

**Minute of the Board of Management Meeting
Held on Thursday 18 June 2020
By virtual attendance via Zoom**



Present: Willie Mackie (Chair)
Elaine Anderson
Fiona Blain
Margarette Bryan
Scott Cooley
Steve Graham
Christopher Hall
Lauren Howieson
Gordon James
Mary McClung
Jack McCrindle
Fiona McQueen
Hazel Murphy
Michael Stewart
Alison Sutherland
Carol Turnbull
Alan Walker
Steven Wallace

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Yvonne Melvin (Executive Assistant)
Michael Breen
Anne Campbell
Jane McKie

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of the 'housekeeping' in respect of using Zoom.

2 Apologies

No apologies were received.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 26 March 2020 (Paper 1) (P)

Item 3, page 2; The fourth bullet point to be amended to state 'M Breen continued to work with the three Ayrshire IJBs in respect of possible student involvement and the availability of equipment'.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: E Anderson; **Seconded:** M Stewart.

Board of Management Action Tracker (Paper 1A) (P)

The following was noted in relation to the content of the Action Tracker:

Action 24 – The Board agreed this action would be marked as Closed.

4 Matters Arising

Item 9, Page 4; the Board Secretary noted that, following recommendation from the Board and Board Chair to Scottish Ministers, Mr Scott Cooley, Mr Steven Graham and Mr Michael Stewart had received approval for their reappointment as board members for a full four year period, with effect from 1 August 2020 until 31 July 2024.

5 Student Association Report (*Paper 2*) (*P*)

J McCrindle took members through the Student Association Report, highlighting various aspects of the report to the Board. It was noted that the Periods R Pants initiative had been successfully moved online and students were able to apply for a free 3-month sanitary pack using a Survey Monkey Link. The Board was pleased to note that the initiative received a very positive response and that, due to the effective marketing of the scheme, Ayrshire College experienced the highest uptake of these products across the sector, with over 300 students requesting packs.

J McCrindle reminded members that the Student President and Vice-President Elections, scheduled to commence on 18 March 2020, had been postponed as a result of the Covid19 shutdown. It was noted that, following discussions with NUS, Ayrshire College Student Association had proceeded to conduct the student elections online, and campaigning and polling had taken place from 1 to 5 June 2020. The Board was pleased to note that Lauren Howieson had been elected as Student President and that Steven Oliver had been elected as the new Student Vice-President.

The Board thanked J McCrindle for his time and input during his tenure as a Board Member and also for his hard work and commitment to the College during his time with the Ayrshire College Student Association, both as Student Vice-President and Student President.

The Board noted and welcomed the above Report and welcomed back Lauren Howieson, this time as Student President, and new Student Vice President, Steven Oliver, to membership of the 2020-21 Board of Management.

6 Chair's Report

The Chair reported on the following matters that had occurred since the previous meeting of the Board:

- A number of virtual meetings of college Chairs had been held during the period to discuss raising the profile of the college sector and to mitigate the potential impact of Covid-19. Ministerial meetings had also taken place in the period using video-conferencing software, during which colleges were recognised for their work as a sector and for their ongoing community based work during lockdown.
- The Colleges Scotland Chairs' Group had agreed that a sub-group be created to focus on Economic Recovery post Covid-19 shutdown, with W Mackie as Chair.

- The Chair and the Board thanked C Turnbull and the Executive Leadership Team for their outstanding leadership and hard work in meeting the exceptional challenges brought about by the Covid-19 shutdown. Board members responded by acclaim.
- The Chair introduced the Tabled Paper Board Recruitment 2020 - Draft Revised Recruitment Timeline and reminded members that Board recruitment for this year had been paused following the Covid-19 shutdown. It was proposed that this now be reactivated with immediate effect. The Chair assured members that he had confidence in the use of virtual conference software to conduct recruitment meetings and interviews and that Independent Member, Paul Houlden, had been consulted and agreed with the revised timeline and methodology.

The Board approved the Draft Revised Recruitment Timeline and authorised the immediate reactivation of Board Recruitment 2020.

7 End of Academic session 2019-20 and Preparations for Academic session 2020-21 (Verbal) (P)

A Campbell introduced this verbal update on the progress of the fourth quarter of Academic Year 2019-20. The Board was advised that guidance had now been received from all Awarding Bodies, but members were concerned to hear that students who were required to complete practical assessments on some courses had been unable to do so for health and safety reasons and their assessment would be deferred until AY 2020-21. It was noted that, as per SQA requirements, Internal Quality Assurance Panels had been convened to ensure standardisation of course teams' interpretation of SQA's advice and guidance and to ensure objectivity, fairness and accuracy of assessment judgement. A Campbell advised that all meetings had now concluded and had instilled confidence that course teams had adopted a robust and innovative process to arrive at fair assessment judgement, whilst incorporating individual student circumstances. It was noted that resulting was now underway.

C Turnbull followed, advising that the College was planning for reopening on 24 August 2020, subject to Scottish Government and Public Health Guidelines. The initial focus at that point would be school-college courses and deferred students from AY2019-20. It was noted that, following robust discussions and to allow for focus to remain on deferred students, the College had taken the decision to delay the start of full-time courses for the academic year 2020-21 until 22 September 2020, in line with Scottish Government guidelines. The delivery of learning and teaching for the new student cohort would incorporate a mix of remote and online learning with limited on-campus delivery.

A Campbell added that a VP Curriculum Network had been created to identify and guide actions to support curriculum delivery in AY 2020-21.

C Turnbull also advised that staff were now able to return to campus for preparation work, as per the First Minister's recent announcement. It was noted that Scottish Government Guidelines for colleges was yet to be published and it was hoped this would be available by the week commencing 22 June 2020. It was further noted that a Return to Campus Steering Group had been established, to oversee preparations, and consisted of key staff from across the

College as well as representation from both EIS and UNISON. Since its initial two meetings, the Group had created 4 workstreams:

- Physical Infrastructure
- Learning & Teaching and Student Engagement
- ICT
- Workforce Support and Wellbeing

Each workstream would work with teams across the College to support, advise and guide them on their delivery and planning for the possible scenarios facing the sector, i.e. Full Lockdown, Partial Re-opening and Return to Face-to-Face Teaching.

During the discussion that followed, a number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses were received. In response to a specific query, C Turnbull advised members that student access to data and ICT was being considered at a national level and the College would be approaching students to ascertain their individual requirements. The College was also working with SQA on the provision of ICT and data packages for students.

The Chair updated members on a forthcoming SFC review of the sustainability and coherence of the provision and delivery of HE and FE going forward. C Turnbull added that an initial report was expected end-August 2020, with a 2nd Stage Report expected by end-December 2020. It was noted that an advisory group had been set-up by SFC, which C Turnbull had been invited to attend, together with others in the sector to provide college input.

The Chair also advised that an Economic Advisory Group had also been established, chaired by Benny Higgins, Specialist Advisor to the First Minister. Output from this group was expected during the week commencing 22 June 2020. It was anticipated that this output would focus on a list of high priority actions flowing from the Cumberford-Little Report.

In response to a query regarding an opportunity for the Board to provide feedback into the SFC Tertiary Review, C Turnbull advised that the mechanism for Board members to do this was unclear at this time but she would raise this with SFC and report back.

The Board thanked C Turnbull and A Campbell for the verbal update and looked forward to receiving further updates as the situation continued to evolve.

Action: C Turnbull to confirm if there is an intention to provide a methodology which would permit individual Board members to submit feedback to the SFC Tertiary Review.

8 2020-21 Budgets for the academic year ending 31 July 2021 (Paper 4) (P)

M Breen introduced Paper 4, advising that the 2020-21 Budgets for the academic year ending 31 July 2021 had been considered and approved by the Business, Resources and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting held on 2 June 2020. It was noted that most of the members in attendance at this meeting had also attended the meeting on 2 June. Board members were advised that the budget presented was a 'business as usual' baseline budget providing the

College position outwith Covid-19 and was based on the 2019-20 Budget, as approved by the Board. It was noted that the uncertain environment created by the Covid19 pandemic directly affected the College's ability to make budgetary predictions, but providing a baseline budget was important to indicate the financial sustainability of the College in terms of the Financial Sustainability Plan submitted to and agreed with SFC earlier in the academic year.

S Wallace, in his capacity of Chair of the Business, Resources and Infrastructure Committee, advised members that a robust discussion had been held by the Committee at its meeting on 2 June 2020. It was highlighted that the Committee recognised the College's positive position outwith Covid-19 and recognised the unprecedented circumstances and challenges faced in preparing a budget when so much uncertainty existed. S Wallace concluded by confirming that an updated budget for 2020-21, to be prepared when further information becomes available, would be presented to the Board for its consideration at the next scheduled meeting, in September 2020, after submission to the BRIC Committee earlier in the cycle

The Board thanked M Breen and the Finance Team for their work in producing Paper 4 and looked forward to receiving the balanced budget in September 2020.

The Board approved the interim 2020-21 Budget for the academic year ending 31 July 2021.

9 2020-21 SFC Funded Capital and Revenue Expenditure Programme (Paper 5) (P)

M Breen introduced Paper 5, noting that, whilst the capital allocation had increased on AY 2019-20, the amount provided was still significantly lower than previous years (pre 2019-20) and this would continue to impact the College capital expenditure proposals. Board members were advised that it was the intention of the College to utilise £300,000 of its revenue maintenance grant for capital spend and that this would be used towards the funding the North Ayrshire Future Skills Hub. It was highlighted that the utilisation of these funds was still to be agreed by SFC. The remaining capital allocation would be used towards staff and student ICT provision in preparation for the new AY2020-21 delivery model and towards alterations to the campuses in line with COVID-19 requirements.

S Wallace, in his capacity of Chair of the Business, Resources and Infrastructure Committee, advised members that the Committee had discussed Paper 5 at the meeting on 2 June 2020, and the Committee had welcomed the internal actions taken by the College.

Further discussions took place, with a number of questions asked and satisfactory responses received.

The Board approved the 2020-21 SFC Funded Capital and Revenue Expenditure Programme and the proposal to utilise £300,000 of the revenue maintenance grant for capital spend to be used towards the funding the North Ayrshire Future Skills Hub, subject to SFC approval.

10 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy (Paper 7) (P)

J McKie introduced Paper 7, advising that the Policy takes into account the revised organisational structure and associated responsibilities following the Organisational Review 2018-19. It was noted that the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy had been considered by the Business, Resources and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 2 June 2020 and it had been commended to the Board for approval.

The Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy was approved by the Board.

11 Committee Chairs' Reports

The Committee Chairs provided verbal reports on the matters considered by the Committees since the last meeting of the Board, and not already dealt with under the agenda for this meeting. The agenda and papers would be published on the website and the confirmed minutes of these meetings would be received by the Board at its next meeting.

The Chairs reports were noted by the Board.

12 Confirmed Standing Committee Minutes.

The following confirmed Standing Committee Minutes were received by the Board.

- **Learning and Teaching Committee 5 March 2020 (Paper 8) (P)**
- **Business, Resources & Infrastructure Committee 10 March 2020 (Paper 9) (P)**
- **Audit Committee 26 November 2019 (Paper 10) (P)**

13 AOB

W Mackie, as Board Chair, reported that Gordon James and Margarett Bryan would be leaving the membership of the Board with effect from 31 July 2020. As such, this was the last meeting they would attend as members of the Board.

Gordon had originally been a member of the legacy James Watt College Board and had made a significant contribution as a board member to the establishment of the merged Ayrshire College Board of Management in 2013. Gordon had chaired the Estates and New Campus Development Committee and also the Audit Committee. Throughout his period as a member of a legacy board and the Ayrshire College Board, Gordon had continuously and tirelessly contributed to the work of the Board as a passionate and devoted ambassador of education.

Margarett had joined the Ayrshire College Board of Management in 2016, following her retirement from Begg & Co. Her passion and support of the students throughout her tenure was renowned and was sure to continue for many years to come. The Chair thanked Gordon and Margarett for their many years of contributions to work and life of the Board during their tenure, and wished both the very best for the future.

The Board endorsed all of the Chairs remarks and wished Gordon and Margarett all the best in their future endeavours.

14 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 24 September at 4pm.

Received for Information

15 Further and Higher Education COVID 19 - Letter for Institutions – Working Together to Respond to Covid-19 (Paper 11) (P)

P - Papers will be published on the College Website

R - Papers will not be published for reasons of commercial confidentiality or for reasons associated with data protection legislation

C/P - Confirmed minutes will be published on the College Website

Reserved Items On Next Page: