

**ITEM 8 NCL ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
NCL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**



FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Resources and General Purposes Committee		
Presented by	Brian Gilchrist		
Author/Contact	As above	Department / Unit	Executive Board
Date Created	18 May 2020	Telephone	01698 232391
Appendices Attached	None		
Disclosable under FOISA		Yes	

1. PURPOSE

To update the committee on Organisational Development and Brand Team activities.

2. BACKGROUND

See above

3. DETAIL

See paper attached

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Not applicable

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

None

6. RISK

None.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

10 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the contents of the update.

Resources and General Purposes Committee

1 June 2020

Item 8 NCL Organisational Development Update

NCL Marketing Update

8.1 NCL Organisational Development Update

“One Common Bond”

In my last report to the R&GP Committee, I mentioned some of the culture building activity that we have been undertaking, which is continuing during the period in which the buildings are closed. This work is important, as our sense of community and belonging has been especially important to us at the present time, leading us to reflect on how best to capture and build on this to the benefit of all members of the NCL community.

There has been a ‘bringing together’ of the NCL community and in many respects, the current circumstances are the first truly shared experience affecting all staff in the same way. Much of our focus has been on health and wellbeing, but we are being careful to maintain a common approach that also appreciates and recognises the local nuances arising from the needs of specific campuses and staff groups. In this sense, we are operating as one college identity, but with several connected communities.

This increasing recognition of the needs of campuses within an overall structure can be demonstrated by initiatives such as the agreement of three full-time Student Presidents, with one at each main campus, to better ensure that the voice of all of our students are heard and their needs are addressed. Similarly for staff, we will be progressing with the establishment of Staff Councils, as we are seeing a resurgence in staff engagement and a wish to be more involved in influencing the experience of being a member of our college community.

As well as some focused work on building a sense of connection to the College, to capture feedback from all staff in more wide ranging terms, we will be prioritising a staff survey, as it is vital that we demonstrate that all staff have the opportunity to contribute. The findings of this will be used in a number of ways to inform and benchmark practice and will shape our culture further by providing the evidence base for specific cultural change initiatives. Of particular note is that we intend to design the survey in such a way that the results will also serve as one of the foundation stones for formulating a leadership development programme.

As part of our developing approach to leadership development, the Executive Board will be participating in a programme of personal development reviews commencing in June. This will be led by the Principal and Chief Executive and will be used as a basis for considering our revised future PDR model for all staff, setting a clear path for all staff within a supportive framework.

Safeguarding Policy

Our Safeguarding Policy has been updated and will be published to all staff prior to the summer break. There are no substantial changes to our approach, but we have expanded the references to Gender Based Violence and have also provided clarification on the link between safeguarding and corporate parenting.

One key change is that from August 2020, we will be introducing a Safeguarding Board, the purpose of which will be to ensure that our safeguarding arrangements remain fit for purpose and that effective training and support is in place for staff members involved in safeguarding incidents.

The College was due to participate in a Safeguarding Aspect Review being conducted by Colleges Scotland. However, this meeting has been deferred by Education Scotland under the present pandemic restrictions.

Internal Audit – Freedom of Information

Following the recent internal audit of our FOI/Complaints Handling process, the auditors made a recommendation that the Board should receive a report either annually or biannually covering details of the requests received.

The audit report has been submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee. However, I wish to ask formally whether this FOI report is one that the committee would wish to receive (and how often), or whether this should be remitted to the full Board.

To date in AY 2019/20, there have been 17 requests. Of these, 9 were requested by individuals where no identifying information was provided other than the name of the requester. Of the 8 where the organisation or body to which the requester belonged was available, we received:

- Educational Institute of Scotland 3 requests
- UNISON Scotland 2 requests
- Digby Brown LLP 1 request
- NUS Scotland 1 request
- Councillor, North Lanarkshire Council 1 request
- NCL Student 1 request

Where requests are received from one of the staff trade unions or from NUS Scotland, the request is generally sent to all colleges.

If the Board or this Committee wish to receive such a report as recommended by the internal auditors, this would commence from August 2020.

Business Continuity Policy

Prior to the current pandemic response, we had reviewed and revised our Business Continuity Policy, which was progressing through our policy approval arrangements. Our business continuity response has since been tested on a limited basis resulting from the need to close one of our buildings for a short period earlier in the year, and have been tested again at a full organisational level in terms of our response to the pandemic restrictions.

We are currently reflecting on whether the revised policy requires further review as a result of learning points from the current circumstances and we propose to table it for ratification at the Board meeting in June.

JNC Update

Neither JNC has met for scheduled meeting since the last Resources and General Purposes Committee, although we have continued to engage with our trade union representatives on a regular basis. For example, all three trade unions participated in our Coronavirus Response Group and continue to be involved in our scenario planning activity, and a trade union specific session will take place as part of the Values Project. Discussions have also taken place at an individual member level where necessary.

A JNC for both groups of staff has been scheduled for 8 June 2020, with diary dates already proposed for all meetings in 2020/21.

Employers' Association Update

The Employers' Association met on 13th and 14th May by videoconference. A key part of the agenda was to be discussion of the pay claims submitted by the staff side of the NJNC. However, this discussion did not take place to the extent intended as the EIS had asked for further time to consider their previously submitted position and no pay claim had been received from the support staff unions at the date of the meeting.

Other discussion took place on facilities time for trade union representatives involved in national discussions, which was remitted back to the national working group. Other general updates were also provided on recent national discussions.

Members were also advised of the financial parameters that would influence pay discussions in respect of any pay award to be agreed from 1 September 2020.

8.2 NCL Marketing Update

Communicating during a pandemic

The current restrictions have seen a step change in the work (and workload) of the Brand Team. As well as maintaining student recruitment activity, the Brand Team have also played a key role in our communication with staff and students at this challenging time. Through the use of #NCLTogether and #NCLFromHome, we have sought to engage staff and continue to provide key information to staff and students. During this period, the Brand Team have been fundamental to the College's operations and the delivery of a digital approach to the student experience and there is a real recognition of their role in a business sense, rather than their role being seen in terms of their more visible responsibility for course promotion.

The team have also been integral to our COVID-19 response itself. The Head of Brand and her team participated in our Coronavirus Response Group, ensuring clear and timely communication for all staff and students (including providing an online chat service from 8am until 8pm during the early stages of our response), they have promoted activities to support social interaction on The Clan, have facilitated the weekly video communications from the Principal, and have attended all of our virtual coffee events to collate and respond to staff concerns. Moving into the next phase of our COVID-19 response, the team will continue to be integral to our scenario planning process and the development of our routemap.

We also donated significant amounts of PPE to local hospitals and hospices to meet shortages and more recently have donated a large quantity of food to the Simon Community from our kitchen stores, which would otherwise have spoiled during the period in which our buildings are closed. The Brand Team continue to promote these stories on social media and via press releases.

Student Support Activity

The Brand Team played a leading role in developing the online presence of our key Student Support Services, ensuring that these were delivered as a coherent digital service. A specific microsite was developed including key information on the college services available, as well as signposting students to mental health and other relevant resources.

The team have also led on direct student communications, facilitating direct communications to students on issues of assessment, and through a weekly communication to all students from each Head of Faculty providing curricular specific updates and items of interest at faculty level.

Campaign Activity

The Brand Team have taken a strong lead in our revised approach to student recruitment, as we address the major challenged and disruption arising from the present circumstances. This has required a rapid response, not only in terms of content, tone and method of promotion which has been the 'stock in trade' of the team, but in terms of their contribution to significant redesign of our admissions and recruitment

processes. We have established a Strategic Admissions and Recruitment Group, which has three main elements – Product Development i.e. ensuring the curriculum portfolio we are promoting is fit for purpose and meets current need, Insights – where we are gathering intelligence and data to maximise student recruitment and Student Experience – looking at induction/enrolment and related student communication. These groups will all meet weekly.

In terms of our campaign messaging, we have replanned our campaign activity in terms of its presentation and content and, reflective of the times we are living in, we are offering a warm, hopeful and forward looking campaign under the strapline “Everything you could be”. Promotion has already commenced and in the coming weeks we will be developing the brand messaging further to target our key audiences.

The ‘multi-segment’ approach to our key audiences will be increasing important as it is likely that the continued need for social distancing and the wider economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic means that our traditional approach to full-time/part-time courses will no longer be sufficient. In terms of enabling us to meet delivery targets and in terms of meeting local need, we will need to be much more agile and flexible.

Careers Portal

As part of a review of our digital student recruitment activity and a clear focus on careers, we will be launching a careers portal on our website. This has been part of our strategy for some time, but the need for it is even more pressing in the current climate. The intention is that the portal will provide applicants with evidence of a stronger connection between studying at NCL and the future careers to which it could lead, as another means of maximising student recruitment. This will become increasingly important within a landscape where there is likely to be increased competition and accessibility of learning opportunities due to a proliferation of digital delivery across the sector and beyond.

Assistant Principal: Organisational Development

May 2020