

Glasgow Kelvin College

Board of Management Meeting of 28 August 2024

Principal's Update Report

Report by Principal

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an outline of key activity, and events considered by the Principal to be noteworthy or of particular interest to Members of the Board which are not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

This report will cover the ten-week period from the last Board of Management (BoM) meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 until Wednesday 21 August 2024.

2. Industrial Action Update

UNISON, at the end of last Academic Year (AY), accepted College Employers Scotland's (CES's) offer of a three year pay deal for September 2022, September 2023 and September 2024, consisting of £2,000, £1,500, and £1,500, respectively. The awards for September 2022 and September 2023 have now been paid to all relevant members of staff which include back pay to September 2022 and September 2023. The September 2024 award of a further £1,500 per annum will be seen in staff payments on the 26 September 2024. Negotiations on a September 2025 pay settlement will begin next calendar year.

EIS-FELA have not accepted the current four year offer for September 2022, September 2023, September 2024 and September 2025 at this time, consisting of £2,000, £1,500, £1,500 and 3%, respectively. However, three days strike action scheduled for week beginning 19 August have been suspended. I believe, following a meeting between EIS-FELA, CES and Graeme Dey, Scottish Government (SG) Minister, a revised offer is being negotiated. This is potentially good news for all involved. I do not have any further detail at the time of writing; however, I will be attending an Emergency Meeting of College Employers Scotland (CES) on the evening of Wednesday 21 Aug; after this paper has been issued. I will brief Members verbally at the Board Meeting on the latest developments.

EIS-FELA renewed their mandate for industrial action on 22 July 2024. Action includes:

"....a programme of continuous industrial action short of strike action...." consisting of " 'working to rule', where members perform their duties strictly to the letter of their contract..." and " a resulting boycott, involving members withholding students' results".

"It is anticipated that the industrial action short of strike action will continue until 21st January 2025, though it will end earlier if a resolution is found.

And

“a programme of discontinuous industrial action consisting of strike action...”

Initially consisting of dates –
20th, 21st, 22nd August 2024; (this action has been suspended)
27th, 29th, 30th August 2024.

Followed up on 16 August 24 by –
2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th September 2024; and
9th, 10th, 11th, 13th September 2024.

At the time of writing this report I have not received further confirmation of strike dates.

As the weeks progress, we enter a phase of huge risk to College operations, reputation and stability with a scale of impact we have not experienced before. A speedy resolution is essential.

3. Disposal of West Campus Update

The College's solicitors, are finalising the terms of the contract with the buyers in-house solicitor and conclusion of missives is expected imminently.

The College is working to clear the property ready for the anticipated completion and handover date.

4. Post School Reform Consultation

The SG are currently conducting two formal consultations of particular interest to the College Sector. These are:

[Review of the Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultations/post-school-education-skills-reform-consultation-legislation/pdf/) , issued 17 June 2024, closes 20 September 2024;
and
[post-school-education-skills-reform-consultation-legislation.pdf \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultations/post-school-education-skills-reform-consultation-legislation/pdf/)
issued June 2024, closes 20 September 2024.

The Review of Regional Strategic Bodies is covered in detail within my report at Item 12. of this meeting's Agenda.

Following discussions with the Chair, with regards to the Post-School Education and Skills Reform, it was agreed that due to the detailed and often very operational nature of the detail of the consultation, that I would lead the Senior Management Team in formulating the College's response. This will include the College's input to a Sector response to be submitted by Colleges Scotland and the authoring of institutional

submission by Glasgow Kelvin College. It was further agreed that this response would not come to the Board for development and approval. However, it was agreed that I would keep the Board informed of its development and submission. The link to the review is available above and I would of course be happy to discuss or receive any thoughts of observations of Board Members.

The response is in the form of a questionnaire and will be concise. We are currently at an early stage. The Ministerial proposals are:

Ministerial Proposal 1: Business as usual

Ministerial Proposal 2: Consolidate all provision funding within the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and all student support funding within the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)

Ministerial Proposal 3: Consolidate all provision funding and all student support funding within SFC

The following key points outline our current thinking.

Our preferred option is Ministerial Proposal 2: Consolidate all provision funding within SFC and all student support funding within SAAS. i.e. the merger of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and SFC. Although we would also support Ministerial Proposal 3: Consolidate all provision funding and all student support funding within SFC if there was majority stakeholder support. i.e. the merger of SDS, SFC and SAAS.

The rationale is for a single, simplified funding stream directly to the Colleges and Universities to allow greater flexibility to deliver College local community and regional skills priorities for education, skills, apprenticeships, upskilling, reskilling and individual development. We wish to be able to work as part of an empowered greater regional partnership among universities, colleges, local authorities and the private sector, where colleges and universities have greater flexibility to use their funding to meet local, regional and national needs. A single simplified system that allows us to deliver positive outcomes both for our people and for our employers. A system characterised by agility and flexibility.

We believe that leaving student support funding with SAAS but perhaps expanding to the management of all student funding, both Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE). Currently SAAS manages HE and SFC manage FE student support funding resulting in historic inconsistency. SAAS is different from both SFC and SDS in that it is a government department and as such is part of the “SG family” with regards to responsibility for “underwriting” its funding. Experience shows there are significant advantages to this. Also, student support funding is a system which is quite different from other funding streams. SAAS remaining a separate SG government department with an extended responsibility for FE also provides a certain independence and protection to this important function. This could still be initiated under a three organisation merger model however one potential disadvantage may be that student support funding would be managed by an arm’s length public body.

5. Colleges Scotland Resignation of CEO & Appointment of interim CEO

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Colleges Scotland has informed Sector colleagues of her intention to resign. Following Shona’s announcement, Colleges Scotland Board approved the recruitment of an Interim CEO. The role is now open for applications.

Colleges Scotland Board are refreshing Colleges Scotland Strategy 2022-26, with a focus on necessary changes to the current business model and a more resource effective governance structure. The board therefore seeks “...an exceptional leader for 6-12 months to lead a short-term review of the business model and strategic priorities of the organisation..... and ahead of appointing a permanent CEO to lead and grow Colleges Scotland into the future”.

Members should note that I am currently a member of Colleges Scotland Board.

6. Glasgow Colleges Group (GCG) Convenorships / Leads

As of 01 August 2024 the AY rotation of GCG’s convenorship / leads has taken place:

GCG Principals Convenor
GCG Sustainability Lead
GCG L&T Lead

Jon Vincent, Principal GCC
Andrew Dixon, Vice Principal CoGC
Robin Ashton, Vice Principal GKC

7. Key Activity & Events

Events:

- Summer Awards Ceremony

Meetings:

- Ivan McKee MSP, Glasgow Provan, Minister for Public Finance
- John Mason MSP, Glasgow Shettleston
- Bob Doris MSP, Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn
- Pam Duncan-Glancey, Glasgow Region, Scottish Labour Spokesperson for Education and Skills (Scheduled 27 August 24)

Partnership meetings:

- Glasgow City Region - Regional Partnership
- Glasgow City Region – Skills Devolution Group
- Colleges Partnership West
- Colleges Scotland Board
- Colleges Scotland - College Principal’s Group (CPG)
- Colleges Scotland - College Principal’s Group (CPG) – Leads
- Glasgow East Arts Company Board

8. Resource Implications

In the event of ongoing protracted industrial action the Objectives of the College’s Operating Plan are at significant risk with significant negative impacts on Financial stability / solvency, physical resource and human resource.

9. Impact on Students

The impact of “a resulting boycott” and ongoing strike action by EIS-FELA during AY 2024/25 remains significant for our AY 2023-24 cohort because of the inability of the

College to certificate resulting in postponed graduation; threat to student progression external to the College; preventing apprenticeship completion; and inability to secure employment. For our AY 2024/25 cohort, continuing strike action may result in major disruption, potential course cancellation, reduction in available student places, and a significant deterioration in student satisfaction, retention and success.

EIS-FELA strike action, should it continue, will seriously disrupt student progress and experience.

10. Risk and Assurance

The risk to the College's financial stability stays very high and has already been affected by the deterioration in funding allocation for AY 2024/25 in comparison to the previous year.

The impact of any continuation of a "*resulting boycott*" and strike action by EIS-FELA during AY 2024/25 has the potential to impact future non-SFC funding arrangements due to reputational damage. There is a significant risk to College cash flow because of customers / partners withholding payment. Also continuing action may result in course cancellation, reduction in available student places, and a significant deterioration in student retention, thus resulting in further loss of SFC/SG funding.

For the long term, Members should gain assurance from the lead and influencing roles senior College staff are taking part in through representation to SFC, SG and Parliament to secure future funding for the sector. Assurance should also be taken from the implementation of the latest version of the College's Operating Plan (COP), V3 2024-29, although it should be noted that if current industrial action becomes protracted the COP itself, and therefore the operations and financial stability of the College, are at significant risk.

Chronic insufficient levels of funding from SG compounded by the impact of EIS-FELA industrial action remain the highest institutional risks to College operations and financial viability.

11. Equality

No negative impacts on people with protected characteristics have been identified because of this paper.

12. Data Protection

There are no direct data protection implications because of this paper.

13. Environmental and Sustainability

There are no related impacts regarding environmental and sustainability issues because of this paper.

14. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- i) note the contents of this update report.

15. Further Information

Members can obtain further information on the contents of this report from Derek Smeall, Principal dsmeall@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

Glasgow Kelvin College

DSm

21 August 2024