**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 5.00pm in Room A605 Kingsway Campus and Hybrid on Teams**

***Draft confirmed by Chair***

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| **PRESENT:** | Laurie O’Donnell (Chair) | Sally Middleton |
|  | Derek Smith | Simon Hewitt |
|  | Adele Lawrence | Helen Honeyman |
|  | Neil Lowden | Carri Cusick |
|  | Brian Lawrie | Stephen Oakley |
|  | Roy McLellan | Margo Williamson |
|  | Matthew Beattie |  |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | Julie Grace (Vice Principal Curriculum and Partnerships) | |
|  | Steve Taylor (Vice Principal Support Services and Operations) | |
|  | Penny Muir (Board Administrator) | Nicky Anderson (Director of Finance) |
|  | Kara Ramsay (incoming Student President) | |

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|  | **WELCOME**  L O’Donnell welcomed everyone to the Board of Management Meeting and welcomed Kara Ramsay to her first Board of Management meeting as incoming Student President. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received from Donna Fordyce, Daniel Rosie, Jackie Buchanan, Donald Mackenzie and Colin Ogilvie. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR CONNECTION**  There were no declarations of interest or connection. |
|  | **MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 12 MARCH 2024**  The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 12 March 2024 was approved as an accurate record. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  One item remains open and will be addressed at the Board Strategy Development Day in September 2024. All other matters arising were complete or on the agenda. |
|  | **NATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE**  L O'Donnell provided a verbal update highlighting the current general election and potential impact of a change in UK government but that there was little prospect of additional funding irrespective of the election outcome.  Chairs for the colleges met with the Minister for FE & HE for further conversations. National bargaining was discussed, and the Minister noted to other chairs that his first meeting with D&A College was positive, highlighting the good relationships being built between managers, unions and the Students’ Association.  S Hewitt reported there is a strong indication of an upcoming announcement regarding changes in funding for apprenticeships and foundation apprenticeships, which should benefit the college sector although the specifics of this funding are yet to be established.  S Hewitt also highlighted the changes within the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), which will be rebranded to Qualification Scotland. The implications of this change are still being explored.    S Hewitt mentioned that The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has appointed a new interim Chief Executive. |
|  | **STRATEGIC ITEMS**   * 1. **Strategic Projects Update**   J Grace reported that all major projects had been pulled together in terms of oversight and reporting. She was pleased to note that out of the 23 bids submitted, 15 were successful, equivalent to over £10 million of income to the College of the duration of the different project activities.  J Grace noted that clear arrangements were in place around governance, particularly to meet the stringent requirements necessary for Tay Cities deal funds.  J Grace highlighted the SME Skills Project, noting that the first-year target was achieved by August 2023.She also noted that Tay Cities is under pressure to save funds and that some funding may no longer be available. The Tay Cities Engineering Partnership (TCEP) project continues to progress well with regular partnership board meetings and ongoing work towards meeting project objectives. She stated the partnership agreement has now been signed by all partners involved.  J Grace highlighted The Decarbonisation of Transport project has been successful in obtaining funding, which will allow students to be upskilled with an EV Technician qualification.  S Hewitt talked about student enhancement within the College, stating the only way to enhance the student experience is by pursuing strategic goals, identifying desired outcomes, and securing funding like the range of projects outlined. He commended the team for their efforts and passed on his thanks.  S Oakley noted the variety of opportunities available to students and enquired about feedback from unsuccessful bids. J Grace responded that for the two unsuccessful projects, feedback was requested but not provided due to the high volume of bids, and that feedback is always sought to inform improvement.  C Cusick noted the low uptake of SME skills among businesses in Fife and asked why this was the case J Grace noted that the bid only covered Northeast fife and noted that there were fewer businesses to engage with within that geographical boundary. There had also been a staff vacancy for a period of time but efforts are ongoing to work with Fife using existing courses and collaboration opportunities.  J Grace highlighted there has been a recent change request submitted to the Scottish Government regarding the measure of S3 girls to be engaged during the TCEP project initiative.  M Williamson questioned if it was limited to girls in S3 only. J Grace stated that it was felt that the focus only on S3 was too restrictive (and too late to inform subject interest and choices) so the change was focused on reaching out to primary school girls. The recent event with Seaview Primary School was noted as a good example of this. N Lowden remarked on the positive reception from school staff and pupils at this event, highlighting the outstanding engagement and enthusiasm.  D Smith stated that College staff had also been very positive about the event.  The report was welcomed.   * 1. **2030 Strategy Development Update**   L O’Donnell introduced draft strategy noting that this followed on from previous Board input through the strategy days.  S Hewitt highlighted the draft strategy followed on from this work, pulling these together into key themes that would inform operational priorities for the 2025 – 2023 period.  M Williamson welcomed the overall document , but commented that she felt that the mission statement was overly wordy and noted that Theme 4's actions tended to repeat the objectives, indicating the need for further refinement. She stated that she had some thoughts and notes on these that she would share with S Hewitt.  Regarding the vision statement, there was a discussion about whether it fully reflected the College’s activities, with L O’Donnell suggesting an edit to align this better the College's core focus.  C Cusick welcomed the draft and noted that it may be beneficial to refer to values-based leadership in the document. This was noted and C Cusick also asked about the realism and achievability of the campus maintenance and facilitation goals within the given time frame.  N Lowden praised the first draft and suggested incorporating the vision into the graphic for clarity. S Hewitt noted that this would be taken forward as a final design once the final draft of the wording was complete.  S Hewitt agreed that the section on impact needed further work and welcomed the feedback received.  L O’Donnell encouraged Board members to share any additional thoughts with S Hewitt. Feedback will be considered, and a final draft of the document including initial metrics will be presented at the October Board meeting. **S Hewitt to progress.**   * 1. **Board Strategy Day – September 2024**   L O’Donnell highlighted plans for a board development session in September, suggesting a 3.00 – 7.00pm session.  S Taylor discussed the upcoming Development Strategy Day, highlighting several strategic and development areas, and the importance of understanding the governance framework around these.  S Taylor noted that if the College was moving forward with major infrastructure projects, it is crucial to understand the governance needs underpinning these. S Taylor noted that there was also planned input around the report from Audit Scotland, focussing primarily on the future of public funding in Scotland  S Taylor highlighted there was also a need to focus on Risk Management and Risk Appetite as a refresher or introduction for Board members to address the recent audit recommendations. This was welcomed by H Honeyman.  P Muir had contacted Board members to identify a suitable date and would confirm arrangements as soon as practicable.   * 1. **Future Infrastructure Vision & Next Steps**   S Hewitt provided a verbal update on the Future Infrastructure Vision of the College, he noted the efforts to build a solid foundation to address the challenges and opportunities faced by the College. S Hewitt noted discussions are occurring in collaboration with various partners to develop and inform this vision. S Hewitt highlighted that feedback is welcomed, and that work would progress over the coming weeks to move the vision forward.  Discussion around the next steps and requirements was held and the developments and direction of travel noted. |
|  | **STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT**   * 1. **Activity Report**   L O’Donnell stated C Oglivie expressed his gratitude to the Board as his term on the Board was coming to an end.  A Lawrence reported that the Students Association team is now fully staffed with elected officers, representing a 20% increase in votes compared to last year. She also noted that the new Constitution has been submitted for approval by the Board. Additionally, the new Student Partnership Agreement is being developed by the team over the summer.  In line with the D&A Decade Celebrations and community service, each member committed an hour weekly to litter picking around the campus to create a clean and safe environment for people and wildlife. Furthermore, A Lawrence noted that all profits from the D&A Decade merchandise will be donated to Thrive.  S Oakley enquired about micro-donations and the possibility of rounding up bills for investment. This was noted and would be looked at.  C Cusick congratulated the team on their hard work and success over the year.  L O’Donnell thanked A Lawrence and K Ramsay for their report.   * 1. **DASA Constitution**   Board members approved the Constitution. S Taylor stated the changes were minimal, focusing on updates and modernisation. |
|  | **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**  S Hewitt presented the paper for noting.  M Williamson commented that it was an interesting read, highlighting the accomplishments of the College. She asked for clarification on the survey feedback and S Hewitt explained that the goals and strategy feedback was linked to survey questions about the future of the College. S Hewitt noted that a more detailed survey update was planned for the autumn.  L O'Donnell noted that the survey and report were very positive, noting that it resisted the negative narrative surrounding the sector and outlined strong work being taken forward for the future.  S Oakley mentioned that negative comments were in the minority, with a more positive atmosphere prevailing. He attributed this improvement to effective leadership and communication, which have significantly benefited the staff's perspective.  L O’Donnell thanked S Hewitt for the report. |
|  | **NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE**  S Taylor summarised the paper noting that the ongoing pay award discussions for Academic staff had not reached a resolution with consideration now focused on moving from a three-year to a four-year offer. There has been some debate among the management side, with some members hesitant to progress with the four-year deal. The Scottish Government is maintaining its current stance, with no likelihood of additional funding.  Following further national discussions for support staff, Unison agreed to put a revised three-year offer to a membership ballot. This reworded offer was overwhelmingly accepted and arrangements have progressed to implement the payment of the deal in July 2024. The resolution of this deal was very welcome.  L O’Donnell thanked S Taylor for the report. |
|  | **FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE ITEMS**   * 1. **Financial Sustainability**   S Hewitt provided a summary of the current situation, highlighting that College Funding Allocations and Credit Thresholds were published by the Scottish Funding Council on 30 May 2024, with the credit threshold remaining unchanged from 2023/24.  S Hewitt highlighted that 2023/24 was the first year of the reduced credit target and the full effect of this is still to be seen in terms of changes to recruitment and the credit guidance. Strategies are being developed to enhance the College's financial sustainability, with close management of all costs likely to be required for the foreseeable future.  B Lawrie noted the budget discussion at the Finance and Property Committee meeting, welcoming the revised approach to the structure of the management accounts and budgeting process and improved management of employee costs. He noted that building the budget with a long-term focus, rather than a single-year perspective, is beneficial for the future. He emphasised that starting the future without a deficit and ending with a surplus is crucial, and underspending can be as problematic as overspending.  The update was noted.   * 1. **2024/25 Budget**   N Anderson highlighted the draft budget for approval.  N Anderson stated the 2024/25 draft budget reflects a deficit of £464,000. A surplus of £457,000 is required to meet the annual loan repayment.  N Anderson also noted a positive reduction in the non-staff budget, with utility costs expected to reduce by approximately £400,000 compared to 2023/24.  N Anderson stated that once the budget is agreed there will be a further review for September 2024, as further work was progressing on the detail of staff costs as these accounted for over 80% of expenditure.  This work would include detailed costing of individual staff and building a more robust staff cost structure. Non-staff and staff costs will be reviewed, particularly around the Sports Centre, Gardyne Theatre, Nursery and Service Design Projects.  N Anderson and S Taylor noted that work was progressing on the Financial Forecast Return (FFR) with this due to be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council by the end of June. It was agreed that this could be approved by the Chair of the Board and by B Lawrie (acting in place of the Chair of Finance & Property). The finalised FFR would be discussed at the next Board meeting. **N Anderson to progress.**  The draft budget was approved.   * 1. **Climate Emergency Action Plan Update**   S Taylor summarised the progress report, noting that excellent progress had been made across the full range of climate emergency actions. This had been reflected in the very positive internal report considered at the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting.  The Board noted the progress made and thanked all involved.  S Taylor noted that work was progressing on the next action plan, with this coming to the Board in due course.   * 1. **Management Accounts (for information only)**   N Anderson highlighted that the college is in a positive position with a cash-backed surplus of £549K, an increase of £26K from the last forecast, which had already improved from a budgeted deficit of £15K.  The report was noted. |
|  | **GOVERNANCE ITEMS**   * 1. **Board Evaluation & Development Plan**   S Taylor provided an update on the Board development plan, noting good progress on a range of identified points, he highlighted to the Board that steps are required to progress an independently facilitated evaluation of the effectiveness of the Board of Management's operations, which will be conducted during the period from August to December 2024.  M Williamson asked if someone had been identified to undertake the evaluation and S Taylor noted that nobody had been identified yet and that there was a need to identify an individual with appropriate knowledge and experience in both governance and the sector.  It was agreed that arrangements for this be progressed **L O’Donnell and S Taylor to progress.**   * 1. **Membership Update**   S Taylor noted following the expiry of his tenure as Students’ Association President, the Board membership of Colin Ogilvie will conclude over the summer. The new Students’ Association President, Kara Ramsay, will join the Board in August 2024, alongside Vice President Adele Lawrence. The Board extended its thanks to Colin for his contributions over the past year.  S Taylor updated the Board, stating that interviews for the vacancy position had been conducted and a candidate has been identified. However, this appointment will require approval by the Scottish Government in due course.  S Taylor highlighted that D Fordyce has had to step away from her Board commitments for a period of time due to family circumstances, with B Lawrie stepping in as temporary Chair of the Finance and Property Committee. Given the critical work of the Finance and Property Committee it was also proposed that an additional member be co-opted onto this Committee. Arrangements will progress, with members asked to endorse the identified co-opted by e-mail prior to end August 2024. This was agreed. **S Taylor to progress.**   * 1. **Board Metrics**   S Taylor noted the usual range of Board metrics.  M Williamson stated that it would be helpful for Board members to be aware of some of the details in respect of RIDDOR reportable incidents. S Taylor confirmed that these can be provided for future meetings. **S Taylor to progress.** |
|  | **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  Updates from the Committees were noted. |
|  | **CORRESPONDENCE**  The list of recent correspondence was noted. |
|  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 5.00pm in Arbroath Campus, Isla Seminar Room 5. |

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| **Action Point Summary** |  |  |
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
| Final draft strategy to be developed incorporating board comments and planned metrics | S Hewitt | 1 October 2024 |
| Final FFR to be approved by L O’Donnell and B Lawrie | N Anderson | 30 June 2024 |
| Arrangements for externally Facilitated Board Review to be progressed | L O’Donnell & S Taylor | August 2024 |
| Summary of RIDDOR reportable incidents to be included in Board metrics | S Taylor | 1 October 2024 |