

# REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

<b>Subject: Board Evaluation and Enhancement Plan 2020/21</b>	<b>Purpose:</b> For Approval <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Prepared by:</b> Ingrid Earp	<b>Date:</b> 6/10/2020
<b>Purpose:</b> To report on results of the Board Self Evaluation exercise and to discuss the proposed Enhancement Plan for 2020/21.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Ambition: Proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> The Secretary undertook the Board self-evaluation exercise in May/June 2020 asking Board members to reflect on the AY 2019/20. The response rate was disappointing, however it is understood that lockdown was in place and that members, even more so than usual, had lots of diverse calls on their time.  Overall the feedback is good and an improvement on the previous year in most instances.  Responses were collated into the attached document and the Secretary has drawn up a draft Enhancement Plan for Board Development over AY 2020/21 based on responses that scored the lowest responses from members and the additional comments made by members. Also included in this plan is the development needs and requests from new Board member reviews which were carried out by the Chair in June 2020 (noted in the development plan).	
<b>Recommendation:</b> Board agrees the development plan for 20/21, subject to additions when new Board members join.	
<b>Previous Committee Approvals:</b> No	
For publication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For publication with redactions <input type="checkbox"/>
Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Regional Board Self Evaluation 2019-20 to inform Enhancement plan for 2020-21

### 1. Background and Introduction

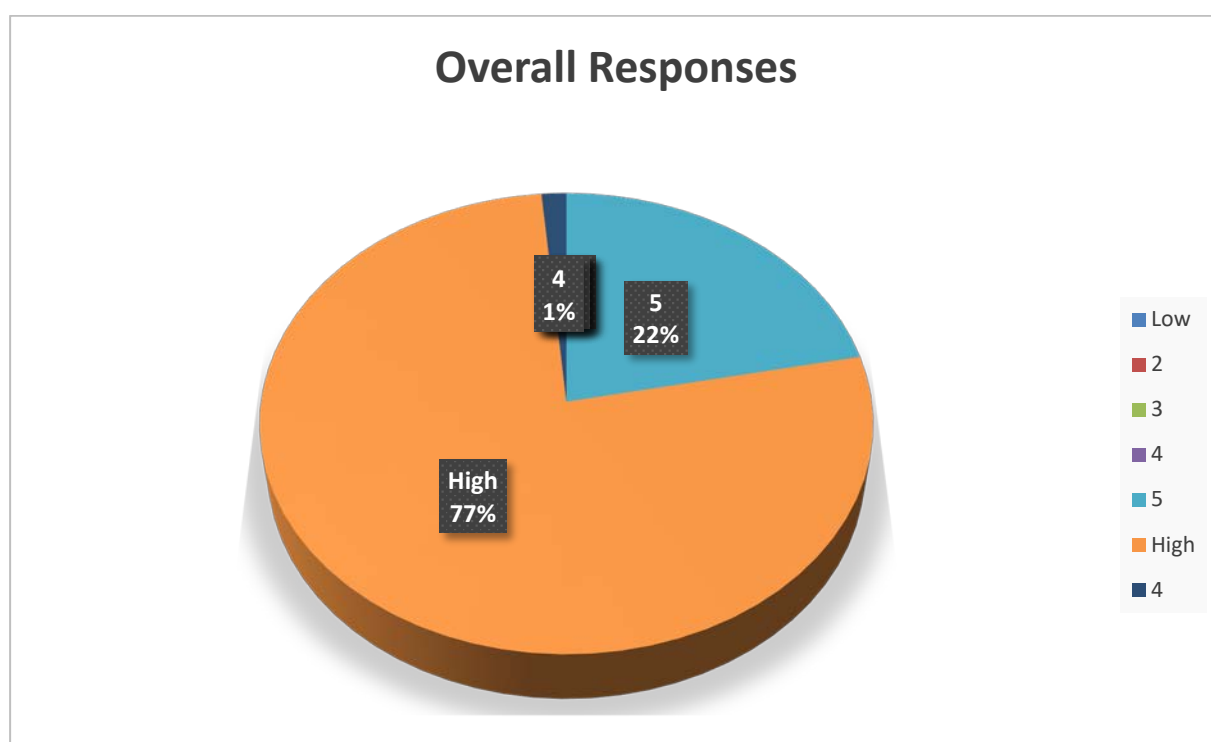
The *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges*<sup>1</sup> ("the Code") has been developed and is owned by the college sector. The Code establishes standards of good governance practice for all boards, and provides the essential foundations for compliance within the legislative framework. The 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 in 2019-20. In total there were eight returned questionnaires with 35 questions. The analysis is broken down into nine sections depending on their grouping.

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

The overall responses were positive with 77% of responses being the highest ranking up from 64% in the previous year. There were zero responses scored at three or below as opposed to 2% the previous year. There were zero statement responses that did not have an answer.



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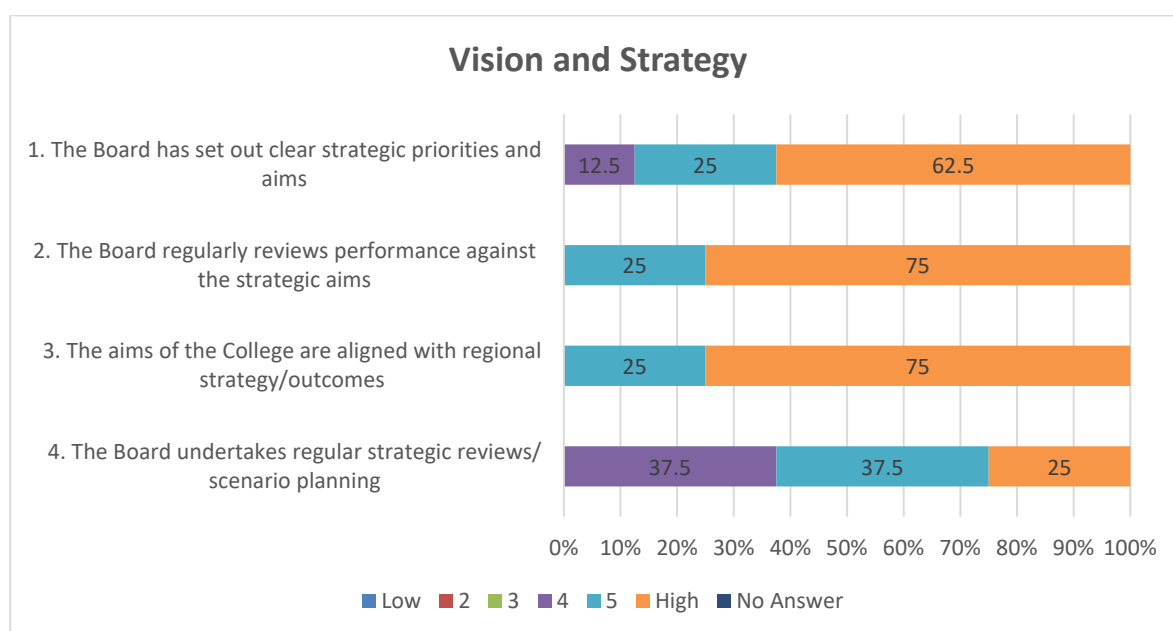
<sup>1</sup> [Code-of-Good-Governance-for-Scotland's-Colleges-August-2016.pdf](#)

## 2. Vision & Strategy

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No response
0	0	0	12%	28%	60%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

Overall this area had the highest percentage in point four, although overall 82% of responses were at points five and six. In the previous year 18% of responses were at point four or below and only 39% of responses at point six.



The statement that received the highest percentage at point six were statements two and three with 100% of the returns being made in the top two places on the scale. Statement four received the lowest ranking with 75% of the returns being at points four and five of the scale. This area received significant comments with regard to more strategy planning opportunities and particular attention to be paid to this area in the light of Covid-19 being popular.

### Comments

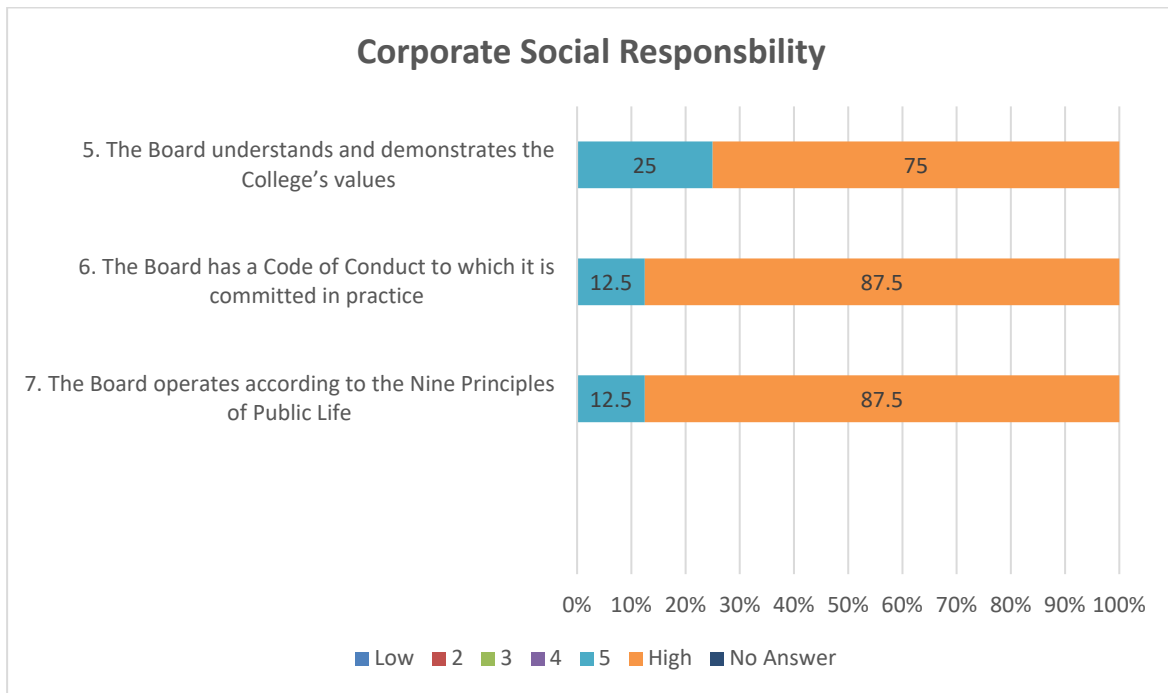
Difficult to review within a Board meeting. Perhaps more strategy or development days/afternoons with external input.
Although we had clear strategic priorities and aims, Covid-19 drove a horse and cart through them and I'm not sure that the fast changing situation has allowed clear priorities, beyond financial sustainability and continuing to provide an effective learning experience, to be a realistic option.
Re Q3: Aligned currently, though change might be expected when SOSE priorities develop.
Re Q4: Awaydays are effective in informing/discussing with Board possible scenarios. Financial scenarios are considered by F&GP.
In light of Covid 19, board needs to be more proactive in considering and reviewing future scenarios around student numbers, finance etc.

### 3. Corporate Social Responsibility

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	17%	83%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

Overall this area scored well with the majority of responses being at point six with responses very comparable to the previous year.



All three statements received 100% of responses at points five and six on the scale, as in the previous year, but with an increase of 2% to 83% in the highest ranking.

#### Comments

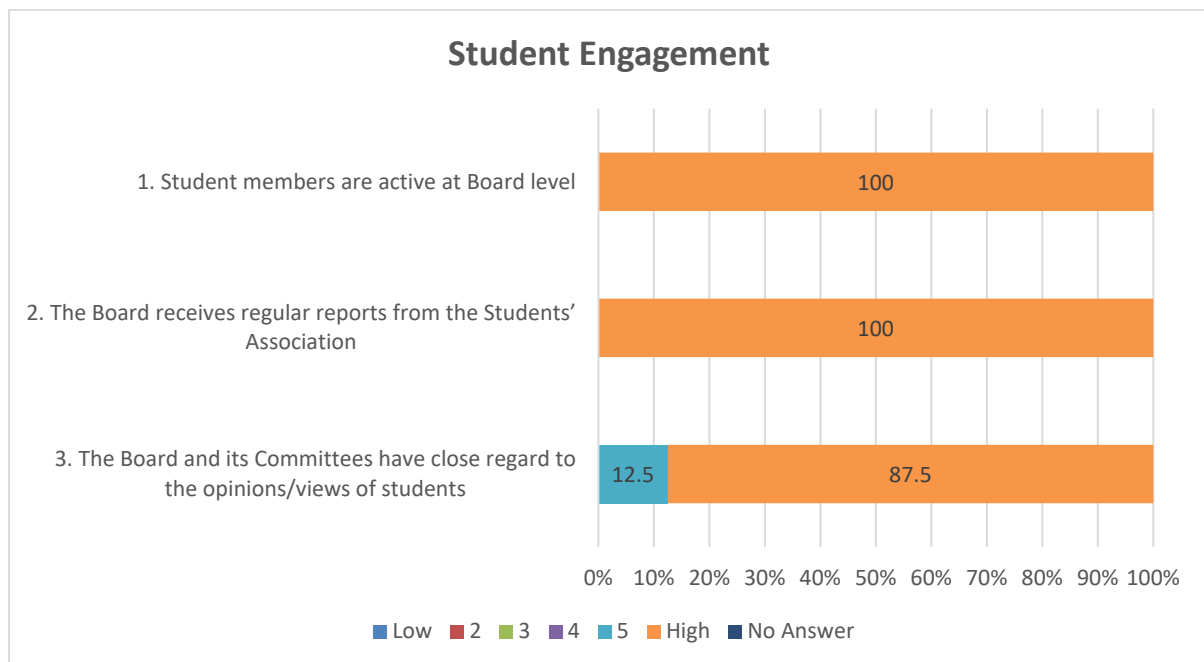
Sometimes I am not sure that all Board members do understand and demonstrate the Colleges values. It is not that Members wilfully ignore the values but I think that a clear restating of, and maybe discussion of, the values would be beneficial.

#### 4. Student Engagement

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	4%	96%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

Overall the scores for this section are excellent and an improvement on the previous year when 76% of responses were at point six.



Student Engagement received the most positive responses with 100% in points five and six on the scale, up from 97% in the previous year. Statements one and two received 100% at point six, with only 4% at point 5 and none below that. The value placed on the student members' engagement is clear with a comment for the Board to engage with students other than those on the Board.

#### Comments

I think there is room to improve this although the current system of Student Association Chair and Vice Chair sitting on the Board works very well, I think that possibly periodic attendance/reports in person from other student reps would be beneficial to both the Board and the students.

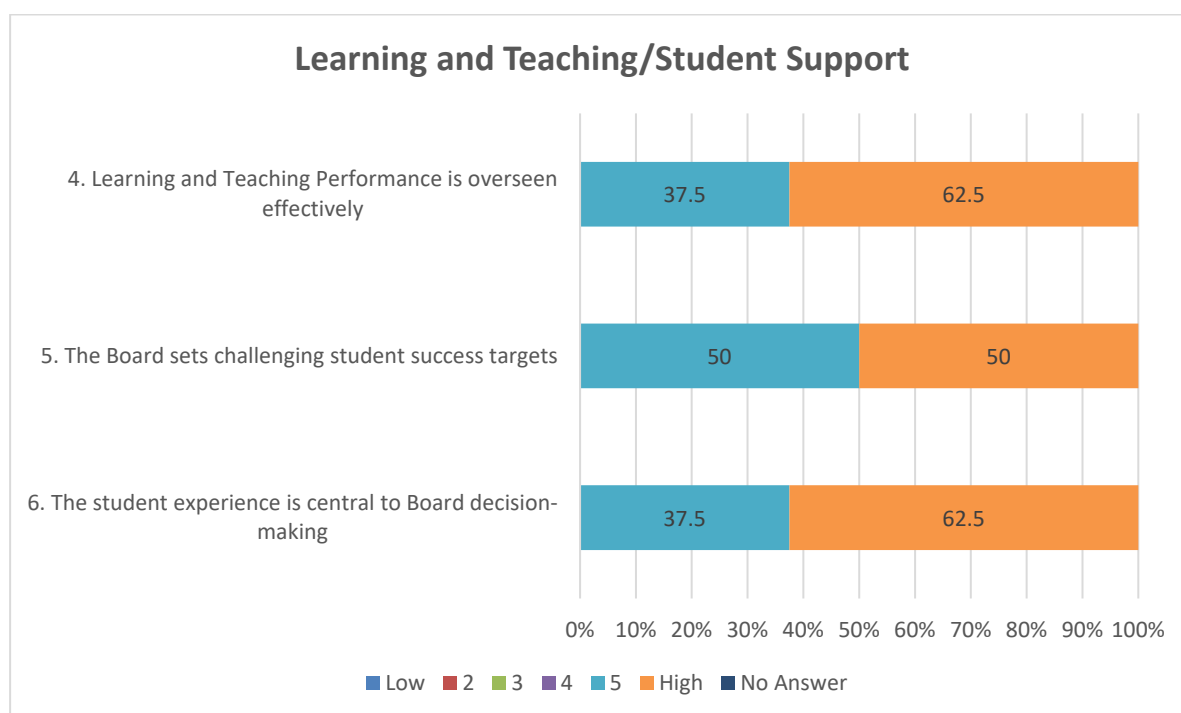
Re Q3: The College listens to students through personal open channels of communication and through the BCSA. BCSA is very well represented at Committees and Board.

## 5. Learning and Teaching/Student Support

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	42%	58%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

This area saw the most significant fall in responses at point six, down 18% on the previous year.



100% of responses were at points five and six, although this is the area with most, 42%, responses at point five. Statement five returned a response of 50/50 between points five and six, a significant increase on the previous year when 28% of responses were at points three and four.

### Comments

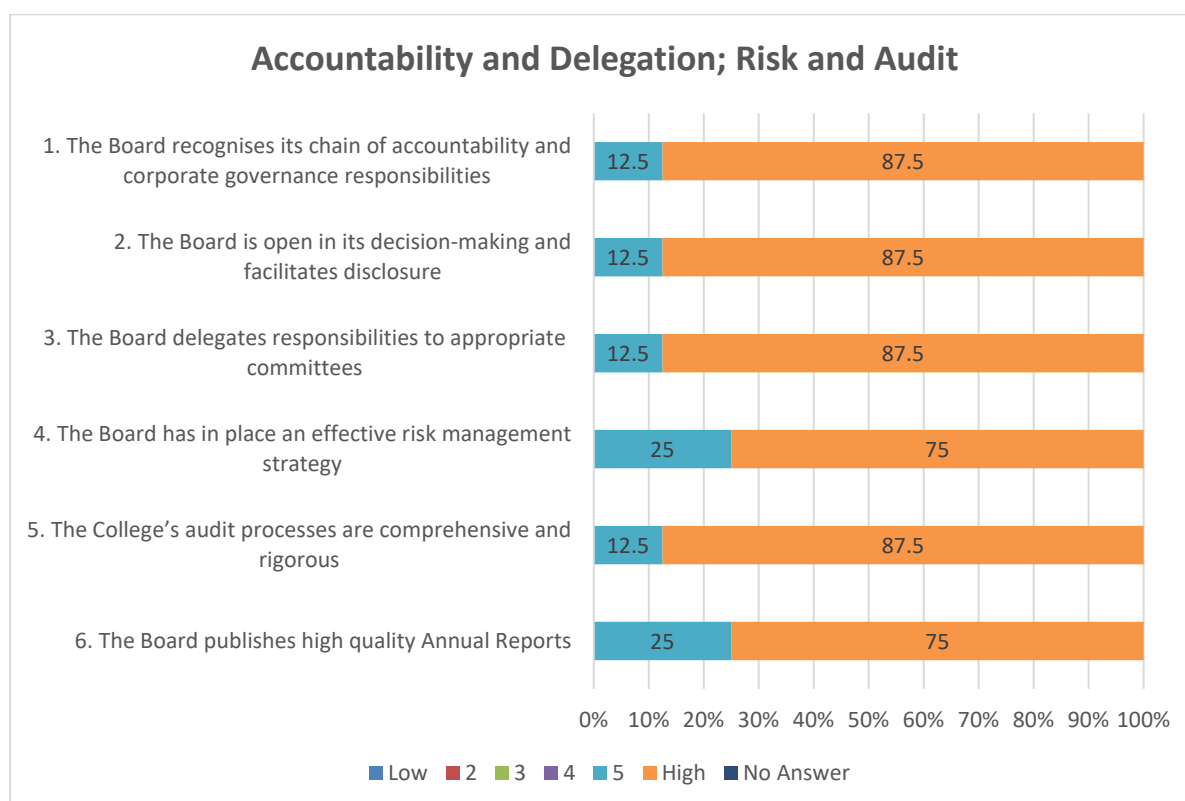
I think there could be more challenge on the quality of Learning & Teaching. Lots of activity is described and student feedback but the quality of learning is not challenged sufficiently.
My only comment is that it appears that sometimes students are accepted on to courses that are too challenging or otherwise inappropriate (with no intention from anyone, it just happens) and this skews the student experience and means that the targets set can be unrealistic. Maybe the Board should be more aware of the process of how students are recruited/accepted and guided on to the most appropriate course.
Re Q6: Students are at the heart of the College, but budget does not always allow for aspirations to be met e.g. IT resources, student support and guidance. However the recent investment and impetus in digital developments will mean some re-prioritisation of resources will continue to improve the student experience. Hence score 5/6.

## 6. Accountability & Delegation; Risk & Audit

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	17%	83%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

This is a strong improvement on the previous year when 31% of responses were at point five or below with 8% at point four or below.



Again all statements returned 100% of responses at points five and six. There were no comments made in this section.

### Comments

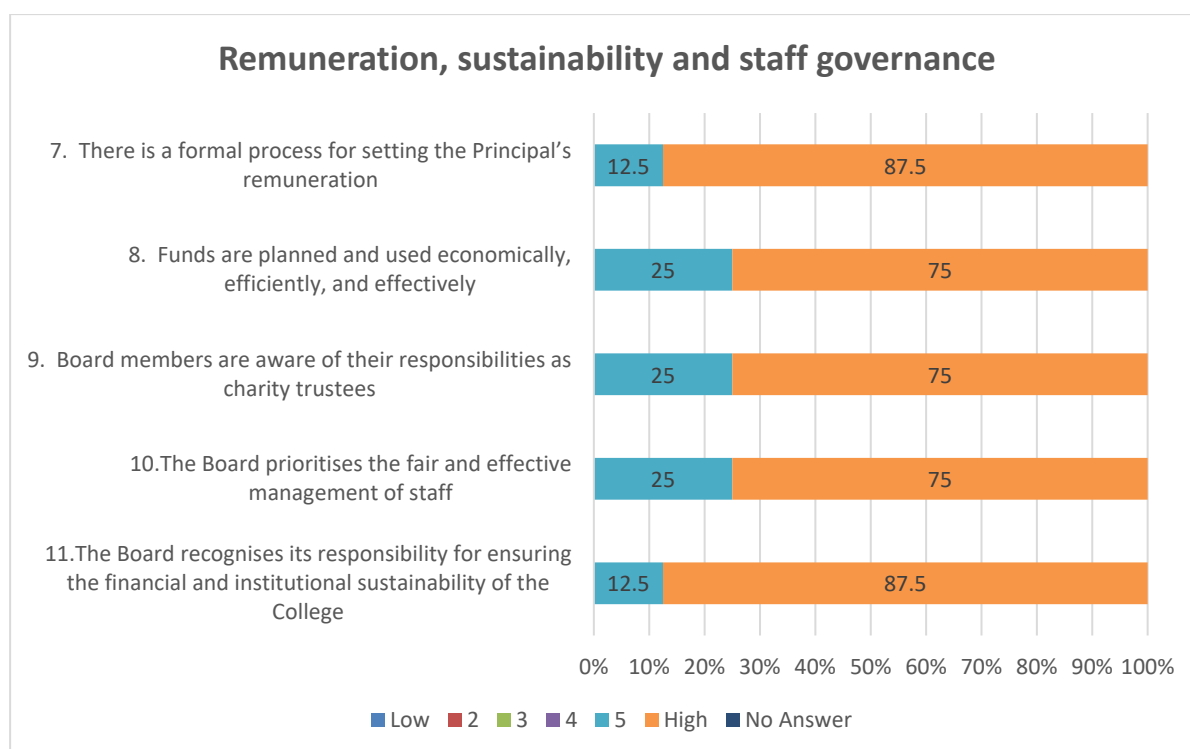
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## 7. Remuneration, Sustainability, Staff Governance

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	20%	80%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

An improvement across the section on the previous year when 32% of responses were at points four and five or had no response.



A good response with 100% at points five and six, still reflecting the need to address statement nine and ensure awareness across the Board.

### Comments

Only proviso is that the Board are able to control College's income from Government, which is the main financial source, and so, by definition, have to work reactively rather than proactively to plan a sustainable financial future.

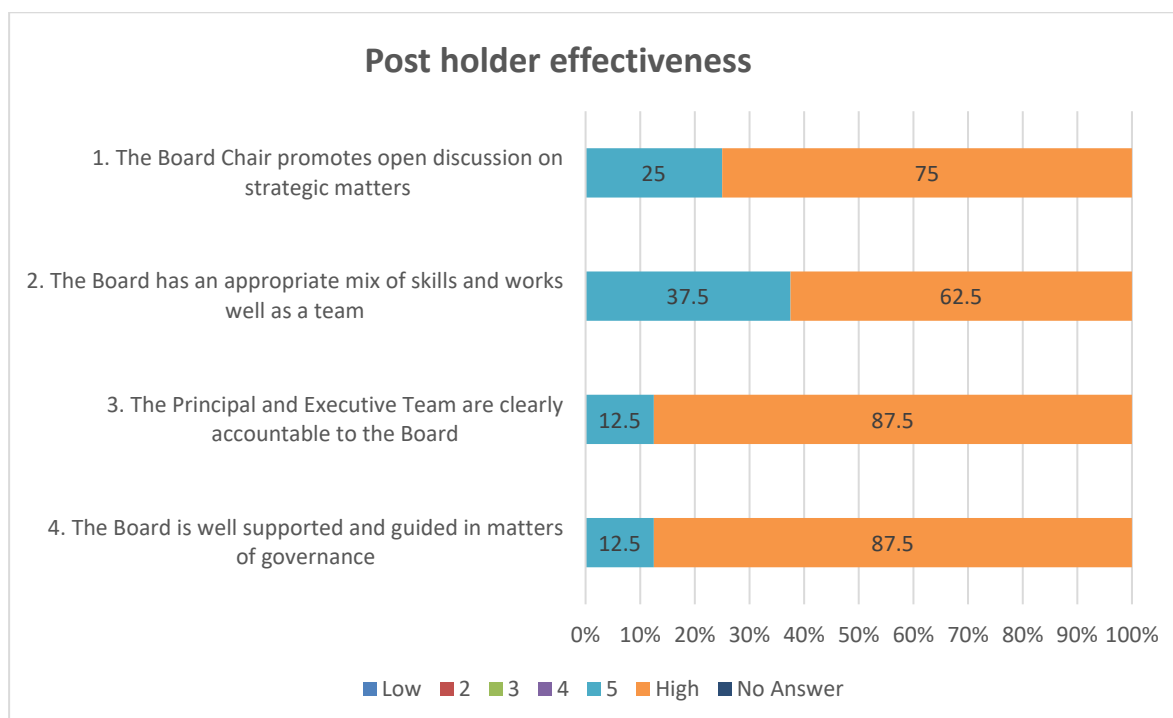


## 8. Post Holder Effectiveness

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	22%	78%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

The number of responses in point six is similar to the previous year, however there 9% of responses in the previous year at points three, four or no response.



Statement two had the highest number of responses in point five, indicating the need to focus on mix of Board members in future recruitment exercises.

### Comments

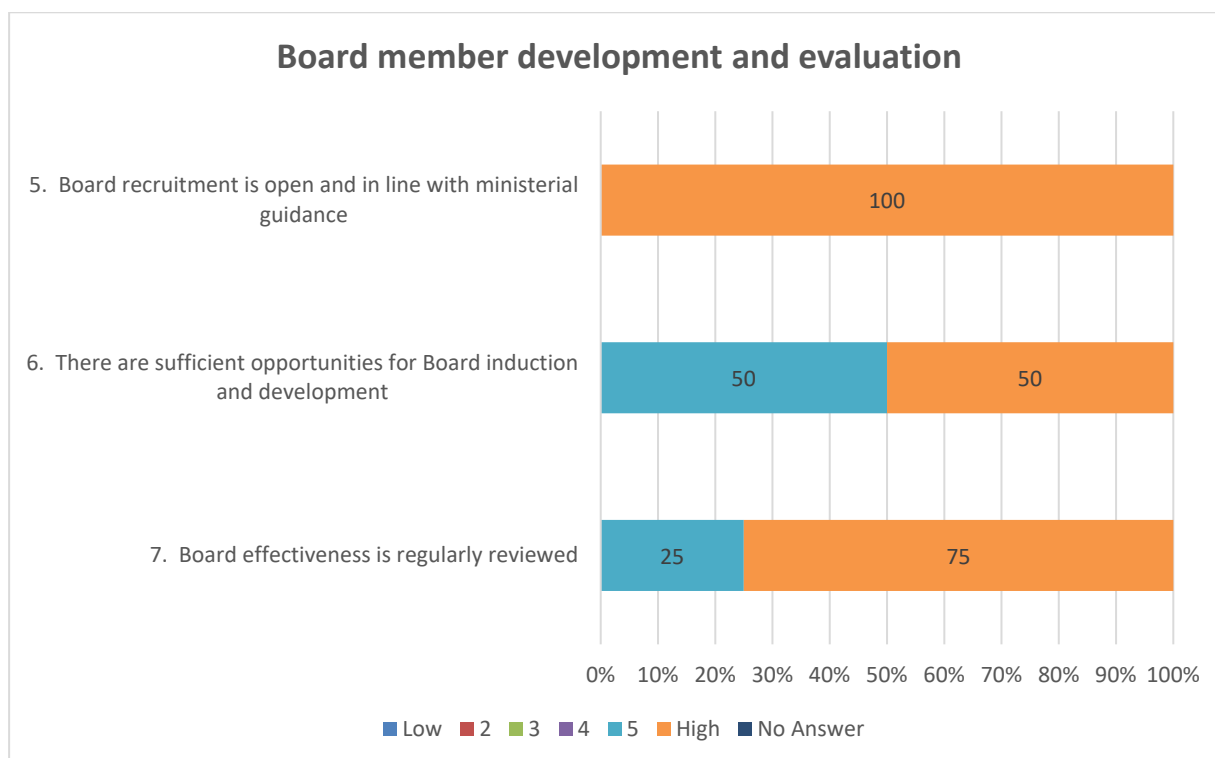
Some board members are more passive during Board meetings despite have the skills and experience to contribute more.
Mix of skills could be enhanced, eg with legal and accountancy additions, but is currently good.
Re Q1: Not sure that e-meetings do facilitate open discussion on strategic matters, though thought the consultation on Strategic Ambition worked well and the approach could be used more.

## 9. Board Member Development and Evaluation

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	25%	75%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

Overall an improvement on the previous year with responses at point six increasing by 18% and point five by 6%.



It is positive that statement five had 100% response rate at point six. Statement six remained the same response level as the previous year suggesting more discussion should take place around this.

### Comments

Great effort has been made to encourage greater diversity on the Board, eg youth and ethnic minority representation, but no one can conjure up applicants from these sectors, it is a matter of maximising the situation from the applications received.

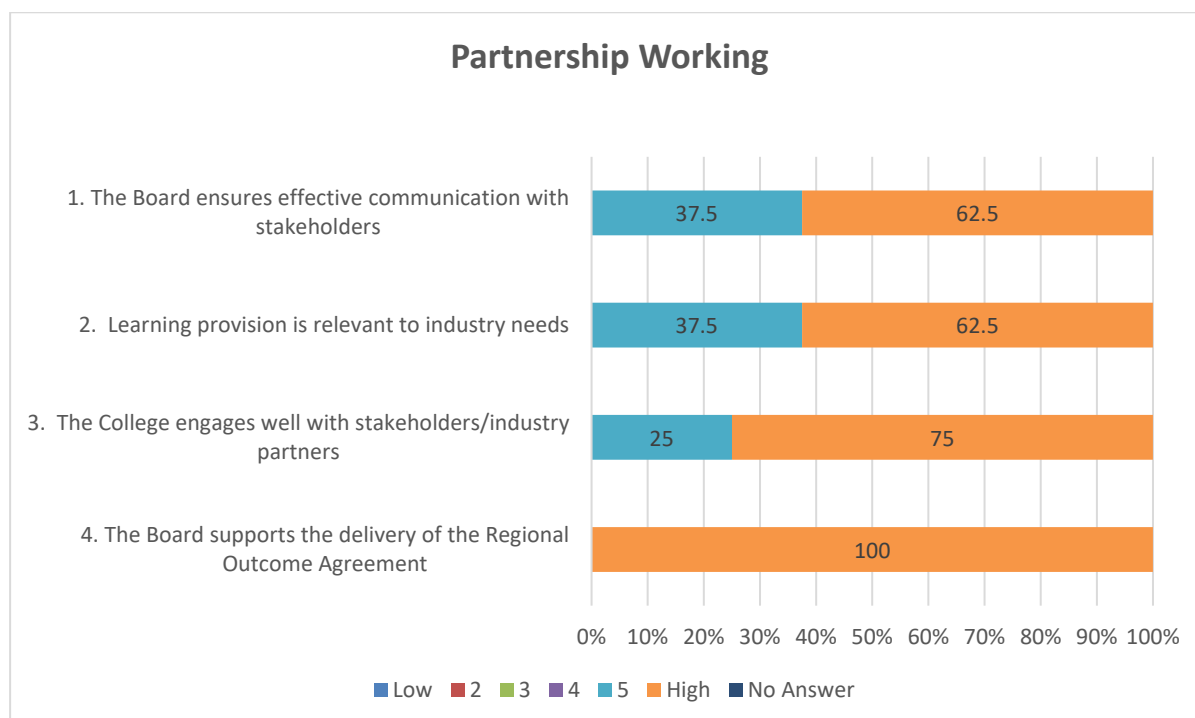
Re Q6: Development is largely restricted by time availability of Members. Promote webinars as provided by CDN in future?

## 10. Partnership Working

1 Low/Disagree	2	3	4	5	6 High/Agree	No Response
0	0	0	0	25%	75%	0

Table of statements combined percentages for all statements.

In comparison to the previous year point six increased by 30%.



Statement four achieved 100% response rate at point six. All answers see an improvement in the previous year responses although the results and comments suggest a continued need to focus on stakeholder engagement.

### Comments

There is more opportunity for stakeholders to attend Board meetings and development sessions to present their needs/ambition which would help Board members understand the college offer, opportunities and challenges.

Communication with stakeholders could be a higher priority for the Board, but is effective as it is. Relevance of courses to industry needs is always a hard one because it is a reactive situation in talking to industry and designing and implementing a new course, so the time lag can make a course irrelevant almost before it starts in a fast moving World.

Re Q1: Stakeholder engagement mostly via Principal and Chair.

Re Q2: Industry? Relevant to stakeholders, sectors and communities.

## BOARD ENHANCEMENT PLAN (2020-21)

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2020)
1	The Board undertakes regular strategic reviews/scenario planning.	Board has regular input to College strategic plan and regular two way dialogue between Board and College is established.	<p>Agree a timeline for undertaking reviews.</p> <p>Dedicate time for scenario planning away from regular meetings to allow focus on specific items. This is particularly important this year with the impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>Organise a planning day at least once per year with clear agenda agreed beforehand. Consider use of facilitator to ensure maximum effectiveness of the day.</p>	<p>Chair/Secretary</p> <p>Chair/Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>	Planning day in diaries for 12 November 2020. Consider another later in the AY to include new Board members.
2	Learning and Teaching/Student Support	Board receives a more rounded view of the learner experience.	More discussion of learning and teaching quality, examination of quality targets and less straight reporting of 'facts and figures'.	VP for Curriculum/Chair of CQC	
3	The Board has an appropriate mix of skills and works well as a team.	Board is represented across all main curriculum and business areas and can provide professional input to all areas.	Board recruitment to be focussed on diversity of skills, experience and personal attributes.	Chair/Secretary	Board recruitment undertaken during Sept 2020.

			Significant outreach and promotion around recruitment drives.	Secretary	Considerable outreach undertaken with a good level and standard of applicants. Report from Secretary to Board on 22 Oct 2020.
4	There are sufficient opportunities for Board induction and development.	Board will operate effectively and efficiently and be clear of what the role requires.	<p>Have mentors for new Board members.</p> <p>Liaise with CDN re training and development of more online opportunities.</p> <p>Talk to current Board members re what they found missing when they joined the Board – revisit induction plan.</p> <p>Provide list of acronyms used across the sector.</p> <p>Provide list of useful documents with links.</p> <p>Create supportive environment to encourage challenge and discussion.</p> <p>Consider more use of Teams for consultation and/or workshops for larger agenda items prior to meetings.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Chair/Principal/Committee Chairs/Secretary</p> <p>Chair/Principal/Committee Chairs/Secretary</p>	<p>The reviews undertaken by the Chair of new Board members raised a number of items now included in this plan below.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>Discussion required as to how best achieve this.</p>

### Items carried forward from previous enhancement plan

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2020)
A	The Board has in place an effective risk management strategy.	Ensure a greater understanding of risk, mitigation and risk appetite.  Consistent understanding across the Board.	Consider undertaking a risk appetite workshop if one has not been carried out for a number of years.  Clarify if the session explaining the structure and purpose of the risk register has happened and if notes are available as back up.	Chair/Secretary	Risk workshops to be run by Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services to discuss new approach to risk register.  Consider more generalised workshop around risk.