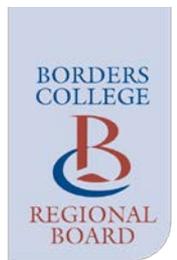


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BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD



Actions from the
Meeting of the Regional Board held at 5.30pm on
Thursday 4 March 2021

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
03/21	The challenges faced by the College in collaborating with the universities will be discussed off line	SDFC/A Cox	Ongoing
04/21	Alternative wording will be suggested around the BCSA recommendation, which reads as if the College does not supply enough resource or put mechanisms in place to support the President and VP	A Cox	Complete
04/21	The VP Curriculum and Student Services will be contacted by BCSA outwith the meeting regarding employer partnerships	S Prentice	
	Responses to the recommendations will be drafted and submitted to the Chair and Principal before being circulated to the full Board for approval	I Earp	Complete – report sent to SFC
09/21	The format of the Equality Outcomes report will be changed to reflect the new strapline and strategic ambitions	H Anderson	
16/21	A suggestion to invite CDN to discuss the challenges of remote learning will be followed up	I Earp	Ongoing as we place schedule for Board sessions over the next year

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Regional Board
held on Thursday 4 March 2021 at 5.30 pm

ITEM	MINUTE
Present:	<p>Elaine Acaster (Interim Chair) Angela Cox (Principal) Bryan McGrath Nuala Broderick Liz Parkes David Peace Jess McBeath David Johnson Paul Scrimger Carol Gillie Paul Cathrow Lynn Mirley Jen MacKenzie (Support staff member) Ann Letham (Student member) Sally Stephanie Prentice (Student member)</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Hazel Robertson (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services) Heather Anderson Vice Principal, Curriculum & Student Services) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary) Sheila McColm (Minutes) Ben McLeish (External Effectiveness Reviewer) – item 04/21 Mike Cantlay (OBE, Chair SFC) – item 03/21 James Dunphy (Director of Access, SFC) – item 03/21</p>
01/21	<p>CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The Interim Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The three new Board members; Paul Cathrow, Lynn Mirley and Carol Gillie were welcomed as were Mike Cantlay and James Dunphy from the Scottish Funding Council.</p>
02/21	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Dave Black and Virginia Grant.</p>
03/21	<p>SFC REVIEW – LEARNING AND OUTCOMES</p> <p>Mike Cantlay and James Dunphy were attending the meeting to provide some insight of themes arising from Phase One of the SFC Review of Scotland’s Colleges and Universities, which was commissioned in June 2020 by the Minister of FE, HE and Science.</p> <p>The current stage of the review, Phase Two is the working stage. The review will enter Phase Three just after the election.</p> <p>M Cantlay advised that SFC has worked hard to ensure colleges have funding from initiatives to meet regional needs. Colleges are in the front line in terms of economic recovery. The challenges of completing as many students as possible in this academic year are recognised and he thanked everyone on behalf of SFC for their additional efforts.</p>

	<p>The Principal noted her appreciation of the support provided by SFC over the past year. She advised that, despite the challenges around COVID-19 this has been a successful year for Borders College with the Digital Transformation Project, the Strategic Ambition launch and Sustainability Strategy launch. She raised the issue of the long standing lack of credits to deliver on the demand in the region and which will be needed in terms of recovery. She asked if future funding can be allocated according to need and current landscape.</p> <p>J Dunphy considered it right and proper that a college developing so positively wants to deliver to people in its region and advised that SFC would like to see the College have full capability to change provision. The genuine need and potential for jobs was clear through the review. The partnerships with universities and challenges in finding articulation routes aligns with SFC thinking.</p> <p>The challenges faced by the College in collaborating with universities will be discussed off line.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: SFC/AC</p> <p>Any further questions for SFC should be directed to the Board Secretary.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the SFC representatives for attending the meeting and they left the meeting at this point.</p>
04/21	<p>DRAFT EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW (Paper 1)</p> <p>Ben McLeish joined the meeting to present the draft report of the External Effectiveness Review and was welcomed by the Board.</p> <p>He thanked everyone for their time and effort and advised that this is the first report he has ever submitted with a Strong Assurance level (the highest possible).</p> <p>Four areas of good practice were identified during the review and eight recommendations that are Priority 3, the lowest category. The recommendations are optional but some are already in the process of being implemented.</p> <p>The high number of established relationships and collaborations was noted.</p> <p>In response to questions from Board members the following points were clarified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language used in the report reflects views of Board Members. This is a Report and not an Audit in the traditional sense. • Alternative wording will be suggested around the BCSA recommendation, which reads as if the College does not supply enough resource or put mechanisms in place to support the President and VP. <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: AC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCSA was not excluded from the consultation. Dates were provided and no one came forward for an interview. <p>The VP Curriculum and Student Services will be contacted by BCSA out-with the meeting regarding employer partnerships.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: SP</p> <p>Responses to the recommendations will be drafted and submitted to the Chair and Principal.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: IE</p> <p>The response will then be submitted to the SFC by end April.</p>

	The Chair thanked the Reviewer for the very thorough review and he left the meeting at this point.
05/21	<p>MINUTES OF REGIONAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2020 (Paper A)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>
06/21	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>All actions were complete and there were no matters arising.</p>
07/21	<p>DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST/REGISTER OF INTERESTS UPDATE</p> <p>There were no declarations of any conflict of interest or updates to the Register of Interests.</p>
08/21	<p>EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2021 (Paper B)</p> <p>The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021, which had been discussed very thoroughly by the Curriculum and Quality Committee at its meeting on 18 February.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the recommendation of the CQC to approve the Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021.</p>
09/21	<p>EQUALITY OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLAN (Paper C)</p> <p>The Board received the Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025.</p> <p>The format of the report will be changed to reflect the new strapline and strategic ambitions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: HA</p> <p>The following four outcomes have been identified to for the College to focus on over the next four years:</p> <p>EO1 – reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%</p> <p>EO2 – improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce</p> <p>EO3 – retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups will be close to the average of the student population</p> <p>EO4 – staff and students will feel more confidence to report hate incidents and harassment</p> <p>The importance and enormity of these outcomes was noted by Board members.</p> <p>The following points were clarified by the Principal and VP Curriculum & Student Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are national issues that the entire sector is struggling to achieve. The outcomes are bold but they are issues which the College must put more effort into addressing. The appointment of a 0.5 Equality Officer is already making a big difference.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) has agreed to take a much greater role in terms of monitoring and progressing the outcomes rather than leaving this to the Equalities and Inclusion Committee. • The diversity disclosure rates relate to staff as well as students and it could be that individuals are unaware of what constitutes a recognised disability. • Reducing gender imbalance in subject areas is likely to take time and will need to be addressed in partnership with the schools. • The Curriculum and Quality Committee will receive an annual report on progress. <p>Thanks were noted to the Equalities Officer for this huge amount of work.</p> <p>The Board accepted the recommendation of the CQC to approve the Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025.</p>
<p>10/21</p>	<p>STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AGREEMENT 2021 (Paper D)</p> <p>The Student President presented the Student Mental Health Agreement 2021, a requirement of the Regional Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>The following three areas have been identified to concentrate on to improve the mental health and wellbeing of students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and implement ongoing campaigns to improve mental health and wellbeing • To improve the accessibility of support services • To focus on preventative aspects of mental health and wellbeing to raise overall awareness of mental health issues and help students self-manage their mental health <p>Board members queried retention data against that of previous years. Where retention is not the best option and time out is needed, an avenue for return in a future academic year was also queried.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the number of students withdrawing and citing mental health reasons is monitored closely at a College level. At the point of withdrawal, the options to return will be made clear. In some cases where funding is an issue, withdrawal can be the best option.</p> <p>It was noted that the action plan will not be included when the Agreement is published.</p> <p>The Student Mental Health Agreement was approved.</p>
<p>11/21</p>	<p>RATIFICATION OF BOARD APPROVALS RE SALE OF MELROSE ROAD SITE AND SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE TO SFC PHASE 1 SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW</p> <p>The decisions made by email regarding the sale of the Melrose Road site and the response to the SFC Phase 1 Sustainability Review were ratified by the Board.</p>
<p>12/21</p>	<p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p> <p>The Principal thanked the Board for accepting a verbal report on this occasion.</p>

	<p>The Vice Principal Curriculum & Student Services and the VP Finance & Corporate Services were thanked for stepping in during the recent absence of the Principal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National strike action has been confirmed by EIS, consisting of 16 days between now and the summer period, commencing 16 March. The curriculum team work hard to ensure that students receive some form of learning on strike days. • Agreement has not yet been reached on the national support staff pay increase which was due to be paid in August. • The Sustainability Strategy Launch the previous day was very successful. The event was opened by the Minister for FE, HE and Science and was attended by 75 people, around 50 of which were external. There was good coverage of the Launch in the Scotsman, • Student engagement remains at 95% although schools engagement has dropped. • The Principal has been invited to join a small working group led by SFC on Innovation which was one of the 10 themes emerging from the Phase One SFC review.
13/21	<p>BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE 2021-2022 (Paper E)</p> <p>The Board Secretary presented the meeting schedule for 2021-22, a revised version of which was circulated prior to the meeting. Several strategic sessions are yet to be built into the schedule.</p>
14/21	<p>IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDENT COMPLETERS AND COST TO MITIGATE</p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services and VP Curriculum & Student Services have been working on scenario planning for students that may not complete this academic year. A PowerPoint presentation was shared with the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with the COVID 19 strategic framework issued by the Scottish Government no more than 5% of students are permitted on campus at any one time for practical work. • Some safe study spaces will be available. • A very small number of senior phase school pupils can attend for essential practical coursework. • There will be a minimum 3-week gap in easing measures. • From 29 March there will be a phased return of a further small number of students; this will be time sensitive and critical to conclusion of their studies. • 5 risk levels have been modelled. The percentage of those able to complete online has increased from the time the information was presented to the CQC and is now close to 70%. 9% require practical training onsite during March while 22% need to be onsite after Easter. It may be possible to bring apprentices in during the summer holidays to complete • At end Period 6 the financial position is a £304k underspend due to not occupying the buildings, the job retention scheme, income surplus and an underspend on the temporary lecturing budget. Additional costs of the completion plan are estimated at around £120k which can be accommodated within existing budgets. <p>The following points were clarified during discussion with Board members:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 5% level of students on campus is being robustly measured by the Scottish Government, with colleges required to complete reports of occupancy. • It has been necessary to prioritise the construction groups on campus and some work will need to move into next year. Sufficient work can be completed within the course to retain the apprenticeship. However, there could be an impact on being unable to take new students in these areas. • If unable to take a full new cohort next academic year we will be very dependent on progression and therefore may struggle for funding. This risk will impact on the next few years. • The strike action will be mitigated, possibly, by bringing in additional staff on these days if required.
15/21	<p>STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (Paper F)</p> <p>The VP Finance & Corporate Services presented the Risk Register which has already been received by the Audit, Finance & General Purposes and Curriculum & Quality committees and is being provided to Board for additional assurance.</p> <p>One of the risks was increased due to impact of COVID 19 on student achievement. A new risk policy is being produced and will require engagement with some Board members prior to its formal presentation.</p>
16/21	<p>BOARD SECRETARY'S UPDATE (Paper G)</p> <p>The Board Secretary presented the update and highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic session is planned for Tuesday 16 March with members of the SOSE senior team. • A further strategic session will be held in April if the SFC Review Phase Two report is published. • Student Services will give a presentation at the Board meeting on 22 April. • An academic staff member will be invited to the meeting on 17 June to discuss the challenges of the past year. <p>A suggestion to invite CDN to discuss the challenges of remote learning will be followed up.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: IE</p>
17/21	<p>BCSA UPDATE (Paper N)</p> <p>The Student Member presented the update of activities linked to BCSA's operational themes and provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student President elections are now closed. Only two nominations were received. • The £8k allocation of student association funding is being utilised for two short term posts. The Digital Communities Coordinator will help BCSA to build online student communities and produce a plan for going forward. The Student Engagement Officer will have a consultant role to analyse and produce a future strategy.

18/21	<p>REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS INCLUDING ANNUAL REPORTS</p> <p><u>Finance & General Purposes Committee</u> A verbal account of the meeting on 25 February was provided. The Committee received the Business Review an update on the Digital Transformation Programme and a report from the HR Manager.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee</u> Draft minutes of the meeting on 4 February were received. The Audit Chair drew attention to the excellent audit reports and congratulated the Finance team for their efforts.</p> <p><u>Curriculum & Quality Committee</u> The most significant agenda items at the meeting on 17 February related to Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>
19/21	<p>STANDING ITEMS</p> <p><u>Health & Safety</u> No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion</u> No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Environmental & Sustainability</u> No items were raised.</p> <p>It was noted that all of the above themes have been prevalent throughout the meeting.</p>
20/21	<p>AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Any suggested agenda items should be forwarded to the Board Secretary.</p>
21/21	<p>BOARD PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION</p> <p>Only those papers marked for publication will be posted on the website. No draft papers or those that are commercially sensitive will be published.</p>
22/21	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>No further business was raised.</p>
23/21	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting of the Regional Board will take place on Thursday 22 April 2021.</p>

Signed:.....

Chair

Signed:.....

Board Secretary