

# MINUTES

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**Meeting:** Board of Governors

**Date:** Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 3.30pm

**Location:** Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline

**Present:** David C Watt (Chair), Mike Boyle, Drew Connelly, Garry Dickson, Pamela Dobson, Brian Fisher, Tali Fisher, Stacey Fleming, Hugh Hall, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Samantha Mowbray, Phillip Thompson, Zoe Thomson, Emma Wallace, Lorraine Wilkinson

**In Attendance:** Wendy Brymer, Iain Hawker, Dorothée Leslie, Marianne Philp

## 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 8 December 2022

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 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: including an update on funding for 2023-24 and the impact on the sector, the College and the need for transformational change
- Dunfermline Learning Campus: approval on the DP4 submission had been confirmed since the last Board meeting, and the contract with Balfour Beattie signed.
- Overall Performance: this was covered in more detail under the business report.
- Staffing Matters: including staff survey results and an update on the Deputy Principal vacancy
- Awards: Fife College Students' Association had been shortlisted for 3 NUS awards.

## 5 Fife College Students' Association (FCSA) Update

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Student Board Members outlined the progress made against FCSA aims and commitments, and against the Student Presidents' elected aims. It was noted that the election process for Student President positions for 2023-24 was underway.

**Decision:** To facilitate contact between the FCSA and Fife Voluntary Action Group.

**Responsibility:** I Hawker/E Wallace

**Deadline:** 30 April 2023

## 6 Business Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The strategic highlights within the paper were outlined in turn.

There was a discussion about student retention within the College and across the sector and it was suggested that some further analysis and discussion on this would be useful. It was noted that a high proportion of students could not be contacted after withdrawing from their course, and anecdotal feedback appeared to mirror reasons given by those who had been contacted – securing employment, mental health issues and course not being as expected being the main reasons. There were discussions about high risk groups and the impact Covid had had on resilience of students and it was noted that this was a multi-faceted issue.

Updates were provided on how applicants are engaged with prior to starting course, including open days, invitations to various events, and communications and taking early steps to ensure people were on the course that was right for them.

It was noted that a year-end modest financial surplus was forecast, which was considered to be a good position in all the circumstances.

It was confirmed that the Carnegie Conference Centre would be part of the Halbeath land disposal transaction and that proceeds of sale would most likely be expected to be returned to the Scottish Funding Council. It was noted that the College currently owned the land and buildings and would be in control of when the sale would take place, and this would be after relocation to the new Dunfermline site.

### Decisions:

- To undertake a “deep dive” into student withdrawals at Fife College and a comparative sector analysis, and present this to the Academic Quality Committee in due course.  
**Responsibility:** D Leslie **Deadline:** 30 May 2023
- To consider visibility of the Board as well as the Executive Team in the staff survey action plan.  
**Responsibility:** Principal **Deadline:** 22 June 2023

## 7 Draft Strategy 2023-28

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted and an update on progress was given on the overall Strategy and the next level of strategies recently presented for discussion at Committee meetings. It was confirmed that the feedback received from members via email would be incorporated into the next draft, and the comments offered by the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee at the recent meeting would be reflected in the strategies.

It was suggested that consideration be given to referring to relevant external Strategies and the impact of the external environment and anticipated disruption in the next few years in the Strategy. Global warming and Artificial Intelligence were also mentioned as big issues to consider that would have a significant impact on how we live and work in the future.

### Decisions:

- To agree the direction of travel of the draft Strategy 2023-28, and to incorporate the feedback made by email and at the Board meeting into the next version.



- To add richness and depth to the next level of draft Strategies as discussed at the recent Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee meeting.
- To undertake a direct alignment exercise of the overall Strategy, next level of Strategies and Directorate plans to ensure clarity and alignment, and to add richness and depth with a focus on outputs and outcomes.

**Responsibility:** W Brymer / Executive Team

**Deadline:** 22 June 2023

## 8 Strategic Risk Register

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that as a result of feedback from Committee meetings, a new risk had been added to reflect job evaluation activity, and risk 9 had been updated to reference industrial action more overtly. A brief update on recent issues was provided.

**Decision:** To approve the changes to the Risk Register 2023-24.

**Responsibility:** W Brymer

**Deadline:** 31 March 2023

## 9 Draft Voluntary Severance Scheme

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the current Voluntary Severance Scheme, which remained open for applications, was due to expire. An update on the main changes was provided. Members were advised that the Chair's Committee (acting as Remuneration Committee) had reviewed the terms of the Scheme and the legal advice provided by the College's solicitor, and had recommended it to the Board of Governors for approval. Thereafter it would be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council for approval before rollout.

Nervousness was expressed that the payback period definition within the draft Scheme excluded pension strain costs and it was requested that to ensure clarity and transparency, this be called something other than payback period.

It was confirmed that voluntary severance schemes were managed by individual colleges to enable them to manage their own specific workforce planning needs, but that there was similarity across the sector in schemes.

**Decision:** To approve the Voluntary Severance Scheme, subject to the change relating to payback period being made.

**Responsibility:** Principal

**Deadline:** 31 March 2023

## 10 Budget Scenarios for 2023-24

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Principal updated members on information received since the last Board meeting. It was highlighted that final allocations would be announced in May 2023, which would be too late to take the action required to bring the budget position into line for 2023-24. It was confirmed that work on curriculum planning had been ongoing for several months and that this had all been factored into the planning process.

**Decision:** To agree that Scenario 2 be used as the basis for consultation and planning, and to note that the draft budget would be presented to the June 2023 Board meeting for approval.

**Responsibility:** Principal

**Deadline:** 22 June 2023



## 11 Update on Governance Matters

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. An error was noted in the paper. The current Student Presidents would step down from their positions on 30 June 2023 and the new President take up post from 1 July 2023.

### Decisions:

- To endorse the decision taken to appoint Gordon Mole and Evelyn McPhail for a second term of office from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2027.
- To agree that questions and answers relating to Board papers in advance of meetings be circulated to all members of the Board for information.

**Responsibility:** M Philp

**Deadline:** 22 June 2023

## 12 Board Updates

### 12.1 Chair's Updates

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

### 12.2 Summary of Committee Business

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

### 12.3 Stakeholder Map

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

## 13 Review of Meeting

No business was transacted.

## 14 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 22 June at 3.30pm, Carnegie Conference Centre

Board Strategy Day: Thursday 25 May 2023 at 9am, Carnegie Conference Centre

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. On behalf of the Board, he also thanked the Principal for the huge contribution he had made to the work of the College over his six years in post and wished him well for the future. It was noted that a dinner would be arranged following on from the Board meeting in June 2023. The Principal expressed his thanks to the Board, FCSA, staff and students for all their support and shared his optimism for the future.