

Board of Management

MINUTES of the MEETING of the CHAIRS COMMITTEE held in the Board Room, 1 Inverness Campus on Thursday 28 May 2020

PRESENT:	Hazel Allen, John Wilson, Tom Spiers, Innis Montgomery
APOLOGIES:	Gavin Ross
CHAIR:	Sarah Burton
ATTENDING:	Principal Secretary to the Board of Management

It was noted that the Chair of the F&GP Committee had stepped down from the Board of Management and we are now looking for a Chair for this Committee. A process is underway to appoint the role of Chair for the F&GP Committee and a proposal will be presented to the Board for approval in due course.

There were no declarations of interest noted.

1. MINUTES

The minute of the Meeting of the Committee held on 5 March 2020 was **ACCEPTED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- Board Member Evaluations – the self-evaluations are being progressed. All individual evaluations are to begin. The Secretary to the Board of Management can provide assistance where required. This item will remain on the list.
- Finance Strategy – this will be discussed with the new Chair of F&GP when appropriate. Until then this item will remain on the list.
- International Students – it was noted that this was referred to within the SMT Report further on the agenda.

3. GOVERNANCE – EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

It was noted that we require to have an external effectiveness review carried out later this year with a report being submitted to the SFC by the 30 April 2021.

There are three options available to us:

1. Colleges Development Network now have a bank of Board Review Facilitators who can carry out this review and the Board Secretary can seek a proposal from them.
2. Contracts and Procurement prepare a tender process as they did for the previous review.

3. We get both a proposal from CDN and Contracts and Procurements complete a tender process and the committee review these and make a decision on which proposal best meets our needs with a view to the cost of carrying this review out in the current circumstances.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that the Board Secretary would contact CDN to ascertain the costs involved with using their Facilitators, how the process would work and the time involved and report back her findings to the next Chairs meeting in June.

4. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

The Principal presented a report on progress against the financial recovery plan.

It was **AGREED** that the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Management would meet to discuss what information the Committee expects to see each month, to ensure that the SMT has a clear idea of what we are asking the Finance Team to produce each month and to reinforce the Committee's commitment to supporting the SMT in delivery of our plan.

5. SMT Report

The Principal's report highlighted the recent activity including:

- Continuing work on our Financial Recovery Plan
- Virtual Open Day Events
- Partnership Working
- Impact of Covid 19
- Review of each course
- New approaches to teaching/online teaching/blended learning

With regards International Students the report noted that that we have received our highest ever number of applications for International Students with 41 applications being received. However, there is uncertainty as to whether all applicants will be able to study here due to the impact of Covid-19. Further Government guidance is being sought by the Partnership with regards study visas and issues such as the loss and the effects from this across the market as a whole.

The Committee discussed the ELCC and it was **NOTED** that discussions with the Highland Council remain positive.

6. PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that there have been changes made to the Partnership Council, which has moved from having an advisory role to a clear decision making role and that their relationship to the Regional Strategic Committee needs to be properly defined to ensure that all decisions can be held to scrutiny. As a result their terms of reference are currently being reviewed.

7. AOCB

ITEM 01

It was noted that the Internal Audit Programme has not previously involved the Chairs Committee when agreeing the scope of the programme for the forthcoming year. However, it was felt that the Committee's input across all areas could provide a collective assurance over issues. Items discussed were:

- Financial Reporting – this will be subject to Internal Audit in January 2021. The FES will be returned to the SFC.
- Planning & Controls – looking back over previous Academic Year, reflecting on impact of Covid 19, Health and Safety and best practice.
- Curriculum Planning 2021.
- Cyber Security – including training staff and system issues/upgrades.
- Data Protection/GDPR – how well this is implemented within the organisation.
- Workforce Planning

8. Thursday 25 June 2020 - 8.30 a.m.

Signed by the Chair: *Sarah Burton*

Date: 25 June 2020