

Board of Management – Human Resources

Minute of Meeting of the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Management of Dumfries and Galloway College held on Tuesday 11 February 2020, 11:30 am in Room 1074b

Present: Janet Brennan (Chair) Ros Francis
Joanna Campbell Rob Orr

In attendance: Brian Johnstone, Chair of Board of Management
Helen Cronie, Interim Head of Human Resources
Sue Livermore, Equality and Diversity Officer
Mandy Wallace – eLearning Manager
William Currie - Head of Corporate Services
Penny Davis, Interim Secretary to the Board (Via link).

Minute Taker: Alex Elkins, Executive Team Assistant (Minute Taker)

1 Welcome and apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. BJ officially welcomed PD (Via link), Interim Secretary to the Board to the committee.

No apologies were received.

2 Declaration of Interest

Members agreed to indicate declarations of interest as appropriate throughout the meeting.

3 Minute of Previous Meeting of 13 March 2018

The Minute of meeting of 5 November 2019 was approved.

4 Matters Arising (not on the Agenda)

4.1 Staff Development Plan

It was confirmed by KR that currently there was no staff development plan and there was a need to develop a structured plan. The timeframe for developing the plan would begin after the transformation plan had been approved.

HC advised the committee that the College had received £15000 from the Development fund which would be used immediately within support functions to promote a 'customer focus'. Longer term themes would include developing capability, leadership, quality and continuous improvement, process improvement, lean and digital capabilities. Leadership development would also be included in the plan.

The members agreed that a provisional timeframe for the plan is important, and the committee was assured that a timeframe was in place.

4.2 Format for Annual Report to Board

PD advised that there is no existing model for annual reports from committees. However, it was felt that it would be useful for all committees to complete a review at the same time to aid planning for the year ahead.

It was agreed that a one-page report should be used to self-evaluate the effectiveness of decisions, rather than simply to report on committee activity, this would be based around a standard checklist and would be completed at the end of the academic year.

ACTION: - PD and KR to develop a checklist and forward initially to the Chair, JB, with a view to completing the report for September publication.

5 Update on Ambition 2025

A report had gone before the Board of Management and feedback is being considered. A report will be brought back at the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: - This item would be carried forward to the next meeting.

6 HR Strategy 2016

The 2016 HR strategy document was distributed to members for comment. Members were not familiar with it and the College was not currently monitoring progress against it. It was agreed that the committee should have oversight of HR strategy in accordance with its terms of reference. Members were advised that HR strategy would be encompassed within the 'people and cultures' section of the Ambition 2025 strategy.

7 Transformation Plan Update

JC advised members that the Senior Leadership Team had met with trade unions and College managers and staff to discuss the plan. Dialogue was on-going with staff and managers.

JC gave members a short overview of the presentation that had been shown to managers.

The details of the presentation and Transformation plan were discussed...

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At this point, IW declared an interest as a Trade Union officer. All members agreed that IW should remain in the meeting, noting that no decision was to be taken by the Committee with regard to the VS scheme.

KR asked the members to consider the recommendations of the scheme and a deeper discussion around the curriculum plan findings took place. It was noted that feedback from managers had been gathered.

KR asked members to feed back any concerns about the scheme to him, prior to the formal Board of Management meeting.

It was confirmed that the Remuneration Committee has responsibility for reviewing VS schemes and making a recommendation to the Board, and the Board will have the choice to approve or reject the scheme.

Following advice given by PD, members agreed that it would be helpful to hold an extraordinary Board of Management meeting to allow the board to discuss the proposal as soon as possible. BJ commented that he gave his support for the recommendation of an extraordinary meeting.

ACTION: - Executive Assistant to distribute the staff presentation to Board members.

ACTION: - Chair to take the proposal for extraordinary meeting (3 March) to the Remuneration Committee meeting (11 February 2020).

8 Curriculum Plan Update

It was confirmed that applications for courses would open on Wednesday 12 March, the courses offered had been based on proposals from the curriculum plan. This had been brought forward a week to boost applications.

JC commented that DD – Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience had done much work to bring the date forward.

9 Staff Survey 2020 Update

The committee discussed the timing and success of the previous survey carried out in 2018. It was noted that the response rate was low. It was agreed to implement a staff survey in Spring 2021 whereby views on the progress of the transformation process could also be gathered.

HC advised the committee that a cross College short life working group will set up to promote a better response rate for 2021 and boost confidence with responses.

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10 Job Evaluation Update

It was confirmed that the process was progressing, and Dumfries and Galloway College was the first to commence the process as it was the first College to submit the completed information.

11 Staff Numbers – Headcount and FTE

KR reported that the College had seen a steady increase in staff numbers from 2013 to August 2019. Monthly trend information and tracked progress will be given at the next HR committee meeting.

From August 2019 to date there has been steady progress in reducing staff numbers in relation to vacancy management.

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ACTION: - SL to bring a report to the next meeting.

12 Staff Turnover – January 2020

It was reported that recruitment requests were being analysed by both managers and heads of service at weekly meetings with the Head of HR.

IW commented that delays in recruitment should not impact on the business needs of the College.

RO commented that the College was not out of line with the national average, showing figures slightly above the average.

13 Casual (Zero Hours Contracts) Update

JB raised a question on the College policy of Zero Hours Contracts and sought clarification on the matter.

It was confirmed that short fixed term contracts were being looked at as an alternative to zero hours contracts, however some staff preferred zero hours contracts.

JC confirmed that the time sheet process had been changed. Heads of service and Vice Principals now analyse all timesheets, and this higher level of scrutiny had shown a significant reduction in costs.

14 Sickness Absence – January 2020

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ACTION: – HC to report to the next meeting on additional information requested.

15 Staff Wellbeing Update

It was reported that the College seeks to build wellbeing activities into the daily routines of all staff. Many Health and wellbeing skills have been identified in the recent 'skills audit' which could feed into the wellbeing plan. It may be possible to pay qualified staff to deliver wellbeing courses to staff.

The committee endorsed the use of staff in this way.

The College continued to use the services offered through Occupational Health within the NHS service. This was used mainly for non-work-related issues such as anxiety caused around family issues and stress.

16 Workforce Planning Update

It was confirmed that work from the curriculum planning process will form the base for a new 'workforce plan'. MW and DD will work with KR to produce a plan in line with time frame for the development plans. It was agreed that planning would factor in an aging workforce.

A further discussion around the process of recruitment for future needs took place.

13:00hrs - JC left the meeting

17 Digital Skills Update

It was reported by MW that the College had carried out the JISC digital analysis for all staff. There had been a good response overall. The analysis showed clear strengths and weaknesses in digital capabilities within the workforce. Most of the weakness is within support staff, with most falling into the 'developing' range. Most lecturing staff fell into the 'capable' range.

Staff would be encouraged to undertake an NPA - PC Passport which offered basic skills. A PDA in technology would also be on offer which would help with teaching resources for the SoSEP project. 234 staff members were required to complete the PC Passport and 104 Lecturing staff the NPA. It was noted that the College plans to introduce a basic digital skills test for all candidates at interview stage.

BJ recommended that the Learning and Teaching committee monitor the delivery of training.

13:11hrs - MW left the meeting.

18 Health & Safety Report

WC gave a verbal update and the following points were noted: -

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- Managers will be offered Risk Assessment Training through Zurich Insurers.
- An Internal audit checklist for managers had been issued.
- It is planned to offer managers desk top training in Risk Continuity Disaster management.
- The live site had caused some issues with health and safety and there had been consultation with unions however no incidents had been reported.
- KR raised the issue of reports that external contractors were seen contravening health and safety standards. WC reassured the committee that the College issued a suppliers' code of conduct to all contractors and had introduced a quality tracker and an independent Health & Safety consultant who is on site regularly.

13:16hrs - WC left the meeting.

19 Strategic Risk Register

The committee were asked to note that it may be necessary to amend 3.5- Industrial Relations in the future, further to a discussion at the recent LJNC about a future pay award.

20 Equality and Diversity Report

A discussion took place around the issue of recruitment in some roles that are perceived to be for females. It was confirmed that these issues were being addressed with focus on job titles and uniforms.

RF commented that she welcomed the inclusion of data on low paid jobs which were dominated by one gender.

13 Any other business

The skills update would be circulated to all board members.

The committee were asked to note that the College would be using paperless payslips from this month.

14 Date and time of Next Meeting

Next meeting October

ACTION: - PD to identify a possible date for the next meeting.