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BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD



Actions from the
Meeting of the Regional Board held at 5.30pm on
Thursday 22 April 2021

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
03/21	The challenges faced by the College in collaborating with the universities will be discussed off line.	SFC/A Cox	Ongoing
28/21	The Audit Committee will follow up with the points raised as recommendations of the External Effectiveness Review and the Chair will report back to the Board.	P Scrimger	
29/21	The Registers of Interest will be updated accordingly.	SMcColm	Complete

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD



Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Regional Board
held on Thursday 22 April 2021 at 5.30 pm

ITEM	MINUTE
Present:	<p>Elaine Acaster (Interim Chair) Angela Cox (Principal) Bryan McGrath Nuala Broderick Liz Parkes David Peace Jess McBeath David Johnson Paul Scrimger Carol Gillie Paul Cathrow Lynn Mirley Dave Black (Academic staff member) Jen MacKenzie (Support staff member) Ann Letham (Student member) Sally Stephanie Prentice (Student member)</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Heather Anderson Vice Principal, Curriculum & Student Services) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary) Sheila McColm (Minutes) Clare Nairn, Head of Student Services Andrew Kirkness, AP Finance</p>
24/21	<p>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The Interim Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Both Andrew Kirkness and Clare Nairn were welcomed to the meeting and invited to stay as long they wanted.</p> <p>The Interim Chair informed the Board of Virginia Grant's decision to stand down from the Board with immediate effect. A previous staff member, long term Board member and Senior Independent Member, Virginia brought a wealth of experience to the Board and contributed widely across the College. The Interim Chair has written to thank her for her contribution over the years.</p> <p>Sally Prentice, student member, was congratulated on being elected as Student President for session 2021-22. Sally will take up the role on 18 June 2021.</p> <p>Board members have received the SFC Sustainability Phase Two report. The Phase Three report, due to be published in the summer will focus on the impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Board has been receiving regular updates around the College's safe return from lockdown which are appreciated.</p>

25/21	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services, Hazel Robertson.</p>
26/21	<p>STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PRESENTATION</p> <p>The Head of Student Services, Clare Nairn, gave a presentation of the work of the Wellbeing and Learning Support teams, detailing the types of issues being dealt with, case studies and student feedback.</p> <p>The Interim Chair thanked the Head of Student Services and their team for this moving presentation. The team's phenomenal caseload and their "above and beyond" service to students was noted.</p> <p>The presentation will be shared and Board members are invited to contact the Head of Student Services offline with any questions.</p>
27/21	<p>MINUTES OF REGIONAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2021 (Paper A)</p> <p>Further to following amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Item 04/21 – First bullet point to read: The language used in the report reflects views of Board Members. This is a Report and not an Audit in the traditional sense.</p> <p>Item 08/21 – VP Curriculum job title to be amended.</p>
28/21	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The Audit Committee will follow up with the points raised as recommendations of the External Effectiveness Review and the Chair will report back to the Board.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: PS</p>
29/21	<p>DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST/REGISTER OF INTERESTS UPDATE</p> <p>There were no declarations of any conflict of interest.</p> <p>The Interim Chair reported on their recent appointment as Vice Chair of the Court of QMU.</p> <p>L Mirley advised that they will take up a new post with Eildon Housing in June.</p> <p>D Johnson has joined the Board of Directors of a veterinary management group.</p> <p>The Registers of Interest will be updated accordingly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: SMc</p>

<p>30/31</p>	<p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Paper B)</p> <p>The Principal presented their report and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance remains strong despite the challenging environment. • Student recruitment for 2021-22 is a potential area of concern which staff are working to mitigate. • Discussions are ongoing with SFC around innovation and digital infrastructure. • The EIS dispute continues although some progress has been made. Approximately 24 Borders College staff have participated in each strike day. Staff have worked hard to mitigate the impact of the strike. The Principal and Assistant Principal met with managing agents SECCT and CITB to assure them that mitigations are in place to avoid disruption to apprentices. • The Great Places to Work survey achieved an overall score of 75% of staff considering the College a 'Great Place to Work'. Considering the difficult period the report covers and the extra challenges all staff have faced this is a very good result. There was variation in scores across individual areas and targeted responses will be implemented depending on the needs of each area. The ongoing delays with the national support staff job evaluation, which started in 2018, may have had some impact on certain scores. • In response to questions from Members, the Principal advised that a more detailed report of the Survey will be presented to the F&GP Committee, and an action plan individual to particular departments or groups will be developed. <p>The Board recognised, and thanked staff for their continued commitment during this challenging period.</p>
<p>31/21</p>	<p>IMPACT OF COVID UPDATE</p> <p>The VP Curriculum and Student Services provided a presentation on the impact of COVID on student completions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a minimum 3-week gap in easing restrictions. • Additional funding has been made available. • Self testing kits will be available from 26 April for staff and students. • From 26 April almost 29% of learners from the three top priority groups will be allowed on campus. • 63% of students will be able to complete online. • 0.4% will not complete. • The financial impact is an overall £5k adverse financial position. <p>Clarification was provided on the following points raised by Board members:</p> <p>The majority of students are keen to get back on campus to complete their practical work. Testing is helping to boost confidence around returning. Due to the additional funding received it has been possible to double the amount of time allocated to skills development. The awarding bodies have altered some of the assessment requirements, which is helpful.</p> <p>The vast majority of students have had a 'satisfactory' experience with courses involving hands-on, practical learning affected more than others in terms of campus access. The Student Support Services team will be back on campus from 26 April.</p>

	<p>For staff, it is recognised that returning to campus could be a daunting prospect for some and ongoing support will be available to help with this. It is also recognised that, going forward, there is a balance to be struck between working from home and being on campus.</p>
<p>32/21</p>	<p>STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (Paper C)</p> <p>The Principal presented the Risk Register and advised that risk levels remain unchanged from the previous meeting and no new risks have been established.</p> <p>The VP Finance and Corporate Services will update the Board in due course regarding the continued development of the new style of Risk Register.</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>
<p>33/21</p>	<p>MID-YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW 2021 (Paper D)</p> <p>The AP Finance presented the mid-year review and financial forecast for July 2021 and summarised the highlights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College is forecast to have a surplus of £50k against the original projection of £67k. • An additional grant of £280k was received from SFC for COVID consequentials. • Target savings of £772k for the year have been achieved. • Main variances in income and expenditure have been identified. A rates increase due to under accrual from the previous year has resulted in a £44k increase this year. • The Melrose Road site has sold for £280k against a book value of £300k in the balance sheet. • The cashflow position remains strong and is £260k ahead of the FFR position. <p>There were a number of questions from Members.</p> <p>The first question was whether or not the savings are recurrent or one off. Part of the savings will be recurrent due to reshaping of the curriculum and workforce. Some of the savings also included an increase in income targets, much of which will be recurring, eg apprentices. There will, however, be challenges going into next year where more savings are required.</p> <p>Another question related to any threat to external income. The AP Finance replied that the scenario around European funding will cause pressure but it is anticipated that there will be other opportunities for commercial funding.</p> <p>A final question was about the impact of pay awards and pension changes. Pension changes and staff salary increases through national bargaining continue to be relative unknowns, however an agreed % is applied when planning the budget overall.</p> <p>The AP Finance was thanked for their presentation and the positive position was noted and commended.</p>

34/21	<p>ANNUAL KEY PRIORITIES PROGRESS REPORT (Paper E)</p> <p>The Principal provided an update on progress against the Strategic Priorities, agreed by the Board in June 2020, in order to realise the new Strategic Ambition.</p>
	<p>Some actions have been delayed or restricted due to COVID, but good progress has been made overall.</p> <p>This continues as a work in progress and the Board will receive a summary report before Strategic Priorities are agreed for academic session 2021-22.</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>
35/21	<p>BOARD SECRETARY'S UPDATE (Paper F)</p> <p>The Board Secretary presented their report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any suggestions for Board strategic sessions will be welcomed. • Two members of teaching staff will attend the meeting on 17 June to discuss the challenges of the past year. • The online election for Support Staff member is almost ready for circulation. • A process for sharing and circulation of Board papers will be progressed over the summer to be in place for next academic session. <p>The Interim Chair reported that an indication is expected from the Scottish Government in early/mid May of how the process for appointment of Chairs will be taken forward.</p>
36/21	<p>REGIONAL BOARD OPERATIONAL AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN (Paper G)</p> <p>The Board Secretary presented the Board Development and Enhancement Plan, which includes the recommendations of the EER report.</p> <p>A list of acronyms has been added, along with other information to the Resources section of the website.</p> <p>Feedback from Board strategic sessions has been positive and any suggestions for future sessions will be welcomed.</p>
37/21	<p>BCSA UPDATE (Paper H)</p> <p>The Student President presented an update on activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Digital Communities Coordination and Student Engagement Officer posts have been filled and will commence on 8 May for an intense 8 week period. • Collection of student feedback has proven more difficult online. There is concern from some students about being able to complete this AY, and the potential impact of the strike action. • Board members are welcome to join a virtual student and staff award afternoon on 27 May.

38/21	<p>REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS</p> <p><u>Finance & General Purposes Committee (Paper I)</u> Draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 February were received.</p> <p><u>Curriculum & Quality Committee (Paper J)</u></p> <p>Draft minutes of the meeting of 18 February were received. The Committee received an enjoyable and very useful presentation from the Equalities Officer. The focus of the next meeting will be around achievement and enrolments for the 2021-22.</p>
39/21	<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>
40/21	<p>AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Any suggested agenda items should be forwarded to the Board Secretary.</p>
41/21	<p>BOARD PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION</p> <p>Only those papers marked for publication will be posted on the website. No draft papers or those that are commercially sensitive will be published.</p>
42/21	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>No further business was raised.</p> <p>The Interim Chair thanked Board members for their contribution and attendance.</p>
43/21	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting of the Regional Board will take place on Thursday 17 June 2021.</p>

Signed:.....
Chair

Signed:.....
Board Secretary