

EMBARGOED UNTIL MEETING

Agenda Item 14.05 – BOM 11.09.14



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Minute of the Extraordinary meeting of the Board of Management held at 4.30pm on Tuesday the 19 May 2015 at Langside Campus.

PRESENT:	
G Chalmers (Chair)	
R Leggett	
B McCrindle (Student President)	
L Jacobs	
J Hamilton	
E Proudfoot	
S Pickles (Support Staff Member)	
P Laverie (Teaching Staff Member)	
K McKie	By conference call
G Reid	
IN ATTENDANCE:	
Carol Adam	Secretary to Board
Aileen McKechnie	Scottish Government
Alice Brown	Chair, SFC
Ali Jarvis	Interim Chair, Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board
APOLOGIES:	
A Ponton	
A Clocherty (Student Vice President)	

		ACTION
19/05/1	Welcome and Apologies	
	Apologies have been received from A Ponton and A Clocherty.	
19/05/2	Declarations of Interest	
	No declarations of interest were noted.	
19/05/3	Determination of other Business	
	No other business was noted.	
19/05/4	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a roundtable of introductions from everyone. There is no written	

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	agenda for the meeting other than to discuss the current situation.	
	Each member of the Board was asked by the Chair of the Board to put forward their thoughts on the past few months since the suspension of the Principal. Each Board member introduced themselves and gave a brief summary of their feelings and thoughts on the past few months.	
	Aileen McKechnie introduced herself and thanked the Board for being so frank. She said that Ministers were very alert to the issues at Glasgow Clyde College and that the contribution of the Board members was very valued. She said that she heard the Board perspective and recognised the corporate and personal hurt and would like to make plans for moving forward and offering support.	
	She then went on to outline the different accountabilities. Scottish Ministers are the primary funder of the college sector through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) who oversee the Code of Good Governance and funding to the College Sector. They offer advice to Ministers on whether a College is fit to fund and monitor performance at a regional level. Performance needs to be compliant with the Financial Memorandum and the Code of Good Governance.	
	College reforms have meant dramatic changes over a tight time frame combined with high expectations to continue to deliver from an administration impatient for swift delivery. The sector has responded positively and Audit Scotland have received good reports. However there is still a need to work harder at these relationships.	
	Improving College governance is an aim along with putting learners at the centre. Glasgow is of extreme importance strategically and is aspiring to be a beacon of excellence but is not there yet. So it came as a surprise to hear of the difficulties at Glasgow Clyde College as Ministers had not been aware of major difficulties. Quality reports had indicated that the College was well led with robust arrangements in place. Ministers had been surprised that there had been no engagement with SFC or them.	

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	<p>SFC therefore sought assurances from the College and set in hand a review as they need to ensure high standards of governance. The reviews' report and conclusions will provide assurances to Scottish Government on the degree of rigour used in relation to the suspension of the Principal.</p>	
	<p>Professor Alice Brown introduced herself and thanked the Board for the invitation to attend the meeting. Saying that she had listened carefully to what has been said to date. SFC are keen to make Further Education as good as it can be however, huge challenges face SFC at this time involving new and different kinds of relationships.</p>	
	<p>SFC were very surprised to get news of the suspension of the Principal and could not understand this on the basis of the Education Scotland report and wanted to understand why. They felt they were not getting as open responses as expected. She has been assured that there have been no leaks from the SFC as no one wants to be in the media. She pointed out that the Chief Executive is the accountable officer for the sector and could be in front of a Parliamentary Committee in relation to this issue. She said she was keen for a constructive review to allow things to move forward.</p>	
	<p>Ali Jarvis introduced herself and said that she was keen to support the Assigned Colleges and add value to the college sector. She said that she had written to the Chair and Board members to offer support but said that she had no locus on employment relationships but had a locus on reputation across the sector. GCRB is not yet fully operational but needs to get there. She is keen to know how we can work together and focus on the future and help broker and rebuild relationships.</p>	
	<p>The Chair threw the meeting open to questions and comments.</p>	
	<p>G Chalmers reiterated that it was not the decision of the Board to suspend the principal, the Chair took legal advice on the matter and the Board were not informed of the substantive reasons for the suspension. There was no desire to be obstructive. Board members needed not to be involved in order that they could come to the matter with a clean slate.</p>	

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	<p>G Chalmers said that he drove to SFC on the day of the Board of Management meeting of the 23 Feb having been promised a meeting with Alice Brown. However on arrival he was taken into a meeting with L Howells and M Fairbairn.</p>	
	<p>It was again reinforced that SFC are not briefing the Herald and the Board were assured that there would be no statement to the Herald in the future however, if the Herald ask direct questions then SFC need to respond. It was suggested that it would be better if joint statements were made in future.</p>	
	<p>K McKie felt that this was a useful start but wanted to point out that there instances where SFC had not been supportive. A Jarvis said that she was willing to help.</p>	
	<p>S Pickles asked if a financial risk assessment has been undertaken. She also asked if it was possible to mediate between the Principal and the Board however G Chalmers stated that lawyers advised him not to discuss the suspension.</p>	
	<p>G Reid said that he was surprised that the Principal had been suspended but he had no feeling that governance had been breached.</p>	
	<p>A Brown said that this was an unprecedented situation and that the questions posed by SFC to the Board had not given them the assurances that they felt were needed and that this had not been an open and transparent process.</p>	
	<p>However the Board felt that they had acted on the legal advice they had been given.</p>	
	<p>Colleges are now back in the public sector and are not independent bodies anymore and this has been a difficult transition.</p>	
	<p>It was suggested that the Board share their experiences with Colleges Scotland. A Jarvis offered to translate the learning.</p>	
	<p>P Laverie left the meeting at 5.45pm.</p>	

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	B McCrindle stated that he is not aware of what is going on and cannot answer any questions.	
	G Chalmers suggested that A McKechnie should be asked for her points to discuss with SFC.	
	A Brown suggested a dialogue is started with SFC.	
	G Chalmers stated the S Miller gave advice to the Board and is willing to be a witness in the SFC review.	
	A McKechnie said that this had been a very helpful discussion for everyone to understand what the perceptions have been. It was useful to try to understand each other and to discuss that people have not felt supported in this journey. It would be helpful to talk more and to ask for help when needed.	