

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Board of Management Meeting

Tuesday 28 September 2021



Approved

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Management of Dundee and Angus College held on Tuesday 28 September 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
M Williamson	S Mill
N Dowie	A Monks
S Middleton	S Stirling

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 T Pirie

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were declarations of interest from S Mill in relation to Agenda Item 11.1 – Membership Update and G Robertson noted his role as Chair of the Board for Gardyne Theatre Limited.

4. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 8 JUNE 2021

4.1. Adoption

The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 8 June 2021 was signed and approved as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Arrangements had progressed, and the establishment of the Community Interest Company (CIC) was in its final stage of approval with Angus Council.

5.2 SFC had not approved change the terms of the Voluntary Severance Scheme, but it remained the intention to open the scheme in the later part of the year to support future change around Ways of Working project.

All other matters arising had been closed out.

6. COVID 19 Update

S Hewitt noted that significantly more students were back on campus for study (with the bulk starting w.c. 13 Sept 2021). This was a further change, and another period of adjustment with similar challenges as last year.

S Hewitt noted that COVID cases in the community were quite high, and this was reflected in student and staff case numbers. Ensuring compliance with the regulations was a challenge with some students, particularly where the in-college arrangements were different from the rest of society.

S Hewitt indicated that student recruitment was down (by around 600 learners) although apprenticeship numbers were up, and a plan was in place to support achievement of overall targets.

S Hewitt stated that he had recently had a meeting with SFC re the challenges facing the sector nationally around recruitment and to discuss potential solutions. It was noted that the meeting was very positive, with everyone recognising the impact of the pandemic and keen to find and implement solutions. S Hewitt advised that the focus for D&A College was firmly on retention and creating an excellent student experience.

S Hewitt noted the reinstatement of weekly catch-up meetings with SLT, Union, Students' Association, and support services around the Student Experience.

J Grace highlighted that applications were down by around 600 full-time students with applications for Further Education level programmes most effected with pupils staying on at school.

J Grace noted that students on campus were delighted to be there and many wanted to be on site more.

J Grace highlighted that the College had enrolled c.1600 senior phase pupils through the School College Partnership. This was similar recruitment to previous years and was a positive step given the disruption in 2020/21.

Work was progressing in areas where numbers were low, including merging groups to ensure efficiency and planning alternative tasks and projects where staff had spare capacity.

J Grace noted the launch and promotion of an enhanced part-time portfolio and noted that there would be an increased marketing campaign to support this (and future offers).

J Grace noted the focus on retention of students with team working across the College to support and keep students engaged.

J Grace highlighted the work undertaken on contingency planning within the curriculum (including generating as much evidence as possible of students' achievements relative to course aims) just in case there was a period of lockdown, or significant periods of absence or self-isolation for students and/or staff.

J Carnegie took the opportunity to summarise the current mitigations and arrangements in place, and the regular changes to highlight compliance with the current guidance and student experience. Noting the importance of encouraging students to comply but not to make them feel disengaged - a fine balance.

Face coverings were mandatory within all communal areas (including classrooms etc) apart from eating in the canteen areas. This had caused some concerns amongst staff and or near a protective screen e.g. Help Points.

J Carnegie was delighted with the COVID vaccination popup service and noted that these had been busy but that no data on numbers vaccinated had been made available. Encouragement was being provided to both students and staff to get vaccinated.

J Carnegie highlighted the increase in the number of COVID cases since the start of the Academic Year compared to the stats from Jan – July 2021. This was resulting in some learning disruption for staff & students.

S Taylor highlighted early intervention was key to supporting students, including support for those feeling anxious about returning to College. Demand for referrals for academic support as well as mental health and social, emotional, and behavioural support was high, and Student Services were busier than ever. Additional SFC funding had, however, allowed for additional staffing to be provided and this was helping to keep waiting times and referrals under control.

S Taylor highlighted the support for assessment arrangements through the Quality team and an approach of planning for the worst and hoping for the best.

S Taylor noted the work undertaken by Students' Association (with training and support) contacting / speaking to around 360 students over the next week - making early contact with students who may have missed classes. S Taylor confirmed that the College had also been in contact with students that were self-isolating, checking up on their wellbeing and giving reassurance around their studies.

S Taylor noted most students and staff were delighted to be back on campus and seeing their colleagues and students. Where concerns or anxieties were highlighted support was available and individual risk assessment arrangements were in place.

S Taylor took the opportunity to note a refreshed joint statement and key principles had been agreed with between the College, unions and Students' Association on Health & Safety and approaches to COVID arrangements.

A McCusker thanked all for their very focused responses.

D Fordyce noted how overwhelmed she was with all the work undertaken and the amazing job being done by staff and students and asked if there were any issues getting furlough staff back? S Taylor confirmed discussions and reassurance had been given but there were a small number of staff anxious (as well as staff with underlying health issues) about returning to campus and noted the arrangements in place for this.

S Mill noted the strain on staff and asked if there was any sense that this was reducing? S Taylor noted that things were hectic, especially with more staff and students on campus. It remained very busy with the COVID piece sitting on top of the usual business.

N Lowden asked about staff who had not been vaccinated. S Taylor noted that this was covered within the various guidance and individual risk assessment arrangements, but the College was not seeing significant numbers of staff unvaccinated or where this had caused an issue.

H Honeyman asked if there was a cut-off point for when any staff concerned about returning would have to be back on campus. S Taylor stated that this would be looked at on a case by case basis relative to the need to be on campus and the situation for the individual, but that it was possible that staff could be required to return on campus.

H Honeyman noted that it was controversial to ask if staff have been vaccinated. S Taylor noted that this was part of the arrangements surrounding the self-isolation guidance and risk assessment needs.

A McCusker was pleased to note that every student had an opportunity to come on campus at some point but asked if there was something in place if they had to isolate? J Grace confirmed individual teams had contingency plans in place, including online materials. Group Tutors would pick up with students on what they have missed and how to catch up. Work was also progressing to create hybrid teaching spaces where students could join in class or online.

Clarification was sought around the 360 students being contacted by the Students' Association (by 3 members of the team). It was noted that these were students with poorer attendance who were being contacted before their attendance became a more significant concern. This development was welcomed.

A McCusker thanked everyone for the update.

7. STRATEGIC ITEMS

6.1. SFC Review

S Hewitt summarised his paper and outlined the timeframe of the review. It was noted that the Scottish Government were due to respond to Phase 3 of the review in early October.

The update was noted.

6.2. Review of SQA & Education Scotland

S Taylor noted the paper highlighting the views of the College around the review of SQA and EdS.

It was noted that the review was scheduled to report in c 6 months and the College would contribute to the consultation and engagement arrangements.

6.3. Board Strategy Session Output

S Hewitt highlighted the 2 highly engaging events focusing on the College of the Future undertaken with the Board and Students' Association. S Hewitt noted the Executive & Senior Leadership Team (SLT) were keen to take on all the point highlighted during the sessions with 7 commitments that will form the SLT Operational Plan and the 2025 Strategic Plan.

A Monks noted that the students were very impressed with the sessions and how important their voice was to the Board. On revisiting the outcomes these were noted as still current and a benefit to the work of the Students' Association.

A McCusker intimated how great it was to see the relationship with the students and Students' Association growing.

K Ditcham asked about how the college will measure the commitments around the pledges highlighted? S Hewitt confirm the metrics within the 2025 Strategy under each pledge that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

M Williamson asked about arrangements to take the student voice a step further – students' agency to capture improvement? M Williamson noted the Students' Association's real desire to find out what mattered to the students and build this into improvements and enhancements and how positive this was.

K Keay noted that she really enjoyed the session and the outcomes achieved from this and asked if there were opportunities to have students helping with solutions e.g. student numbers/recruitment?

S Taylor confirmed that developing engagement and promoting the student voice was part of Cher Meldrum's new role. She would work with students and teams to support and promote co-creation. It was noted that a significant part of this was developing the mutual culture, working together to co-create rather than just looking at issues.

S Hewitt highlighted the building of the culture of the College. The Board Strategic Session was a part of this.

A McCusker noted the commitment to having further joint Board - Students' Association events on a regular basis.

6.4. Strategic Project Update

S Hewitt updated the Board on the MSIP Project highlighting the good publicity received during the New York Climate Week. This was great profile raising for MSIP and D&A college.

It was noted that the Mathew Trust had provided £100K support for the Skills Academy and that a bid for revenue funding was being progressed.

S Hewitt said that the Tay Cities Engineering Partnership has been approved to progress to the final business case (FBC) stage. The BioTech & SMEs projects were moving forward slowly.

S Hewitt noted that the Esports partnership was progressing well with focus on curriculum planning and understanding the space. While funding is still unclear Dundee City Council are looking at bidding for public funds. S Hewitt noted his hope for the Esports to be a Centre for Excellence that is gathering momentum at D&A College.

S Hewitt confirmed that Jim Brown, Grant Ritchie and himself were members of the MSIP Advisory Board.

6.5. Regional Outcome Agreement Timeline

S Taylor noted the approval needed for the document and timeline. Work was underway to create an ROA for this Academic Year with deadline Jan 2021 which was part-way through the year and had been impacted nationally by the covid situation. The timeline was approved.

8. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

A Monk introduced Nicola Dowie to her first Board meeting noting that she would co-present the Students' Association Report ([attached here](#)).

The report and update on activities was warmly welcomed by the Board. H Honeyman noted how proud the Board were of everything the Students' Association were doing.

9. FINANCE & ESTATES ITEMS

8.1. Financial Forecast Return (FFR)

J Carnegie noted that the FFR was a requirement to be presented to the BOM for approval (even though this had been submitted in July).

J Carnegie noted the £536,000 operating surplus quoted was now out of date and a cash backed surplus in the management accounts would be just short of £2m.

The Board were asked to formally approve what had been submitted to SFC. J Carnegie and S Mill confirmed that this had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Finance and Property Committee.

The Board Approved the FFR.

8.2. Estates Development Update

J Carnegie summarised estates developments being progressed and noted that (as a result of discussions around food poverty and the catering review) new student kitchen spaces had been created at each campus. These sat alongside the food larders to assist those impacted by food poverty.

J Carnegie noted the progress on the Kingsway Tower project with some equipment still outstanding for Hospitality department and furniture for the student social spaces delayed, but otherwise works were being progressed and completed on time. The Kingsway hair and Beauty development would be on going until April 2022.

J Carnegie highlighted (due to COVID / Brexit) that costs had increased in respect of building materials, resulting in an increase in costs of c.£136,000 for the development at Kingsway Campus. J Carnegie noted that arrangements had been agreed through the Finance and Property Committee to address this and (if required) utilise the funding agreed in respect of the D&A Foundation.

J Carnegie noted that work had also been the resurfacing of more of the road at Kingsway Campus.

The update was welcomed, and it was noted that Board members would have an opportunity to see the new facilities at the retiral event for G Ritchie and/or the next Board meeting.

10. NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE

S Taylor updated the Board on the salary negotiations for Academic and Support staff. It was noted that the Academic discussions were around a pay increase while Support was around salary and new ways of working / home working and a request to consider a 4-day working week.

S Taylor also noted that the National Job Evaluation was still progressing slowly.

11. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

S Hewitt highlighted the employability piece within his report, noting that he and J Grace were working with local authorities to help enhance employability in both Dundee and Angus. S Hewitt stated that there were also plans to step back and look at what D&A College's role is in relation to employability for the region.

12. GOVERNANCE

11.1. Board Membership

S Taylor told Board members that A Wilson has stepped down and S Mill had signalled his wish to step back from a Board role over the coming year

Board members approved a request to recruit 2 new members. **S Taylor to progress.**

11.2. Standing Orders Amendment

S Taylor highlighted the proposed change to the Standing Orders around the potential removal of a board member. S Taylor confirmed it would be up to Board members to discuss the best approach and decide on the options available in line with the other Standing Orders.

The Board approved the amendment.

11.3. Strategic & COVID Risk Register

S Taylor noted that the Risk Register updates had gone through normal arrangement and were approved by the Audit & Risk Committee 21 September.

S Taylor highlighted new risks around SFC Review, SQA / Education Scotland review and post pandemic ways of working.

S Taylor noted that changes around the College's experience of COVID had resulted in the "likelihood" of various risks being reduced.

G Robertson thanked the Committees for their continued work around risk awareness and management.

S Mill noted that the Finance & Property Committee had reviewed Risk 2.6 and 4.2 but didn't change scoring after discussion.

The risk registers were approved.

11.4. Board Metrics

S Taylor noted the metrics for information.

11.5. Board Chair Appraisal & Objectives

G Robertson highlighted that the report summarised the feedback on the role of the Board Chair and the positive nature of these. All comments had also been shared with the Board Chair.

G Robertson noted progress in respect of 2020/21 objectives and summarised the objectives for the year ahead.

13. Minutes of Committee Meetings

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

M Williamson noted the fantastic input/presentation from the College's Engineering Department to the recent Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee and her hopes for an amazing future for the Team.

S Mill noted approval was given for the revised set of Financial Regulations for the College highlighting the substantive change around the delegated authority limits.

14. SFC CORRESPONDENCE

The list of recent communications was noted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 10.00am. This meeting will be followed by the Board Christmas lunch (COVID arrangements permitting) in the Training Restaurant at Kingsway Campus.

Action Point Summary

Action

Board recruitment to be progressed through Chairs Committee

Responsibility

S Taylor

Date

March 2021