

**South Lanarkshire College
Human Resources Committee (Board of Management)
Held on 11th November 2020**

Present Chris McDowall
Rose Harkness
Aileen McKechnie

In Attendance Lindsey Ferries
Tricia Gardner

1. Declaration of Members' Interests

Membership of The Lanarkshire Board was declared by Ms Harkness and Ms McKechnie.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minute of the meeting held on 26th August 2020 was agreed by the Committee.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Review of Committee's Terms of Reference

Ms McKechnie led a discussion on the revisions to the ToR, advising that some were stylistic; some made clear the operational nature of the activity; and some clarified the role of the Remuneration Committee in relation to senior appointments. Mr McDowall agreed that operational matters should not come to Committee for consideration. He suggested there would be value in specific recognition of the importance of employee relations, separate to employee engagement.

Ms Harkness supported the changes suggested and agreed the value of separate consideration of employee relations, noting that there was considerable investment in supporting positive employee relations. Further amendments were discussed, including merging the bullets on staff upgrading and changes to management structures; and consideration of the language in relation to 'termination'. Ms Ferries noted the introduction of exit interviews; and proposed a revision to capture 'staff movements'. Ms McKechnie suggested that a revised version of the ToR would be circulated to Committee members and that national issues would be included. Ms McKechnie advised that a refreshed set of Committee ToRs would go to the Board for approval in due course. Action LF to update.

5 Report from Human Resources

Ms Ferries provided an overview of key points of the report, including that the college now has a **COVID** protocol with NHS Lanarkshire to facilitate a rapid response in the event of a positive Covid result on campus. Ms McKechnie advised that this was currently a unique protocol in Scotland between a health authority and tertiary education providers.

Mr McDowall asked if the protocol had been tested. Ms McKechnie noted the work progressed over the weekend of 6 November in response to an incident in our canteen had provided a real - and positive - test of the protocol and the College's approach to BCP and communications. She advised that the protocol was available on the staff portal but not the College website. Ms Harkness added that the communication sent out to students and staff by text and email over the weekend had made reference to the protocol; that this had offered assurance to the College community; and had been well received.

Ms Ferries advised that there had been significant activity in terms of **mental health and wellbeing**, supported by the Mental Health and Wellbeing working group. The college has recently entered into a new partnership with Remploy who deliver the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service, and which is funded by UK Government. The service is open to all staff and is free to the College.

Ms Ferries advised of the legislative requirement to undertake an organisational stress risk assessment. This has been discussed and agreed with JNC, the Health and Safety Committee, SLT and CLT and the proposed approach is to establish a short life working group in partnership which will take this work forward. This will include focus groups and an independent HSE survey of staff.

There continues to be a strong focus on **equality, diversity and inclusion**, supported by the College Equality Group. One area of particular focus at present is progressing the Equality Mainstreaming report, which will come to the March HR Committee prior to publication in May. The new Equality project assistant, Billianna Allen-Manderville, is working with the college for 3 months to support equality ambitions through Inclusive Scotland.

On **Learning and Development**, Ms Ferries provided an update on progress, including reminding the Committee of the successful August staff development day. Action - LF to provide an explanation of the tables within the paper. The next staff development day takes place on 21 December. Work continues to support the Management Development Programme for the OM/CM group, supported by CMI. Ms McKechnie informed the Committee that she is conducting a series of 121s conversations with OM/CMs, which have been a useful barometer of staff mood. A formal evaluation of the training will take place. Ms McKechnie suggested that coaching and mentoring should be encouraged to maintain momentum. Mr McDowall suggested that reverse mentoring might also prove useful.

Ms Ferries advised that updated contracts of employment and job descriptions for Assistant Principals, Curriculum Managers and Lecturing staff are under review and should be complete by end of the year. She provided an update on absence management and noted no real concerns at the moment.

In relation to departmental redesign, Ms Ferries advised that this took account of efficiencies in ways of working as well as ensuring future resilience of the relevant

function. The current priority is considering changes to the marketing function. Ms McKechnie discussed the issue of team resilience due to long term sickness absence, particularly across the support functions and that this obliges management to consider staff health and wellbeing.

In relation to staff changes, Stella McManus, Depute Principal, and Gary Macintosh, Head of HR, are both due to start on 14 December. Gary is due to come in on 26 November for an informal visit (travel restrictions permitting). Mr McDowall indicated that he would wish to have an early introductory meeting. Action: Ms Ferries agreed to make this part of the induction programme.

Finally, Ms Ferries noted that that national bargaining pay award has been signed off for lecturing staff. Unison colleagues have rejected the offer and discussions on a revised offer are currently taking place.

6. Review of HR Policies

Ms Ferries advised of the proposed refresh of policies and procedures which has been the subject of discussion with JNC colleagues. It is hoped that a timeline of priority policies will be agreed with the JNC. The refreshed social media policy remains a work in progress. Mr McDowall asked to what extent do policies have to be agreed with JNC colleagues. Ms McKechnie indicated that some policies may need to be agreed at national level via the Employers Association. Agreement would be sought locally or perhaps have a different descriptor for policy (such as 'revised draft or interim').

Ms Harkness noted the importance of including emerging Scottish Government policy as appropriate, such as gender-based violence. She suggested that we might adopt local guidelines to national policies. Ms McKechnie indicated that it was important to introduce a rolling programme of policy refresh every few years. Mr McDowall recognised the importance of clarity on which policies are national and require collective agreement; and of being clear on whether we require JNC approval of policy refresh. Action: LF to confirm approach.

7. Health & Safety Report

The report was noted by the Committee.

8. Horizon Scanning

There was a general discussion on matters of potential importance to the College over the coming period; the scope to build on the findings of the HSE Organisational Stress Risk Assessment once concluded. Ms McKechnie noted the importance of progressing the HSE Survey in an inclusive way. She added that she was currently considering how best to introduce an employee engagement survey in 2021. Ms Ferries felt that researching and developing an Employee Engagement strategy for the College would be a great project for an MSc student. She advised that she had been approached by an ex student of the College (via one of our lecturers) and is progressing discussions with Gary McIntosh.

The value of the College offering employability opportunities to individuals, including ex-students was noted. Ms Harkness indicated that she may consider an internship, for example in relation to graphic design. Ms McKechnie recently recruited an intern to take forward a fixed term project on industry engagement. The College is also planning to increase its cohort of modern apprentices.

There was a brief discussion on corporate values and the possibility of additional work, including agreeing a strapline, to support strategic messaging.

9. AOCB

Ms Harkness advised that the Student Association was recently awarded the LGBT Youth Scotland Silver Charter Mark Award. The Committee recognised the significant effort and energy which had gone into securing this prestigious award.

There being no further competent business, the Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.