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REGIONAL BOARD

14/12/23

Borders College Annual Student Partnership Agreement

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER
For decision

1.1 The paper details the Student Partnership Agreement 2023/24 for the Board to approve to then be signed by the Student President and Principal.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Section A of the Student Partnership Agreement details how the College and BCSA will work as partners. Section B features three key areas for the College and BCSA to work together on, which are issues important to students.

2.2 The three key areas are:

- Support for Student Wellbeing
- Developing a Stronger Community
- Promote and Expand the Respect Campaign

2.1 The Agreement allows for shared accountability and is a physical demonstration of the successful relationship that exists between the College and Students' Association.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

3.1 I recommend that the Regional Board/Committee Name: -

3.1.1 Discuss the Partnership Agreement's contents, share any amendments that should be made and approve its key areas for partnership working.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 This Partnership Agreement has adapted the previous Partnership Agreement that was in place at Borders College. The key areas have not strayed too far from the previous priorities which were:

- Improving Communication
- Increasing Student Wellbeing
- Developing Community

4.2 BCSA felt that the key areas from the previous document are still very much relevant to current students. Justification for focusing on these three areas can be found in the Partnership Agreement Section B.

5.0 Student Partnership Agreement

5.1 Partnership Agreement accessible in Appendix A.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

6.1.1 No direct implications.

6.2 Learner Implications

6.2.1 The Agreement allows partnered work to be targeted at students to increase effectiveness of activity.

6.3 Staff Implications

6.3.1 The Agreement will be signed on behalf of all Borders College staff by Pete Smith.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

6.4.1 No direct implications.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

6.5.1 No direct implications.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

7.1 Working without a Partnership Agreement in place can impact the relationship between the Students' Association and College. It provides clarity on the interaction between both partners and outlines the shared respect required for a successful relationship to exist.

7.2 Without shared goals and priorities both partners limit the reach of work carried out to improve the student experience.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 With the Regional Board's approval, this document will be signed by the Student President and Principal and shared on the College Document Hub.

8.2 The Agreement will also be reflected on in future Partnership Agreements to assess our successes and understand what could strengthen the partnership between the BCSA and Borders College.

Eilidh Forrest and Chris Alder

Students' Association Support Officer and Student President

06/12/23

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

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For publication ☒	**Not for publication** ☐ **If not, why not?**

APPENDIX A

PARTNERED

Borders College Student Partnership Agreement

2023-2024

BCSA
Borders College Students' Association

Section A - The Agreement

Introduction

Borders College and Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) will work together to promote their common values and to achieve their shared priorities for the academic year 2023-2024.

This agreement demonstrates the relationship that exists between the College and BCSA, and the continued work to develop a strong and effective Students' Association, as presented in the 'Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations' (Developing College Students' Associations, 2021).

Partnership

The idea of 'partnership' expresses a joint working relationship based on shared respect between staff and students. The College and BCSA value each other and respect the views, work and decisions made by each group. Working in partnership allows for the Students' Association and College to navigate different opinions and viewpoints without affecting the effectiveness of this relationship.

Our partnership working is based on the values of:

- Openness
- Trust and Honesty
- Shared goals and values
- Effective communication between partners

The Role of BCSA

BCSA is the primary champion of the student voice. By sharing student voices and representing their views, BCSA works with the College to improve the student experience.

BCSA is made up of:

- Its members; all students enrolled at Borders College.
- An Executive Team of elected Student Officers.
- Unelected Student Officers
- The Student Experience Committee; chaired by the Student President, and including student and staff representatives.

BCSA's strategic visions is:
'For Borders College students to be heard by the College, successfully supported throughout their time studying here, and armed with the tools needed to succeed as global citizens'.
Borders College Students' Association Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

The Role of Borders College

Borders College strategic ambition is:
'[Borders College] will provide innovative, life-changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship'.
Borders College Strategic Ambition 2020-2025.

Borders College supports BCSA to represent students' views and ensure that students have a say in how the college runs. The College commits to supporting the Students' Association in the following ways:

- Making sure the student experience is central to all Board decisions.
- Working with the Students' Association to understand the quality of the student experience.
- Getting feedback from students before important decisions are made.
- Giving BCSA the support needed to become strong, autonomous and adequately resourced.
- Helping BCSA to run in a fair and democratic way which fulfils its responsibilities.
- Making sure partnership procedures between the College and BCSA are put in place in order to achieve change for students.

Working Together

The College and BCSA are committed to working in partnership to promote opportunities for students to influence change and become involved in the decision-making process at Borders College. Students can shape and influence change through many ways at College, some of these include:

- Giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in surveys, focus groups, and other informal discussions.
- Speaking to a Course Tutors or Head of Sector (HOS) directly.
- Sharing views with Class Reps.
- Standing to be a Student Officer or Class Rep.

Section B - Priorities for 2023-2024

Introduction

This Partnership Agreement has been created from the feedback and views shared by Borders College students and outlines three key priority areas important to the BCSA and College. The College and BCSA are agreeing to work together on these areas in 2023-2024 as outlined below:

Support for Student Wellbeing

39% of 159 students in 2023 told BCSA that Mental Health is their main concern. Through conversations with students there is growing concern about wellbeing and how this will impact their experience of College. NUS Scotland's Cost of Survival Report 2023 showed that 37% of students have considered dropping out due to financial reasons and 1 in 5 mentioned the cost-of-living as a reason for considering dropping out. The ongoing cost-of -living crisis is making it more challenging for students to succeed. Over the next year BCSA and the College will work in partnership to:

- Create a Student Mental Health Agreement that is relevant to current needs.
- Provide students with a range of accessible support through different activities and initiatives.
- Improve communication around the support that is available to students to increase awareness and understanding of what help there is.

Developing a Stronger Community

We have learned from the Big Student Survey 2023, looking at the experience of Student Induction, that 30% of students felt neutral regarding feeling part of the College community. For students to become successful global citizens it is important for them to feel valued as members of the community that exists at Borders College. Borders College and BCSA will work to;

- Ensure students from all campus feel valued, included and equal.
- Support the creation of student led groups.

Promote and Expand the Respect Campaign

Feeling safe and welcome is an important part of forming community. Students have shared their experiences of bullying and harassment in the YPG Research undertaken during 2023 at Borders College, and these experiences have led to students either wanting to leave college or withdrawing fully from a course. To better support students experiencing bullying and demonstrate a zero tolerance policy towards it,

the College and BCSA will work to;

- Raise the awareness of the new Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Launch and promote the new Report For Support system to students and staff for disclosing experiences of bullying, discrimination or harassment, hate crime, racism, and gender-based violence.
- Improve communication with students on the support available if they are experiencing a negative situation at College and ensure they know who they can talk to and report an incident to.

Signed

Chris Alder
Student President

Pete Smith
Principal