

# Chair's Report April 2016

## Introduction and Welcome

As Chair of The Board of New College Lanarkshire, the Regional Strategic Body for Lanarkshire, I have met many of you over the last few months at functions and events on the NCL and SLC campuses. I am keen to continue formal and informal contact with staff and students and look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months.

At the Board's Strategic Planning event in January, held at 101 Park Street, NCL Coatbridge, the staff and student Board members were keen to have better communication of Board decisions to help everyone understand the role of the Board and the impact of its decisions. I am therefore going to provide a Chair's Report after each meeting of the Board to give you news about the issues the Board has considered.

The Board, through its committees, takes a key strategic role in the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA), curriculum issues, HR issues, resource and estates issues (e.g. taking catering services in – house at the Motherwell Campus, the recent reconfiguration of space at the Coatbridge Campus and bringing the dental students from Duart House to this campus and the programme of works across campuses through last summer), audit issues and finance (e.g. engaging with the SFC to ensure payment of student funds in Lanarkshire).

The Board met on the 21st March 2016 in the Boardroom at South Lanarkshire College following meetings of the NCL and SLC Boards' committees in the committee cycle. The Board had a busy agenda and its main focus for this meeting was a range of strategic regional documents and board procedures which are key to fulfilling the financial and planning responsibilities of a Regional Strategic Body.

### Some highlights from the Board Meeting

Some of the issues considered at the meeting below:

**Pay Negotiations:** The Board was informed that the latest position is that, after further negotiations with Colleges' Scotland and the EIS, a new draft pay agreement will be sent out to the EIS FELA Executive for consideration with the negotiators' recommendation to accept. The Board will be informed of further developments.

**Good College Governance:** the Education Secretary's Task Group on good college governance has now been published. I tabled the executive summary at the Board meeting and updated the Board that there are 10 recommendations as follows:

- better arrangements are put in place to improve board member recruitment
- better support for board member development
- better use of board member appraisal to improve performance
- better systems in place to ensure that all Boards' get consistently get the basics right
- better support and facilitation for good governance practice
- better implementation of staff governance
- better use of Board self-assessments to improve performance
- better use of external assurance to respond promptly to emerging issues
- consideration of a wider range of sanctions
- further assessment of the governance health of the sector.

Student Association Update: Ashley Hickford, the student president of NCL, informed the Board of a range of activity including that the NCL student association was engaged in very positive working with apprentices and with the National Apprenticeship Society. There were 45 apprentices in engineering and an Apprenticeship Steering Group had been formed which was deciding on how funding allocated to it would be spent. She informed the Board that the dates for the NCL student elections had been put back due to industrial action to the 29th – 31st March and that there was a good geographical and gender spread of candidates this year. The Board also received the newsletter from the SLC students which informed it of their activities.

**SLC:** Assigned College Report. The Board noted the timetable for the recruitment of the new SLC Board by September 2016. The Board also noted a paper on the new low energy, low carbon teaching block at SLC. South Lanarkshire College is a high performing college with an 81% overall success rate in 2014-15. The full time student attainment rate fell across Scotland between 2013 -2014 but it rose in SLC for the same period. Learners from the 10% and 20% most deprived data zones achieve well with an attainment 8-10% above the national average. SLC is among the top three colleges in getting students into a job at the end of their course. The college has grown by 60% since 2011-12. It operates at a cost per credit well below the Scottish average and one of its three strategic priorities is to promote sustainable behaviour. The revised credit target is 46,884. The Board noted this report.

**ROA 2016-17:** The colleges are completing the annual revision and update of the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) document and this covers the final year of the current three year ROA process (2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-2017). The Board considered a number of enhancements and updates to sections of the ROA and approved the submission of the document in principle.

**Strategic Documents:** The Board approved a number of key regional documents: The Lanarkshire Region Risk Management Strategy, The Lanarkshire Regional Risk Management Framework, The Financial Strategy Statement, The Value for Money Statement and The Lanarkshire Regional Strategy 2016-17 which sets out a vision and mission for the region's colleges.

The vision is that: "Lanarkshire Colleges aim to be Scotland's leading provider of education and training, recognised for their achievements in empowering people and enriching lives through learning."

The mission is: "To ensure learners are well prepared for the future by providing innovative, high quality, relevant learning for careers, life and success. Supporting the people, business, economy and sustainable development of Scotland."

**Board Procedural documents:** the Board approved revised Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Revised Committee Terms of Reference.

The development and approval of these documents puts the Lanarkshire Board well on the way to meeting its regional responsibilities set out in legislation and I am pleased to report the progress made at this meeting in agreeing a regional vision and mission for the colleges in Lanarkshire. The Board will work with staff and students to make the vision and mission happen in Lanarkshire.

I am also pleased to note that the parking restrictions at the Cumbernauld Campus which were impacting on students and staff and reported to the Board will be lifted as of the 2nd May 2016.

**Linda McTavish**

Chair of the Lanarkshire Board