

MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Wednesday 17 March 2021 from 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Present: David C Watt (Chair), Jen Anderson, Bob Black, Jade Burnett, Patrick Carnie, Shona Cochrane, Brian Fisher, Hugh Hall, Joseph Harney, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Zoe Thomson, Jim Trail OBE

Apologies: Sarah Ferguson

In Attendance: Susan Dunsmuir, Dorothée Leslie, Sue Reekie, Marianne Philp, Lorraine Grierson

1 **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. It was noted that a briefing session on strategic issues relating to the new Dunfermline Learning Campus had been held immediately prior to the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 9 December 2020**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3 **Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding**

The contents of the paper that been circulated were noted.

4 **Chair's Updates**

The Chair gave a brief update on various meetings he had recently attended as Regional Chair of Fife College including:

- Regular updates with the Principal and with the Director: Governance and Compliance
- Fife Chamber events
- Fife Council economic recovery
- Colleges Scotland Board
- Employers' Association
- Fife College Board interviews

5 **Principal's Update Report**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated by email were outlined and noted.

Highlights included updates on:

- Strategic sector-wide issues
- Coping with Covid
- Overall performance
- Staffing matters

It was noted that there would be a gradual return to College for some students and staff, in line with Scottish Government guidance. Scenario planning had been undertaken for various situations which would now be used to maximize opportunities for students and allow as many as possible to complete their courses. A recent staff pulse survey had been undertaken which would also be used to help prioritise support required for staff. It was suggested that learning from lockdown could be a useful topic for discussion at the Board Strategy Day.

It was noted that various initiatives had been launched by the Scottish Government to support Covid and that the College was maximizing the use of any opportunities available, despite the tight deadlines and stringent rules put in place.

Decision: To ask the PR team to push out more information about how the College is supporting all areas of Fife, including the North and East, to ensure support under represented areas in Fife.

Responsibility: Principal

Deadline: 30 April 2021

6 Fife College Students' Association Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Highlights included updates on:

- FCSA changes and re-engagement of learners
- Mid-year strategic review
- FCSA elections
- FCSA events
- FCSA supporting student placements
- FCSA sports and health update
- Thank you forms
- External events and awards

Board members offered support to the FCSA if any could usefully be provided, eg in taking forward the strategic review actions that would be developed as a result of the mid-year review.

Members commended the FCSA staff and students on all that had been achieved since the last meeting.

7 Business Report

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. The bullet points in the Executive Summary were outlined in turn as follows:

- The College was on track to achieve the SFC credits target for 2020-21 and full-time recruitment for 2021-22 was also progressing well.
- Retention of students had been impacted on slightly as a result of the current pandemic. The small drop demonstrated that the extensive support put in place to support students was working. In addition, the number of students withdrawing from courses and citing mental health issues as the reason had dropped.
- Modern Apprentices were exceeding target during 2020-21 which had also increased the number of places available for 2021-22.



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- Staff were finding innovative new ways of working and were keen to be removing unnecessary steps and improve efficiency. It was noted that taking a strategic approach to innovation was essential so that there was a clear direction of travel.
- The College was currently projecting a year-end surplus of £246k which was better than forecast. The Finance Services team was scenario planning based on different activity levels so that the situation could be effectively managed.
- Planned increase to spend was materially more (circa 22%) than had been originally budgeted for and further detail was requested on this. It was confirmed that it was mainly spend that would have been made next financial year in relation to digital, curriculum equipment and backlog of maintenance estates issues. It was confirmed that the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee had also had some discussion in relation to this matter, and further clarification could be given to members by the Chief Financial Officer upon request.
- Good progress continued with implementation of MyFife.
- Estates projects were on track with the exception of Rosyth where there was now a proposal to remain until the end of the lease to better meet operational requirements. It was noted that a business case was being prepared for Glenrothes campus in case funding became available.
- Digital projects were also on target and significant progress had been made as a result of remote working. CyberSecurity was a growing risk and multifactor authentication had been introduced to reduce risks.
- Staff would be returning to work on a gradual basis and, to date, there had been no significant issues with this. The recent staff pulse survey had shown that a majority of staff were keen to have a blended approach to working and were keen to continue to support learners. The College would be exploring what flexibility could be offered to staff to suit individual preferences, whilst also considering business need.

Decision: To circulate additional detail on the planned increase to spend due to variances within the budget.

Responsibility: Chief Financial Officer

Deadline: 30 April 2021

8 Regional Outcome Agreement

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the Agreement was shorter than in previous years. Members commended the team involved for the succinct format of the document.

Decision: To approve the Regional Outcome Agreement and delegate authority to the Executive Team to make any final changes that may be requested by the Scottish Funding Council.

Responsibility: Executive Team

Deadline: 31 May 2021

9 Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that the report had been reviewed in detail by the Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee.

Decision: To approve the Equality Mainstreaming Report and arrange for its publication.

Responsibility: Chief Operating Officer

Deadline: 31 May 2021



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10 Dunfermline New Learning Campus: Progress Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that the project was on track and that relationships between the College and Fife Council were very positive. An update was given on a meeting recently held with the Deputy First Minister which had been very positive. Now that the Concept Design was available, stakeholder engagement could commence as good visual materials were available to support this.

11 Update on Governance Matters

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Updates were given on:

- Board membership and recent interviews
- Student President Elections
- External Effectiveness Review: Draft Response and Action Plan
- Dunfermline New Campus: Governance document
- Recent and Forthcoming CDN Workshops

Decision: To approve the External Effectiveness Review draft response and action plan and arrange for this to be published on the College website and submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

Responsibility: Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 31 March 2021

12 Summary of Committee Business

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Links to the full minutes were included in the paper. A few updates were given by the relevant Chairs:

- The concerns raised by the Academic Quality Committee in relation to outdoor learning spaces for the new campus had been fully addressed at recent meetings.
- The Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee meeting with Trade Union representatives had been very positive.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 3.30pm