

**NOTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT HELD AT 4.30PM ON 24 MARCH 2021.**

**The meeting was held remotely using ZOOM due to COVID-19 restrictions**

**PRESENT:**

David Newall (DN)	Chair
Mary Docherty (MD)	Board Member
Fiona Godsman (FG)	Board Member
Sandra Heidinger (SHe)	Board Member
Stephen Henson (SH)	Board Member
Kacper Kacica (KK)	Board Member
Gordon McGuinness (GMcG)	Board Member
Alan O'Donnell (AO'D)	Board Member
Lindsey Paterson (LD)	Board Member
Michael Payne (MP)	Board Member
Sissa D Rasmussen (SDR)	Board Member
Margaret Swiderska (MS)	Board Member
Jon Vincent (JV)	Principal and Board Member
Clare Walker (CW)	Board Member
David Watt (DW)	Board Member

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brian Hughes	VP Curriculum and External Relations
Janet Thomson	VP Resources and College Development
Tracy Elliott	AP Finance and Infrastructure
Christine McConnell	Clerk to the Board (Minute Taker)

**21.01 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Keith Rosser and Runa McNamara.

**21.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**21.03 DETERMINATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that agenda item 21.07 Briefing on Learning and Teaching would be dealt with first and the reports from Committees would be moved up the order of business to align with presenters' availability. The Minute reflects the order of business as on the agenda.

**21.04 MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING ON 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020**

The minute was accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to a clarification in respect of Item 20.82.

**21.05 MATTERS ARISING – ACTION GRID**

The Board noted that all items on the grid either have been completed or are on the agenda.

**21.06 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT UPDATE**

B Hughes spoke to the paper which provided the Board with an update on the outcome of the 2019/20 Regional Outcome Agreement and on some of the activity into the early part of the 2020/21 academic session.

The Board was advised of the change to an Outcome and Impact Framework which is designed to be less onerous, while giving the Scottish Funding Council reassurance that the College's spending is leading to good outcomes for students.

The Board discussed the work being done to support the aim of "work-ready graduates". The Board was advised that the College looks at many reports identifying employer needs and identifies what the College can offer to support these needs.

The Board noted that various national funding initiatives have been announced in recent weeks, but that some have had very tight timescales which makes responding very challenging.

The Board noted the report.

**21.07 BRIEFING ON LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Brian Hughes, Eric Brownlie and David Marshall gave the Board a presentation designed to give a flavour of activity in the College over the last year.

The presentation covered the challenges for staff and for students, which have arisen out of the new ways of working as a result of the pandemic.

The Board heard that staff had been innovative but that many were exhausted as a result of the increased workload and additional stresses under which they have been working.

The Board was told of the range of support which had been provided to assist staff including many hours of bespoke learning to build digital competence and confidence.

The Board expressed concern that, despite the very best efforts of staff, the overall learning experience for students has been very different to their expectations.

The Board discussed the mental health support available for both the staff and students, including the mental health first-aiders initiative and recognised the challenges of providing support on a remote basis.

The Board welcomed the additional government funding which has been made available to support mental health in Scotland.

The Chair thanked the presenters for the informative presentation and asked that thanks be passed to staff across the College for all the work being done.

**21.08 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE**

J Thomson spoke to the paper which provided an update on the progress of activity in support of the College's plans for Financial sustainability.

The Board noted the progress on milestones and deliverables for the GCEF funding and welcomed the release of the first £900,000 in December 2020.

The Board asked that consideration be given to using more tables and graphs to support the text in future reports.

The Board welcomed the helpful report.

J Thomson also gave the Board an update on the voluntary severance scheme. She explained that the scheme is in three phases; the second of which closed on 12<sup>th</sup> March. In phase one, 55 applications were received, of which 19 have been accepted. A further 16 applications have been received in the second phase and these are under evaluation.

The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that key staff are retained and able to deliver the required level of service, noting that the majority of staff whose applications have been approved hold promoted teaching roles. The Board noted the value of completing workload risk assessments to assist with the selection of support staff.

## **21.09 GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

C CMcConnell presented the paper which covered the following elements of the governance framework:

CMcC

- Board Development Plan,
- External Effectiveness Review; and
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

The Board agreed that the Nominations Committee should consider the Board Development Plan at its next meeting and ensure, in particular, it takes account of recommendations from the recent External Effectiveness Review.

The Board noted the final External Effectiveness Review report which had been revised to take account, to some extent, of comments received.

CMcC

The Board discussed the recommendation that the Board allow more space for strategic discussion and agreed the importance of ensuring it reaches an appropriate balance between strategic decision making and oversight of operational activity.

The Board also recognised the importance of ensuring the Board is able to look forward to put the College in a secure position in the future.

The Board agreed that the Nominations Committee should consider the recommendations in the report and draft an action plan with priorities and dates for consideration at the next Board meeting. In considering the report, the Committee should take cognisance of the comments made by S Henson in response to

the draft report, emphasising the importance of not losing sight of operational matters by being too externally focussed.

The Board considered the terms of a draft Whistleblowing Policy which was submitted with the papers. Whilst generally supportive, the Board expressed some concern over the inclusion of the term “substantive” in the draft and asked that this be reconsidered.

The Board agreed that the Policy should be read alongside the Unethical Behaviour and Whistleblowing Procedure which is due to be considered by the Organisational Development Committee and the Audit Committee at their next round of meetings. The Board asked that the Policy and Procedure be brought back to the next Board. The Board agreed that the Policy must also be supported by a communications package.

The Board noted the meeting dates, which are proposed for next session.

## **STANDING ITEMS**

### **21.10 CHAIR’S REPORT**

The Chair updated the Board on the progress of the Scottish Funding Council’s review advising that he had very recently received a copy of the Phase 2 report, which he would share with the Board. CMcC

The Chair also provided an update on the review being carried out by GCRB, which is ongoing.

### **21.11 PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**

The Principal spoke to his report, which provided the Board with an overview of relevant developments.

The Board noted that a recruitment process had commenced to replace Brian Hughes who is retiring in June 2021.

The Principal advised the Board of the content of a letter received from the Minister for Further Education on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 which provided information on key dates towards a return to full College activity. The Principal advised that further details are needed and this is being explored.

The Principal also advised the Board that, following the Employers’ Association’s decision on 18<sup>th</sup> March that it could not ratify the text of a draft agreement with EIS, college staff throughout Scotland would be proceeding with industrial action on 25<sup>th</sup> March. A further 13 days of action are planned.

The Board was also advised that the Scottish Funding Council has announced some additional funding for 2020/21. The College is awaiting details of its allocation.

The Board thanked the Principal for his report and expressed a hope that the industrial dispute can be resolved quickly.

## **21.12 STUDENT PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

S Rasmussen spoke to her report, which informed the Board of the work of the Student Association.

She highlighted the different campaigns to support students' mental and physical wellbeing.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the work being done and complimented the team on the variety of methods which had been used to engage with students.

The Board noted the work being done with the White Ribbon charity to prevent violence against women and heard of a moving presentation for the College's mental health first-aiders from the mother of Emily Drouet.

In the context of the UK-wide reaction to Sara Everard's murder, the Principal undertook to provide the Board with details of other relevant activities in the College. JV

The Board was advised that most students are very much looking forward to returning to campus but are understanding of the reasons why this is not possible. Students are appreciative of the support being provided by College staff.

## **21.13 MINUTES FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **i. Organisational Development Committee 27 January 2021**

The Committee Chair spoke to the Minute. In noting the intention to run a 'pulse' survey of staff in the near future, some disappointment was expressed that there had not been a full staff survey for some time, whilst recognising the difficulty of proceeding with this in the current circumstances.

The Board noted that, after intervention from the Principal, all Health and Safety inductions have now been completed.

The Board noted the minute.

### **ii. Learning and Teaching Committee 10 February 2021**

The Committee Chair spoke to the Minute, which the Board noted.

### **iii. Audit Committee 3 March 2021**

The Committee Chair spoke to the Minute, which the Board noted.

### **iv. Finance and Resources Committee 10 March 2012**

The Committee Chair spoke to the Minute. The Chair commented that the College is indebted to GCEF for its significant contribution to the College's improving financial position. He reported that the Committee had approved a fresh commercial strategy, which would be revisited regularly in the light of emerging opportunities.

The Chair welcomed the addition of Keith Rosser and Lindsey Paterson to the Committee.

**Items for Formal Approval**

**21.14 CAPITAL MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

The Board approved the update.

**Items for Noting**

**21.15 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

The Board noted the update.

**21.16 CREDITS PROJECTION 2020/21**

The Board noted the College's progress against its credit activity target for 2020/21.

**21.17 FINANCIAL REPORT YEAR TO JANUARY 2021 AND FORECAST OUTTURN TO JULY 2021**

The Board noted the update.

**20.18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The next Board of Management Meeting will be held at 4.30pm on Wednesday 16 June 2021. Venue to be confirmed.