

# REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

<b>Subject:</b> Principal's Report	<b>Purpose:</b> <b>For Approval</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Discussion</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Information</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Prepared by:</b> Angela Cox	<b>Date:</b> 16 October 2017
<b>Purpose:</b> To update the Board with information on key projects/events not covered by the Board Agenda.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal 1: Respond to the needs of our region.</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> This board report provides updates and information on:  Performance Progress on digital transformation Eyemouth High School New staff appointment Building our external profile Hospitality Students New learner voice activities City Region Deal Innovation progress Flexible Workforce Development Fund National Bargaining	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Board are asked to note the paper and request any further verbal updates at the meeting.	
<b>Previous Committee Approvals: No</b>	
For publication <input type="checkbox"/>	For publication with redactions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/>	

## **Principals Update**

**October 2017**

### **Performance**

We have had a good enrolment with 21 full time enrolments over target. FE is up by 33 (984) and HE down slightly by 12 (232) with early withdrawals (30) lower than this point last academic year. We believe that this is a result of a more focussed approach to monitoring student attendance and earlier interventions with students identified at risk of achieving. The new Achievement Coach role is having a positive impact.

Attendance is also positive with Construction, Engineering and Land-based Faculty and Care and Access Faculty at 89% and the Creative Industries Sport and Business Faculty at 88% cumulative attendance as of 6<sup>th</sup> October. Every student not attending is followed up by the Achievement Coaches ensuring no one drifts away.

I have met again with John Kemp, Interim Chief Exec at Skills Funding Council, and requested additional credits based on our positive enrolment numbers. I also took the opportunity to raise the issue of rurality funding.

In response to our poor success rates in 2016/17, Heather and myself have met with the programme leaders responsible for the 10 programmes most needing to improve and Heather is now monitoring the progress of the agreed action plans for improvement with the Heads of Faculty. If these 10 programmes reached the 70% target our success rate would improve by 4% points.

We also met with all the staff who taught on our 10 highest performing programmes for a celebration and sharing good practice event. The key themes emerging from that event have been shared with Heads of Faculty who will adopt as appropriate with their teams to improve.

### **Progress with Digital Transformation**

Towards the end of last academic year and over the summer we have introduced CELCAT Timetabling and register software. For the first time all timetabling has been completed online and in one central portal which will provide us with information on room utilisation and reduce the manual inputting of timetables completed by the MIS team.

We have also implemented Advantage software and are starting to develop a suite of reports which we can use to monitor student progress. Eventually we will have a live performance dashboard. The progress has been hindered by the need to hire in a developer on a day rate. This is something which we will need to resolve in the longer term.

In my start of term Principals address we launched a project for 50 staff to obtain a mobile device (tablet or laptop) to use as part of their role to improve the service or quality of learning and teaching for students. The only criteria was that the individual told us what they were going to do which was different and feedback through a sharing good practice event at the end of the academic year on what went well and what the challenges were. 44 devices have been committed and will be used for a range of things including online portfolio building with students through one note and Microsoft 365 and building of evidence using video and photographs.

Two of our staff are among the first in the country to enrol on a Graduate Level Apprenticeship programme in Digital Management with Heriot Watt University. We hope to be able to support a couple of staff members each year to take advantage of gaining a degree through this route.

### **Eyemouth High School**

I have been working with Eyemouth High School to create virtual learning hub with pupils being able to access lessons via video link or work independently on computers or have a 1-1 tutorial via skype with their tutor. This would allow a more blended approach to learning and either stopping the requirement for pupils to attend college, particularly for more theory based subjects such as Psychology or Computing Science or reduce the frequency of college attendance for more practically based subjects resulting in higher attainment.

Young people from Eyemouth engaged in our School Academy programmes currently have to travel more than 2 hours to access Borders College in Galashiels, when onsite delivery is not viable, with drop out on the schools programme higher than the average. Success rate for school academy pupils attending college was 57% compared to 66% success rate for programmes delivered within Eyemouth High School (2016-17). The college has already invested in delivering Construction and Engineering on site where large numbers make this a cost viable option but too many pupils are still expected to attend college on a weekly basis where small class sizes make school delivery unviable.

Other schools i.e. Duns and Berwickshire would also be able to send pupils to this facility if there were small numbers interested in accessing a particular subject. Longer term it would be envisaged that this model would be rolled out to other schools and be made accessible for adult learning as well.

In our last conversation with Borders Council it was suggested that the 69k required to get this project off the ground could be funded from their digital budget. If so we would be looking to start Higher Psychology through a blended learning model in September 2018.

### **New Staff Appointment**

Janet Robertson has been appointed as our Director of Business Improvement and Performance and will join us in the new year. Janet has a background in the housing sector and latterly has been working for Quality Scotland as their Director of Learning and Training.

The interview process covered a range of skill tests and meeting with our Senior Leadership Team and some other staff members that Janet would be lead.

### **External profile**

I have invited a number of external stakeholders into the college recently to raise our profile as a good college and ensure that decision makers understand the impact on a small rural college. Visitors include Shirley Anne Somerville, Minister for FE, HE and Science, Michael Cross, Interim Director for Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements at the Skills Funding Council and Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Employability and Training.

I have also met with Professor Richard Williams, Vice-Chancellor, and Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal of Heriot Watt University, Marcus Clinton, Principal Northumberland College and David James, Head of Education at SRUC to discuss future opportunities to collaborate.

Marketing continue to be proactive in promoting the college in news articles and recently through several radio interviews including Deirdre McKendry discussing the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

### **SFC Access and Inclusion Committee**

I have joined the Access and Inclusion Committee as a principal representative for the sector. This is for a 2 year term with 3 meetings per year.

### **Hospitality Students**

On 26<sup>th</sup> September a small group of our Hospitality students were invited to serve the canapes at the Colleges Parliamentary Reception in Edinburgh. The students enjoyed the event and had their photograph taken with Rachael Hamilton MSP.

### **Learner Voice**

We have introduced a 'Buzz the Boss' texting service where any student can text me directly (linked to my email) about any concerns they have which have not been addressed through the usual routes. I respond personally to every text.

Building on the success of the 'Ask Angela' sessions last term I will be hosting more student Q&A sessions over the next 3 terms starting next week in Galashiels.

### **City Region Deal**

Projects are currently being written up and will be a key driver in helping deliver the ambitious targets laid out in the £25 million, eight year Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) programme. This includes giving nearly 15,000 more people access to training, as well as finding additional employment for 5,000 more.

Regional colleges have set up a separate skills group to ensure that we act as one in the various discussion and decision making groups. I have agreed to chair this group which will meet monthly.

A £3.5 million business case for colleges to address the future digital skills will be submitted in the next few weeks. If successful this will provide the opportunity for 25 Borders College staff to participate in a 160 hour digital upskilling programme and provide us with some capacity to develop an online digital core skills programme for all our full time students and co-ordination/developer capacity.

The Construction bid had been well developed ahead of the deal but now needs to be revisited in light of the reduced skills funding allocation. Consideration is also being given to the level of digital skills requirement after recent visits to the Construction Innovation Centre. Davie Lowe, Head of Faculty for Construction, Engineering and Land-based, is our representative in this project group.

The regional bid for employability was unsuccessful and it was agreed at a recent IRES group that employability will be fed through the digital and construction skills route.

### **Innovation**

Deirdre McKendry, Davie Lowe and myself visited the Construction Innovation Centre in Hamilton at the end of July to meet with the Chief Executive, Stephen Good, and explore how Borders College could bring that level of innovative practice to our Region. Subsequently I have written a proposal for a Construction and Sustainability Innovation Hub to be developed in our Hawick Campus. This would be supported by the Construction

Innovation Centre and make available to Construction businesses in the Borders technology which is being adopted by the larger building companies including 3D Printing, software which aids planning i.e. BIM and energy efficiency testing and enables off site construction. I have shared this with the Skills Funding Council, Borders Council and Paul Wheelhouse MSP as Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy. Depending on the scale of the funding available we are looking for circa 200k to get things moving.

Deirdre McKendry and myself met with the Director of Interface, Dr Siobhan Jordan, in June regarding the role of colleges in supporting Business Innovation. A number of things have happened as a result of that meeting including Shelly Breckenridge, Business Engagement Manager for Borders Region spending a morning in college with myself and learning about what colleges do and how we engage with business. Shelly is also coming back to train all of the Business Development team on how to access, with Businesses, 5k Innovation vouchers.

We have also now got listed on the Interface site the specialist facilities available at the college for employers to access if they would like space for product development or use our expertise for design.

At the end of August I presented to local employers at the Kingsknowe Hotel 'The role of FE in Internationalism' which was sponsored by Interface.

### **Flexible Workforce Development Fund**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> September the Scottish Government announced a 10 million pound fund for Levy paying employers to access. £112,000 of this funding has been allocated to Borders College to support businesses in the Borders in upskilling their current workforce and improve productivity. Each employer can access up to 10k.

The funding is on a first come basis and there is the opportunity to request more if demand in the Borders was such. The challenge is being able to demonstrate to the SFC by December exactly how this money will be spent with employers.

We have had good local publicity through the newspapers, radio and digital media. Business Development staff are calling employers personally and to date we have 4 employers secured.

At the launch it was suggested that if the sector can deliver on this more funding will become available.

### **National Bargaining**

The National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) met on Thursday 5 October 2017 to continue negotiations with the respective side tables. An overview of each meeting and the key points discussed are below:

#### **NJNC – Side Table (Support)**

The discussions were productive although there are still a number of key elements to be agreed with the Support Staff Trade Unions, including:

- the approach to job evaluation
- the scope of the National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA)
- delivering on commitments made in the Pay Agreement
- providing adequate facility time.

Two meetings have been arranged to discuss the above points further on 19<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> November

#### NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing)

The discussions focused on the unresolved sections of the May 2017 Agreement on pay and conditions of service for lecturing staff. Both sides engaged in the discussions, however, there was no real change in the EIS approach to negotiation and no final resolution was reached.

Each side set out current and respective positions with the Joint Secretaries agreeing to finalise an NJNC paper outlining what has been formally agreed, what has been agreed in principle and what remains a matter for negotiation. This will support negotiations going forward.

The following items were presented for discussion by the management side, again with nothing agreed:

- A proposal was put forward in relation to the May 2017 Agreement on pay and conditions of service, in an attempt to turn the purple items to black\*
- A response to the 2017/18 pay claim was provided\*

\*All proposals in respect of annual leave, salary conservation, class contact, moving to another post and pay claim are to be taken as a whole package and not as individual items.

Negotiations will continue on the above items with the next meetings scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 16 November 2017.