

Zoom meeting 4.00pm

AGENDA

		Type	Lead
1	Apologies and Declarations of interest	Discussion	Ross Martin
2	Minutes and Matters Arising of Meeting of 25 June 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B/19/089 Draft Budget 2020/21 and FFR Commentary (Elements of paper 2 are withheld from publication on the Forth Valley College website under Section 33 Commercial Interests and the Economy of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.) 	Approval	Ross Martin
3	Sale of Falkirk Campus (Paper 3 is withheld from publication on the Forth Valley College website under Section 33 Commercial Interests and the Economy of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.)	Approval	David Logue
4	Review of Risk	Discussion	All
5	Any other competent business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Self Evaluation 	Discussion Discussion	All Alison Stewart

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Zoom Meeting, (Commencing at 4.30pm)

Present: Ross Martin (Chair)
Dr Ken Thomson
Naila Akram
Hazel Burt
Andrew Caldwell
Fiona Campbell
Trudi Craggs (Vice Chair)
Lorna Dougall
Pamela Duncan
Davie Flynn (Vice Chair)
Lindsay Graham, Forth Valley Student Association Vice President (FVSAVP)
Jennifer Hogarth
Liam McCabe
Ken Richardson
Andrew Smirthwaite, Forth Valley Student Association President (FVSAP)
Steven Tolson

Apologies: Andrew Carver
Beth Hamilton

In Attendance: Andrew Lawson, Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer (DPCOO)
David Allison, Vice Principal Information Systems and Communications (VPISC)
Kenny MacInnes, Vice Principal Learning & Student Experience (VPLSE)
Alison Stewart, Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Affairs (VPFACA)
Katherine Graham (observer)
Stephen Jarvie, Corporate Governance and Planning Officer and Deputy Board Secretary (CGPO)
Laura Calder, Project Support Officer (PSO) for agenda item B/19/081 only
Senga McKerr, Head of Finance (HOF) for agenda item B/19/089 only

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and informed them that agenda item 9 on the College's preparations for return to campus operations would be taken first. The Chair also introduced Laura Calder, PSO, to members.

B/19/081 Covid-19 Planning to Return to Campus Operations

The Chair asked Davie Flynn, as the Board's representative on the College Short Life Working Group (SLWG) managing this process, to provide an introduction.

Davie Flynn informed members that the Board was keen to support the College Senior Management and staff during a difficult time and that it was agreed he would offer to participate in the SLWG.

He outlined the work of the SLWG and commented that he had been impressed with the professionalism of the staff involved, the way the group worked together and

the level of effort going into preparing for the next academic year. He also highlighted the work of the PSO in supporting the members of the SLWG and also maintaining a clear audit trail on the project.

The DPCOO informed members that the work of the SLWG had been of interest to a wide range of staff, to the extent that there was not enough space on the group for all those that volunteered to participate.

He noted the contributions of all the staff involved in the SLWG.

He highlighted that the paper contained further detail on the work of the SLWG which met for a total of 7 times. He noted that the SLWG had ended to shift the focus away from development of ideas onto the implementation of recommendations which had been reviewed and approved by SMT.

He confirmed that progress continues to be actively monitored by himself, the PSO, subgroup leads and the CGPO.

The PSO presented an overview timeline of activity to members showing the actions planned in advance of the start of the next academic year and confirmed to members that the College was keeping abreast of the changing picture at a national level in terms of the Scottish Government route map which, if changed, would trigger alterations to the project plan and activities.

Members queried how easy the College would find it to adapt to changes in physical distancing guidance.

The DPCOO discussed the proposed methodology for student timetabling, noting that a lot of work was going into this to offer as stable as possible timetable, with the same students attending in groups, utilisation of a single classroom for students each day where possible. He also confirmed that students and lecturers, when not in College for timetabled activity will be encouraged to work from home.

He confirmed that, should distancing be reduced, the College would be able to adapt quickly to this both in timetabling and the facilities on campus.

Members queried mental health support for students and staff during a challenging, ongoing period.

The DPCOO confirmed that there was a range of support mechanisms in place that staff and students can access.

The Principal noted that the DPCOO was involved in representing the sector to Scottish Government on preparations for next academic year.

He also addressed concerns that had been in the press recently in relation to blended learning in schools. He confirmed that the College's blended learning

differed from this, with students accessing lessons from home, with a range of tutor supported activities and it was noted that we had supplied xxx laptops for student use, where clear demand had been determined.

Members noted that there was a significant period of time before the next scheduled meeting and, given the impact of the current situation on the College, asked whether it would be beneficial to schedule a further meeting.

The Principal agreed that this would be useful and suggested an additional meeting at the start of August. This meeting could update members on the preparations and also other relevant information such as student recruitment levels.

- a) Members noted the content of the paper and commended the College staff for the amount of work that had gone into preparing for the next academic year
- b) Members agreed a further Board meeting in early August should be arranged

B/19/082 Apologies and Declarations of interest

Andrew Carver
Beth Hamilton

B/19/083 Minutes and Matters Arising of Meeting of 30 April 2020

Members approved the minutes of the meeting of 30 April 2020

B/19/070 Principal's Report

The Principal confirmed that the staff guidance for assessment document had been considered by the Audit Committee and also shared with the Learning & Student Experience Committee.

B/19/072 FVSA ALF Application

The FVSAP confirmed to members that the application to the Arm's Length Foundation had been approved, noting this was a single year package. It was also noted that the Chair was discussing ideas for the longer term stability of the FVCSA finances with the FVSAP, the VPFACA and Principal

B/19/076 SFC Indicative Allocations 2020/21

The VPFACA confirmed that contingency for covid-19 requested had been added to the budget to be presented later in the agenda.

B/19/078 Futures Programme (Verbal)

The Principal confirmed that further information on this topic was included on the agenda.

B/19/084 Minutes of Committee Meetings

HR Committee – 19 May 2020

Fiona Campbell, who chaired the meeting, reported to members on the business of the committee. She highlighted a report on health and safety along with discussions on the health and wellbeing of staff during the lockdown.

She also informed members that, following an earlier recommendation, the matter of staff awards had been taken forward by a staff led group who had produced recommendations for staff awards. She highlighted that a couple of members of the Board had been requested to participate in the judging for this and that the Committee felt that this would be valuable information.

Members were asked to record their interest in participation with the CGPO.

Audit Committee – 21 May 2020

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the meeting, noting that it had not been quorate but that approval items had been issued to those members who hadn't been able to attend to secure their approval.

She noted that the Committee commended the detailed work produced on risk mitigation and confirmed that a specific covid-19 risk register had been created by the College and considered by the Committee.

Learning & Student Experience Committee – 11 June 2020

The Chair reported on the meeting, noting that there had been some very good discussion on the College's assessment practices and how the College was supporting students during the lockdown.

He highlighted the Performance Indicator Prediction Tracker (PIPT) and confirmed that the Committee would like this to be demonstrated to the Board at a future meeting.

Members noted from the minute that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had written to the College to confirm that the Board was not required to sign off the outcome agreement (OA) this year as normal and asked for further information.

The VPISC confirmed that this was the case and reported that the College expected to receive further guidance in July on next steps for OA's which will be fed back to the Board.

a) Members noted the content of the report

Finance Committee – 16 June 2020

The Chair of the Committee reported that the main focus had been on the budget which was included in the Board agenda and had generated a lot of discussion. He also informed members that the Tuition Fees and Fee Waiver Policy as well as the accounting policies had been considered and approved.

B/19/085 Chairs Report (Verbal)

The Chair provided members with an update on three main areas.

Work with Colleges Scotland Board

He informed members that consideration had been given to the role of Colleges Scotland as the voice of the sector and how this can be strengthened to put forward the case for the sector with Scottish Government and other stakeholders.

He confirmed that Colleges Scotland would be feeding into the SFC review of Colleges and Universities and that he had been asked to present to the Chairs Group on the work of the College in a regional setting in conjunction with universities.

Work with the Employers Association

He updated members on recent discussions with EIS and UNISON and commented that the relations with the unions were becoming increasingly positive and that there was a more collaborative spirit developing, whilst recognising that some tensions still remain to be resolved.

The Chair also indicated that he was working with the other members of the Employers Association to consider how best to approach the funding of future pay settlements, as an integral part of a more unified pitch to government on behalf of the sector.

Working with the College

He provided an overview of the regular meeting he has with the Principal to ensure support from the Board and also noted other interactions between Board members and the College.

He also gave members an overview of recent development work in relation to apprentice provision and work with employers and funders on the development of an Apprenticeship Challenge looking at low carbon and innovation.

He confirmed he would issue further information on the challenge to members and highlighted that the College would host a national event in relation to this later in the year if possible.

a) Members noted the content of the update

B/19/086 Principal's Report

The Principal presented his update on activity since the last meeting of the Board of Management.

He noted that this had been an especially busy period for all staff in the College.

He highlighted an increase in retention statistics for students in the latter part of the year.

He provided an overview of the recently launched care project, which had been funded by SFC. He welcomed the content of the project and noted that this clearly demonstrated to SFC that strategically funded projects that benefit the whole sector can be effective.

He outlined recent discussions with SFC and Scottish Government and also provided some background to the four college, east of Scotland proposal document to fund collaborative working.

He confirmed that the Arm's Length Foundation had agreed to the funding request for the development of the EnableFVC digital hub and that recruitment to support this had commenced.

He also commended the VPLSE and his team for their work with schools on Foundation Apprenticeships.

Members noted the recent Black Lives Matter issue and asked whether the College had a position on this.

It was noted that the lockdown had prevented more in depth action on this, but that information was being prepared by the College's Diversity Officer for inclusion on our website at the moment.

The FVSAP also noted that this was being discussed within the Student Association.

a) Members noted the content of the report

B/19/087 Student Association Annual Report

The FVSAP presented the annual report on the activities of the Student Association. He highlighted the student council meeting held virtually in April and outlined the motions passed at this meeting.

He confirmed the approval from the ALF for funding of FVSA and informed members that he had written to the Principal to open dialogue on future funding once the ALF monies run out. The Principal confirmed he would discuss this further at his next scheduled meeting with the FVSA.

[REDACTED]

B/19/089 Draft Budget 2020/21 and FFR Commentary

The VPFAA presented the draft budget and FFR commentary for members' consideration. She highlighted that normally the College would be bringing a budget and the associated, SFC requested, FFR for approval.

She noted that SFC had initially indicated, as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and uncertainty, that the budget would not be required until September but had then reversed this decision on 9 June 2020 requesting that College's submit a balanced budget and FFR for a further two years by the end of June.

She outlined the discussions at Finance Committee, where it had been noted that the sheer level of externally driven uncertainties out with the College's control underpinning the budget as it currently sits and the concern that balancing the budget under these circumstances presented a real risk to the College if SFC then required the College to meet the budget.

She provided an overview of the uncertainties underpinning the budget as presented to the Board and noted that Finance Committee were recommending submitting a deficit budget at this time with a clear commitment in the narrative that the College would work to resolve the deficit to the budget and plan the remaining 2 years planning requested by SFC, with a view to presenting this to the Board for consideration and approval in September 2020.

The HOF noted that delaying the submission of the balanced budget until September would allow for some of the assumptions involved, for example the number of apprentices in academic year 2020/21, to be clarified.

The Chair of the Finance Committee informed members that he felt the paper being presented was a fair reflection of the discussions at the Finance Committee and represented both a pragmatic and principled approach at a time where the information needed to prepare a budget for approval is not robust enough.

He also confirmed that the Finance Committee had been clear that they would not advise the Board to sign off on a budget that the College could not be sure of delivering on at this time.

The Principal informed members that budgeting had been discussed at the College Principal's group where the ongoing fluidity of the current situation presented the same challenges across the sector. He also confirmed that this group was engaging directly with Scottish Ministers to highlight the challenges being faced by the sector.

Members noted the significant proportion of the College budget in relation to salaries which were subject to national bargaining and out with the College's direct control.

Members discussed being clearer in the submission of the deficit budget to SFC on the level of income the College would require to balance the budget at this time.

a) Members supported the submission Financial Forecast Return showing a deficit budget at this time to SFC along with accompanying Commentary which notes the Board's commitment to resolving the deficit and submitting a balanced 3 year forecast by the end of September 20.

B/19/090 FVC Recovery and Futures Programme (FRP) 2020-2021

The Principal presented a paper to members which builds upon the approved scenario planning presented to the Board in March for approval.

He noted that the College would normally develop and present an operational plan but that it was proposed to use the schedule of work contained in Appendix 2 of the paper as the College's operational plan.

He confirmed that activity under this approach would still be actively monitored and reported back to the Learning & Student Experience Committee as normal via a dashboard report.

a) Members approved the content of the paper

B/19/091 Honorary Fellowship Nominations

The Principal presented a paper seeking to award a Forth Valley Honorary Fellowship to four individuals. He highlighted that Fiona Campbell, who was in attendance, was one of the candidates but noted that this award did not have a financial or other commercial benefit, so the College did not feel she needed to recuse herself for this item.

The Chair confirmed that Fiona Campbell would not need to recuse herself for this item.

The Principal noted that the rationale for this award to each of the candidates was contained in the paper and that, while normally fellowships are conferred at the Stirling Graduation, there was still uncertainty as to whether this year's graduations would take place. He confirmed that, should they not take place, an alternative arrangement for conferring the fellowships would be devised.

a) Members considered the report and approved the award of four honorary fellowships

B/19/092 Review of Risk

Members noted that risks were discussed under the preceding agenda items.

B/19/093 AOCB

Board residential and Effectiveness Review

The VPFA discussed the Board away session which had been planned for August 2020 and noted that, following discussions with the Chair, it had been agreed to postpone this event until the end of February 2021, in whatever circumstances allowed at the time.

She also highlighted to the Board that the annual self-assessment and one-to-one meetings between members and the Chair were approaching. She confirmed that materials for this would be issued to members in due course along with a doodle poll of potential dates for the discussions with the Chair.

She noted that the Board was also due an external review of Board effectiveness and that this would likely take place toward the end of 2020. She confirmed further information would be brought to the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

College History

Fiona Campbell provided members with an update on the work on the history of Forth Valley College being prepared by Ian Scott.

She noted that progress had slowed owing to the lockdown and the inability to access materials but that an update on progress could be brought at a future point.

The Chair welcomed the update and noted that Fiona Campbell and Ian Scott should present to a future meeting on progress.

Covid 19 risk register

Members welcomed the inclusion of the COVID-19 specific risk register in the papers but recommended that this be reviewed as the information presented at the head of the meeting showed that mitigating actions were starting to be put in place for a number of risks.

The Principal confirmed that this will occur.
