

# MINUTES

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**Meeting:** Board of Governors

**Date:** Thursday 8 December 2022 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, Hugh Hall, Tony Martin, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Samantha Mowbray, Phillip Thompson, Zoe Thomson, Emma Wallace, Lorraine Wilkinson

**Apologies:** Stacey Fleming

**In Attendance:** Susan Dunsmuir, Iain Hawker, Dorothee Leslie, Marianne Philp

## 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and Lorraine Wilkinson, attending for the first time after her election as the teaching staff Board member, was introduced.

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 29 September 2022

### 2.1 Minutes of the Development Day: 1 November 2022

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

## 3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that been circulated were noted. It was agreed to extend the deadline for the paper on Colleges Scotland until the end of the summer.

## 4 Update on Recruitment of New Principal

The Chair advised Board members that 18 applications had been received for the position of Principal and Chief Executive, and that four candidates had attended the recruitment day on 5 December 2022. The Chair advised that there had been an outstanding applicant at interview. A recommendation was made to appoint Jim Metcalfe, currently Chief Executive of College Development Network (CDN) to the position. It was noted that this remained confidential until the formal announcement was made on the morning of 9 December 2022. The Chair thanked Board members who had been involved, and the Director: OD and HR and Director: Governance and Compliance for the organization that went into the day.

**Decision:** To appoint Jim Metcalfe to the position of Principal and Chief Executive, effective from Spring 2023.

**Responsibility:** Chair

**Deadline:** ASAP

## 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 current Student Presidents

would step down from their positions on 30 June 2023, but would continue to work on their manifestos until then.

Two questions had been asked prior to the meeting which were answered. It was confirmed that the main reported concern from students was online learning concepts. Further work was ongoing to see where in particular students were struggling and to investigate what support was available, and to work with the College on solutions.

It was confirmed that the resourcing issue was due to structural changes being made. It was anticipated that this would soon be resolved.

It was reported that there had been low attendance at class representative meetings due to work placements, exams, and other commitments. Reminders would be issued to remind students that attendance was important throughout the year, not just when representatives had issues to raise.

Evelyn McPhail confirmed that she was the Board member on the FCSA Advisory Board. A remit for the group was being prepared which would be circulated to the Board of Governors in due course.

Members commended the FCSA on the significant progress made since the last meeting and thanked the Student Presidents for their comprehensive update.

## **6 Principal's Report**

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

- Strategic sector-wide issues: it was noted that another review was underway. Board members suggested submitting evidence provided for previous reviews, rather than responding again as a potential way forward.
- Dunfermline Learning Campus: approval on the DP4 submission was currently with Scottish Ministers. It was anticipated that this might be confirmed as part of the overall budget announcements on 15 December. Orders could not be placed until after contracts were signed, after approval had been given.
- Overall Performance: this was reported as general good and would be covered in more detail under the business report.
- Staffing Matters: the drop in response rate for the staff survey was considered to be due to staff now having returned to work. A 62% response rate was considered to be in the top quartile and very high. Action plans were now being compiled by directorates and an overall college action plan would also be prepared.
- Awards: staff innovation awards had been successful.

It was noted that the Deputy Principal was leaving to take up a new post, and that this complicated the change of Principal. It was confirmed that handovers would be possible.

It was reported that a condition survey of all college buildings was being commissioned which would highlight particular risks to the College. Glenrothes was discussed and it was noted that the business case submitted was unlikely to be considered until autumn next year at the earliest. Other potential options for improvement were being explored and where possible implemented.

## 7 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 and it was confirmed that mental health remained the highest known reason for withdrawal. Other reasons included course not being what was expected and gaining employment. Each faculty was considering their own statistics and working out plans to better retain their students, including curriculum design in some cases.

An update was given on the financial position. A reforecast of the College's in-year position had been undertaken after the 25% cut-off date which was recommended by the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee to the Board for approval.

It was noted that the Digital Strategy had been presented to the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee for discussion, and more work had been requested on the detail of this. It was noted that the current Digital Strategy had focused on the infrastructure required for the College and that the new plan would focus on giving staff the tools, skills and working practices to use technology effectively.

**Decision:** To approve the F1 budget reforecast.

**Responsibility:** Deputy Principal

**Deadline:** ASAP

## 8 Regional Outcome Agreement

The Director: Planning and Performance joined the meeting for items 8 and 9 on the agenda. The contents of the paper that had been circulated were outlined and noted. It was highlighted that the format of the document was set by the Scottish Funding Council and that the current document was more of a refresh than a rewrite.

**Decision:** To approve the Regional Outcome Agreement.

**Responsibility:** Director: Planning and Performance

**Deadline:** ASAP

## 9 Draft Strategic Plan

The contents of the draft Strategic Plan that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that feedback taken from the Strategy Day and from staff and student engagement sessions had been considered. Some further feedback was given by members at the meeting and by email since the draft had been circulated and further updates would be made. It was confirmed that the newly appointed Principal would have the opportunity to input into the Strategy.

**Decision:** To continue to work on the draft Strategic Plan and bring it to the June meeting for approval.

**Responsibility:** Director: Planning and Performance

**Deadline:** June 2023

### 9.1 Draft Learning Strategy

The contents of the draft Learning Strategy that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that further work would be undertaken to ensure alignment between the Strategic Plan and all Strategies prior to them being finalized to ensure

consistency of wording and flow between them, and to ensure no duplication or omissions.

**Decision:** To continue to work on the draft Learner Strategy and bring it to the June meeting for approval.

**Responsibility:** Vice Principal: Academic Strategy **Deadline:** June 2023

## 10 Annual Accounts 2021-22

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the draft annual accounts had been scrutinized by the joint meeting of the Audit and Risk and Finance, Commercial and Estates Committees and were recommended to the Board of Governors for approval. A clean report had been given by the external auditors. The accounts showed an underlying surplus of £1.4m. It was highlighted that the significant change on the balance sheet was due to the treatment of the pension provision.

The Chair of the joint meeting advised Board members of the discussion that had taken place between the external auditor and Committee members in relation to the red grading given which reflected the external environment, not the College. Reassurance had been given that all colleges in the external auditor's remit would get this grading. The Chair of the joint meeting also advised that at all meetings since her appointment, feedback had consistently been tailored specifically to the Finance Services Team – which was unusual and due to the sterling work undertaken.

### 10.1 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to the Board

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that this report would be sent to the Scottish Funding Council.

**Decision:** To approve the Annual Accounts 2021-22, and to note the contents of the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report. Signatories agreed that electronic signatures could be applied to the accounts and associated documents.

**Responsibility:** Deputy Principal

**Deadline:** 31 December 2022

## 11 Board Updates

### 11.1 Chair's Updates

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

### 11.2 Update on Governance Matters

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Director: Governance and Compliance confirmed that since writing the paper, the consultation on TU membership had been issued and that she would circulate this to members and any feedback could be incorporated into the College's response. The Director: Governance and Compliance also drew attention to the updated Code of Good Governance which had been issued since the last meeting. A review of compliance would be undertaken and presented at the next meeting.

### **11.3 Summary of Committee Business**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The Chair reminded members that they should be aware of Committee business, as responsibility overall sat with the Board of Governors. Any queries should be made via the Director: Governance and Compliance in the first instance.

### **12 Review of Meeting**

No business was transacted.

### **13 Date of Next Meeting:**

23 March 2023 at 3.30pm, Carnegie Conference Centre

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and extended his best wishes to all for the festive period.

Thanks were given to the Deputy Principal for her sterling work over 12 years at the College. Members wished her good luck in her new role. The Deputy Principal thanked members for their support at Board and Committee meetings over the past 5 years.