

Board of Management

DATE:	10 March 2022
AGENDA REF:	09-22
TITLE OF REPORT:	Principal's Report
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PURPOSE:	To provide the Board with an update on key activities, issues and challenges during the reporting period.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	To be discussed by the Board of Management.
RISK	None
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest quality education and support. • Sustainable Behaviors. • Successful Students
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	This report provides some highlight information relevant to the period of the temporary contract undertaken by the Acting Principal. This includes attention to key issues, an update from the Employers' Association and a curriculum activities update provided by the Deputy Principal. A further next steps report will be circulated to the Board by 31 March 2022

**Board of Management
Meeting of 10 March 2022**

REPORT BY THE PRINCIPAL

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with relevant information relating to the period immediately prior to the Board Meeting, to provide updates and to identify key priorities and challenges for the next period.

1 Key Priorities and Potential Challenges

As Acting Principal, in post since December 20 2021 and with a contract end date of 31 March 2022, this will be my only report to the Board. On appointment I had four key areas of focus which were as follows:

1. To provide support to the Senior Leadership Team following a period of uncertainty and disruption to normal operations.

In this area the following work has been undertaken:

- A review and changes to some ways of working to improve effectiveness of meetings
 - A cross-college consideration of key priorities for moving forward
 - Engagement with staff at a departmental and faculty level
 - Engagement with TU's through JNC meetings
 - Support and coaching provided during regular one-to-one meetings
 - Continuous consideration of immediate tasks and work to be completed in line with internal and external deadlines.
 - Involvement of senior staff in the preparation for and participation in key Board committee meetings.
 - Discussion on future strategic approaches to the delivery of services.
2. To consider the key areas of work required to move the College forward as we emerge from the pandemic

In this area the following work has been undertaken:

- The identification of a set of proposed annual priorities for Board consideration to drive forward change and improvement
3. To support the Board of Management in the development of a Governance Improvement Plan

In this area the following work has been undertaken:

- The creation of a revised GIP which has been approved by the Board of Management and shared with the Regional Strategic Board
 - The achievement of key aspects of the plan in terms of board member induction and training, improvements in the administration of meetings
 - Improvements in the timeliness of publication of agendas and papers on the College Website
 - Closer liaison between board members and key members of college staff
 - A full round of quorate committees in February 2022
 - Attendance by senior staff at key RSB committee meetings.
4. To provide general support in the area of communications and HR matters arising from the suspensions of employees of the College and the ongoing investigations.
- Ongoing management of frequent and complex FOI requests.

- Ongoing liaison with governance advisor in relation to HR related queries, legal advice and press enquiries
- Support for the provision of HR welfare support.

Key Challenges for the upcoming period

- There is an urgent need to review the roles and responsibilities of the executive team to stabilise structures and to provide the level of resource, expertise and skills to drive forward change and optimise opportunities for the future.
- There is a need to fully understand the implications of the likely SFC funding allocation for 2022/2023 and beyond and any funding gap that might arise for the College
- There is a need to consider, at the earliest opportunity the impact on the financial outturn in the current year of any shortfall in achievement of the credit target and the implications of any unbudgeted extraordinary expenditure.

2 National Collective Bargaining Update

The following provides an update on current pay offers and the status of the College Sector Job Evaluation project.

Support Staff

Support Staff have been offered £850 on all scale points, a £150 one off payment and changes to some terms and conditions. These include cycle scheme and business miles cycle payment of 20p per mile. There is a commitment to discuss and if feasible pilot a 4 day working week. Also under discussion is a carry over of annual leave, career development activity and a homeworking report.

Over 90% of UNISON members rejected the offer on a high turnout. All unions will now take preparatory action towards next steps on possible industrial action at a future date.

Lecturing Staff Pay

Lecturing staff have also been offered £850 on the salary scale with a one-off payment of £150. This offer has been rejected by the unions and EIS-FELA have declared a dispute with the sector on this matter. A second dispute meeting was held on Monday 28 February 2022, with the EIS-FELA. Unfortunately, but not unexpected, no progress was made.

Stuart Brown, EIS National Offer has confirmed the results from the EIS-FELA Consultative Ballot which is set out below:

It was a 64% TO with a 71% yes to strike action and 88% to ASOS. A statutory ballot will now go ahead.

It would therefore be realistic to expect strike action by both EIS-FELA and Unison members over the next few months.

Job Evaluation

Work of the Pay and Grading Working group continues. All of the original posts have now been scored and are undergoing quality checks prior to hierarchy of roles being shared for sense checking by College HR. Currently on schedule for potential communication of outcomes to staff in September 2022.

Curriculum Update

The following highlights a number of curriculum activities and developments:

CREDIT FORECAST

Table 1: SLC Credit Forecast 2 March 2022

Activity Area	Credit Allocation	Actual Credits to Date	Difference to Target	Planned Additional Activity	Forecast as at 2 March 2022
Total Credit Target	50,035	47,129	-2,906	2,101	-805

Substantial work has been undertaken to maximise our credits since reporting a -3,772 gap to the Curriculum, Quality and Development Committee in February 2022. Further skills have been added to our existing student cohort and additional planned activity includes:

- Keeping Warm courses to support with recruitment, preparatory short 4-week study skills programme for students who have already offers for August 2022.
- Completion of additional online Open University courses for some of our HE students again to enhance employment and progression.

Weekly credit monitoring is ongoing, and the Board will be kept informed of any major changes to the forecast.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND FEEDBACK

SLC had its Education Scotland Progress Review week commencing 21 February 2022 with staff and students participating in professional discussions with inspectors. The visit was centred around the following themes:

- Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment.
- Services to Support Learning
- Learner Engagement
- Evaluation to Facilitate Improvement
- Learner Progress and Outcomes.

The good news is that the college has made satisfactory progress since its last visit which is the best outcome that we can have. There were many highlights including:

- Senior leaders have a clear vision to develop a learning and teaching digital strategy.
- The curriculum planning process is clear and considers the regional and national skills agenda.
- Staff are learner centred providing positive learning experiences despite the challenge of the pandemic.
- Students like the move to Office 365 which has allowed students to receive improved communication and ask for help and support more easily.
- Good use of virtual work placements.
- Innovative changes to delivery - clearly evident that all staff have digitally upskilled themselves and learned about digital learning pedagogy.
- All staff provide exceptional support for students and provide an equitable learning environment by focussing on individual student needs.
- Recognition of new systems being developed and starting to have an impact such as new reports and changes to curriculum planning.
- Refreshed evaluation process is moving in the right direction, allowing for a more collaborative approach to making changes and helping to create "safe places" to talk about challenges.
- Students understand and able to give feedback and can give positive examples of changes made.
- Excellent example of best practice in the development of a thematic HN qualification for Childhood Practice. This was reflected by the students in this area.

Our areas for enhancement which were not a surprise to us included:

- Have a consistent approach to embedding meta skills across the college.
- As part of our strategy development include an overarching one for services to support learning.
- Increase student voice, participation and engagement through improving the connection between the student association and class representatives to ensure a stronger and more autonomous voice.
- Consider the reasons for the decrease in attainment rates especially FT FE, as they may be adversely affected if there are any issues such as the pandemic and may be due to having a higher number of apprentices, senior phase and practical students than in other colleges.

We will receive the overall report in 5-6 weeks, and we will feed any areas for enhancement into our overall college action plan which are about refining our processes and building on work already started.

RECRUITMENT

- Following on from our new approach to curriculum planning, applications for August 2022 full-time courses opened on Thursday 20

January – with 783 applications received as at 2 February, with the target of 5.5k applications by the end of August (4,765 received in 2021/22).

- Part time course applications went live at the end of February.
- The work being done on improving our user experience has led to a 13% year on year increase for our January 2021 courses.

COVID-19 CAMPUS RESTRICTIONS

Following the First Minister's updates, the college has already relaxed some of its precautions which include cautiously increasing the number of students back on campus especially those groups who are at risk of not achieving their qualifications. All of our schools' groups are undertaking on campus learning as well as many of our practical students.

Even though restrictions are lifting we are keen to reflect on what we have learned from the pandemic and what working flexibly means for us as an organisation, so a short life working group has been established to focus on this.

GRADUATION

- The 2022 Graduation has been provisionally booked for Wednesday 2nd and Thursday 3rd November. This will take place at Hamilton Town House, and dates will be added to Board members' diaries.
- Subject to Covid guidance closer to the time it is anticipated that the 2022 Graduation will be face-to-face with Graduands guests invited
- More information and save the dates will be sent to the Board once plans are finalised

CURRICULUM SUCCESS

- One of the recent NHS Lanarkshire Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Accounting students has recently achieved their award with merit. This student now has a permanent job with NHS Lanarkshire.
- One of the Construction, Ross Hepburn, has been invited to "The Master and Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers" to celebrate the winners of its various competitions, including our own student Jordan Maley who won this year's British Slate Off. This is taking place in London on the 10 March 2022.
- The National House Building Conference is being held at South Lanarkshire College on the 7 April 2022. This will see around 150 delegates from the house building and supply chain descend on the college.

POSITIVE NEWS STORIES

Examples of positive press activity over the past 3 months include the following articles, note that these are hyperlinks which can be clicked on to review the content of each article.

- [South Lanarkshire College enjoys bright start to 2022 with 90 percent student satisfaction rate](#) (Herald)

- [Applications are now open for courses at South Lanarkshire College](#) (Glasgow Live)
- [College staff and students rose to challenge of a year like no other - Stella McManus](#) (Scotsman)
- [High-achievers work towards national recognition at the Scottish Apprenticeship Awards 2022](#) (Herald as part of wider SDS Apprenticeship PR)
- [South Lanarkshire College opens course application process in New Year](#) (Daily Record and EK News)
- [Lanarkshire college student nominated for prestigious award](#) (Daily Record and EK News)
- [South Lanarkshire College are cheerleaders for climate change during COP26](#) (Daily Record and EK News)
- [Lanarkshire college spreads goodwill with bumper foodbank donation](#) (Daily Record and EK News)
- [Lanarkshire college student wins prestigious 'Great British Slate Off' contest](#) (Daily Record and EK News)
- [South Lanarkshire College is offering last-minute places on courses starting this month](#) (Glasgow Live)

AWARDS

To ensure that we continually showcase the success and innovation of the college, our staff and students, external award entries remain a priority. Below is a list of awards SLC has been shortlisted for in the past 3 months.

The college has been won, shortlisted for and entered the following awards since November 2021:

- College Development Network Awards (Employer Connections Award – for Construction Partnership with AC Whyte) - Commended
- Lead 50/50 award for our work in gender equality on the Senior Team – Shortlisted
- Holyrood Public Service Awards for our gender equality within the workforce – Shortlisted
- Apprenticeship Awards – Foundation Apprentice in Business Skills student, James Carr nominated – Shortlisted
- Marketing Society Star Awards – Public Sector and Brand Experience categories – Entered