**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Minute of the Meeting held on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 5.00pm in Seminar Room 5, Arbroath Campus, and Microsoft Teams**

***Draft***

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| **PRESENT:** | L O’Donnell (Chair) | S Middleton |
|  | D Smith | S Hewitt |
|  | F Khan | H Honeyman |
|  | D Rosie | D Fordyce |
|  | B Lawrie | C Ogilvie |
|  | R McLellan | M Williamson |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | J Grace (Vice Principal) | B Ferguson (Head of Finance) |
|  | S Taylor (Vice Principal/Secretary to the Board) | |
|  | P Muir (Board Administrator) | C Gibson (Business Partnerships Manager) |

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|  | **WELCOME**  L O’Donnell welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were noted from Carri Cusick, Kevin Ditcham, Matthew Beattie, Jackie Buchanan, Neil Lowden, and Donald Mackenzie. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR CONNECTION**  There were no declarations of interest. |
|  | **MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**  The minute of the last Board of Management meeting was approved following amendment to the attendance and wording re Board lunch. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  All matters arising had been closed. |
|  | **PRESENTATION ON CURRICULUM/EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS**  L O’Donnell welcomed C Gibson to the meeting and asked J Grace to introduce the topic set the context.  J Grace noted the recent changes within the structure and the work undertaken by C Gibson and others to better align commercial and employer partnership work with the curriculum and strategic priorities of the College.  C Gibson highlighted the role of the team was to close the growing skills gaps and labour shortages that the business community faces. C Gibson supports businesses, to access training and funds that may be relevant to them.  This approach helped to create longer-term strategic partnerships that support income generation for the College and meaningful collaboration for the curriculum.  C Gibson provided some examples whereby the success of business partnership working enabled enriching experiences and opportunities for our existing and new students. From working with Emergency Services in delivering electric vehicle training to working with the care sector - upskilling kitchen staff and investing in the time to create a successful commercial income for the college. These were hugely successful projects with excellent feedback from business and further plans are in place to develop these partnerships and opportunities further.  C Gibson noted they are working in partnership with NHS Tayside in terms of care, facilities management and business. This has created a successful and strong partnership, building a strong rapport with the College, and enhancing the student experience.  S Hewitt acknowledged that building effective partnerships is one of the strategic aims of the college’s 2025 strategy that the board had previously agreed upon and these are examples of the manifestation of that agreement.  C Gibson highlighted various new partnerships with local clubs, such as Dundee Rugby Club who are renting out space at Gardyne Campus and Aberdeenshire Sport whose Leisure and Culture Services were moving away from council control and re-contracting with staff and revising ways of working.    C Gibson highlighted the development of the MSIP Skills Academy opportunities through partnership working with Coast Training Services. This has helped Coast to develop its business activities and supported the College to raise its profile with the renewables sector whilst generating income from subletting an area within the MSIP site.  C Gibson noted that the Tay Cities SME skills project will be launched in January 2024 and will run for a period of 6 years to 2030, helping to develop College links whilst also opening up opportunities for training.  Developments were discussed, and C Gibson confirmed that the Tay Cities project would cover the cost of the staff involved as well as being able to realise training income for the college.  The Board welcomed this presentation and praised the work of C Gibson and the staff involved. |
|  | **NATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE**  L O’Donnell stated all colleges are going through difficult times financially; however, we are now in a stronger position at D&A because of the actions taken over the last year. He noted the headline from the recent UK Government autumn statement has been a 2p in the pound cut to National Insurance contributions, but that there had been little reference any additional investment in public services.  L O’Donnell noted that the Scottish Government would announce its 2024/25 draft budget on the 19th of December 2023. In advance of this announcement a funding gap of £1.5bn has been flagged and another difficult year for the college sector finances should be anticipated.  L O’Donnell acknowledged that the College is working hard to influence policy within the Sector with the ongoing financial struggles that are faced.  The update was welcomed. |
|  | **STRATEGIC ITEMS**   * 1. **Strategic Projects Update**   J Grace summarised the paper for information.  J Grace noted the success of the rescheduled Regional STEM Expo that took place at the Skills Academy. Over 973S2 pupils attended over the two-day course and the event helped to engage learners with a range of activities designed to build their confidence and awareness around a future career in STEM.  J Grace noted the developments as part of the Tay Cities TCEP project are continuing to make positive progress. She noted that the Business Case and the Business Justification Case have received full approval from the Scottish Government with the launch of these projects starting early next year.  The update was welcomed.   * 1. **D&A Outcome Agreement 2023-2024 and Self-Evaluation Report 2022-2023**   S Taylor summarised the D&A outcome agreement and self-evaluation report, noting that this was developed relative to detailed guidance from SFC. Two case studies were brought to the attention of the Board to illustrate the way D&A support individuals to change their lives and prosper within the economy, alongside the creation of cutting-edge education to meet regional (and national) skill gaps.  L O’Donnell praised the document and case studies.  D Fordyce noted the progress in respect of the Climate Emergency action plan targets and asked if these were noted to the board. S Taylor confirmed that these were outlined in the annual update on the Climate Emergency Plan.  M Williamson asked if the funding aligned accurately with outcome agreement and arrangements for the academic year. S Taylor stated that they did, but that arrangements did not really link the planned outcomes with discussions around funding. S Taylor stated that the outcome agreement arrangements were under review at the moment and that a new approach was anticipated to be announced early next year.  S Middleton praised the report and case studies. However, noted an error in section 3. This was noted and would be updated.  L O’Donnell thanked S Taylor for the two documents. |
|  | **STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT**  C Oglivie introduced the report presentation to the Board, noting that 249 class reps had been appointed, with 205 of these fully trained. Planning and training had progressed well, with 22 department reps also recruited and only 3 departments not having representation. C Oglivie stated that there were alternative arrangement in place for these areas and for classes that did not have a rep.  On-going support for the Thrive project was noted, with the winter appeal ongoing and proving to be a huge success.  C Ogilvie stated the Sports and Fitness Department as part of the D&A Decade cyclathon raised over £1k for Thrive.  Graduation was held at the Caird Hall on the 28th of October 2023 and was a huge success with many students coming together to celebrate all their hard work and achievements.  C Ogilvie noted the College celebrated their 10th year Anniversary this year with various events held within the Students’ Association. He highlighted the College will be running a Tartan design competition early next year, where students will be able to design a tartan for the College.  H Honeyman thanked C Ogilvie for the update and noted her thanks to the Students’ Association for the on-going work and effort to support students across the College.  L O’Donnell welcomed the update and congratulated C Ogilvie on how quickly he had got up to speed as Student President. |
|  | **NATIONAL BARGAINING**  S Taylor highlighted the paper, summarising recent developments around a range of national bargaining points.  The limited recent progress on reaching a settlement was noted and concern expressed that there did not seem to be any likely resolution in the near future.  S Taylor noted that National Policy discussions were also ongoing, with these policies also being challenging and with only one policy having been agreed, the National Menopause Policy. H Honeyman shared her concerns regarding the policies that have been approved, with other policies not being a priority.  The report was noted. |
|  | **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**    S Hewitt summarised his report highlighting the key projects and recent activities currently being progressed and aligned to the three core pillars of the new 2025 More Successful Students Strategy.  S Hewitt reported that Education Scotland visited D&A college to undertake their annual engagement visit (AEV). This consisted of Education Scotland meeting with a range of students and staff and providing feedback on their findings. The feedback has been phenomenal, very positive, and S Hewitt noted that this was a great credit to the hard work of staff across the College.  S Hewitt noted that the College HMI (Peter Connolly) would attend the next Board meeting to cover the feedback and report arising from the visit. |
|  | **FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE ITEMS**   * 1. **Financial Sustainability & Sector Reform**   S Hewitt noted the importance of creating a stable financial platform for the College to work from. This had been achieved and the savings made in 2022 and 2023 had delivered a breakeven budget. The two savings plans had reduced College expenditure by c£4.5 million (10%) although it was recognised that this had only allowed the College to stand still. Substantial decisions have been made; the college was able to sustain full time student numbers despite the significant funding cuts.  S Hewitt noted that although there have been 26 fewer streams the College has recruited more full-time students, leading to an increase in efficiency. S Hewitt reassured the Board that the senior team were continuing to take steps to reduce costs and to create a stable financial platform for the College to work from over the next few difficult years, despite the difficult financial challenges ahead such as pay awards, further strike action and the potential of a reduction in the flexible workforce development fund.   * 1. **Annual Report from Audit & Risk Committee**   H Honeyman praised the report, noting the positive engagement with auditors and staff. She stated she is content with the position of the College in terms of the Audit & Risk report and how the College is moving forward, financially, with the upcoming potential risks.  The Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Property Committee had welcomed the success in finalising the annual accounts. The Committee had also recognised the significant efforts of the College’s Finance team, led by Brian Ferguson and Rhonda Bissett and the supportive, flexible and pragmatic way that the External Audit team led by Audit Manager Ruth Holland and Audit Senior Somtochukwu Onyesoh.   * 1. **Mazars Annual Audit Report**   B Ferguson summarised the audit letter and report, noting that the audit outcome was positive and unqualified, representing a good audit outcome for the College with no significant concerns highlighted.  B Ferguson stated that two internal control recommendations had been mentioned in section 3 which related to findings from the audit work carried out.  There did, however, remain a final update to be progressed with the valuation of land and buildings as a result of the requested revaluation given the presence of RAAC. B Ferguson noted that this had resulted in a reduction in value of £2.7 million which had now been confirmed to Mazars and the Financial Statements updated accordingly. This was still, however, awaiting final sign off by the auditors, although it didn’t impact on the main body of the statements.  S Taylor noted that the request was for the Board to recognise the audit report with this amendment to be progressed and delegate authority to the Board Chair and Chair of Finance and Property to confirm final approval of the Financial statements. This was approved.  The Board welcomed the positive audit outcome.   * 1. **Financial Statements for the year ended 31July 2023**   B Ferguson summarised the financial statements highlighting that despite the excellent outcomes that the College consistently achieved, and the fantastic opportunities developing within the D&A region, there are significant challenges to be faced.  The ‘flat cash’ funding settlement for colleges for 2023/24 at a time of high inflation and significant wage pressures has represented a further significant funding reduction for the sector as a whole. He thanked Mazars for the approach taken to the audit and for their work in understanding the College and its operating context.  B Ferguson summarized the differences between the tables presented within the statutory accounts and how these related back to the quarterly management accounts considered by the Finance and Property Committee. Movements in non-cash items such as the land, buildings and pension valuations were highlighted.  The Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2023 were approved (subject to final approval as noted above) for submission. **B Ferguson to progress.**   * 1. **Finance & Property Committee Management Accounts (for information only)**   B Ferguson noted the report and the overall improved forecast for 2023/24. L O’Donnell welcomed this improved position and thanked B Ferguson and the Finance Team for their contribution to the finance items. |
|  | **GOVERNANCE ITEMS**   * 1. Membership Update   S Taylor presented this report for approval. He confirmed that Matthew Beattie has been elected as Support staff Board Member in October 2023 with board members having already endorsed this membership.  S Taylor highlighted the Scottish Government has confirmed arrangements for the addition of two union nominated members of college boards with effect from 31 January 2024. These members (one nominated by recognised academic union(s) and one nominated by recognised support union(s) will be confirmed through nationally approved nomination (and election if required) processes. Arrangements for these nominations are underway and will be finalised and progressed once the revised legislation is in place at the end of January 2024 for implementation by 31 March 2024.  As these arrangements amend the number and designation of board members, they will have an impact on the Articles of Governance and Governance Manual operated by the Board. S Taylor will update the Governance Manual to include the proposed updates and will issue a revised document for the next Board meeting. This approach was approved. **S Taylor to progress.**  S Taylor highlighted that as part of the arrangements in place with the D&A Foundation, Brian Lawrie has been nominated to be a Trustee of the Foundation. Board members congratulated B Lawrie and welcomed this endorsement.  L O’Donnell highlighted that K Ditcham has resigned from his position within the Board. L O’Donnell and the Board thanked K Ditcham for his service and contribution as a Board member..  S Taylor asked that arrangements for recruitment of a replacement member be approved, with this delegated to the nominations Committee as usual. This was agreed. **S Taylor to progress.**   * 1. **Board Metrics**   S Taylor provided this report for information only but highlighted the recent student satisfaction data published by the Scottish Funding Council showed that Dundee & Angus College were significantly above average and the highest for any large or regional college with 96.7% overall satisfaction for 2022/23, as opposed to the national result of 93.4%.  The report was noted and student satisfaction levels praised by the Board. |
|  | **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  Updates from the Committees were noted. D Fordyce and H Honeyman summarised key points from the recent meetings. |
|  | **CORRESPONDENCE**  The list of recent correspondence was noted |
|  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 5.00pm, in room A605, Kingsway campus and hybrid on MS Teams  L O’ Donnell highlighted that the Board Strategy Day on 22 January 2024 was progressing, with the location to be confirmed and booked at the new MSIP venue.  M Williamson queried if it would be helpful to have an external facilitator in for the Board Strategy Day. L O’Donnell confirmed he will act on this helpful advice. |

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| **Action Point Summary** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
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| Governance manual to be updated | S Taylor | 12 March 2024 |
| Financial Statements to be confirmed, signed and submitted | B Ferguson/ S Hewitt | 22 December 2023 |
| Board recruitment to be progressed | S Taylor | 12 March 2024 |