

paperMeeting: Board of Directors		Venue: Virtual Meeting via Zoom	Date: Thursday, 24 September 2020	Time: 4.30pm	
Minute Taken By: Jackie Kane		Sederunt: Brian Lister (Chair), Sandra Grieve, Joyce Clark, Pete Smith, Gill Hogg, Richard Butt, Andy McGoff, Gary Husband, Tommy Angus, Dorothy Welch, Neil Hargraves, Richard Dockrell, Duncan Robb, Marlene Gill, Terry Brotherstone	Apologies: Marian Docherty, Angus Donaldson, Jean Urquhart, Stuart Capperauld	Absences: George Archibald	
FOR DECISION					
No.	Agenda Item	Action	When	By Whom	Status
1.	Apologies	Apologies were received from Marian Docherty, Angus Donaldson, Jean Urquhart and Stuart Capperauld.	24.9.20	Board	Complete
		The Chair welcomed Andy McGoff and Neil Hargraves (Learning and Teaching Representative) to the Board Meeting.	24.9.20	Board	Complete
2.	Minute of Previous Meeting (Paper 1)	The Minute of the Meeting held on 18 June 2020 was approved as an accurate record.	17.9.20	Board	Complete
3.	Matters Arising				
	Principal's Report (Paper 2)	In the absence of the Principal. The Depute Principal and Business & Resource Manager spoke to the Principal's Report and the following was noted:	24.9.20	Board	Information
	Update on college progress since lockdown	Throughout the period of lockdown, Learning & Teaching staff continued to support students through online delivery of the curriculum. Retention and attainment in all courses were positive, given the circumstances, but the sudden change to online delivery proved challenging. Some students enrolled on the Preparation for FE Course have decided to defer until January 2021. The annual Awards Ceremony has been postponed. Our 2019-2020 students have been consulted about the feasibility of holding an event in November 2020, in compliance with Scottish Government guidelines.	24.9.20	Board	Information

Throughout the summer, plans were prepared for a safe return to college for staff and students in September 2020. These were drawn up in line with Scottish Government guidance and discussed with staff in all teams before completion.

Successful Applicants' Days and Induction sessions were arranged for all students.

A COVID Working Group, involving staff and students, is being established to review health & safety arrangements on a monthly basis. This group will be supported by our Health & Safety Advisor. To date, no financial support has been allocated to colleges to implement additional health & safety procedures.

The Education Scotland Quality Framework for colleges has been suspended following COVID 19 and HMI links have been altered. Our previous college HMI Janet Campbell has been replaced by Margaret Rose Livingstone. The new HMI will be invited to attend the next Board Meeting in November 2020.

SFC

The college sector has predicted financial deficits of £12.3m in 2019-2020 and £70m in 2020-2021. All colleges have requested additional financial support from SFC to enable them to operate, as planned, this session. SFC asked colleges to submit financial forecasts for 2019-2023 by 30 June. Newbattle submitted details of estimated deficits over the 4-year period and a related recovery plan to improve the long-term sustainability of the college. SFC is fully aware of the college's estimated deficits and cash flow problems. To date, we have had no response to the recovery plan. We have been advised that the college will receive a formal response and that a related meeting will be arranged.

In June 2020, Scottish Government announced that SFC would conduct a review of FE and HE, focusing on coherence and sustainability across

both sectors. The first stage of the review ended in August 2020. Phase 2 (September - December 2020) will consider 'more detailed development of options for change', resulting in implementation plans by May 2021. Widening access and greater institutional collaboration have been highlighted as key aspects of the review.

In May 2020, SFC advised colleges that it would be reviewing Outcome Agreement priorities, in light of COVID 19. This was followed in August 2020 by SFC Credit Guidance for Colleges for 2020-2021, stressing the need to align provision with national economic recovery, including upskilling. Anticipated skills shortages include digital technology, health and social care and early years. We await a meeting with SFC to discuss our Outcome Agreement priorities and will continue to seek additional credits for the curriculum developments outlined above.

Partnerships

Throughout the period of lockdown, SMT continued to discuss partnership options with a range of agencies:

- Edinburgh University: development and delivery of new HNC Working with Communities
- Edinburgh Napier University: outdoor learning in Secondary Teacher Education; Access to Journalism
- Queen Margaret University: building on existing partnerships in HNC Arts & Social Science and Primary Education to include an HNC in Early Years with Outdoor Learning.
- In partnership with Midlothian Council, we have submitted two funding bids to SFC and Scottish Government in relation to reducing child poverty and improving employability for marginalised adults.
- We are in discussion with Wisconsin University about accommodating their off-season and summer residential programme (40+ students in spring/summer/ autumn) from September 2021. This would include the residency and designated teaching areas.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Adult Achievement Awards and Outdoor Learning Awards continue to develop and partnerships have extended across the country. We have now appointed a 1-year full-time Forest College Co-ordinator, with funding from Scottish Government. Work on all other partnership projects will resume from Sep 2020. 			
	Major Works and Refurbishment	<p>Since 2018-2019, Newbattle has received annual capital funding from SFC to undertake essential repairs in the main building and enhance teaching facilities in the grounds: £97K in 2018-2019; £762K in 2019-2020; £1.4m in 2020-2021. The SFC capital programme was suspended on 23 March and resumed on 1 June 2020. Work to be completed includes chimney restoration, courtyard refurbishment and extended parking areas. These are scheduled for completion by November 2020. Priorities for 2020-2021 SFC capital funding are currently being discussed and will be shared with the Board as soon as possible.</p> <p>The refurbishment of the residency has now been completed with £300K funding from the Trustees. This has significantly enhanced facilities for students and future corporate clients.</p>			
	Trustees	<p>Throughout the summer, meetings have been held with the Trustees, who are aware of the college's financial situation. The Trustees have decided not to develop the Business Park for other purposes and are now exploring the costs of refurbishing the area. This would potentially increase rental income and present opportunities for the college to extend teaching facilities in the grounds. An initial report of refurbishment options will be discussed at the October meeting of the Trustees.</p> <p>A positive meeting took place between the Chairs' Committee and the Chair of the Trustees. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the Chair of the Trustees to attend future Chairs' Committee Meetings.</p>			
FOR DISCUSSION					
4.	College Management Accounts (Paper 3)	The Business & Resource Manager spoke to the College Management Accounts and the following was noted:			

		<p>All commercial business, which constitutes 52% of annual income, stopped in March 2020. This has had a major impact on financial forecasts and cash flow. International House does not anticipate any bookings before spring 2021 and estimates that it may take two years before bookings return to pre-COVID levels. The college continues to market commercial activity, including weddings and afternoon teas, and has enhanced its website and online presence.</p> <p>Board members felt that a letter of reassurance from the SFC, in relation to the college's financial viability would be welcomed. This would reassure the Auditors that the college would be a going concern. The Chair agreed to contact Martin Fairbairn, Chief Operating Office, SFC.</p>			
	Update on Financial Forecast/Budget	FFR was submitted within the time limit. Outcome awaited from SFC.			
	Cashflow issues submitted to SFC	The college continues to use the capital funding to meet their revenue costs. Cashflow is monitored regularly and SFC updated on a weekly basis so they are aware of the college using the capital funding to meet revenue costs.			
5.	Risk Register	<p>The Business & Resource Manager explained that there had been no change since the last meeting to the Risk Register. IT is still a growing concern. However, the college Wi-Fi has been updated.</p> <p>SFC have extended funding for digital poverty and the college has been allocated funding to enable students to access online learning.</p> <p>It was noted that the Risk Register would be revisited at the next Audit Committee Meeting to look at how the college would handle the risks in the present climate.</p>	24.9.20	JC	Information
6.	Plans for start of this session	Term commenced on 14 September. Courses are being delivered on a blended learning basis, with most students attending college one day a week. Recruitment has been very positive and there is a waiting list for some courses. As agreed at the Board Planning Day in March 2020, Celtic Studies has not been offered in 2020-2021, given low recruitment and attainment over the past 4 years. Social distancing regulations	24.9.20	SG	Information

		have restricted the number of staff and students we can accommodate in rooms in the main building and grounds. Staff in all teams have worked very hard to ensure the start of session has been as positive as circumstances have allowed.			
7.	Draft EIS Recognition Agreement (Paper 4)	<p>The proposed EIS Recognition Agreement was presented to the Board on 18 June 2020 for their consideration.</p> <p>The Board discussed the main areas of concern and while very supportive of the Recognition Agreement overall, expressed the view that any paid or unpaid time off had to be commensurate with the size of the college and the number of EIS members (currently 11 including 2 SMT members and the Curriculum Manager). The Board raised concerns as to what could be classed as <i>reasonable</i>, given the above, in relation to paid or unpaid time off for Trade Union duties, activities and training. The Learning and Teaching Representative agreed that it was important to take a pragmatic view and agreed to discuss the Board's concerns with the branch members at their next meeting.</p> <p>The Board also proposed and agreed the following wording for Clause 3.2: <i>'The college will provide EIS members the opportunity to speak to newly appointed academic staff on the benefits of Institute membership as part of their staff induction'</i>.</p>	24.9.20	Board	Ongoing
FOR INFORMATION					
8.	Draft Planning & Resource Minute from the Meeting held on 14 September 2020 (Paper 5)	<p>The Chair of PARC spoke to the draft Planning & Resource minute from the meeting held on 14 September 2020. The following was highlighted:</p> <p>PARC agreed that a Planning Day Exercise be organised to review the recommendations of the previous planning day. A date would be discussed at the Chairs' Meeting on 17 September 2020. This would enable the committee to reconsider priorities in the Strategic Plan which ends in 2020 and to develop a new Strategic Plan. It was agreed that this would give an opportunity to plan for the next session and beyond and to carry out a contingency planning exercise. The exercise would highlight the financial position of the college and how to achieve</p>	24.9.20	DR	Information

		its continuation to run. The committee agreed that to achieve the priorities involved the planning should be carried out every 3 months.			
9.	Draft Chairs' Minute from the Meeting held on 17 September 2020 (Paper 6)	<p>The Chair of the Chairs' Committee spoke to the minute of the meeting held on 17 September 2020. The following was highlighted:</p> <p>The Secretary to the Board will circulate to the Board, dates in October to carry out a planning exercise. It was agreed that the college's Estate & Facilities Manager be invited to this meeting.</p> <p>The committee asked the Business & Resource Manager to circulate an advert to recruit additional members prior to the Board AGM in November 2020.</p>	24.9.20	BL	Information
10.	Draft Learning & Teaching Minute from the Meeting held on 2 September 2020 (Paper 7)	<p>The Chair of the Learning & Teaching Committee spoke to the minute of the meeting held on 2 September 2020. The following was highlighted:</p> <p>A priority to be discussed at the planning day exercise would be the positive partnerships the college is developing.</p> <p>The committee commended the Curriculum Manager and the Learning and Teaching Team on their efforts during the past few months.</p> <p>Terry Brotherstone gave an update on the 2020 Conference, Declaration of Arbroath:</p> <p>The timing of the conference is ongoing and a meeting involving the Principal and colleagues to take place in October. Those so far consulted are all aware that the preferred option would be to postpone until September 2021. But the problems surrounding this date would be the college unable to confirm due to the possibilities of commercial business. The leading keynote speaker is unsure about his availability in the autumn.</p>	24.9.20	RD	Information

		<p>An alternative proposal, yet to be explored, is to devote resource to moving the conference online on or near the April dates that have been pencilled in.</p> <p>Terry requested any feedback from the board be directed personally to him.</p>			
11.	Internal and External Audits	<p>Both the internal and external audits are being carried out remotely.</p> <p>Reports will be presented to the Audit Committee in November 2020.</p>	24.9.20	JC	Information
12.	AOCB				
13.	Date of Next Meeting	Thursday, 26 November 2020, 4.30pm - 6.30pm.			