

REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

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| Subject: Principals Update Report | Purpose: For Approval <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Prepared by: Angela Cox | Date: 5/2/2020 |
| Purpose: To update Board on the key priorities for the college. | |
| Linked to Strategic Goal 1: Respond to the needs of our region. | |
| Executive Summary: This report contains an update on: Progress on our Key Performance Indicators Curriculum development Estate Improvements External Engagement | |
| Recommendation: Board are asked to note the paper and raise any queries individuals might have | |
| Previous Committee Approvals: No | |
| For publication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | For publication with redactions <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/> | |



Principals Update - February 2020

Performance to date

We are currently over performing on our **Credits** at 25,868 compared to our whole year allocation of 25,646. We have written to the SFC requesting an additional 1300 credits that would allow us to deliver on our curriculum plan for the year and bring in an additional c200k to our income.

We have opened our **applications** for Autumn 2020 enrolment. To date applications are slightly ahead compared to this time last academic year. We held our Open Day on Wednesday 29th January and welcomed over 450 visitors coming from as far afield as Devon and Aberdeen.

We have made good progress towards **implementing on line enrolment** for all Full Time students in the new academic year.

Apprenticeship starts continue to grow with a total contract of 268 starts compared to 131 in 2018/19. We remain concerned about direct Construction enrolments which have not increased from the last update of 3 starts against a target of 12.

We have been awarded 112 Foundation Apprenticeship starts for 2020/21 from SDS which will be a challenge to fulfil with current starts at 16 in 2019/20.

Our **Flexible Workforce Development Funding** of 140k is fully committed and we have employers now on a waiting list. We have requested an additional 50k from the SFC in the January return.

Retention remains a challenge with FT FE withdrawals sitting at 16.5% compared to 15.6% at the same time last year and HE FT sitting at 8.2% compared to 3.3% compared to the same point last academic year. There is better news on PT student retention at 8.4% withdrawals for PT FE students compared to 11.1% at the same point last year and 4.3% withdrawals for HE PT compared to 9.1% last year.

Our request for £140k of **additional student support** funding has been accepted.

Focus continues to be on these **3 key priority areas** to improve student retention:

- **Continue to invest in Mental Health support**

We have appointed a Mental Health Development Officer to work with students and staff to develop strategies to retain students and we will be using the rest of the funding to provide Counselling services through a partner.

We also continue to train staff in Mental Health First Aid so that they recognise the signs and have confidence in engaging in a dialogue with the individual.

- **Provide increasingly personalised support and learning plans**

Increasing numbers of students require specific learning and pastoral support plans in order for them to remain in education.

Additional achievement coach and learning support hours have been allocated.

Increased use of technology and more flexible timetabling continued to be adopted by course tutors.

- **Improve the quality of our Learning, Teaching & Assessment**

Our Learning & Teaching Enhancement Specialists are carrying out classroom observations and developing bite-size training opportunities as a result of their findings.

A recent Staff Development Day was focussed solely on Evidence Based Teaching with each curriculum area encouraged to form communities of practice around different approaches and feedback in the next Staff Development Day on 18th February.

We continue to support curriculum staff with developing their digital skills and adopting different approaches of delivery.

Curriculum Development

A bid to the **National Manufacturing Challenge Fund** involving Dumfries & Galloway and Borders councils and the colleges has been successful. Collectively we have been awarded £3.3m to work with employers and invest in capital equipment which will support improving the productivity and growth of the manufacturing industry across the South of Scotland. The project is being led by D&G Council.

The college has been successful in being awarded £50k Innovation funding from SFC to develop our **Garage of the Sea** project. This will involve writing an online programme for a Boat Building qualification and creating a small digital and physical Hub within Eyemouth Boatyard with specialist equipment to deliver the practical skills. The funding need to be spent by March 2020 with a Scottish Government 'launch' of all the projects in Dundee on 18th March.

ESP have donated £20k for equipment required to utilise **Wind Turbine Training** through our STEM Renewables Hub.

D Lowe accompanied Eildon Housing on a recent visit to Birmingham last week to learn more about **modular housing** and how this could become part of our training offer.

We have registered our interest in hosting the first **DataFest** event in the Borders. The event will be hosted in our STEM Hub in Hawick on 10th March and is being organised by Scottish Enterprise and EFFINI. It is an employer focussed event and we are expecting 20/30 businesses. We will also use this event to continue to highlight to staff across all curriculum areas that the use of Data is an important skill to develop for the future job market.

Estate Improvements

Newtown St Boswell is the priority area for our IT Hardware and Estate budget over the next couple of terms. We will be replacing two of the old portacabins as well as giving the main block an uplift with new furniture, flooring and decoration. The vast majority of the old IT hardware will be replaced with new laptops and docking stations and laptop locker.

We will also be installing additional **Electric Vehicle charging points** at Hawick, creating an **Enterprise Zone** outside of the shop in Galashiels and consideration is being given through Campus Committee an upgrade of the **Student Refectory**. This would be funded from the sinking fund.

This term we have had a concerted effort to improve the cosmetic appearance of our estate focussing on the removal of flyers and outdated messages on noticeboards. In February, our attention turns to what is displayed in classrooms with managers being given responsibility for the visuals displayed in classrooms.

External Engagement

Our 'official' South of Scotland **Learning and Skills Network Launch** is being held on 12th February with MSP Jamie Hepburn visiting our Technology Enhanced Care Hub on our Galashiels Campus and connecting to employers in our Hawick STEM Hub and students through our network. We will also be joining D&G College where the DFM is attending their opening at the same time.

On Thursday 6th February, Borders College signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Eildon Housing** to work in partnership in advancing our mutual ambitions in addressing the socio-economic challenges of the Borders in Health Care and Housing through collaboration and innovative approaches.

We are hosting an **Business Breakfast for Employers involved in STEM** on 19th February in our Hawick STEM Hub. We will be launching our first round of industry training programmes and equipment trial scheme. We are also listening to our employers share their skills needs from Thermal Imaging, ground source heat pumps, BIM and sustainable construction methods.

Once again a Borders College student has been shortlisted for the **LANTRA Land-based and Aquaculture Skills Award**. We will be attending the Awards ceremony on 5th March at Dunblane Hydro.

The **Minister for Children and Young People Maree Todd** visited Borders College on 14th January and spoke with staff and students studying on a variety of Childcare-related courses including HNC and Apprentices.

The Chair and Principal attended the first **Convention of the South of Scotland** on Monday 3rd February. The Convention was chaired by the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney. The topics discussed included Skills and Transport.

The Principal is meeting with the new interim **CEO for SoSE**, Nick Halfhide on Tuesday 11th February.

Following our recent success at the CDN awards, **JISC who sponsored the Digital Skills Award**, are going to publish an article about the Office365 delivery used by Dale Clancy. This is their method of sharing good practice across the Education Sector.