

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Board of Management Meeting

Tuesday 14 December 2021



Approved

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Management of Dundee and Angus College held on Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 10.00am via MS Teams

PRESENT:

A McCusker (Chair)	G Robertson
S Hewitt	D Fordyce
K Ditcham	K Keay
H Honeyman	S Middleton
T Pirie	S Mill
S Stirling	A Monks

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

1. WELCOME

A McCusker welcomed members of the Board to the meeting and apologised for the cancellation of the planned lunch and face-to-face meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted from N Dowie, B Carmichael, D Mackenzie, N Lowden, M Williamson, and J Grace

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

G Robertson noted his role as Chair of the of the Board for Gardyne Theatre Limited.

4. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 28 SEPTEMBER 2021

4.1 Adoption

The Minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 28 September 2021 was signed and approved as an accurate record.

4.2 Matters Arising

All matters arising had been closed out.

5. STRATEGIC ITEMS

5.1 Strategic Projects Update

S Hewitt highlighted the report provided to the last BOM noting that the Strategic Projects were progressing, but that in some areas the pace was slow due to factors outwith College control. The College was optimistic that they would pick up pace again in 2022 and should see significant progress.

S Hewitt also highlighted that two College posts would provide significant support for the range of projects, including Steph Thoms in her role as Director of Curriculum & Attainment and a new Senior Project Manager role supported through additional funding received.

S Hewitt provided an update on MSIP & TCD:

- MSIP – transformation of the Skills Academy is underway funded by MSIP & Scottish Government. Launch delayed due to ongoing roof work.
- Wider funding secured from: Seagreen - £300K; Matthew Trust - £100K
- The Project Manager Post will be funded for 3 years via Northwood Trust
- Progressing other funding bids/opportunities
- Progressing at pace on the curriculum planning as well as staff CPD.
- Strong / productive relationships with MSIP

S Hewitt noted that the TCD was a little more complicated:

- The TCEP project had met with some delays which had been out with college control. These had delayed securing Outline Business Case approval, although this was finally granted in September 2021 allowing the Full Business Case (FBC) to be progressed.

S Hewitt noted the minor risk due to some construction costs that we might be unable to clawback approx. £55K.

S Hewitt also noted that there was minimal risk outwith this and no staff costs were being incurred at present.

J Carnegie summarised the arrangements and timeline, advising that a meeting had taken place between the College, Dundee City Council, Angus Council and Tay Cities re FBC to be submitted to Scottish Government. This will be considered in January 2022 to decide whether the FBC should be submitted to the Management Group on 24 January 2022. Scottish Government will then send on to the UK Government on 18 March 2022 and at this point it will be approved or not.

J Carnegie confirmed that feedback would be available before going to the Management Group and it was hoped that any small changes required could be made before final submission. J Carnegie did however note that if the initial timeline was not met there was another meeting in June 2022.

J Carnegie highlighted the challenge if we don't spend the money in-year as it would then be reallocated to year 10 of the Deal and could be allocated to other projects.

J Carnegie noted the conversation at the recent Finance & Property Committee confirming the proper arrangements for the Procurement Process for the purchase and provision of equipment for the TCEP project

The Board of Management were asked to note the progress and issues along with possible timeline changes.

S Hewitt provided an update on the Biotech & SME projects reminding the Board that these projects were within the over Skills Projects 'pot'. The Outline Business Case (OBC) for each project had been re-written a number of times to reflect changing circumstances and skills development needs.

It was confirmed that D&A College was ready to meet the deadline submission date of January 2022.

S Hewitt noted the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme was progressing but was less pressing at this would progress as part of phase two of bids at a later date.

S Mill enquired about any risks within the Biotech project due to the links with other projects and institutions that may not progress or be approved. S Hewitt confirmed there were currently no issues around this and that, irrespective of other projects, there were strong and successful engagement and partnerships with both the James Hutton Institute and Universities.

The Board welcomed the update and approved the Skills SME & Biotech OBCs for submission.

5.2 D&A Draft Outcome Agreement (OA) 2021-2022

S Taylor conveyed previous conversations with SFC around amending and streamline the OA process and confirmed that the draft document would be finalised by the end of January 2022. Another OA for 2022-2023 would likely be required relatively soon after that, but timescales were currently not known.

S Taylor noted that the OA give a good insight of what was happening across the College including the required measurement plan and technical details. This year's OA includes a Self-Evaluation Report looking back at 2020/2021. Overall student performance was really strong, and the evaluation give a clear outline of this.

S Mill noted he was happy with the content but highlighted disappointment that the document did not ask for coverage of financial performance or sustainability.

A McCusker noted progress in respect of gender balance and stated that it was hoped that this would progress much further through developments such as the MSIP Project.

S Middleton asked if "green net zero" could also be flagged up in Outcome 5 of the document. This would be updated.

The ROA document and evaluation were approved. **S Taylor to progress.**

5.3 Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) – Board Actions

B Grace provided an update around the CEAP and gave a presentation to Board members.

Small group discussion took place around the following questions:

- a) Are you able to commit to the College achieving Net Zero by 2040? If not, what information would you wish to be able to agree to this target?
- b) Are you comfortable with agreeing to engage with progressing the targets identified above, at the appropriate time, to meet the deadlines?
- c) The intention is to report on progress towards achieving the Climate Emergency Action plan at least annually within the Board cycle. Do you agree? As the actions are cross cutting there are two options; elements of the report are reported to the appropriate Committee OR progress is reported to the full Board. It is proposed that the Board receives progress updates. Do you agree?

Groups comments impacting on College activities were summarised as follows.

- Challenges associated with delivering net zero, and the potential need for significant investment in some facilities to do so, were noted
- The need for change was recognised, but why Scottish organisations were seeking to achieve this in advance of the 2045 target was less clear.
- It was recognised that some form of carbon offset would be required, which may also be costly to secure.
- The scope should cover all College activities, including Gardyne Theatre, but challenges in this were recognised
- National Procurement arrangements needed to be reviewed and updated to support more carbon neutral alternatives
- Education and embedding into college programmes and culture was a critical factor. This was already embedded in the 2025 strategy.
- Everyone across the College would need to contribute to achieve net zero.
- The Board should consider targets or markers in terms of the overall journey.

Overall, the Board recognised that the net zero target was challenging and aspirational but was one that they should commit to and focus on delivering.

It was highlighted that there was not currently a Strategic Risk that encompasses the Climate Emergency Response. It was agreed that this was something that should be included within the Risk Register for the next update. **S Taylor to progress**

Board members requested an update on CEAP be provided to each BOM as a Strategic Item, commencing from the June 2022 meeting. **S Taylor / J Carnegie to progress.**

6. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

A Monks provided an update presentation from DASA highlighting:

- Class visits to encourage engagement and feedback were working well and helping to build relationships.
- New model developed to encourage engagement and new conversations with students.
- Class Rep Training has been completed.
- Using Service Design principles to make sessions fun and interactive with some great feedback.
- Department Reps have all undertaken their training.
- Feedback from the students' sessions – “what is strong & what is wrong” highlighted the staff enthusiasm. Remote Learning, however, continues to be an issue due to individual circumstance. Fully Remote Learning students are missing the social part of college life – social isolation.
- Connecting Scotland Applications – DASA had received more than 200 phone calls for assistance. Feedback indicated that this work had made a huge impact for students. It was hoped that this initiative would continue into 2022.
- SA Officers and Assistants still working hard including some social interaction with/for students and were making phone calls to students on various subjects including: COVID, travel cost, money, ICT devices etc. The Team hoped to offer the personal touch and had made approximately 1200 calls so far.

- Attendance campaign was working well with Sport and fitness offering free month passes. A follow up was planned in January 2022 with Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy department vouchers and the hope for a similar offer from the Hospitality Team (Café Bars and Training Restaurants) after that.
- Service Design Workshop to be held in Feb 2022 to inform the offer of more physical / wellbeing activities.
- Stop & Review – the Students President had attended a number of these meetings. Good opportunity to meet more academic staff and build relationships.
- Sustainability – Planning Service Design Event with the Climate Emergency Team and how to develop this partnership.
- Working with Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Teams around greener salons and the development of the new space at Kingsway Campus.
- Mission Christmas – 6 days of volunteering (360 hours) with a good mix of students and staff involved.

S Stirling noted that there were more Chrome Books now available to be issued to students via the Connecting Scotland project.

Board members gave their thanks to the DASA Team for the inspiring work they undertake on behalf of D&A College students.

7. NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE

S Taylor provided an update on National Bargaining noting that things are still under discussion re salary settlement for both Academic and Support Staff. The recent offer to Academic staff had been rejected.

S Taylor noted that the Job Evaluation arrangements were progressing slowly and that plans to progress changes to Employers Association had been discussed.

A McCusker noted the potential risk around the staff pay as current offers were in excess of public sector pay policy and were above the level planned for when budgeting.

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

S Hewitt noted the Principal's Report and the incredible amount of work being undertaken.

S Hewitt confirmed that student retention was similar to last year. However, retention across the College sector remained a major challenge, acknowledging why the work undertaken by DASA and others was so important.

9. FINANCE & ESTATES ITEMS

9.1 Kingsway Campus Update

J Carnegie noted that the Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy building was progressing to plan with completion scheduled for in late April 2022. J Carnegie noted the defect in the lecture theatre roof had now been removed and the new roof in place by the end of the year.

9.2 Non-Competitive Action Approval – TCEP Works

J Carnegie noted this item had been discussed at the Finance & Property Committee on 7 December 2021 with updated comments from this discussion included in the paper.

Following discussion, the Board approved the Non-Competitive Action.

9.3 Annual Report from Audit & Risk Committee

G Robertson highlighted the vibrant risk register and thanked members for the engagement via the individual Committees. It was noted that positive audit outcomes were received and the closing off action had been excellent.

The Board noted that risk discussion taking place at each Committee was working well.

The annual report was approved.

9.4 Audit Scotland Annual Report

J Carnegie noted the very positive Audit Scotland Report with commendation for the governance arrangements in respect of the COVID Pandemic. Other recommendations to take forward related to the Financial Strategy and Estates Strategy, and Assets Register.

S Mill noted that the Finance & Property Committee were happy with the proposed way forward in respect of the recommendations and noted that comments around The Asset Register would not impact on the Financial Statements.

The Board of Management Approved the Audit Scotland Annual Report.

9.5 Financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2021

J Carnegie confirmed the Financial Statement had been presented to Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Property Committee on 7 December 2021 highlighting the cash-backed position of c. £2.6M.

J Carnegie noted that Audit Scotland had completed their intensive review of the accounts and had confirmed an unqualified opinion.

Board Members authorised for the Accounts to be signed off by A McCusker and S Hewitt. **J Carnegie to progress**

9.6 October 2021 Financial Forecast Return (FFR)

J Carnegie confirmed the College completed 2 FFRs, with the second of these submitted in October 2021 following discussion at a special Finance & Property Committee meeting.

S Mill acknowledged the extraordinary meeting that took place on 19 October 2021 where the FFR document was reviewed, and an unamended version approved by the Committee.

The Board approved the FFR retrospectively.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE ITEMS

10.1. Voluntary Severance Scheme Approval (VSS)

S Taylor highlighted the VSS paper noting it was a Governance requirement for an VS scheme to be approved by the Board and the Scottish Funding Council.

Approval for the scheme currently operating would lapse on 31 December 2021 and the Board were asked to approve the reconfirming of the VS Scheme for a further 3 years – through until 31 December 2024.

It was confirmed that the terms of the scheme were unchanged and that these had been previously approved by the Board following agreement with the Chairs' Committee and unions.

S Taylor noted there was an approvals process that the College needed to go through with SFC but that no issues were expected with this.

The Board approved the VS scheme and reconfirming this with SFC until 2024.

S Taylor to progress.

11. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

11.1. Exploring the Complexities of College Governance Report

S Taylor summarised the background to the ESRC Project undertaken with Stirling University (looking at the process of decision making) which D&A College was involved. The Research Report and related recommendations were discussed, and it was agreed that these would inform future Board arrangements as appropriate.

11.2. Board Metrics

The information within the Board Metrics documents was noted.

12. COVID 19 UPDATE

S Hewitt acknowledged that it had been a difficult, challenging, but very successful year.

S Hewitt noted the amazing work being undertaken considering the College had been in Crisis Management for nearly 2 years.

S Hewitt stated that he was proud of everything achieved as a College and noted that thanks were due to staff, students, and the Board for this. It was noted that at the recent meeting with the SFC OA Team they had noted how remarkable the feedback received by the College and students had been. S Hewitt noted that this was only possible due to the hard work put in.

S Hewitt noted that Omicron had created additional challenges. However, planning was already in place (Plan B & C) in terms of reduced on campus delivery through to January 2022 and the College had reacted quickly and proportionately to this. This included balancing the risks around the new variant and the risks around wellbeing for staff and students.

S Hewitt intimated that there was a National Working Group looking at more flexibility around the Credit Target in light of COVID.

J Carnegie summarised the work being undertaken to maintain health and safety standards and to continue to reinforce mitigations with staff and students. It was noted that this was an on-going challenge and that in some cases this was impacting negatively on relationships between groups.

S Taylor highlighted the impact on student support with the demand being high around mental health & wellbeing as well as education loss and socialisation / interaction / behaviours. All of this was being picked up and a lot of support was being provided.

S Taylor noted that SQA decision tree assessing against course aims was under active consideration and may be needed if there were further restrictions in the new year.

S Taylor noted activities and support for students after the Christmas period, especially given the reduction in on-campus activity. This was traditionally a time when students might withdraw but there were plans in place to continue to contact and encourage students to return to their studies.

The Board welcomed the update and thanked staff and students for their hard work over the year.

13. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Updates from the Committees were noted.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

The list of recent correspondence was noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Monks took the opportunity to thank the Board for the personal support as well as their support for the DASA Team.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 5.00pm via Teams

Action Point Summary

Action	Responsibility	Date
Final ROA to be progressed with updates as discussed.	S Taylor	31 January 2022
Climate Emergency Risk to be incorporated into the Strategic Risk Register.	S Taylor	8 March 2022
Climate Emergency Action Plan Update to be included under Strategic Projects as a standing BOM Agenda item.	S Taylor / J Carnegie	15 March 2022
Financial Statements to be signed and submitted.	J Carnegie	31 December 2021
Voluntary Severance Scheme approval to be sought from SFC.	S Taylor	31 January 2022