

**Board of Management Meeting – South Lanarkshire College
Friday, 5 June 2020 at 1000 hours (on Teams)**

Present A Kerr (Chair), A McKechnie, T Donnelly, S Dillett, Y Johnston, P Hughes, L Newlands, R Smith, K Dougans-Haining, C McDowall, C Gibb, R Harkness

Apologies J Carratt, L Glen, S Duffy, P Hutchison

In attendance A Allan, K McAllister, A Martin

1. Declaration of Members Interests

Membership of The Lanarkshire Board was declared by A Kerr, A McKechnie, R Smith, R Harkness and L Newlands. Mr Kerr also declared his membership of the Board of the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May were approved by the Board.

3. Matters Arising

- Funding allocation – this was still to be finalised.
- UKG Furlough Scheme – the deadline for applications was noted.
- End year events for students – to be covered later in agenda.
- Extension of Internal Auditors contract – assurance secured that this was permissible within the terms of procurement rules and that there was no reputational risk to the college.
- Capital works have recommenced and all are proceeding according to plan. Meetings have already taken place re the funding received for 2020/21 and minor works and other procurement tenders have been issued to the market, with tenders to be submitted by prospective suppliers for end September.

4. Chair's welcome

Mr Kerr welcomed members to the last of the fortnightly extraordinary Board meetings, convened in response to the COVID crisis. He thanked members again for their support over this difficult period, and noted the ongoing hard work of college staff to support the current remote operation and to plan for a blended return to campus in August. He confirmed that we would now move to a written update across the summer, before reverting to our usual schedule of meetings.

Members were then formally notified that this was the final meeting of Ms Newlands and Ms Dougans-Haining in their Student Association roles. Mr Kerr thanked them both for their outstanding contribution to the College over their period of office. Their personal and professional contribution, particularly over the period of lockdown, had been of particular note, when they had both worked tirelessly to provide support for students.

5. Principal's Update

The Principal stated that the main topics of her update would be: student and staff engagement and wellbeing; capital investment (programme of summer works); finance; and future proofing the business.

Student engagement - We continue to have very high levels of student engagement, averaging between 70% and 80% across the three faculties. We are beginning to process results for Block 3 for early completers – already ahead on this time last year - and continue to work towards goal of every student being resulted by the end of term - pass, fail or deferred.

Our student election process has now concluded and we have a new President-elect, Gemma McClarence, and Vice President-elect, Charlotte McDonald. It is understood that this will be a difficult year to come into college to take forward our SA, given the inability to engage face to face and to organise on-campus events. We are currently considering how best to support.

We issued our student survey on 4 June, which asks for views on student experience of support, learning and assessment over the past period out of college and this, alongside the staff survey, will be helpful as we work up our plans for the new Academic Year.

An update was provided on proposals to cancel or defer the graduation ceremonies and construction awards and plans for end-year faculty celebratory activity. We will deliver virtual celebratory events across each faculty to mark student success, as well as issuing certificates and student prizes. We will issue a 2020 Year Book to our construction award students. The graduations will be rearranged for June 2021. Any further suggestions for ways to mark the academic year end would be welcome.

Staff Well-being - Staff absence rates continue to be very low. Staff mood continues to be generally very positive, and we see this coming through in early analysis of the recently concluded staff survey. We are inviting all college staff to come into the college in small groups from 15 June for 2 hours or so, as part of a re-familiarisation exercise before the end of term. We will manage this on a careful rota basis. This offer has been well received by staff. We have drafted student and staff notices and a set of Q&A for internal and external use to offer as much clarification as we can for the new academic year. We have published our proposals for this:

- 12-14 August – college open to staff for CPD
- w/c 17, 24 & 31 August – ongoing CPD and concluding 19-20 students;
- 7/9 – start of the new academic session.

There is a mixed approach emerging across the college sector to term start dates, with some moving to 21 September.

Finally, as mentioned at our last meeting, we are actively progressing utilisation of the UKG furlough scheme for those staff who have not been deployed since lockdown. There is close engagement with the unions to progress this.

Capital investment - We remain on track to spend the allocated funds for dilapidations. Planned works now not going ahead as hoped on either 15 June or 22 June, given issues with the supply chain. We hope to hear more later this week on a likely start date.

Health and Safety - We have already started to re-shape the building – removing furniture, re-configuring spaces, etc. and have signage, Perspex, etc. on order to help with the enforcement of social distancing. We have increased the frequency of Health & Safety Committee meetings, to support the planning taking place for recovery and easing of lockdown. This committee will continue to meet regularly over the summer.

Finance remains a key priority for management. Action is in train to actively reduce costs where possible, including by giving up office premises where lease breaks allow; and ending temporary contracts where appropriate. We are actively investigating use of the UKG furlough scheme, in close consultation with the JNC. Discussions are ongoing with NCL colleagues on how best to agree a strategic framework and a set of overarching principles for the regional funding allocations to secure the parity of funding agreed in the Collaboration Plan and to ensure that the learner sits at the heart of the funding methodology.

Future proofing the business - Student recruitment - applications continue to be down but offers continue to be ahead for this stage in the year. We held a series of virtual information events at the end of May, which worked well. We have announced dates for the start of the new academic year and are actively planning for significant CPD and materials preparation in the first 3 and a half weeks of the next term. Mr Dillett asked about the impact of a potential second wave; and of views on the wearing of face coverings, noting that they were now being deployed by his company. Ms Donnelly noted that face coverings did not offer the same protection as PPE. It was noted that the college was following Scottish Government guidance which, at this stage, simply encouraged the wearing of face coverings in public spaces where physical distancing was not possible.

We have concluded our scenario planning for safe return to campus and are now monitoring progress against agreed actions via our Programme Board. We are working with APUC and the wider sector in the procurement of PPE and related materials to support our return to the building. We are already reconfiguring the building to allow for safe access for staff and students.

6. Quality Enhancement

Board members have been provided with a detailed report on quality enhancement, which updated members on:

- Business Continuity Assessment and Resulting Methodology (BCRAM)
- Academic Board
- Professional Discussion of Learning and Teaching (PDLT) Update.
- College Leaver Destinations (CLD) 2018/19
- Awarding Body Verification Activity Update
- SQA Refined Estimates for NQ 2020
- Learning and Teaching
- College Involvement in National Enhancement Activity

The Board has been regularly updated on our approach to assessment and resulting over the recent period. This is, at present, one of the most important quality processes within every delivery team and will continue to be so until the end of this academic session to ensure consistency of approach in assigning appropriate grades and results for all students. To support this work, we agreed to postpone the June Academic Board and this will be rearranged for later in the year.

Our Professional Discussion of Learning and Teaching group has been discussing how the current observation model could be adapted to support the increased blended delivery offer to students in the next session and beyond. The introduction of observations on digital platforms should follow focussed staff CPD.

Our College Leaver Destinations 2018-19 are again very positive, with 92.5% of our 18-19 leavers in a positive destination 3-6 months after qualifying. Further detail is provided in the annex to the paper.

The update provided on Awarding Body Verification Activity notes that SQA completed 6 external verification visits covering 8 awards with a High Confidence outcome provided for all those verified thus far (7 out of 8). On SQA Refined Estimates for NQ 2020, we are presenting 7 courses through this process. 215 student estimates across 7 programmes have been processed, quality assured and submitted to SQA in line with the submission deadline.

On Learning and Teaching, the college has sustained high levels of student engagement during the period of lockdown – averaging 70-80% over the period thus far. We are planning significant investment in staff development at the start of the new academic year to support online learning and teaching, and the development of materials. The Chair noted the need for investment in staff CPD and on-line teaching and learning platforms. He noted the scope for learning from existing digital providers. Mr Hughes spoke to the risk of technological roll-out of scale and the importance of careful procurement. The College's engagement with APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges) was noted.

Our College continues to be involved in National Quality Enhancement Activity at national level, including with SQA, Colleges Scotland and CDN to support cross-sectoral shared learning; to improve our influencing position with Awarding Bodies and with managing agents (such as CITB and SNIPEF); and to shape approaches for the new academic year, in relation to qualification design, recruitment targets, delivery timelines, and fit with industry needs, for example.

7. Marketing, Recruitment and International

The paper provided a comprehensive update on events, media, promotion and publications; on recruitment; on schools activity; and on international activity.

On media, promotion and publications, we have worked quickly since lockdown to increase our social media presence; to improve our approach to horizon scanning; & to use data analytics to understand our impact. We have updated our media plan to reflect our new

approach, which incorporates a mix of multi-channel, online and offline media. Paul Hughes had separately offered helpful advice on this.

The position on recruitment is relatively positive from a sectoral perspective and given the current climate. There has been a drop in applications (of 10% at this stage) compared to this point last year, alongside an increase in offers by 20% on this time last year.

On schools activity, we are working closely, and well, with South Lanarkshire Council to support senior phase engagement and are planning an on-line event for pupils for later this month. We also continue to engage with East Renfrewshire Council on senior phase options for pupils. The College works hard to engage with schools across the LA area and beyond – attending, for example, 41 career events at schools as well as delivering class talks to numerous schools. Members enquired about fit with the Scottish Government’s Developing the Young Workforce programme. It was noted that all school-college activity was delivered in response to the DYW agenda and would be badged as such going forward.

International activity is currently not a significant area of college business, with only 1 Tier 4 student in college in 19-20; and one offer made to a non Tier 4 student for 2020-21. We anticipate little or no international activity in the next AY given the current COVID situation. On Erasmus+, we did secure a grant allocation for this current A/Y; and have registered a bid for funding in the 2020-21 call. It remains unclear whether overseas travel will be permitted in the next academic year.

7. Scenario planning

Mr Allan provided an update on the college approach to readiness for a potential return to campus, noting the adoption of a programme management approach involving all senior managers across the college, including in identifying and managing risk. Members noted the value of the planning work carried out to date; the potential reconfiguration of the college campus to allow for a safe return; the need for staff CDP to support digital learning delivery; and the need for improved ICT capacity and capability. Ms McKechnie advised that consideration was being given to staff CPD needs in relation to ICT and health and well-being; and that additional investment in ICT was planned to support a return to blended learning in the new academic session.

Mr Kerr asked that the Board’s thanks be passed on to the College Leadership Team in recognition of the significant effort and energy invested in supporting and delivering college business over the period of lockdown.

8. Student President Update

Ms Newlands provided an update on recent engagements with the NUS; on progress with the Mental Health Agreement and advised members that SLC had been invited by the NUS to participate in a panel discussion on mental health. The refreshed Constitution was now with the NUS for comment. She noted that we now had a new President-elect and Vice President-elect and that the existing SA would support induction. She provided an update on the offer of mindfulness classes to students; the provision of sanitary products by *Hey Girls* and advised

that a key role for the SA at this time was to keep in regular touch with students, offering support, advice and guidance.

Mr Kerr thanked Ms Newlands for her presentation and commended the Student Association for its successful delivery under the tenure of Ms Newlands and Ms Dougans-Haining. This was fully supported by the entire Board.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and contribution.