

**South Lanarkshire College
Human Resources Committee (Board of Management)
Held on 18th February 2021**

Present Chris McDowall
Aileen McKechnie

In Attendance Gary McIntosh
Andy Kerr (*in part*)
Lorna Reid

1. Apologies Rose Harkness

2. Declaration of Members' Interests

Mr Kerr declared his membership of the Board of the Scottish Funding Council and The Lanarkshire Board. Ms McKechnie declared her membership of The Lanarkshire Board.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Approved.

4. Report from Human Resources

Mr McIntosh provided an overview of the HR report, noting the change in format and presentation and that he would continue to refine this going forward.

Headcount

The headcount movement graph shows a steady position, with 13 new hires and 11 leavers. Future reports will show any increase or decrease on headcount movements. Mr McDowall asked to include the previous year's numbers next to the current headcount waterfall chart as a comparison. Mr Kerr asked for a named list of joiners and leavers, Mr McDowall agreed. Ms McKechnie reminded members about data protection obligations and that this information should not be published.

Recent changes in staff were noted as: the appointment of a new Marketing & Communications Manager; departure of AP Faculty of Construction, with the appointment of an internal Interim and plans in place for an external recruitment process.

Absence

2003 - 2020 statistics – a range of 3 to 11 people absent every day. $\frac{3}{4}$ driven by long term absence. Table shows 4 departments with high number of instances to FTE ratio which impact department capability, business capacity and can have a consequent negative impact on the wider team. 2 departments have a high number of days lost to FTE, again impacting on departmental capability and capacity. In recognition of the need to better support absence management, planning is in train to improve our training for managers; to enhance and reinforce absence procedures; and to leverage

employee benefits to manage and improve long term absence and frequency of absences. Mr McDowall agreed the value of this approach.

Health & Wellbeing

COVID-19 remains a priority focus for the College. There is significant impact caused by the current approach to lockdown to staff mood and morale, particularly given the impact of home-schooling, caring, shielding, etc. This is regularly discussed and reviewed including with our Leadership Teams, JNC, mental health working group, etc. Alongside the existing support provided, an additional positive response has been to establish a Parent Peer Support Group. We continue to enhance the health & wellbeing offering from the College to support this situation, and line-managers and HR offer support to staff in a considerate, case-by-case basis when required.

The Health Vulnerability Questionnaire was reissued in January – results similar and HR are speaking to those at “high risk”. Mr Kerr highlighted the possible risk of PTSD in relation to the health and social care workforce. Ms McKechnie advised that there was ongoing consideration of how best to support the transition back to the workplace for staff, with conversations in a wide variety of fora to ensure the voices of both staff and students were heard.

Mr McDowall asked about the range of support/information available for staff; and how agile the College is in relation to flexible working. Ms McManus advised that at the TQFE group meetings, the message was reinforced for managers to encourage staff by reminding them that there was no expectation for them to teach live – they could make use of pre-recorded lessons for example. Ms McKechnie noted that there were regular communications to staff about the need for care when managing home-work life balance; that there was ongoing support and advice provided to teaching staff about creative approaches to teaching delivery; that increased effort was invested in ensuring the sharing of good practice; and that it was important to reinforce messages about ‘permission’ to be flexible.

HSE Organisational Stress Risk Assessment

Mr McIntosh advised that he was finalising the procurement review and documentation with the vendor; that this will be tested with the SLWG; and will then be ready to progress a survey to get feedback from employees.

Employee Engagement

Mr McIntosh advised that he had commenced a process of reviewing the employee journey and experience, from pre-entry to exit as part of a wider ambition to ensure the College remains a great place to work. He plans to bring in an intern around May / June to support this with additional research and recommendations. Mr McDowall suggested that the findings, key themes etc, should be presented at future committee meetings. **Action:** Mr McIntosh. Mr Kerr noted the introduction of employee exit interviews with surprise that this was not already in place.

Mr McIntosh noted that he was currently reviewing internal communications with the new Marketing & Communications Manager. He advised that the current approach was manual and not particularly engaging (quarterly, printed newsletter, emails, etc.).

Equality

Mr McIntosh advised that the annual Staff Equality Monitoring survey has now taken place and the results are being reviewed. He advised of the valuable work progressed by our intern from Inclusion Scotland on staff equality, particularly in relation to disability. He noted that, historically, Board information included is purely based on observations of gender, and asked if the Board would like to have a broader Equality Monitoring exercise? Mr McDowall supported this suggestion, as did Mr Kerr, provided that Board members were willing to take part. Ms McKechnie suggested that this might be raised at the Board meeting on 16 March to ensure no objections from members. This was agreed.

Learning & Development

Mr McIntosh noted that staff training and development is provided consistently throughout the year. The graph shows the 4 programs running during the quarter: Onboarding – 13 people in progress; taking your teaching online – 88 complete, 63 in progress (part-time requested longer); Management Development – OM/CM group – 8 complete and 8 in progress. CMI Certified course; and Mental Health First Aid Instructors – 6 complete.

He advised that the December Staff Development day delivered 17 sessions, all virtually; and that his team was currently preparing for the next day on 5th March. He confirmed that some staff were participating in Open University programs around online teaching & teacher development.

Performance

Mr McIntosh advised that planning was in train for leadership investment in the College Leadership Team. The CLT had agreed the value of team building to build on trust, transparency, collective approaches, conflict management, etc. This will be taken forward initially with an anonymous survey to gauge views of the current position which will help shape the development journey. Ms McKechnie confirmed that rich conversations had taken place at CLT level about the value of team-building and providing additional support for collective leadership. She noted that there have been recent changes at senior level within the College; that there is an increased risk of staff disconnect due to the duration of remote working; and that it is particularly important to continue to invest in staff development at times of change and challenge. Ms McManus added that it was important to help managers to better understand their role and responsibilities within their own area and to support them to make decisions at that level.

Career Reviews

Mr McIntosh advised that he was currently considering the College approach to career reviews, as these were inconsistently applied and delivered mixed experiences and outcomes.

Employee & Industrial Relations:

Mr McIntosh advised that the updating of contracts of employment & job descriptions remained ongoing. He noted the targeted issue dates highlighted in the report. Mr McDowall asked if there had been any issues with contracts / job descriptions. Mr McIntosh advised this had been agreed by the unions – some clarifications had been given to employees around job descriptions.

In relation to national Issues, he advised that EIS-FELA had informed College of a national ballot in relation to the Instructor / Assessor role.

He noted that progress was being made with support staff job evaluations and that he had investigated whether it would be possible to include Heads of Service in this process, given the delay in progressing this locally. This will be discussed with the Heads of Service first.

He noted that the HR Policy review had been delayed over the festive period and would now re-commence with priority policies first.

Accreditations

Mr McIntosh advised that Investors in People was due for renewal in December. He has commenced engagement on this and will set-up a short-life working group. The Leaders in Diversity renewal has been delayed due to COVID-19 and work on that will commence during 2021.

Mr Kerr left meeting at 1820 hours.

5. Health and Safety Report

Ms McManus advised on the steps that the College has taken to ensure the building is as Covid-secure as possible. Recent changes have included working closely with colleagues who specialise in health and safety; the updating of the college's Covid risk register, highlighting additional mitigations including spacing, barriers, additional fogging, etc. Regular updates are provided to staff; and regular H&S meetings are being held. No new HSE guidance has issued to date. Visible changes on campus include additional signage in classrooms in relation to opening windows for ventilation; numberings on all doors indicating how many people allowed in each office; room fogging on demand; weekly report to facilities capturing how many staff /students within each department to allow for additional fogging where required; additional use of Perspex screens. We are also making use of capital funds to create bigger, more flexible classrooms/workspaces; and considering how to better monitor social distancing during fire alarm evacuations.

Mr McDowall commented that this was a very useful and reassuring report.

The report was noted by the Committee.

6. Horizon Scanning

Mr McIntosh noted the value of the work being progressed on the employee journey & experience. He noted the importance of careful planning for the transition back to

campus; and for succession planning. Ms McManus discussed staff upskilling requirements for post COVID. Ms McKechnie confirmed the work in train to support transitioning staff and students back to campus and the importance of ensuring this was done carefully and well. Mr McDowall asked whether or not as an employer, the College would expect employees to be vaccinated. How would the College approach the situation where someone did not want the vaccine? Ms McKechnie advised that the current SG advice was that the approach to vaccine delivery – by age and health requirement was unlikely to change which would mean that there would be no sectoral approach to vaccination. The issue of uptake, and requirements, would be considered as required.

7. AOCB

Mr McDowall mentioned that the Committee could meet at an earlier time due to working from home.

Mr McIntosh asked Mr McDowall for feedback on his report.

8. Papers to be agreed for publication

There being no further competent business, the Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.