

**Board of Management Meeting – South Lanarkshire College
Friday 8th May 2020 at 1000 hours (on Teams)**

Present A Kerr (Chair), A McKechnie, R Smith, C McDowall, R Harkness, L Newlands, K Dougans-Haining, C Gibb, T Donnelly, Y Johnston, S Duffy, L Glen, S Dillett

Apologies J Carratt, P Hutchinson and P Hughes.

In Attendance A Allan, K McAllister, A Martin and L Beresford.

1. Declarations of Members Interests

Membership of The Lanarkshire Board was declared by A Kerr, A McKechnie, R Smith, R Harkness and L Newlands. Mr Kerr also declared his membership of the Board of the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minute of the meeting held 24th April 2020 was approved by the Board.

3. Matters Arising

Regional Allocation of Grant-in-Aid – Mr Kerr stated that an initial reach out had been made to colleagues at NCL. Work had now commenced between the two colleges on the funding split and we hoped to introduce a more transparent process which secures best outcomes for the Region and moves us towards parity of funding. Members welcomed this update and the ambition to introduce a more transparent process for the funding settlement.

The Draft Regional Outcome Agreement which had already been circulated to the Board was noted; the Board was also advised that amended guidance was due to be published shortly by the SFC.

4. Chair's Welcome

Mr Kerr thanked members for their continued support to the College. The level of attendance at meetings and the excellent questioning therein were of great value to the College team.

Quad' Meeting – this first meeting of this grouping, the two Principals and two Chairs of Lanarkshire had taken place on 4th May 2020. Work had begun considering a paper from the two Principals on how we might seek to develop governance arrangements across the region and how we might work together to provide a coherent cross-region response to the post-COVID landscape. The two Principals had now been tasked to move the paper forward in line with discussions and bring back to the next meeting scheduled for 25th May 2020.

Members welcomed this collaborative working.

5. Principal's Update

The Principal explained that the key focus of her update would be on human resources but that she would open with a more general update on college matters.

General Update

Student Engagement – the Associate Principals reported engagement figures of between 72-79% over the past week across the three faculties. A robust system of recording engagement had been adopted and we remained mindful that this verification information may be required by external bodies in the coming months. Members welcomed the levels of engagement and the work being done by both staff and students to achieve their goals.

Digital Poverty – as previously reported we had been keen to move forward to assist students in this area. The allocation of the Cyber Hardship funds had started. Due to the changes in the restrictions, we were now giving students access to laptops. This was being managed extremely carefully and the response from students has been hugely positive.

Hardship Funds – since last reported we had allocated £240K to 160 FE students and £22K to 124 HE students.

Assessment and certification – we remain strongly committed to ensure clear guidance is in place for our staff and students to support the assessment and resulting process. The Quality Unit had produced succinct guidance documentation which had been shared with and well received by the EIS representatives. The next stages would be sessions with Curriculum Managers and then with all staff. Members welcomed this work and it was agreed that the paperwork would be shared with members for information.

Student Recruitment – the recruitment figure for next academic year is down by 9% whilst offers continue to be ahead on the same time last year. These figures are not surprising under present circumstances. Discussions had taken place on the timing and content of messaging and the shape of the marketing campaign.

Scenario Planning – work had begun focussing on how we can return to the college in the next academic year, including remote teaching and learning and best use of our buildings and other facilities, noting the strictures of social distancing. This had been discussed at management team meetings and Mr Allan was now compiling a think piece of all key issues. We remain acutely aware of the tight timelines as we head towards the end of the academic year. We are engaging with Colleges Scotland to ensure we are alert to wider sectoral consideration about the next academic year.

To note, that The Funding Council today issued a briefing paper setting out the early analysis of the financial impact of COVID-19 on Scottish universities and colleges. It was agreed that Ms McKechnie would share the link with members. # [COVID-19 webpage](#)

Deep Dive – Human Resources

The following paperwork had been distributed to the members in advance of the meeting:

- Report from the HR Manager – May 2020
- Your Guide to Wellbeing during COVID-19
- Absence Report – First Quarter - 1st January 2020 – 31st March 2020
- On-line Learning Option
- Staff Movement

Ms McKechnie stated that the main purpose of the report was to update the Board of Management on the ongoing key areas of importance during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide an oversight on human resources. The following areas were then highlighted:

Workforce Planning

The outbreak had created resourcing and staff challenges in relation to both numbers and deployment across the sector. It was vital that the College maintained a focus on the future planning of staffing whilst also remaining vigilant to the current resourcing requirements in our remote working environment. It was anticipated that only critical roles would be considered for recruitment over the coming months.

We are actively investigating the application of the UK Government's Job Retention and Loan Schemes to the college, including in relation to one particular team where two contracts ceased at the end of March. Further detail on this particular matter has been shared with the HR Committee Chair. We continue to manage down temporary lecturing contracts as is usual at this stage in the academic year.

Members enquired as to the possibilities of re-deployment for affected staff members. Ms McKechnie replied that Ms Beresford, Head of HR, was in dialogue with the staff involved and consideration would be given to matching the skills sets of these staff with gap areas within the college. Ms McKechnie stressed that the College was mindful of fulfilling its duty of care requirements to staff and demonstrating reasonableness (including, for example, the extension by eight weeks of the one-week notice period to allow the current matching dialogue to take place).

Members deliberated the guidance attached to the UK Government schemes and noted the encouragement by the SFC. Further dialogue on this would take be arranged between Ms McKechnie and Mr McDowall, Chair of the HR Committee.

Health and Wellbeing

The College recognised the difficulties and challenges presented to staff and students and the impact on physical and mental wellbeing. Ms McKechnie stressed that significant effort was invested across the College community to support staff and students in these unprecedented times. All College managers were meeting with staff regularly to sense check on mood and morale. The various offers of support continued to be promoted across the college community and encouragement given to all to make use of the many offers of clubs, training and wellbeing initiatives.

Members agreed that the College was fully embracing the health and wellbeing agenda and commended the level of assistance and support in place. The content and quality of the Guide to Health and Wellbeing during COVID-19 booklet was applauded. Members also welcomed the introduction of the Big White Wall and the launch of the new Employee Assistance Programme Provider, PAM Assist. Members noted the comprehensive listing of the offers made and support given detailed within the report.

Staff Absence

The detail of the staff absence figures for the first quarter from 1st January 2020 to 31st March 2020 had been shared with members. The HR department had maintained focus on absence management and implemented reporting mechanisms to ensure that all COVID-19 related absences would be recorded separately. The current levels of absence for the current quarter were the lowest recorded for this quarter over the last four-year period. Members noted the detail of the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Under the Equality Act 2010, the College is required to report on its efforts to mainstream the PSED and on the progress made to achieve our equality outcomes by 30th April 2021. A fresh set of equality outcomes would require to be published. The current situation is likely to limit the extent of involvement and participation possible in the short to medium term within the College. The Equality Group would meet this month to discuss progress and prioritise actions for the forthcoming academic session. An update will be provided to the Board of Management in August 2020. This was noted.

Learning and Development

The College is committed to delivering a diverse range of activities to encourage all staff to feel empowered to develop their professional learning and to further embed innovation in the teaching and support areas of the College. This is particularly important at present and the College was working to actively develop strategies to ensure the staff remain engaged and motivated. It is particularly important during this period to ensure staff have the opportunity to develop new and existing skills digitally. A comprehensive list of on-line training had been provided to staff. The middle management external training had been concluded through virtual sessions. This group of managers had reported back positively on the content and delivery of this course.

The next staff development day was scheduled for 23rd June 2020 and thought was being given to the content of the day and what would be most useful to staff at present - we are actively looking at sessions that can be delivered virtually to support staff CPD. We expect one focus of this to be on the skills required to deliver learning and teaching digitally in the next academic session.

National Bargaining

Unison had raised a National Collective Dispute on support staff leave across the sector. Following two dispute meetings, this had now been resolved. Colleges are encouraged to be flexible around carry over - we are happy to commit to this. The College had maintained positive relations with the local Unison representative and would discuss the guidance further at the next JNC meeting. There continued to be regular meetings of the JNC and relations with both unions remained positive.

The Job Evaluation project for support staff continued with gaps still present in the returns from colleges. SLC had submitted all required documentation in line with the original deadlines.

Discussions had taken place with EIS representatives to discuss the College's guidance on assessment. This documentation had been well received by staff and further assurance pieces were being put in place.

Staffing Changes - covered by the associated paper.

Mr Kerr then closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance. The Board would next meet on 22nd May 2020.