Blake to progress.**

The final draft FFR was approved.

9.3 Voluntary Severance Scheme

S Taylor summarised plans to re-open voluntary severance (VS) in line with the planned restructure arrangements. It was noted that the likely number of staff eligible for VS would be low given the requirement to cover teaching hours.

A McCusker queried the overall terms of the scheme and it was advised that these were the same as other recent schemes. The option to reduce the maximum value of VS was discussed, and the need to balance out affordability with the attractiveness of the offer was noted.

The VS plans were approved. **S Taylor to progress.**

10. QUALITY ITEMS

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN

S Taylor summarised the draft Annual Quality Report and Enhancement Plan noting that these were developed in the format to meet the requirements of Education Scotland and SFC under the current quality arrangements.

S Taylor stated that the report and plan were in final draft format and would be finalised following discussion with Education Scotland and following finalisation of 2017/18 results and credit data.

D Fordyce noted that the report was very positive and a clear endorsement of the good work and results of the College.

The potential grades were discussed and it was agreed that these would be finalised following discussion with Education Scotland. The finalised report and plan would be submitted by 31 October 2018. **S Taylor to progress.**

11. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

11.1 Board Membership

A McCusker summarised the Board membership paper, noting work progressing in respect of the recruitment of Board members.

It was advised that the two new members identified at the June meeting had been unable to take up their roles.

11.2 Strategic Risk Register

Due to time constraints this item was held over until the next meeting. **S Taylor to progress.**

11.3 Board Metrics

The range of Board metrics produced were noted.

12. NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE

G Ritchie noted that a 30 month offer had been made to support staff with union recommendation for acceptance and that it was hoped that this would be approved in the near future.

In respect of the paper produced, it was noted that there was still a significant gap between the position of the employers and academic unions. An indicative ballot was being held, with this expected to reject the employers pay offer.

The potential for industrial action in respect of academic staff pay was discussed and it was noted that this would require a further statutory ballot. It was confirmed that this would be a consolidated ballot for the sector.

The update was noted.

13. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of the recent round of Committee meetings were noted.

M Williamson noted good progress discussed at the Learning, Teaching & Quality meeting including discussion on progress in respect of the curriculum review, and a detailed report on the wellbeing project.

S Mill noted discussion at Finance and Property had covered a number of the points on the Board agenda and stated that the meeting also looked at the draft out-turn for 2017/18, which had showed an improvement on forecast to a £187k cash-backed surplus. Discussion on a financial procedures issue was noted and S Mill advised that this had been referred to Audit & Risk Committee to review.

G Robertson noted that this issue was being reviewed by the internal auditors and would be picked up by the Committee once the final report was received. Discussions at Audit & Risk in respect of the Audit Scotland report and a range of internal audits was noted.

P Milne summarised discussion held at the Human Resource and Development Committee, including the recent workforce planning audit outcomes and the staffing elements associated with the Audit Scotland report. Discussion of the planned Staff Engagement Survey and Voluntary Severance scheme were highlighted.

P Milne stated that discussions around the uptake of health and safety training had been held, with improvement actions and follow-up reporting identified.

Recent press coverage in respect of the potential impact of allergies were noted and S Taylor summarised examples of how the College had implemented learner support plans in these circumstances.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

The list of recent communications was noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Management meeting will take place at 10.00am on Tuesday 11 December 2018 in Room A305, Kingsway campus.

Action Point Summary

| Action | Responsibility | Date |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|
| Service Design Academy business plan to be supported by short-life working group | S Hewitt | 31 October 2018 |
| List of advisory boards to be shared with Board members | S Hewitt | 30 October 2018 |
| Budget revision and spending timescale to be agreed with D&A Foundation | C Blake | 12 October 2018 |
| Board twilight session to discuss future estates strategy to be organised | G Ritchie | 16 November 2018 |
| Discussion with SFC on sharing of FFR benchmark ratios within sector | C Blake | 31 October 2018 |
| Financial Strategy to be updated to reflect revised assumptions/sensitivities | C Blake | 27 November 2018 |
| VS Scheme to be progressed | S Taylor | 31 October 2018 |
| Annual Quality Report and Enhancement Plan to be finalised and submitted | S Taylor | 31 October 2018 |
| Risk Register to be included in Board Agenda | S Taylor | 11 December 2018 |