

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Board of Management Meeting

Tuesday 16 March 2021



Approved

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Management of Dundee and Angus College held on Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 5.00pm via MS Teams

PRESENT:

A McCusker (Chair)	G Robertson
S Hewitt	B Carmichael
K Ditcham	D Fordyce
H Honeyman	K Keay
N Lowden	D Mackenzie
C Meldrum	S Mill
P Milne	A Monks
T Pirie	S Stirling
M Thomson	A Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

J Carnegie (Vice Principal)	J Grace (Vice Principal)
S Taylor (Vice Principal/Secretary to the Board)	
T D'All (Principal's/Board Chair PA)	

1. WELCOME

A McCusker welcomed members to the meeting

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted for M Williamson (who attended in part)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest. G Robertson noted his role as Chair of the Board for Gardyne Theatre Limited

4. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 15 December 2020

4.1 Adoption

The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 15 December 2020 was signed and approved as an accurate record.

4.2 Matters Arising

All matters arising had been closed out.

5. COVID 19 UPDATE

S Hewitt intimated the positive step forward with that day's coronavirus update from the First Minister and the significant work undertaken by the College to support scenario planning for the sector. There was hope around allowing more students to complete their studies with the appropriate mitigations and more national funding and flexibility.

S Hewitt said that he was massively proud of the work undertaken by College staff over the previous few weeks getting students back on site and acknowledge the successful working relationship with the academic and support unions.

S Hewitt acknowledged the transition back to some kind of normality for our students and staff would be managed carefully and sensibly and noted that J Carnegie, J Grace, and S Taylor will provide a short update for their areas of responsibility.

J Carnegie highlighted there had been a maximum of 5% of students on campus at Kingsway and Arbroath since 8 March 2021 – delivering practical study for students in areas such as: engineering, construction, and hospitality.

J Carnegie highlighted the:

- Review of Health & Safety Risk Assessments
- Communications to students and staff re expectations on returning on site
- Free of charge food e.g. breakfast and packed lunches to encourage students to stay on site and limit on campus movement
- Individualised Health & Safety Induction for both students and staff returning on site

J Carnegie was delighted to report that the students have embraced the changes noting that arrangements had worked well without any major incidents.

J Carnegie summarised the key points for Colleges from the First Minister's announcement:

- Priority for onsite study for students undertaking practical subject and at risk of not completing their studies in construction, engineering, hospitality and hair and beauty from 5 April 2021.
- Shielding students and staff can return to college from 26 April 2021, with this date also signalling a return to the 'level' system and more students able to resume studies in line with this
- A likely return to Level 2 for most areas, with further students able to return to on campus learning from 17 May 2021

J Grace said that the return to campus approach would continue with emphasis around employment and regulated qualifications in the areas of construction, engineering, hair, and beauty etc.

J Grace confirmed the Senior Leadership Team would work closely with the Heads of Sector, teams and students on the revised guidance from the First Minister's announcement and potential way of helping students complete their studies including the possibility of continuing studies during the Easter break; extending the length of the study day from 9.00am – 9.00pm with additional financial support made available for staff costs and student support.

J Grace noted progress with SQA on the holistic approach to student/course assessments with the Quality Team working closely with other awarding bodies on alternative approaches to assessments.

J Grace noted the holistic assessment arrangements were available for Senior Phase school students who will be back on campus in May, and these arrangements would be used to help these students attain their qualifications.

J Grace stated that overall retention rates were very good, but that it was clear that the highest number of withdrawing students had been from the practical study programmes (this was also being seen nationally). There had been good engagement with these students and there may be further opportunities for them to return to College, but some may have to defer or repeat a year.

S Taylor confirmed that currently there were a group of 32 students with significant needs attending physically on site, including British Sign Language (BSL) students struggling with online studying or students where their home circumstances or support needs were complex.

S Taylor highlighted:

- considering the First Minister's announcement increased access to study space/safe zones may be available again for students in April 2021
- over 650 laptops had been issued to students
- ongoing extensive remote support for students
- continuation of delivering food parcels to vulnerable students

S Taylor noted recent communications to students via Lead Reps around who could / couldn't attend College based on the current guidelines where only 5% of students were allowed on site. There had been some upset from students that were not included in the priority list and, due to the generally low mood of the student population, it was important to try and give some reassurance.

S Taylor said that communications around the First Minister's announcement had been prioritised to students and that a Live Q&A session had been planned with the Executive Team on 22 March 2021. Future sessions with support managers around any arrangements for extended courses – eg Student Funding, would also be organised.

S Taylor stated that the number of staff on furlough had increased dramatically and that funding accumulated via the Furlough Scheme would be redirected to support any ramping up of delivery of provision to students.

S Taylor noted that College staff and unions had engaged with management in the 'D&A Way' around arrangements and were working together to seek to manage these as smoothly as possible to try to make the best of the current situation.

H Honeyman asked about access to broadband for students as well as laptops and it was confirmed that this was available as part of the digital poverty support for students.

A McCusker noted how positive the report was and that it was good to hear about the way in which the College had come together to do a great job for our students in the current situation.

6. STRATEGIC ITEMS

6.1 Strategic Update

S Hewitt delivered a short presentation highlighting the opportunities D&A College had taken to drive forward D&A priorities with Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Government. Providing a breakthrough in clarity with government around statistics on a subject by subject basis of on projected non-completers versus percentage of students on campus.

This has resulted in significant engagement from the government and key agencies to create the flexibilities needed for students to complete their studies and minimise the number of deferrals.

S Hewitt noted that the current priorities were:

- the safe return of students and staff on site
- innovative and creative ways to get as many students to complete their programme of study in year as possible
- a very clear focus on Academic Year 2021/22 and how this would look to manage deferrals and support the 2021/22 cohort.

S Hewitt noted that the Scottish Government still saw colleges as playing a vital role in the Economic Recovery and with Caryn Gibson, Economic Partnership Manager, on board there had been a real shift in this work.

S Hewitt stated that there was a good opportunity for D&A College to define its future with a reflection piece clearly outlining what the post-COVID landscape meant for students, staff, the local market, and subject areas.

S Hewitt provided an update on the current recruitment position noting that applications were lower, but noting that this may be as a result of the lockdown e.g. no pupils on site; no guidance available for pupils at school; challenges around parents' information events and pupils stay on at school. This all continued to be a challenge for the College was an ongoing focus for the Senior Academic Leadership Team (SALT).

S Hewitt took the opportunity to also highlight a number of projects that were developing and progressing well including:

- Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc (MSIP) – further update to be provided to the BOM meeting in June 2021.
- eSport was moving quickly with a curriculum group developing a pilot to run in January 2022
- Tay Cities Deal (TCD) was at a crunch period – further update to be provided at the BOM meeting in June 2021 on the likely projects to be progressed and what it means for D&A College
- Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) – J Carnegie, J Grace along with C Gibson are looking at building capacity to optimise activity supported by this fund.

A McCusker congratulated the S Hewitt and the Team on how they had managed to influence at a national level with Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council, and others.

D Fordyce echoed A McCusker's comment adding that the opportunity to lead from the front and shape the national picture was key to developing solutions.

S Hewitt noted that the College's priority was to work through the best solutions in the best interests for our students – very student centred.

Discussion took place around actions planned to counteract the reduction in applications and J Grace confirmed that work had taken place drilling down into the figures and noting the highest reduction in areas of Nursing, Healthcare and Construction and the possible need for wider input to aid recruitment.

J Grace highlighted initiatives in development to increase applications including:

- D&A College Parents' Evening with post 16 opportunities
- Virtual Open Events
- The school leave pledge running until 31 March 2021 highlighting the good news that this was being extended
- Joint advertorial piece with Dundee & Abertay Universities in the local media to publicise education opportunities
- Buy-in with local employers to help influence and inform career paths and progression within industries - for example Hospitality
- A Social Care National Campaign to increase capacity
- Scenario planning and staggered starts for some full-time courses to allow as deferred students many to complete their programme of study
- Adapt Course Portfolio to the needs and trends

J Grace noted one of the biggest challenges was the lack of face to face sessions with School Guidance Teams and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). It was hoped that this would change as current restrictions eased.

The update was welcomed.

6.2 Strategic & COVID Risk Register

S Taylor confirmed that there was no change to the overall Strategic Risk Register. However, discussion had taken place at committee level on 3 changes to the COVID-19 Risk Register:

2.2 Improved Financial Position – this risk was reduced

3.1 Reduction in Student Outcomes – the Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee agreed to keep this under observation/review as it is hoped the potential risk rate should improve.

3.5 - S Taylor noted that the Reputation Risk with schools and employers was a concern due to the impact of COVID-19 and the current government guidance that was out of our control.

G Robertson welcomed the engagement of each Committee in the Risk Register process.

The Board approved the updates.

6.3 Board Development Sessions

A McCusker proposed 2 x 1 hour a BOM Development Sessions in May/June with the Students' Association Lead Reps, Senior Leadership Team and Board members to discuss the "College of the Future" using Service Design (Discover, Define, Develop & Deliver).

Board members confirmed they would be happy to attend such a session taking place in May and June at 5.00pm. **A McCusker & S Taylor to progress**

A McCusker also proposed a 'Deep Dive' BOM Development Session in June 2021 around strategic projects, including MSIP, TCD etc. **A McCusker & S Hewitt to progress**

G Robertson noted a recent conversation at the Audit & Risk Committee re Cyber Security Issues and the desire for BOM members to have some awareness raising training on this. D Robertson, HEFESTIS shared Chief Information Security Officer had offered to facilitate such a session which expected to only last approximately 30 minutes. G Robertson will circulate reference material to members for reference.

It was agreed that this be scheduled for later in the year. **G Robertson & S Taylor to progress.**

7. NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE

S Taylor stated that the EIS industrial action planned for 16 March 2021 had been postponed and that it was hopeful that a resolution could be achieved to the national dispute.

S Taylor noted that the Support Staff 20/21 salary negotiations were near conclusion, with the offer made being accepted by the support unions. It was expected that this would be ratified on 18 March 2021.

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

S Hewitt noted his report was for information and contained highlights on a wide range of recent work and developments.

S Hewitt took the opportunity to draw Board members attention to the fact that D&A had been chosen to be the representative college from the FE sector at the First Minister's Engagement event on 1 March 2021 and noted that Katie Baxter was one of 6 people who met the FM - a fantastic testament to Katie and, of course, the College.

9. FINANCE ITEMS

9.1 Financial Sustainability

J Carnegie noted the financial position presented to the Finance & Property Committee was a cash-backed surplus of £469K, which is an improvement on the budgeted £20K position. Use of (and the extension of) the Coronavirus Job Retention Fund had been the single biggest factor that enhanced the College's financial position. With the potential for other support funds to be announced (and assuming no additional expenditures) the year end cash-backed surplus could therefore be around £1,500K.

J Carnegie stated that the more positive forecast gave opportunities to think carefully about how funds could be used to support Tayside Regional Economic Recovery as well as D&A's Strategic Plan 2025 and work to support priorities such as the Climate Emergency, Cyber Security or loan repayments.

J Carnegie highlighted that the College was at the early planning stage of processing an order for desktop devices as part of a 7-year rolling programme as there was currently a delay of c.4 months on IT resources.

To assist with Blended Learning approach J Carnegie sought approval for the rollout of “Lapsafe” security lockers to allow students to access laptops using their student id card. This would be a long-term digital plan of c £135,000 and noted that this would require approval from the Finance and Property Committee.

Discussion took place around this request and it was agreed that a paper should be prepared outlining the request and circulate via email for approval by Finance & Property Committee members. **J Carnegie to progress.**

J Carnegie noted that it was not the College’s intention to spend more on things but to make sure that we take advantage of funding to better support long-term sustainability.

Given the changing position and the lead in time for some items S Mill suggested that it would be appropriate for the Senior Leadership Team to progress with plans and to report on key areas of priority and spend at the next Finance & Property Committee.

10. STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT

C Meldrum and A Monks outlined the range of work that the Students’ Association had progress since their last report, and took the opportunity to highlight some of the more recent developments

- The SA has received an extra £24,000 from SFC and had used this money primarily to appoint 3 new members of the Team (Caitlin Milne, Lynsey Buchan, and Joshua Mayall) who would be in post until the end of June 2021. The SA had also purchased additional IT resources. Students had also been asked to suggest how they would like the remainder of the funds spent e.g. Student Wellbeing
- SA Elections were about to go live with 18 candidates, so far, for the posts of President and Vice Presidents – voting would close on 30 April 2021
- Nomination were underway for Staff Awards with 450 nominations to date.
- Newly devised Class Rep Drop-In Sessions for Lead Reps had progressed well with excellent feedback
- Lead Rep of the month, Luciano Nobre, along with Health and Social Care Department who received the Departmental Achievement Awards this month.
- Lead Reps and Head of Sector monthly meeting were progressing really well and building valued / beneficial relationships
- Dedicated Departmental MS Teams pages had been set up as a result of Services Design session where isolation and not being part of the wider college community was highlighted by participants.
- Pizza with the Principals had been continuing virtually with Sophy Mitchell, Hospitality Team demonstrating how to make pizzas, along with the SA and the Exec – informal chat, cooking, eating, and breaking down barriers
- The SA Pay it Forward project was going from strength to strength with 6 gifts handed out each week and fundraising continuing
- DASA Clubs – there were currently 14 clubs based on requests from students.
- Student Engagement and Engagement Stats continue with an upward trend
- Refreshers Week took place in January with various activities

- The Teams Step Challenge (COVID safe) was very successful with great feedback. The Team total was 1,166,599 steps approx. 583.3 miles
- Lockdown Lounge 2.0 was launch in January 2021 after the success of the Summer events
- Cuppy & Chat opportunities were being offered to students every day including evenings with themed events on Monday nights. Wednesday nights had Joshua and his origami class, with bingo nights on Thursdays.
- There were several events planned throughout March 2021

Board members thanked C Meldrum and A Monks for their report and the excellent work being done.

11. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

11.1 Board Role in Cyber Security

G Robertson noted that this was covered earlier in the meeting.

11.2 Board Membership

S Taylor confirmed the terms of office for the current staff Board members were set at 2 years. The Code of Good Governance highlights that staff and ordinary Board membership is normally for a term of 4 years. As a result, it is proposed that the terms for current and future staff Board members be reset at 4 years.

S Taylor confirmed that this was P Milne's last Board of Management Meeting and that Donald MacKenzie has been nominated for the roles of Senior Independent Member and Chair of the Human Resource and Development Committee as noted.

The Board of Management approved both proposals.

11.3 Board Metrics

The Board Metrics were noted

11.4 2021/22 Board Meeting Dates

S Taylor intimated that (following conversations around the timeline for setting the budget) it was proposed to push the June meetings slightly later to allow consideration around budgeting as SFCs indicative and final grant announcements were usually later than previously.

The Board of Management approved the meetings calendar for session 2021/22.

12. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of the recent round of Committee meetings were summarised and key points noted.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

The list of recent communications was noted.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A McCusker took the opportunity to thank P Milne for her time as a member of D&A College's Board highlighting her commitment, skills, experience as well as an invaluable contribution from the HE Sector.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 8 June 2021 at 5.00pm, Via MS Team

Action Point Summary

Action	Responsibility	Date
Dates to be confirmed for BOM Development Sessions in May/June – College of the Future with SA	S Taylor / A McCusker	30 April 2020
Date to be confirmed for a 'Deep Dive' BOM Development event around current Strategic Projects	S Hewitt / A McCusker	30 April 2020
Date to be confirmed for Cyber Security BOM Development Session	S Taylor / G Robertson	30 April 2020
Approval of Lapsafe proposal to be considered by email for approval by Finance & Property Committee.	J Carnegie / A Ross	30 April 2020