

Glasgow Kelvin College

Board of Management Meeting of 30 August 2023

Board of Management Self-Evaluation Outcomes 2022/23 and Process 2023/24

**Report by Secretary to the Board of Management and Director of Estates and
Corporate Services**

1. Introduction and Purpose

The Board's governance arrangements require that the Board conducts an annual self-evaluation of the operation of its activities, its standing committees and of each individual Board member. This report provides members with feedback on the exercise undertaken during 2022/23 and provides an update on evaluation arrangements for 2023/24.

2. Board of Management/Standing Committees – Self-Evaluation 2022/23

The Board of Management undertook an evaluation process during 2022/23 which fully met the requirements of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges and included an annual self-evaluation session held on 24 April 2023. The session was led by John Hogg, a Member of the Board of Management and the Senior Independent Member. The exercise invited Board Members to consider 6 questions and provide written comments in response to them. The questions and the responses from that exercise are attached as Appendix 1.

The self-evaluations of the main standing committees comprised a member discussion at the conclusion of each of the last committee meetings of the academic term, together with a short questionnaire to gather feedback on the individual committee chairs. The notes of those discussions will be circulated to the Committee members. There were no issues arising from the questionnaires that require to be raised with committee chairs.

The feedback from the discussions held at the end of the Committee meetings was extremely positive as regards the standard of papers, the openness of the senior team and the quality of the discussions. A key recommendation arising from those discussions was the suggestion that the Senior Team should be asked for their views on the value of the Board as part of the self-evaluation exercise. As a result, an evaluation session was held with the Principal and Vice Principals by the Chair and the Board Secretary on 2 June 2023 and the discussions are reflected below.

The feedback from the Board, the Committees and the Senior Team evaluations were very positive and provided assurance on the Board's governance and decision-making arrangements. Board members' comments included the comprehensive nature and quality of the papers, the good level of debate and discussion, the inclusive environment where members felt able to speak up, and the very good support from the Secretariat. The Senior Team welcomed the challenge from the Board particularly on the College Operating Plan and on more sensitive areas such as the closure of the West End Campus. They appreciated the Board support for the open nature of discussions and felt that the 'no surprises' approach had worked well with Members. The value of the discussions at the Finance and Resources Committee relating to budget scenarios was also noted.

The evaluation sessions also identified areas for improvement or action and Board members are invited to consider the key points set out below, and if appropriate agree that these are included in the Governance Action Plan to be progressed during the academic year:

- Time Management during board meetings was identified as a key area of concern for Members. This included the length of agendas, the volume of papers and the importance of having time to focus on and discuss critical outcomes. Several actions are proposed to address this:
 - *It will be assumed that board members have read the papers in advance of the meeting. The Chair will ask at the start of the meeting if members have any questions relating to the Papers for Information included on the agenda. If there are no questions these papers will not be discussed during the meeting.*
 - *Authors/presenters of Papers will highlight key points only as briefly as possible allowing more time for board questions and discussion.*
 - *Board Paper nomenclature will change to 'Papers for Approval/Endorsement'; 'Papers for Discussion and Noting' and 'Papers for Information'. Papers for Discussion and Noting replaces 'Papers for Noting'.*
 - *Wherever possible Power BI should be used during board meetings to reduce the need for board papers, particularly to provide key performance information. Power BI should be more accessible for Board members between meetings. It is recognized that this will involve another development session.*
- There were some comments from members regarding the relatively few matters considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee that required approval or endorsement. This point was raised at the evaluation session with the Senior Team and the Principal and Vice Principal made the following point:
 - *The Senior Team agreed that there were fewer areas that required approval by the Learning and Teaching Committee however they stressed the significant value of the professional dialogue/discussions that take place between the members and the senior team at that Committee. It is proposed that the introduction of 'Papers for Discussion and Noting' (rather than For Noting) is a change of emphasis that would help to reflect the value of that dialogue.*
- There was a view that all in-person meetings should be established with an option to attend online rather than online access having to be requested and set up in advance of the meeting.
 - *The Board has agreed that all 5 Board Meetings would be conducted in person, and that the Standing Committees would hold the first and last meeting of the year face to face with the two other meetings held online. The request for online access to a Board meeting should only be made if the member would otherwise be unable to attend the meeting. It is proposed that the facility is set up and made available for all person-to-person meetings but a member should only advise Secretariat of their intention to use online access if they are unable to attend in person and would otherwise need to submit apologies.*
- There was a desire from some members to understand more about the College's stakeholders and there was a request for a stakeholder map.
 - *This was also raised last year and there is an item on stakeholders at the August 2023 board meeting. If further information is still sought by members following this session it is proposed that this could be a subject for inclusion in the board development programme for 2023/24.*

It is proposed that members note the summary above and the detailed feedback attached as an appendix to the report. If agreed, the areas identified for action will be incorporated into the Board's Governance Action Plan (GAP) for consideration and development during the academic year. Updates on progress will be incorporated into the regular update reports on the GAP both to the Audit and Risk Committee as well as to the Board at its December and June meetings.

The annual review of the Board Chair was undertaken by the senior independent member, John Hogg. In addition, feedback on the Chair's performance has been received through the Chair evaluation questionnaire issued to all Board members. This issue is covered in a separate report on this agenda.

Individual reviews were undertaken with each Board Member by the Board Chair. Any individual actions or development areas arising for members will be progressed by the members themselves or through the Secretary to the Board. Should there be any broader issues for consideration they will be fed into the GAP.

3. Annual Evaluation Exercise 2023/24

The Chair asked the Secretary to the Board to advise David Archibald of Henderson Loggie that GKC intends to undertake its next Externally Facilitated Effectiveness Review in 2025/26 and to ask him if he would be willing to lead the Board's self-evaluation exercise in 2024/25 in preparation for the Review. David Archibald acted as the Independent Assessor for the College's External Effectiveness Review in 2020/21.

Members may recall that the reviews should be held every 3 years, however this may be extended to every 5 years, provided the most recent review of the College has a positive outcome. This fully satisfies the requirements of the Code of Good Governance.

This arrangement has still to be discussed with David Archibald, but, if it is agreed, it is proposed that the Board would hold a slightly scaled back self-evaluation exercise in 2023/24.

4. Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

5. Impact on Students

There are no negative impacts on students identified as a consequence of anything contained within this report. Appropriate Board development and improvement as identified in self-evaluation sessions ensures the Board are self-aware which will impact positively on the student experience.

6. Equalities

No adverse impacts on individuals with protected characteristics have been identified as a consequence of this report.

7. Risk and Assurance

By taking the above action, the Board is mitigating the risk of failing to meet the highest standards of corporate governance. Assurance is provided through implementation of an effective self-evaluation process and associated reporting.

8. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising as a consequence of the Board's evaluation processes.

9. Environmental and Sustainability

There are no environmental and sustainability issues as a consequence of this report.

10. Recommendations

Members of the Board of Management are recommended to:

- i) note the contents of this report and appendix;
- ii) endorse the findings from the Board evaluation and agree the development actions identified through the self-evaluation 2023/24 be incorporated into the Governance Action Plan;
- iii) note the outcomes from the committee evaluations and the senior team evaluation and that feedback will be provided to the Committee Chairs by the Chair and Board Secretary; and
- iv) note that David Archibald will be approached to lead the self-evaluation exercise for 2023/24.

11. Further Information

Members can obtain further information on the contents of this report from Linda Ellison, Secretary to the Board at lindaellison@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk or Lisa Clark, Director of Estates and Corporate Services at lisaclark@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk.

Glasgow Kelvin College Board of Management

Self-Evaluation Session

Monday, 24 April 2023 at 5.00 pm at Springburn Campus

The Board of Management held its annual self-evaluation session on 24th April 2023. The session was attended by the following Board members:

Ian Patrick, Chair
Robert Doyle, Vice Chair
John Hogg, Facilitator of the Session
Heather McNeil
Jennifer Lavery
Dermot Grenham
Natalie Philips
John McBride

The session was facilitated by John Hogg, the Senior Independent Board Member and Director of Continuous Improvement at the University of Strathclyde. The session was structured as an After-Action Review which asked members in attendance to reflect on their individual experience of being a member of the Board of Management over the last 12 months. Members were asked a series of questions and asked to capture their thoughts on individual post-it notes based on the following six questions:

- **What went well?**
- **What helped these things go well?**
- **What didn't go well?**
- **What hindered?**
- **What should we do more of?**
- **What should we do differently?**

The key themes that emerged during this session are outlined below:

1. What went well?

Communication

- There is clear decision making and a good level of discussion and debate.
- Members feel that they are listened to when contributing the discussion and debate.
- There is a good level of challenge, but this is done in a respectful way.
- All board members are engaged and willing to contribute during meetings.
- Face to face Board meetings have helped.

Board Papers

- The Board papers are comprehensive and good quality
- Papers are always circulated well in advance of meetings.

Other

- There is a good relationship between the Board and the College's Senior Management Team

- The development and approval of the College Operating Plan, whilst difficult, was done in the right way.

2. What helped these things go well?

- There is an inclusive environment where members feel able to speak up.
- Members enthusiasm and commitment.
- Good level of support from College Secretariat.
- Good support from Board Secretary.
- Availability of Senior Management Team to discuss issues.
- Presentations at board meetings have brought topics to life e.g., Sustainability
- Allowing context from staff and Trade Union representatives.
- Comprehensive financial analysis and action planning.
- Frequency of Board and Committee meetings.
- Flexibility to attend meetings online.
- Use of Executive Committee in between Board meetings where necessary.

3. What didn't go well?

Agenda and Time Management

- Finishing time of Board meetings
- Length of Board meetings
- Insufficient time given to some important items on agenda, due to running out of time.

Agenda Content

- Lack of discussion on Learning and Teaching matters
- Finance dominates the agenda (for obvious reasons)
- Lack of focus on improving outcomes

Finance

- Lack of impact on national funding model.
- Financial stability from SFC funding

Other

- Having to ask to attend remotely instead of having facility/option (always) available - would help IT support plan for this.
- Insufficient time with external auditors as part of induction (Audit & Risk Committee specific).
- Diversity of Board/recruitment.
- Not always able to get into conversations/discussions (due to layout of meeting room).
- Papers at times only give single options

4. What hindered?

Agenda and Papers

- High level of detail and volume of papers
- Too many reports being discussed that are for information only
- Discussing papers that are for noting only
- Too many agenda items - not enough time allotted for discussion

Finance

- Rigid Scottish Government approach - FE low profile & adverse economic conditions

Other

- Meetings not set up as hybrid & IT not being told until last minute.
- Board focus is perhaps too introverted and needs more sight of key external stakeholder engagement and impact of this for the College.
- Board members giving speeches
- Seating plan means some attendees cannot be seen by the Chair.
- Being given IT tools at last minute with no 'show & tell'.

5. What should we do more of?

This section reflects the things that we currently do well and/or add value for the Board, which we should strive to do more of.

- Continue to seek ways for board members to get to know one another better
- Continue to encourage engagement of members at meetings
- Continue the levels of engagement & partnership (between Board members and Senior Management Team)
- Continue flexible application of Executive Committee

6. What should we do differently?

Agenda, Papers, and Time Management

- Where possible, provide more than one option provided on papers or include an options appraisal.
- Fewer reports for noting/information
- Items for noting could be acknowledge via email with any comments considered
- Do not discuss papers for noting
- Delegate more to sub-committees to free up time on board agendas
- Papers should point to Power BI data where appropriate to help keep papers more succinct
- Board members should not repeat what has already been said (unless they are developing the point further)

Agenda Content

- More discussion on Learning & Teaching
- There should be more focus/discussion on critical outcomes, which are performance indicator driven.
- Provide Board with a Stakeholder Engagement Map.
- Incorporate Poverty data on Power BI Report
- Get a better understanding of how well the College is engaging with our key stakeholders – and get a better understanding of who the key stakeholders are.

Other

- Set up all in-person meetings with an option to attend online
- A better seating plan with Chair more visible to all members