

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Actions from the meeting of the Regional Board meeting
held in the Boardroom at the Scottish Borders Campus at 5.30pm on
Thursday 22 June 2023.

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
35/23	Drafting of a more definitive role for the Honorary Fellow of the College.	R McCowan	
35/23	Follow up with BCSA regarding potential ways to involve the Honorary Fellow with students	A-M Sturrock	
45/23	Further discussion required at Chairs' Committee regarding the Risk Register	R McCowan	
51/23	Review and submit Board Papers for publication	I Earp	

**BORDERS COLLEGE
REGIONAL BOARD**

Meeting of the Regional Board held at 5.30pm on Thursday 22 June 2023
in the Boardroom at the Scottish Borders Campus

ITEM	MINUTE
<p>Present:</p> <p>In Attendance:</p>	<p>Ray McCowan (Chair) Pete Smith (Principal) Andrew Buckenham Vernice Key Ugo Mbaezue Carol Gillie Bernie Quinn Lynn Mirley Paul Cathrow Ann McKerracher Jess McBeath Samantha Hamilton-Green (Via Teams) Philip MacDonald</p> <p>Christopher Alder (Vice President for Education - Borders College Students' Association) Micah Hall (Vice President for Activities & Wellbeing - Borders College Students' Association) Anne-Marie Sturrock (Vice Principal - Student Experience) Jane Grant (Executive Director - Enterprise & Business Innovation) Kirsty Robb (Vice Principal - Finance & Corporate Services) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary) Suzie Hartley (Minutes)</p>
27/23	<p>Chair's Opening Remarks The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.</p>
28/23	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Dave Roberts and it was noted that Paul McGreal recently submitted his resignation from the Board, with immediate effect and was therefore not in attendance.</p>
29/23	<p>Minutes of previous meeting held on 9 March 2023 (Paper A) The minutes from 9 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.</p>
30/23 10/23	<p>Matters Arising The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed with the majority of actions completed and the following updates provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Mental Health Agreement – Health & Safety Committee Self-harming incident to be reviewed in line with Safe-guarding Policy. - Timelines for actions to be progressed. - Board Members to be given access to the Safeguarding training module. <p>All self-harming is reported through Safe-guarding policy. Board members have been set up and now have access to safeguarding training module. COMPLETED.</p>

11/23	Scottish Borders Campus Risk to be added to Strategic Risk Register. Risk register currently under review with note to add as a risk. – this will be discussed during the meeting today.
12/23	Board Committee Schedule would be updated accordingly as per comments made. COMPLETED.
31/23	Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest/Register of Interests Update No items were raised.
32/23	<p>Funding Streams Presentation (J Grant) J Grant, Executive Director – Enterprise and Business Innovation (E&BI) gave a presentation on Non-Core funding opportunities. The key points noted were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - College continue to benefit from relationships throughout the regions including Borderlands and are leading in conversations with local Councils. - Opportunities for national and international programmes via relationships with other educational institutions. - Economic innovation and levelling up continue to be at the core. - The Regional Economic review ensures funding is specifically targeted and distributed where needed. The College benefits from sitting in between two economical groups. - Withers Review due in August and the implications of this will become clear. - Focus on current funding streams as well as future opportunities in the short, medium and longer term and the next strategies for 2022-25, 2030/45/50 – the City Deal timeline runs from 2021-2041. <p>Current funding streams include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared Prosperity Fund (I) in the region of £500k - beginning of Borderlands (two years until start to see funding come through). - Shared Prosperity Fund (II) – hope for this to expand. - Proposals in for Rural/Land Based. - Flexible Workforce development - Commercial courses - a small number to continues to run every year. - Increased online programme offerings to cater for the changing post-Covid landscape. - HCI DDI and the City Region Deal – the College are well placed to have programmes ready to start up. - Innovation vouchers - Sponsorship - various bids are being considered. <p>Total capital and revenue for the next 1-10 years is hoped to be in the region of £5.8m. The unknowns around whether this is achievable and the risks were acknowledged. The College aim to keep enough volume, activity and discussion going and continue with research and focus on strategic plans to maximise achievement. The need to be cautious was recognised however given capacity and restraints.</p> <p>Questions/comments; A member queried the regionality of funding streams and whether there is a conflict between this and the College looking to reach more widely. Executive Director, E&BI confirmed that doing both is possible, however, capacity will dictate what is achievable.</p>

	<p>A member felt it positive that a variety of income streams are being explored but wanted to know more about individual opportunities and the risk associated and also about partnership working to reduce risk. Members were reassured that much of the Colleges work involves partnership collaboration – for example, the City Region Deal. The College are also leading in terms of working with other colleges and collaborating on large scale projects. “2 for 1” and “oven ready” projects are also being pursued – successful evidence can be seen in the Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>
<p>33/23</p>	<p>Draft Annual Budget 23/24 & Financial Forecast Return (Paper B) The Chair acknowledged the collective efforts of colleagues to prepare the draft budget in extremely complex and turbulent conditions.</p> <p>VP Finance & Corporate Services agreed it had been very challenging and recognised the hard work of SLT and Finance colleagues in generating ideas to prepare a Flat Cash position with a 10% reduction in credits. The main points noted were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three budget scenarios produced; Optimistic, Realistic and Pessimistic and assumptions for each scenario are detailed in Appendix A of the paper. - The recommended budget for 2023/24 is based on the realistic budget scenario and produces a balanced Adjusted Operating Result for year one. - An optimistic budget would result in a surplus of £342k and Pessimistic would lead to a £1m deficit. - Work continues to bridge the gap for year 2 (2021/25) and 3 (2025/26). - A review of support functions is due to start by the end of June 2023 - Plans are being developed for the rationalisation of the estate and improvements to efficiencies. - Curriculum delivery and increased commercialisation opportunities continue to be explored and developed. <p>Members were asked to approve the budget for 23/24 and the FFR submission to the SFC, contained within Appendix B, and to note the future years budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p> <p>Questions/comments; A member asked whether the delay to the resulting of qualifications due to ASOS would have financial implications. It was explained that the budgets are based on the volume of students rather than results and therefore there are no short-term financial implications.</p> <p>A member requested more detail on the risks and mitigations and how the College are prepared and also asked what future savings will be delivered. VP Finance & Corporate Services noted that the two main risks are pay awards, which are monitored on an ongoing basis and the increase of the Colleges external income. It is proposed to break the latter down and have a separate risk for non-core income and robust monitoring of this. In terms of savings for future years, upcoming projects are hoped to generate savings but these are not yet quantifiable. The member questioned whether this is realistic. Members were reminded that this is not a financial plan but is based on assumptions and that there are several other upcoming factors that could have significant implications, including the outcome of the Withers Review, Heriot Watt University potentially moving offsite and a review of the funding model - discussions are currently underway in relation to these. The chair acknowledged the difficulties in</p>

	<p>reflecting the unknowns and likely future deficits within the budget and felt there is a degree of certainty that all sides are covered and that risks are being managed as best as can be. Members were also reminded that approving the budget will allow departmental budgets to be allocated.</p> <p>A member asked about staffing implications and how this compares with other colleges. Table 5 in the report details percentages and compared to other colleges, our percentage is quite low.</p>
<p>34/23</p>	<p>Award of Catering Contract (Paper C)</p> <p>The current catering contract with Baxter Storey was due for renewal by end of July this year. This is a joint service with Heriot Watt University and forms part of the SLA. An external expert was consulted to seek the views of HWU and College users and an open day held for interested bidders. Two bids were considered from Baxter Storey and Aramac. Baxter Storey was deemed as the preferred choice and have pledged to absorb potential losses and make improvements to service quality. The recommendation was approved at the last Campus Management Committee and suggested service improvements are detailed within the report.</p> <p>A member queried the intention to remove the client subsidy and whether this would lead to a price increase for users. Reassurance was given that prices will not rise and that improvements to quality can be achieved by increasing footfall. The chair asked members of BCSA for their thoughts on the current service. BCSA Vice President for Education, C Alder suggested having multiple price options to create more affordability. M Hall, BCSA Vice President for Activities & Wellbeing wanted to see more vegetarian options. These suggestions have been put forward to Baxter Storey and will form part of the new contract. In addition to this, free breakfasts will continue, an evening offer will be made available and a Liaison Officer post will be put in place.</p> <p>Members were happy to approve the paper.</p>

<p>35/23</p>	<p>Honorary Fellow of the College 2023 (Paper D) Jodie Millar was awarded the role last year. The Principal proposed offering this year to Chris Ball with an alternative choice of Bruce Aitchison (a prominent member of the local sporting community)</p> <p>A member queried how names are brought forward. It was noted that historically, they come through SLT or board members. A member raised concern that there are potentially people who are equally as deserving but aren't being recognised or considered, for example those helping with food banks. The Chair acknowledged this whilst highlighting that the best decision is made with the information known at the time.</p> <p>Members suggested providing a short description about what a fellow is / the purpose of the role, which may help widen the search and align with College values. It was suggested to put this on the agenda for the March Board meeting and to compile a list to bring back in June. The Chair agreed to draft a more definitive role.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Chair</p> <p>Discussion took place around expectations of the role and associated duties. It was noted that the Fellow usually gives a speech at graduation. C Alder suggested involving them in the induction process to encourage and motivate new students and to also be visible to students who don't attend Graduation. The Principal highlighted that they can't obligate but can certainly ask. A member raised that nominees could be deterred from accepting the role if told they need to attend events or make speeches. Vice Principal - Student Experience will follow up with BCSA.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Vice Principal - Student Experience</p> <p>Members were content to keep the process the same for this year and to approve the award of honorary fellow of the College for 2023.</p>
<p>36/23</p>	<p>Business Growth & Employer Engagement Strategy Update (Paper E) The Director for Enterprise and Business Innovation provided an overview of her report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance measure updates have been RAG rated in relation to risk. - CRM procurement is currently under review due to budget constraints and is rated amber. - DEBI are looking into free CRM solutions and will discuss further with S Moncrieff, IT & Digital. - MA contract is rated red due to a 13% reduction in places and subsequent inability to grow the provision. The college remain ready however to take on more starts later in the year. <p>A member queried the figures in the credits and money table and it was clarified that not all candidates are credit generating.</p>
<p>37/23</p>	<p>Borders College & International Development (Paper F) The paper is aimed at inviting further discussion around potential International Development for the College.</p> <p>The College are currently engaged in the Turing Scheme and plan to continue this, however, members were asked to consider further potential opportunities. The Erasmus scheme was suggested and also encouraging international fee-paying students, given the small numbers of UK fee paying students currently at the College. Concern was raised around the standards of education offered elsewhere for International Students and the ethics around quality and the significant resources required to support</p>

	<p>such students. It was highlighted that changes to immigration laws mean students can no longer bring their families with them to the UK. Language and leadership courses were suggested. It was acknowledged that International Students come with a significant risk and are not a 'financial panacea', however, if the right balance is found, this could potentially bring financial rewards. Short courses (2/3/4 months) have shown to be as effective as longer, credit bearing offerings. Members heard that the City of Glasgow College for example, franchise their programmes to other countries which produces high returns, it was agreed that quality would be the highest risk. Summer School and the opportunity to gain experience in tourism, hospitality and rural subjects was suggested and ESOL courses are popular too.</p> <p>The chair suggested carrying forward with the proposed plan with a degree of caution and to pursue low risk recommendations and low impact options. All members were in support of this approach.</p>
<p>38/23</p>	<p>Annual Strategic Priorities Update (Paper G)</p> <p>The table has been updated and there are some changes and progress to note from this year which will continue to be built upon.</p> <p>A member said they would like to see more measurable outcomes. The Principal agreed and advised they want to link this in more closely with the Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan and cut down on duplication.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the huge effort and work to date, particularly in relation to diversity, recruitment of disabled people and the work on early withdrawals amongst young people. The recent award won by Amy Brydon - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer was also acknowledged.</p>
<p>39/23</p>	<p>Principal's Report (Paper H)</p> <p>The Principal touched on some of the key highlights from his report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global citizenship is progressing - thanks were extended to A-M Sturrock for her update. - SFC Pathfinder work continues. Joint prospectus launches next week and a joint statement of strategic consent is being set up. - Innovation Vouchers – J Grant updated on this earlier in the meeting. - Think the unthinkable - four key principals identified; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Delivery - create pipeline into workforce, 2. Digital Transformation - working group started and how to deliver for Scotland considered including finding more ways for colleges to communicate and work better digitally together 3. Sharing services in relation to the delivery of courses and saving resources by having one or two colleges developing curricular material. 4. Workforce resilience and flexibility - National Bargaining on Pay and Conditions - position has not changed and the full and final offer remains. There are no further funds in the budget to cover an offer exceeding this amount and there is no government support available either. - KPI's in relation to the Colleges Credit Target, enrolments for 2023-24, financial outturn and staff turnover and sickness absence is noted in the report. <p>A member asked if student progress and satisfaction could be included. The Principal explained that most of these PI's are annual so it wouldn't make sense to include this in a quarterly report, however, he was happy to</p>

	<p>discuss further out with the meeting. Members felt it would be useful to include a benchmark.</p>
<p>40/23</p>	<p>Sustainability Strategy Update (Paper I) The report provides an update on the key activities of each workstream since the report to the Board on 1 December 2022. Some progress ratings have improved from red to amber and it is hoped to move more areas into green. It was also noted that the College have been nominated for an International Green Gown Award.</p> <p>VP Finance & Corporate Services summarised the progress made in each of the key areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbon management –application being drafted to remove gas boiler and replace with Heat Pump technology. - Waste management – new waste contract is in operation and will provide real data/KPI’s going forward. - Travel and transport - the College’s car fleet is now completely electric and additional charging points have been installed. Recruitment is commencing for a Walking and Cycling Officer. Procurement of two new, lower carbon minibuses is underway. - Procurement –development of action plan to measure sustainability of the College’s suppliers. - Curriculum – measurement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) and the implementation of Sustainability across the curriculum is being led by D Lowe, Assistant Principal, and will provide a baseline to set and monitor KPI’s. - Community - Short courses continue and a good uptake is noted. - Biodiversity – building of bug hotels at Newtown Campus, tree and hedge planting plans for Hawick and Galashiels Campuses now finalised. The College recently observed ‘No Mow May’. - Behavioural - sustainability champions to be trialled soon and the Sustainability Calendar continues on a rolling basis. <p>The Chair remarked on a great paper and thanked all involved for their hard work.</p> <p>A member asked whether the College are considering a blend of remote versus in-person learning from a sustainability point of view. VP Finance & Corporate Services advised that their annual report reviews carbon costs for students and highlighted the ongoing debate about what generates more carbon, being ‘on-site’ or at home. Quality of the student experience is also taken into consideration.</p>
<p>41/23</p>	<p>Board Developments and Documentation (Paper J) The paper reports on the progress made regarding feedback to the Chair from last year, highlights the actions and further work that remains to be done and acknowledges the developments taking place. Evidence of feedback and things to take forward are noted towards the end of the paper.</p> <p>Members were content to note the paper.</p>

42/23	<p>BCSA Annual Report (Paper K)</p> <p>Key points and proposed changes/improvements were highlighted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two 'Big Student Survey's' completed and findings are informing the work of BCSA. - Student Experience Committee's continue to be held regularly, took place in March and June this year and next scheduled for October 2023, February '24 and May '24. - Two Vice Presidents elected for Galashiels Campus and one for Newtown St Boswells. - Class representatives elected and in place since October 2022 and meeting regularly with classes to address arising issues. - Plans to introduce a Student Council of class reps with better training and support in place, aimed at improving the student voice. - Mental Health identified as a significant concern amongst students. Activities held in May for Mental Health Month to raise awareness, coordination of mental health training for student officers and a petition to 'Save Our Counsellors' signed by Student Officers.
43/23	<p>Learning for Leading Reports and Discussion (Paper L)</p> <p>Five reports were completed in total by the following Board members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B Quinn (Student Support Services) - Jess McBeath (Management Systems & IT) - Dave Roberts (Land Based) - Carol Gillie (Creative Industries) - Liz Parkes (STEM) - Ugonna Mbaezue (Marketing) <p>Staff feedback indicates that they welcome this interaction.</p> <p>It was agreed to bring this back to the next meeting for more discussion. Members were encouraged complete their visits when they receive their allocations.</p>
44/23	<p>Voluntary Severance Scheme Update (Paper M)</p> <p>The VS scheme has not concluded yet but is expected to close next week. The College will return a revised position on the cost implications of this in the Autumn.</p>
45/23	<p>Strategic Risk Register Presentation (K Robb)</p> <p>VP Finance & Corporate Services summarised the changes made to the register to review and simplify the current reporting and risk appetite. Some elements are low risk whilst bigger risks are required to meet budget requirements. It is proposed return to a more traditional method of stating risk, to undertake enhanced reporting on higher risk and monitor actions and identify any areas not being met. Agreement was sought from members to adopt the revised format and take this forward.</p> <p>A member queried if the register is updated dynamically. It was confirmed that the proposal is for quarterly monitoring and amending of actions so every meeting should be an opportunity to revise and amend. Members were reminded that this is a strategic and not an operational document.</p> <p>Discussion ensued around which committee would review the register. Members had mixed views and concerns were raised in terms of version control, should it go to each committee. The Principal proposed it should go in its entirety to the Audit Committee, then to Board every six months and undergo a 'deep dive' once per year. This was challenged by several members.</p>

	<p>Agreement was reached on the revised look/format but an action taken for further discussion to take place at the Chairs Committee around the best way forward in respect of which Committee will review the document.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: RM</p>
46/23	<p>Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Annual Report 22-23 (Paper N) Not discussed due to time constraints.</p>
47/23	<p>Board Secretary’s Report (Paper O) Not discussed due to time constraints.</p>
48/23	<p>Reports from Committee Chairs: None of the reports were discussed due to time constraints.</p> <p><u>Chairs’ Committee (Paper P)</u></p> <p><u>Finance & Resources Committee (Paper Q)</u></p> <p><u>Audit Committee (Paper R)</u></p> <p><u>Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience (Paper S)</u></p>
49/23	<p>Standing Items</p> <p><u>Health & Safety</u> No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion</u> No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Environmental & Sustainability</u> No items were raised.</p>
50/23	<p>Agenda Items for Next Meeting Not discussed.</p>
51/23	<p>Board Papers for Publication I Earp will review and submit items for publication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Secretary</p>
52/23	<p>Any Other Business No items were raised.</p>
53/23	<p>Date of Next Meeting 17.30 on Thursday 26 October 2023 at Scottish Borders Campus</p>

Signed:.....

Chair

Signed:.....

Board Secretary