REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Student Partnership Agreement 2020 - 21	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: Ann Letham & Amy Brydon	**Date:** 18 November 2020

Purpose:
To present the Student Partnership Agreement 2020-21

Linked to Strategic Ambition: Create high quality learning and training opportunities which are relevant, enabling and flexible

Executive Summary:

The Student Partnership Agreement outlines ways in which the College and Students' Association can work together in order to improve the quality of the student experience.

An action plan with measurable outcomes will be produced in partnership with staff. This will be taken forward by a Student Partnership working group.

Recommendation: To approve the Student Partnership Agreement

Previous Committee Approvals:

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐

Student Partnership Agreement 2020-2021

Agreed between Borders College and
Borders College Students' Association

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 2020-2021.

The agreement demonstrates the relationship between the College and BCSA, and our commitment to developing a strong and effective Students' Association, as set out in the 'Framework for Development of Effective Student Associations' (Scottish Funding Council, 2015).

Why a Partnership?
The idea of 'partnership' reflects a cooperative working relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff. By working together, we can make sure the college experience is improved in a way that works well for everyone.

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. 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
- A team of unelected voluntary Student Officers
- The Student Experience Committee, chaired by the Student President and including student and staff representatives

The Role of Borders College
Borders College supports BCSA to represent students' views and makes sure that students have a say in how the college runs. As outlined in the Code of Good Governance (2016), 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

Opportunities for Students to Influence College Life

As a student, being involved in decision-making within the college is the most effective way to improve the student experience. The College and BCSA will work together to promote opportunities for students to get involved in shaping and influencing college life. These include:

- Giving honest and constructive feedback by taking part in surveys, focus groups and other informal discussions.
- Speaking to a course tutor or Curriculum Learning Manager (CLM) directly
- Sharing views with student representatives
- Standing to be a Student Officer or student representative

Section B – Priorities for 2019-2020

The Student Partnership Agreement will be overseen by a working group that includes Students' Association and College representatives. The College and BCSA are agreeing to work together on three priority areas in 2020-2021 as outlined below:

Improving Communication
Student feedback tells us that ineffective communication can be a barrier to engagement for some of our most vulnerable students. We have a responsibility to communicate clearly with students so they get the best out of their college experience. We should also provide regular opportunities for students to share their feedback with us. Where possible, this feedback should lead to change.

We will make sure that:

- Important information is communicated clearly to students
- Students have the chance to feedback directly to college managers
- Information that affects the student experience is accessible to everyone

Increasing Student Wellbeing
Covid-19 has had a major impact on mental health and wellbeing. The WHO report the main psychological impact of the pandemic has been increased levels of stress and anxiety, although rates of loneliness and depression are also rising. Based on national research and results from college surveys, we know that particular groups of students are more likely to experience poor mental health. Over the next year BCSA and the college will work in partnership to:

- Create a Student Mental Health Agreement with measurable outcomes
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in inclusive physical activity both during, and out with, their lessons.
- Develop projects that will improve the wellbeing of disabled and LGBT+ students

Developing Community
Research has shown that a sense of belonging can improve wellbeing and mental health. In a largely digital environment where students may be experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness, it is important we create ways for students to become part of a College community. Borders College and BCSA will work to;

- Deliver inclusive student events and activities
- Encourage students to set up student-led groups to increase the opportunities for students to create new friendships

Signed

Ann Letham	Angela Cox	Elaine Acaster
Student President	**Principal**	**Chair of the Board**