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Regional Board Report

Subject: Principal's Report	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☒ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: P D Smith, Principal & CEO	**Date of Meeting:** 22 June 2023

Purpose: To update the Regional Board on matters of interest not reported elsewhere

Executive Summary:
Key items:
This report provides the Board with updates, including the following: -
Rural and Landbased pathfinder Project
Innovation Vouchers
Awards and Accreditation
Immersive Classroom
Curriculum Planning and Performance
Turing Project
"Think the Unthinkable"
Education Scotland Review of Modern Apprenticeships
National Bargaining on Pay and Conditions
Job Evaluation
Key Performance Indicators
External Engagement

Questions that Members should ask themselves when reading the paper:

n/a

Linked to Strategic Ambition(s):
Choose an item.
n/a
Choose an item.

Performance Measures:
Choose an item.
n/a
Choose an item.

Linked to Strategic Risk Register:
Choose an item.
n/a
Choose an item.

Recommendation: Paper is for discussion

Previous Committee Approvals: n/a	
For publication ☒	**Not for publication** ☐ **If not, why not?**

REGIONAL BOARD

22 June 2023

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper is summarises College activities not reported elsewhere, as well as items which may be of general interest to the Board, including external engagements undertaken by the Principal and CEO. It also provides an update on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

2.0 MATTERS OF INTEREST

2.1 Embedding Global Citizenship

2.1.1 Global Citizenship recognition was introduced at Borders College as a part of our Future Skills Strategy and the campaign was launched in August 2022 for both staff and students.

2.1.2 Our Global Citizenship Awards recognise staff and student development in the skills that allow them become to "Global Citizens", themed around "4 R's": Responsible, Respectful, Resilient, and Recognised.

2.1.3 All staff teams within the College have devised their individual Global Citizenship team plan and have also introduced 'Inclusive Leadership' training for all leaders within the college.

2.1.4 During college induction we introduced a 'Respect & Resilience Campaign' (In line with Scottish Government's 'Thriving Learners Campaign'. We believe this contributed to a reduction in early withdrawals.

2.1.5 All full-time students have undertaken 'Sustainability & Me' and 'Global Citizenship' Units as part of their course. This provides students with knowledge of how our environment is affected by our behaviours.

2.1.6 We have introduced a nomination form for both staff and students, enabling them to nominate an individual who should be recognised for their improvement in one of the 4R's. We hold a 'Celebration event' for staff and students and provide a Global Citizen Certificate and Pin for nominees.

2.1.7 Global Citizenship is within our self-evaluation processes and for next academic will be included within team operational plans. At our Education Scotland review in November 2022 our campaign was highlighted as an area of good practice.

2.2 SFC Pathfinder

2.2.1 The College has now completed Stage 1 of the Landbased Pathfinder project with Scottish Funding Council (SFC), South of Scotland Enterprise and SRUC, delivering a joint prospectus in Rural and Landbased Studies for the South of Scotland. This ensures achievable learner pathways for students and has already realised some positive curriculum developments to enhance articulation, retain talent and address workforce planning for the landbased sector in the South of Scotland. A launch event has been scheduled for 29 June 2023.

2.2.2 We are also working with SRUC to agree a Joint Statement of Strategic Intent to deliver rural and landbased skills for the South of Scotland

2.2 Innovation Vouchers

2.2.1 Since my last report, we have now been awarded a total of seven innovation vouchers, making us the sector leader in this. We are still agreeing the scope of the most recent three vouchers.

2.3 Scotland's Innovation Strategy

2.3.1 The Scottish Government have just published their Innovation Strategy:

https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-innovation-strategy/

The Strategy includes a 'vision... for Scotland to be one of the most innovative small nations in the world.' This chimes with our own strategy to be one of the most innovative colleges in Scotland.

2.3.2 The strategy highlights key markets with 4 broad innovation themes on which future activity and funding will focus: energy transition, health & life sciences, data & digital technologies and advanced manufacturing. These are key areas of expertise and growth for Borders College. This, and our Innovation Voucher programme, puts the College in a strategically important place for funding associated with the Strategy and the realignment of innovation funds alluded to in the SFC Tertiary Review.

2.4 Awards and Accreditation

2.4.1 As a result of our win in the UK and Ireland awards, the College has been shortlisted in the International Green Gown Awards for Climate Action 2030. We currently await the outcomes or Round 1 judging.

2.3.3 In April 2023, we were confirmed as a Great Place to Work, affirming our commitment to supporting and developing our staff, and that they feel supported and a part of College life.

2.5 Curriculum Planning and Performance

2.5.1 The Executive Team and the Assistant Principals have now met with all Curriculum and Learning Managers to review current performance indicators

and plans for future years. This is something we will now programme regularly to have closer oversight of any issues as they emerge.

2.6 Turing Project

2.6.1 As part of the UK Government-funded Turing Scheme, our ten students and two staff have now returned from their visit to Centennial College in Toronto, Canada where they were able to live and study alongside Canadian students and develop global citizenship skills.

2.7 "Think the Unthinkable"

2.7.1 Convention 5 took place on 06 June 2023. A verbal update on the four themes will be given at the meeting.

2.8 Education Scotland Review of Modern Apprenticeship Provision

2.8.1 Education Scotland reviewed our MA provision on 10 and 11 May 2023. While we await receipt of the draft report, initial feedback was very positive and a credit to the staff concerned.

2.9 National Bargaining on Pay and Conditions

2.9.1 The Employers' side has now made full and final offers to both teaching and support service unions. While neither has, as yet, accepted, negotiations are ongoing and we are hopeful of a resolution in the coming weeks.

2.9.2 The offer consists of a flat £2,000 from 01 September 2022, plus a further £1,500 from 01 September 2023. We have included this as one of our scenarios in developing the financial plan.

2.10 Job Evaluation

2.10.1 Since my last report, there has been little change in the position, although discussions continue to take place and we remain hopeful that a resolution can be agreed for implementation by the end of the calendar year.

2.11 News and Press Coverage

2.11.1 The College continues to engage pro-actively with the media. A number of recent news items can be found here: -

https://borderscollege.sharepoint.com/:w:/t/MarketingTeam-ADHOC/ESPEKJS4hpFCrQI74vcJnDABZIU9C2jjR2ka8LTXnHahOQ?e=y8UU8e&wdLOR=c0C307D26-9428-464B-8C7B-410CE5E1F836

3.0 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

3.1 Key Performance Indicators are shown in the attached **Appendix A**, including performance against our student activity (Credit) target, our enrolments for 2023-24, financial outturn, staff turnover and sickness absence.

3.2 We currently expect to exceed our Credit target by some 3% and enrolments are significantly ahead of this point last year.

3.3 Financially, we are tracking slightly ahead of budget to date. As reported to Finance and Resources Committee, this is mainly timing-related and will unwind as we approach year-end. Excluding the impact of anticipated voluntary severance costs, we still plan for a balanced out-turn.

3.4 Staff costs remain around 70% of total cost.

3.5 Year-to-date staff turnover has reduced from 15% to 9% in comparison with 2021-22, with absence rates constant at 2%.

4.0 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Since my last report, external engagements have included: -

- Launch of Immersive Classroom with Graeme Dey, Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, and Minister for Veterans.
- Welcomed Gillian Keegan MP, John Lamont MSP and Rachael Hamilton MSP, to our Galashiels Campus to discuss the pressures and opportunities facing the College and further education in Scotland. All three also experienced the possibilities the Immersive Classroom offers and met with student groups across the College.
- With the Chair and Vice Principal – Student Experience, met with SRUC to consider opportunities for further joint working.
- With the Chair, met with Cllr Anderson to consider how the College can increase its influence and benefit for the communities in Berwickshire.
- Met with Cllrs Douglas, Hamilton and Greenwell to discuss the College offer and links with schools.

4.2 Upcoming engagements include: -

- Launch of Joint Prospectus for Rural and Landbased curriculum.
- Planning to hold a Net Zero/Sustainability Summit in September, to be attended by public and private sector regional partners and elected representatives. Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Climate Change and Biodiversity had been invited to deliver the keynote address.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications:

No specific financial implications.

5.2 Learner Implications:

As noted above.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment:

No specific implications.

5.4 Staff Implications:

As noted above.

5.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications:

As noted above.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Report is for discussion.

P D Smith

Principal & CEO

14 June 2023

Appendix A – Performance Indicators

Students

Finance

People