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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Subject: Board Self-Evaluation and Development and Enhancement Plan	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☒
Prepared by: Ingrid Earp	**Date: 17 October 2022**

Purpose: To provide Board with the results of the Self-Evaluation Survey and the resulting Board Development and Enhancement Plan for 2022/23.

Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland

Performance Measures: Recogise nationally as a progressive organisation

Linked to Strategic Risk Register: New Risk (outwith themes)

New Risk Commentary:

Executive Summary:

The annual Board Self-Evaluation Survey was undertaken during June 2022. A response rate of 57% was achieved and thanks is extended to those who took the time to respond. This, along with individual Board Member annual reviews carried out by the Chair, forms the basis of the Board Development and Enhancement Plan.

Any items that had responses at four or below in the Self-Evaluation Survey are included as an item for action in the Plan.

A particular challenge in drawing up the Plan is to balance the requests from Board Members to help enable them to undertake the role of Board Member to their full potential with the aim of not to over burden Board Members. Feedback from Members would be welcome on how best to achieve this.

The collated results of the Self-Evaluation Survey are attached along with comparison with the previous year results, as well as the Board Development and Enhancement Plan.

Recommendation: Members to note Plan and provide any feedback to the Board Secretary.

Previous Committee Approvals:

For publication ☐	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☒

Regional Board Self Evaluation 2021-22 to inform Development and Enhancement plan for 2022-23

1. Background and Introduction

The *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges*[1] *("the Code")* has been developed and is owned by the college sector. The Code establishes standards of good governance practice for all boards, and provides the essential foundations for compliance within the legislative framework. The Board must also comply with all other statutory requirements.

The Code requires that Boards "have in place a robust self-evaluation process" which should comprise an annual internal review and an externally facilitated effectiveness review every three years.

The following is an analysis of the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires returned for 2021-22. In total there were eight returned questionnaires, a response rate of 57%.

The questionnaire answers were ranked from one to six with one being Low/Disagree and six being High/Agree.

The overall responses were positive with 63% of responses being the highest ranking comparable to 57% in the previous year. There were 1.6% of responses scored at three or below, again comparable to the 1.5% of the previous year. All responses provided a response to each question.

Generally response ratings were similar to the previous year although that was significantly lower than the year previous to that. The knock-on effects of the COVID Pandemic continued in to 2021-22 and we did not start having Board meetings back on campus until March 2022.

We had a new Chair start on the 1 February 2022, two Member resignations during the year due to work/lifestyle commitments and two Board Members terms of office came to an end. The Principal resigned towards the end of the academic year, the Vice-Principal for Curriculum retired in April after many years of service to the College and the Vice-Principal Finance and Corporate Services also resigned towards the end of the academic year.

[1] Code-of-Good-Governance-for-Scotland's-Colleges-August-2016.pdf

2. Vision and Strategy

87.5% of responses were at points five and six, compared to 85% the previous year.

The statement that received the lowest ratings was statement four relating to strategic reviews and scenario planning, as it was the previous year, indicating a continued requirement to focus on this.

Comments

Financial forecasts and scenario planning considered by Finance & General Purposes Committee and Board.
Although scenario planning has been agreed to be incorporated it is still finding its way into regular use.
Strategic aims are embedded throughout e.g. financial and risk reporting but I'm not sure that our discussions look at overall performance against each aim rather than focusing on the detail.

3. Corporate and Social Responsibility

All responses for 2022 are at points five and six. 87.5% were ranked the highest up from 54.5% the previous year.

The Board Secretary will continue to regularly remind Members of the Code of Conduct and the Nine Principles of Public Life.

Comments

The Board is regularly reminded of its obligations and all members are cognisant of and demonstrate appropriate behaviours and considerations.

4. Student Engagement

Overall, the scores for this section are good but a reduction on the previous year when 93% were ranked five and six against 87.5% in the current year.

A new student member will join in Autumn 2022 and as usual the full support of the Board Secretary and the Student Mentor will be available. Timing of student member recruitment is not ideal with regard to training and induction.

Comments

Student Rep engagement has been slightly more challenging this year due to one representative have hearing issues and also due to the ongoing issues brought about by the pandemic. I think we still have a little bit of work to do to ensure board is listening to the student voice.
I think I've found it hard to hear the student voice as much as I had expected.

5. Learning and Teaching/Student Support

Responses at level five and six are very similar to the previous. This section had the highest number of responses at scores of three or four.

Comments

The curriculum and quality committee spends a lot of time considering 'other' wraparound policies and not the quality of the learning experience – what happens in classrooms, the quality of the VLE etc.
I am not sure about student targets and teaching performance. I have little oversight of this at the Board.
Board have repeatedly demonstrated that the student experience is at the core of decision making by expressing regularly that the "raison d'etre" of the college is the students.
I would like to ensure we fully understand the student experience.

6. Accountability and Delegation; Risk and Audit

Again, the top scores of five and six are very similar year on year however with none rated at two or three for the current year suggesting a slight improvement at the lower end of the scale.

Comments

Policy on publication of papers unless confidential, disclosure of interests at each meeting, easy to read and informative annual reports. Effective committee structure, risk register reviewed at each meeting. Training and planning for risk mitigations, e.g. cybersecurity. Audit Committee and plans.
It is a small point but increasingly with newer board members some of the discussion recommendations reach into leadership which is delegated to the Principal. This is most often through people trying to be helpful but not fully understanding what is already in place.
My comments reflect the need to review the role of the Board governance committees.
Board can be a little too SLT led when new decisions are called for, in that challenge to SLT papers is sometimes not overly robust. Delegation to appropriate committees has recently been questioned but works well. Risk management has and continues to undergo review but is superior to a few years ago.
I don't feel during the past year that I've contributed to decision making more that we've monitored performance and activity. However, this may reflect the point at which I joined the Board and where the College is within the delivery of its strategy.

7. Remuneration, Sustainability and Staff Governance

An improvement in all areas against the previous year, in general. A change to some Committee Terms of Reference and inclusion of new staffing reports should hopefully address the scoring of the 'fair and effective management of staff' comment.

Comments

As a Board member I have no oversight of the management of staff.
Might be useful to remind Board of their responsibilities as trustees. Could do this as part of induction of the 5 new members.

8. Post Holder Effectiveness

Scores are similar to the previous year, where there is a reduction it may reflect the change in Board membership.

Comments

The Board works well together, and the Interim and newly appointed Chairs have provided leadership and direction.
With a new Chair and number of new board members I think some teambuilding would be beneficial but the mix of skills are good.
Board skills mix has been recognised to be slightly light on financial expertise and every effort has been made to rectify this and to increase minority representation in Board recruitment.
I am really looking forward to in person meetings returning as I think this will enable better leverage of the skills mix in the Board.

9. Board Member Development and Evaluation

Again, a very similar result to the previous year however for the current year all scores are at level five or six.

Comments

Positions are advertised and appointments made based on merit and the skills necessary. There is a process for induction and development including internal and external courses, e.g. CDN Board induction courses. Board Members submit self-evaluations of the Board's effectiveness and that of the Chair annually, and there are one to ones with the Chair to evaluate individual performance.
Board member development is offered continuously, but not always taken up. Effectiveness of the Board is regularly reviewed internally but maybe more of an external view could be sought more regularly.

10. Partnership Working

Overall an improvement on the previous years with a slight change downwards regarding learner provision and industry needs.

Comments

There are well established fora for working with stakeholders and partners, including South of Scotland Enterprise. The Board contributes to the Regional Outcome Agreement.
Communication with stakeholders is left to SLT and only reported back to Board but it is effective and stakeholders are happy with system. Learning provision is reactionary rather than proactive due to the nature of course funding. Only when there is scope to freely develop new courses as and when requested by industry/in consultation with industry can we say that the provision is truly relevant to industry needs.

BORDERS COLLEGE

Board Development and Enhancement Plan 2022-23

Regionally Focused — Globally Engaged

The feedback received from the Board Self-Evaluation which takes place in May/June each year, and outcomes from individual Board Member reviews with the Chair inform the content of the Plan.

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2022)
1	**Vision and Strategy**				
	The Board regularly reviews performance against the strategic aims.	Board will have clear reference points regarding the College progression across the year(s) against the Strategic Ambition which is now agreed and is in place until 2025, as well as the supporting strategies.	Regular reporting and discussion of progression of strategies is scheduled into all meeting agendas.	Chair/Principal/ Board Secretary	All College strategies have been assigned to a supporting Committee or will report to the Board as a whole. Each strategy will be reported on at least twice a year with progress against objectives and performance indicators clearly indicated in relevant papers.
	The Board undertakes regular strategic reviews/scenario planning, and ensures the College strategy is aligned to the regional strategies of stakeholder organisations. (Also in the previous year's Plan).	Scenario planning, and evidence of, will provide Board with reassurance that the challenges of the upcoming years have been considered and planned for as much as possible.	Dedicate time for scenario planning away from regular meetings to allow focus on specific items (and agree what this commitment will look like in terms of days/hours). Organise a planning day at least once per year with clear agenda agreed beforehand. Consider use of facilitator.	Chair/Board Secretary Chair/Principal /Board Secretary	Consider identifying dedicated time for scenario planning reporting. Next planning day scheduled for 10 November. Agenda is progressing. Think ahead to future days, spacing and timings. Demands on Board Member's time to be balanced.

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2022)
		Regular strategic information and discussion sessions, some with key stakeholders, will ensure coherence across all sectors.		Chair/Principal/Board Secretary	Introduction of an item in all Board meetings to focus solely on a strategic area, such as the curriculum offering, is being trialled.
2	**Student Engagement and Student Board Member Participation** Student Members are active at Board level, and the Board and Committees pay close regard to Student Member participation. (Also in the previous year's plan).	Student Board Members feel empowered and able to contribute fully to Board business and are encouraged to undertake this with the needs and requirements of the student body in mind.	Continued and ongoing support for student members from the Student Mentor. Encouragement from Board Secretary to attend training where possible. Review of timings for recruitment of student Board Members. The current process means that usually at least one student Board Member each year misses the specific student focused CDN Board Member Training. They also tend to join very near to the first Board Meeting allowing little time for induction.	Student Mentor/Board Secretary	

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2022)
3	**Learning and Teaching/Student Support** Learning and Teaching performance is overseen effectively, challenging student success targets are set and the student experience is central to Board decisions. (Also in the previous year's plan).	Board receives a more rounded view of the learner experience. Board is reassured that targets are ambitious and achievable.	Continued focus on improving the presentation and content of papers to allow Members to 'see the wood for the trees' Comprehensive reports from CQC to full Board.	VP for Student Experience/Chair of CQC/Board Secretary	Future Skills Strategy reporting directly to CQC with update at least twice per year. Remind all Board Members that they can attend CQC even if not an official Committee Member.
4	**Accountability and Delegation; Risk and Audit** All also in the previous year's plan.	The Board is assured that all policies and procedures are adhered to and that audit and risk management practices are comprehensive and clearly reported.	New Chair of Audit Committee to continue to drive for improvement in and maintain compliance and levels of assurance required across the Board. Comprehensive report to Board from Audit Committee. Revised Terms of Reference to be agreed, approved and implemented.	VP Finance and Corporate Services/Committee Chairs/Principal	Carried forward from previous year - Revised Risk Register to be reviewed for effectiveness and usability after 12 months or so. New Chair of Audit Committee in place with wide ranging and extensive Audit and Finance experience.

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2022)
5	**Remuneration, Sustainability and Staff Governance** The Board prioritises the fair and effective management of staff.	Board has more information and a wider picture regarding staff and their management. Increased awareness of the strategic impact of any changes in this area.	Regular updates against the Workforce Strategy reporting progress against performance indicators and strategic objectives. Inclusion of the oversight of compliance with the College Staff Governance Standard and the implementation of National Bargaining into F&GP Terms of Reference. Regular updates from the Great Places to Work (GPTW) scheme and staff surveys.	Head of HR Head of HR/Chair of F&GP Head of HR	Amended ToR to be approved.
6	**Post Holder Effectiveness** The Board Chair promotes open discussion on strategic matters.	Board feels able to contribute fully to any discussion and are assured they are being given every opportunity to provide input into strategic matters.	Time set aside at each Board Meeting for an indepth discussion of a particular strategic matter, ie the curriculum offering.	Chair /Principal	This being trialled over the coming year. Amount of time available may be a challenge.

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2022)
	The Board works well as a team and has a good mix of skills.	Board work well together towards common goals with appreciation of fellow members' skills, experience and knowledge.	Use the Board Away Day to undertake some group work. Appraisal of current skills mix and any gaps identified, prior to a round of Member recruitment.	Chair/Principal/Board Secretary Chair/Board Secretary	The planning day in November will be on campus and in person. All Board meetings to be in person. Board Member recruitment due to get underway in November.
7	**Partnership Working** The Board ensures effective communication with stakeholders. Learner provision is relevant to industry needs.	Members and stakeholders have increased awareness of the role of each other and the impact they can make. Board is assured the College is aware of Regional and stakeholder requirements and the curriculum is flexible and responsive.	All parties invited to College events, to allow for, and encourage interaction. Hold specific events for stakeholders and Board Members to meet. Clarity in reporting of these areas to Committees and Board. Make clear the work the College has undertaken to meet industry needs.	Chair/Principal/Board Secretary Principal Principal/VP Student Experience	