

# MINUTES

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**Meeting:** Board of Governors

**Date:** Thursday 22 June 2023 at 3.30pm

**Location:** Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline

**Present:** David C Watt (Chair), Mike Boyle, Drew Connelly, Pamela Dobson, Tali Fisher, Jim Metcalfe, Evelyn McPhail, Susan Mitchell, Gordon Mole, Samantha Mowbray, Emma Wallace, Lorraine Wilkinson

**Apologies:** Garry Dickson, Brian Fisher, Stacey Fleming, Tony Martin, Phillip Thompson, Zoe Thomson

**In Attendance:** Gail Dunn, Iain Hawker, Dorothée Leslie, James Thomson, Marianne Philp

## 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interests

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting. In particular, the Principal and Deputy Principal were welcomed to their first Board meeting since taking up their new posts.

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 21 March 2023

### 2.1 Notes of Strategy Day: 25 May 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting and the notes of the strategy day were approved as an accurate record.

## 3 Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding

The contents of the paper that been circulated were noted. It was agreed that the actions relating to Strategy should be combined and the deadline extended to reflect the timescales suggested in the strategy day update paper included in the Boardpack.

## 4 Principal and Chief Executive's Update Report

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

- Principal induction and staff engagement
- 2020-21 PIs and Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit (PIs for 2021-22 are now also available [here](#))
- Executive and leadership team development
- Forth Green Freeport
- Dunfermline Learning Campus
- Estates master planning
- Withers review
- Fife economic strategy
- Awards and Scholarships

Board members commented positively on the new format of report – which was more visual and avoided duplication with other reports on the agenda.

A request was made to see some of the staff suggestions coming forward. The Principal agreed that these could be shared in an anonymised and summarised way.

It was confirmed that the EIS were currently taking action short of a strike, which meant that student results were not being submitted. A measured approach was being taken and the situation was being monitored so that steps could be taken to minimise impact on students where required.

There was a discussion about recent protests by Fashion students. It was acknowledged that the situation could have been managed better, with more notice having been given to those affected. It was also noted that this was a reflection of the significant funding challenges within the sector. It was confirmed that the College was trying to assist displaced students by finding alternatives for them.

**Decision:** To share staff suggestions in an anonymised and summarised way.

**Responsibility:** Principal

**Deadline:** 28 September 2023

## 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. Members thanked the Student Board members for all they had contributed over their two years' in office and wished them well for the future. A small gift was presented to each of them.

## 6 Business Report

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

It was noted that in some areas, student recruitment was sitting well above target, eg 134% in care. Reassurance was given that conversions were closely monitored and that recruitment levels were based on experience of previous years. Many applicants have offers from universities as well as college and will choose university if their exam results allow.

The Finance Team was congratulated on the projected year-end position during a very challenging year. A brief update was provided on national pay award discussions.

It was noted that the Audit and Risk and Finance, Commercial and Estates Committees had both requested an update on Net Zero/Sustainability issues and that this would be scheduled for Board members during the next academic year.

The impact of moving courses from one campus to another on students and their ability to travel was raised as an issue. The under-utilisation of Levenmouth Campus was also acknowledged and it was confirmed that some new training had been identified for delivery there next academic year. In addition the planned master planning activity would highlight this.

Members were requested to be vigilant when receiving emails which contained hyperlinks or attachments. Any suspected harmful emails should be forwarded to [abuse@fife.ac.uk](mailto:abuse@fife.ac.uk) which would enable addresses to be blocked.

## 7 Draft Budget 2023-24

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the Finance, Commercial and Estates Committee had reviewed the draft budget in detail and

recommended it for approval to the Board. It was noted that a modest deficit in 2023-24 was projected, with larger deficits in future years, based on current assumptions.

It was noted that the FFR would require to be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council by end of June and that this would be circulated to members for approval by email.

**Decisions:**

- To approve the draft budget for 2023-24.
- To circulate the FFR to members for approval by email.

**Responsibility:** Deputy Principal

**Deadline:** 30 June 2023

## 8 **Update on Strategy Day, College Strategies 2023-28 and Annual Operating Plan**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members agreed the proposed actions and timescales within the paper that had been circulated. Progress was reported on the Regional Alignment for East Central Scotland, which was in line with strategy day discussions.

The Chair emphasized that any agreement to proceed with a Board Scholarship would be voluntary, and it was not a condition of being on the Board. It was suggested that a survey could be issued over the summer to get an indication of likely interest and preferences, and thereafter options could be presented for consideration.

**Decisions:**

- To endorse the timeline for approval of strategies and roll out of risk and opportunity actions.

**Responsibility:** Principal/Deputy Principal      **Deadline:** December 2023

- To circulate a survey to members seeking individual interest in offering a Board Scholarship and to come back with information on options available.

**Responsibility:** Director: Governance      **Deadline:** September 2023

- To prepare some bullet points on an elevator pitch for the Board to give key messages on Scholarships and Alumni activity.

**Responsibility:** Director: Governance      **Deadline:** September 2023

## 9 **Update on Education Scotland Visit**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was confirmed that verbal feedback had been positive overall with one main action relating to retention and partial success. It was confirmed that Peter Connelly would be invited to attend the Board meeting in September to present the report which would be published around 6 weeks after the visit.

## 10 **Equalities Mainstreaming Update Report 2021-23**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was noted that the report had been reviewed by the People and Culture Committee and had recommended it to the Board for approval.

Members suggested that consideration be given by management to whether all work undertaken is required to meet legislative requirements, and whether the effort and reward for optional pieces of work made it worthwhile.

It was also suggested that information on how deeply embedded this work is within the culture of the college would be useful in future reports and whether or not all colleagues are aware and involved.

It was noted that a session on Emily Test Charter might be useful for Board members as it was an impactful way to highlight tackling gender based violence.

**Decisions:**

- To approve the Equalities Mainstreaming Update Report 2021-23, and to feedback comments made by members to the OD and HR Team.

**Responsibility:** Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 30 June 2023

## 11 Board Updates

### 11.1 Chair's Updates

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

### 11.2 Summary of Committee Business

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

### 11.3 Governance Update

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

## 12 Self Evaluation 2022-23

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the format of self-evaluation had been altered slightly to try to increase feedback from all Board members. Other attendees would also be asked to contribute to this to give a more rounded view of the Board's performance. It was also noted that this was an opportunity to review the remit of the Committee and recommend any changes that may be required to the Board of Governors for approval. The compliance document and a review of Compliance with the latest version of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges had been completed by the Director: Governance and Compliance and members were requested to review both of these and offer comment where they disagreed with or wished to query anything recorded.

**Decisions:**

- To issue the self-evaluation template by email to members and attendees.

**Responsibility:** Director: Governance and Compliance **Deadline:** 30 June 2023

- To complete and return the self-evaluation template.

**Responsibility:** All Committee members and attendees **Deadline:** 31 July 2023

## 13 Review of Meeting

No business was transacted.

## 14 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 28 September 2023 at 3.30pm, Carnegie Conference Centre