

Agenda

The Lanarkshire Board – 2nd October 2023

Tour of Coatbridge Campus – 4.30 to 5.30 pm

Followed by – Blended Meeting of the Board Coatbridge Campus and via Zoom at 5.30 pm

Meeting Agenda

1. Chair's welcome

Ronnie Smith

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

NCL Regional College Business

4. NCL Committee Minutes (FI) ~

Minutes Emailed

4.1 CSAO 11th September 2023 ~

Ronnie Smith

4.2 Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) 11th September 2023~

Yvonne Finlayson

4.3 RGP Committee 18th September 2023 ~

Keith Fulton

4.4 Finance Committee 18th September 2023 ~

Paula Blackadder

4.5 Chairs Committees 26th June 2023 and 18th August 2023

Ronnie Smith

SLC Business

5. SLC Committee and Board Reports (FI)

5.1 SLC Committees Update

PH/AS /SM/KMCA

5.2 Board Update

Verbal Report – PH

5.3 SLC Board Appointments

Paper Emailed - PH

Lanarkshire Board Business (RSB)

6. Minute of the Lanarkshire Board 12th June 2023 (FA)

Minutes Emailed -RS

FI = For Information FA = For Approval FR = For recommendation to the Board FN = For noting

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DW= Dave Winning; IC = Iain Clark; ET = Elaine Turkington AB= Ann Baxter; CM= Christopher Moore; YF = Yvonne Finlayson; KF = Keith Fulton; BS= Board Secretary; MJ= Moira Jarvie; TBA= Student President NCLSA; KF = Kayleigh Wither Student President SLCSA; KM= Keith McAllister; MS= Matthew Smith; SM= Stella McManus Principal SLC.PB= Paula Blackadder; RS= Ronnie Smith.

7. Chairs Report (FI)

Verbal Update - RS

- 7.1 Chair's Regional Overview
- 7.2 National Committees
- 7.3 Board Recruitment
- 7.4 Audit Scotland & Colleges Scotland Briefing Notes

8. Board Self -evaluation (FA)

Papers Posted – RS

- 8.1 Board Evaluation
- 8.2 Chairs' Evaluation
- 8.3 Board Development Plan

9. Update from Employers' Association (FI)

Verbal Update – KF/ET

10. Regional Outcome Agreement (FI)

Verbal Update–

AB/SM

11. Regional Risk Register *

Paper Posted– MS/KMA

12. Lanarkshire college finances update

Papers Posted–

IC/KMcA

12.1 NCL FFR (FA)

12.2 SLC FFR (FI)

12.3 Financial Update (FI)

13. Student Association Reports (FI)

Papers Posted

13.1 NCL Student Association Report

AB

13.2 SLC Student Association Report

KW

14. Principals' College Update Reports (FI)

14.1 SLC Update

Paper Emailed/SM

14.2 NCL Update

Verbal Report/CM

General Board Business

15. Lanarkshire Board Dates 2024 (FA)

Paper Posted– BS

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16. Approval of Publication of Papers from the Board (FA)

Board Secretary

17. AOB

18. Date of Next Meeting: The scheduled date of the next meeting of the Lanarkshire Board is Monday 11th December 2023 at **10.30 am at the Cumbernauld Campus followed by the Board Christmas lunch.**

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Appointment of Non – Executive Board Members to the Board of South Lanarkshire College (SLC)

1. Purpose

1.1 The Lanarkshire Board is invited to consider the appointment of new Board Members, assessed against the current skills and needs of the Board. The recommendation arises out of a recruitment process undertaken by a panel made up of Board Members of SLC with input from the SLC Governance Professional in course of which five potential members – as detailed in Para. 6 hereafter have been identified.

2. Background

2.1 The Ministerial Guidance on Board appointments sets out guidance for appointments to Assigned Incorporated Colleges, which requires that an assigned incorporated college should have a membership with diverse skills knowledge and experience which, taken together, reflects the current and future needs of the Board and which supports it to meet its responsibilities for effective governance as set out in the Code of College Governance.

3. For non-executive members, the [College Sector Board Members 2014 Ministerial Guidance](#) states that non-executive Board members can be appointed for two terms of office, each of which can be for a period of up to four years.

4. Staff board members can also be elected for a period of up to 4 years.

5. Process

5.1 The Ministerial Guidance 2014 sets out that appointments and re-appointments of an assigned college must be approved by the relevant Regional Strategic Body (RSB); and that the RSB cannot appoint anyone to the Assigned College Board that is barred from regulated work under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland Act) 2007 but appointments can be made subject to it being satisfied that an individual is suitable following a PVG scheme record. Annex B to the guidance also sets out a list of disqualifications from being a Board member e.g., a prison sentence of not less than 3 months in the last 5 years or undischarged bankruptcy. Appointments by the Board will be subject to these conditions being satisfied.

5.2 An assigned college can have a minimum of 13 and a maximum of 18 Board Members and 7 – 12 non-executive Board Members.

6. 1 SLC Board Appointments

This paper is to advise the RSB of the proposed appointments to the SLC Board to take it to 18 Board Members in total. The nominations for additional non- executive members of SLC Board are as follows:

Name	Gender	Key Skills from CV	Knowledge of education sector/industry, commerce, the third sector, public service, trade unions/the region
Paul Brodie	M	Member of Chartered Management Institute Curriculum Manager with Ayr College Chair of SQA Qualification Team (Sport & Fitness) Experience of developing joint Curriculum with secondary Schools	Significant management experience Significant knowledge and understanding of Secondary / FE curricula Sound understanding of KPIs and Team Evaluation Highly Experienced FE Lecturer Trained in HSW Risk Management Sound broad experience of the wider educational sector Track record of innovation in teaching
Scott Coutts	M	Sound experience of Budgeting within the educational sector Sound understanding of governance. Good understanding of communities within the college catchment area Thorough understanding of the educational landscape at both HE and FE levels. Very considerable expertise in Marketing /PR.	Marketing and Communications Manager (online) at University of Edinburgh. Formerly Marketing & Communications Manager at SLC. Previous relevant FE experience Has an in-depth knowledge of SLC and an excellent track record in key areas such as networking and engagement. Considerable experience at Senior Team Level of strategic and operational planning . An effective and experienced manager / team leader.
Thomas Feely	M	Substantial experience in accountancy and audit as senior partner in an established accountancy practice. Also has relevant experience as a Charity Trustee and in community development. Strong management experience and leadership skills allied to sound local knowledge	Current member of the Board of Motherwell Football Club – a supporter owned company limited by Guarantee. Experience of advising corporate bodies and individuals on a full range of accountancy and audit subjects. Commercial experience of running a successful local business. Considerable sharp end experience of Audit processes and procedures

Prof. Jo Gill	F	Vice Principal and Head of College of Arts – University of Glasgow Outstanding experience of Curriculum Quality & Development at the highest level and substantial academic management experience	A leading educator with a distinguished record of relevant publications . Former Governor of an English Sixth Form College. Extensive experience of the education sector generally and the interface between HE and FE specifically. Considerable experience of Chairing Academic Boards and Committees
Peter Sweeney MBE	M	40 year career in the Civil service with outstanding leadership skills which were recognised in the Honours List High level experience within the technology sector with particular emphasis on cyber security and risk management Lifelong resident of East Kilbride with sound understanding of community relationships.	Experience and expertise of governance within the public sector. Specific experience of Audit & Risk. Considerable experience of talent management. Track record of interaction with local colleges and formerly a regular attendee at college recruitment fairs. Proven commitment to community development and the role of FE. Currently Chair of the Educational Trust which has been providing funding for student support initiatives.

6.2 Several Board Appointments are coming to the end of their terms of office and have indicated that they would be happy to participate in a phased programme of appointments so as to spread the termination dates over a period and accordingly a further recruitment process is ongoing for non-executive Board Members with the intention of maintaining Board membership at its full complement of 18 Board Members.

7. Other Relevant Board Changes

7.1 As part of a phased Board refresh to improve succession planning and in recognition of the natural turnover in Board Membership as a result of career progression and family responsibilities the following related changes should be noted.

Chris McDowell	M	Chair of the Human Resources Committee – which has substantially completed a major review of all HR Policies	End of second Term scheduled in 2024 standing down early to facilitate a committee refresh. The new committee Chair is an existing committee member and a new intake will strengthen the committee going forward
Craig McLaughlin	M	Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee – standing down due to career and family demands	A suitably qualified and experienced candidate has been identified from within the proposed new membership and a handover period has been provisionally agreed which will allow continuity
Heather Stenhouse	F	Chair of the Curriculum Quality & Development Committee – standing down due to career and family demands	A suitably qualified and experienced candidate has been identified from within the proposed new membership – which also has the potential to reinforce and add value to the committee
Declan Hogan	M	Standing down due to career and family commitments	The proposed new membership contains a range of skills to replace the skill set being lost

8. Board Member Support

8.1 The appointment of these Board Members and Student Members will be fully supported by Inductions and mentoring support tailored according to need.

8.2 The Chair and Secretary of the LRSB will bring the regional perspective to this if so requested.

9. Recommendation.

9.1 The Lanarkshire Board is asked to approve the nominations for the additional non-executive SLC Board Members set out at section 6.1 above and appoint the said Paul Brodie, Scott Coutts, Thomas Feely, Prof Jo Gill and Peter Sweeney as members of the Board of South Lanarkshire College under and in terms of Schedule 2 Para 3A (2)(f) of the Further & Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 [as amended) This approval is subject to the following:

- The appropriate PVG checks being carried out and there being no disqualifications
- The SLC Board formally approving and endorsing the appointments

Scotland's colleges 2023

A briefing paper



AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
September 2023



Key messages

- 1** Scotland's colleges are vital to learners and local communities. Risks to the college sector's financial sustainability have increased since we reported in 2022. Rising staffing costs are colleges' biggest financial pressure.
- 2** The Scottish Government's funding for the sector has reduced by 8.5 per cent in real terms between 2021/22 and 2023/24, while the sector's costs have increased. Effective, affordable workforce planning is now a greater than ever priority and challenge for colleges.
- 3** Significant changes to how the college sector operates have been recommended by recent reviews. However, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council urgently need to build on their ongoing work to help colleges plan for change now, and make best use of available funding so that they are sustainable for the future.

Accessibility

You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our [website](#).

For information on our accessibility principles, please visit: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/accessibility.

Scotland's colleges have a vital role

Colleges provide valuable learning and facilities, support economic growth and help people achieve wider outcomes

1. Scotland's colleges offer academic and vocational courses to develop people's skills and knowledge for work, continued study or general interest. Students can choose to study full-time, day release, evenings, block release or on an open learning basis. The courses that college students undertake contribute not only to their own development but also to Scotland's sustainable economic growth. Colleges are valuable hubs whose facilities may also be used for local community purposes, including as meeting spaces and sports venues.

There are different types of colleges

2. Of the 24 colleges in Scotland, 22 sit in college regions that have one or more colleges. Nineteen colleges are classed as 'incorporated' and are public bodies that are subject to audit by the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS). As public bodies, incorporated colleges are not permitted to retain reserves at the end of their financial year. The five unincorporated colleges (**shown in bold in Exhibit 1 (page 4)**) are not audited by the AGS and have a range of constitutional arrangements. Two establishments are outside colleges' regional arrangements. **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig** offers further and higher education opportunities through the medium of Scottish Gaelic. **Newbattle Abbey College** is an unincorporated residential college that caters largely for students returning to education in adulthood. In addition, **Scotland's Rural College** is a higher education institution that contributes to the national target for colleges.

3. On 1 August 2023, UHI North Highland and UHI Lews Castle, both of which were incorporated, merged with each other and with UHI West Highland, which was previously unincorporated. The new, merged college is known as UHI North, West and Hebrides. It is expected to be assigned to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and incorporated. This merger is designed to create an institution of scale which will improve sustainability and create benefits for students, staff and stakeholders across a wide region of Scotland.

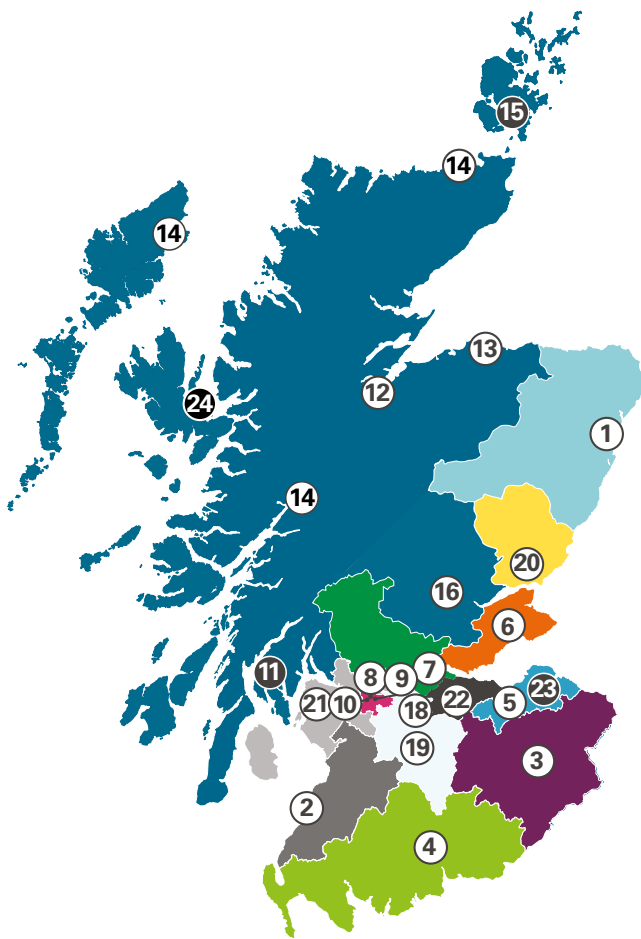
4. This briefing paper draws on our analysis of auditors' annual audit reports (AARs) about incorporated colleges.

Exhibit 1.

Scotland's colleges as at 1 August 2023

The colleges not listed in bold are subject to audit by the Auditor General.

- College – incorporated, audited by AGS
- **College – unincorporated, not audited by AGS**



Region	College
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	1 North East Scotland College
Ayrshire	2 Ayrshire College
Borders	3 Borders College
Dumfries and Galloway	4 Dumfries & Galloway College
Edinburgh and Lothians	5 Edinburgh College
Fife	6 Fife College
Central	7 Forth Valley College
Glasgow	8 City of Glasgow College
	9 Glasgow Clyde College
	10 Glasgow Kelvin College
Highlands and Islands	11 UHI Argyll
	12 UHI Inverness
	13 UHI Moray
	14 UHI North, West and Hebrides
	15 UHI Orkney
	16 UHI Perth
	17 UHI Shetland
Lanarkshire	18 New College Lanarkshire
	19 South Lanarkshire College
Tayside	20 Dundee and Angus College
West	21 West College Scotland
West Lothian	22 West Lothian College
n/a	23 Newbattle Abbey College
n/a	24 Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Source: Audit Scotland

The Scottish Government has a central role in setting policy and funding the college sector

5. The Scottish Government sets national policies for learning and provides over three quarters of the college sector's funding, through its financing of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). It does this in financial years (FY) that run from April to March.

6. The SFC works with colleges to set thresholds for the amount of course provision that colleges should deliver and provides the funding to each college, or regional strategic body in multi-college regions. It does this to fit with the college sector's academic year (AY) from August to July. A regional strategic body allocates funding to the colleges within its area. The SFC holds colleges and regions to account for what they deliver through Outcome Agreements. These set out what colleges plan to deliver in return for their funding from the SFC. Its Outcome Agreement Managers work with each college to develop their individual Outcome Agreement.

Risks to the college sector's financial sustainability have increased

In 2022, we reported that change was needed to ensure the sector's financial sustainability in the long term

7. [Scotland's colleges 2022](#) drew on colleges' accounts for AY 2020-21 and concluded that it will be difficult for colleges to balance delivering high-quality learning at the volume expected while contributing to other Scottish Government priorities. We said change was needed to ensure more students are successful; and also that the Scottish Government and the SFC should support colleges to plan for change now to make best use of available funding and ensure the sector is financially sustainable in the long term.

Risks to the sector's financial sustainability have increased since then

8. Auditors' AARs on incorporated colleges for AY 2021-22 highlighted sustained risks to colleges' financial sustainability, and an increased level of risk in most of them.

9. The SFC requires a college to report its adjusted operating position (AOP), to reflect its underlying operating performance after allowing for material one-off or distorting matters outside its control. This helps to assess a college's underlying financial strength and to provide figures which are readily comparable among colleges.

10. The sector reported an adjusted operating surplus of around £8 million in AY 2021-22. The SFC has not yet concluded its assessment of the sector's finances for AY 2021-22. While early analysis indicates that the sector's adjusted operating surplus is slightly better than forecast, the surplus for AY 2021-22 is likely to be considerably less than its surplus of £19.3 million for the previous year.

11. The anticipated reduction in the surplus is partly due to increases in staff costs, reflecting the impact of the sector's pay award in AY 2021-22 and some additional recruitment as well as rising inflation, fuel costs and other pressures. Other operating costs increased by around £10 million (six per cent) on AY 2020-21 levels. The return to campus activity – following

the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – saw an increase in teaching, teaching support and administration costs plus increased catering, student residence and utilities costs. More colleges reported an adjusted operating deficit in AY 2021-22 than in AY 2020-21.

Rising staffing costs are colleges' biggest financial pressure

12. Staff costs accounted for more than two thirds (around 70 per cent) of the sector's expenditure in AY 2021-22. Changes to their staffing are one of the main levers for colleges to manage their costs. Staff pay awards remain a pressure on college finances. Trade unions are continuing to pursue their pay claim for AY 2022-23. Employers' pension contribution costs are increasing. The outcome of a job evaluation exercise for support staff will also increase staff costs when completed.

13. Colleges have already sought voluntary redundancies to reduce their staff costs. While final figures for the sector are not yet available, we know that many colleges have spent money on staff restructuring costs – that mainly involve voluntary redundancies – to help save money in the longer term. The SFC reported that there were no compulsory redundancies during AY 2021-22. Some colleges anticipate the need for further, significant staffing reductions which could severely erode their ability to deliver a viable curriculum.

14. Glasgow Kelvin College has indicated that it may need to reduce its workforce by 21 per cent from AY 2022-23 to AY 2024-25. Ayrshire College, in preparing its 2022 financial forecast, also calculated a set of financial projections using an alternative, more pessimistic planning scenario (compared to the planning assumptions provided by the SFC). This scenario found the college may need to lose 70 per cent of its staff over a five-year period – a scenario in which it could no longer function.

15. All colleges provided updated financial forecasts to the SFC at the end of June 2023 along with additional planning scenarios that they considered appropriate for their operating environment and circumstances. The updated forecasts and additional planning scenarios supersede the 2022 equivalents. These are currently being reviewed by the SFC.

16. The strategic workforce pressures facing the college sector are more challenging than before, as colleges seek to reduce their costs. Some colleges have said that they are considering implementing compulsory redundancies. In June 2023, the Minister for Higher and Further Education and Minister for Veterans [informed](#) the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People Committee that he had written to all college principals to '[reiterate the importance the Scottish Government places on the use of fair work practices in the college sector ... My officials are engaging with the SFC to build a picture of the scale of redundancies facing the sector and whether there is any impact on provision.](#)' In July 2023, the Minister [wrote](#) to the Committee, indicating that colleges should only seek compulsory redundancies as a last resort and should notify the SFC of such intentions.

Colleges also have other pressures

17. Without investing in maintenance, colleges risk their estate becoming a worsening environment for learning. [Scotland's colleges 2022](#) noted that capital funding for the college sector was £321 million short of requirements for lifecycle and backlog maintenance, and that capital funding from the Scottish Government, administered through the SFC, had consistently fallen short of the level colleges have needed.

18. The SFC developed the [College infrastructure strategy](#) for 2023-33 in consultation with the sector and it recognises the urgent need for significant investment in the college estate. The Scottish Government increased the sector's capital funding from £74.7 million in FY 2022/23 to £82.4 million in FY 2023/24. After taking account of inflation, this represented an increase of 7.6 per cent in real terms. Recognising the increasing number of urgent calls for assistance on repairs/works of a health and safety or business continuity nature, the SFC set aside £4.7 million in AY 2023-24 to support the sector. The SFC received expressions of interest to a value of approximately £20 million and is currently triaging these to a shortlist to fit the budget. Emerging issues around Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete will only add to this pressure.

19. Numerous colleges have highlighted impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic on their financial position and sustainability. These include reductions in their non-SFC income sources in AY 2021-22 due to pandemic-related restrictions, such as constraints on pursuing commercial opportunities. Other risks are summarised in [Exhibit 2](#).

Exhibit 2.

Significant areas of risk for colleges

This is a cross-section of the numerous risks affecting colleges.

- Inflation, interest rates and energy costs.
- The investment required to achieve public sector net zero targets, especially in relation to the college estate.
- Investment required to invest in digital.
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining students and staff.
- The requirement for colleges to self-fund staff restructuring and voluntary severance package costs.
- Competition from private sector training providers.
- Competition from some universities.
- The challenges of raising income from non-teaching activities.
- The impact of cost efficiencies on staff wellbeing and the student experience.



Colleges rely heavily on Scottish Government funding

20. The Scottish Government's budget works in financial years (FY) that run from April to March, such as April 2022 to March 2023. The Scottish Government has budgeted revenue funding for the college sector comprising £675.7 million in each of 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. After taking account of inflation, this represents a reduction in real terms of 8.5 per cent from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

21. The SFC uses the Scottish Government's funding to provide grants to colleges within their academic year (AY) that runs from August to July. This means that a college year spans two years of the Scottish Government's budget. For example, the college sector's AY 2022-23 year spanned the Scottish Government's financial years FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24. The SFC has set a college revenue budget for AY 2022-23 of £675.3 million, a reduction of £36.5 million (5.1 per cent) from AY 2021-22.

22. Grant funding provided via the SFC accounted for around three quarters of the college sector's total income in AY 2021-22. One college relied on the SFC for less than half its income (Sabhal Mor Ostaig). All other colleges relied on the SFC for more than half their income, including seven that obtained over three quarters of their income from the SFC. Colleges' main source of non-SFC income was tuition fees and education contract income, with other income-generating activities, including catering, making up the bulk of the balance.

Significant changes lie ahead

The Scottish Government recognises that changes are needed

23. Several national reviews have recently recommended major changes that would affect the college sector, and these sit alongside other significant developments ([Exhibit 3](#)). They all bring both challenges and opportunities for the Scottish Government. There are questions about what can realistically be achieved in the short term and what may require a longer timescale, possibly involving new legislation.

Exhibit 3. Recent major developments affecting the college sector These bring challenges and opportunities.



**29 June
2021**

The SFC's [review of tertiary education and research](#) included a recommendation to the Scottish Government that there should be more flexibility in how colleges are funded.



**7 June
2023**

The Withers [review of the post-school learning system](#) urged the Scottish Government to think creatively about how to secure the sustainability of the post-school skills delivery system. It included a recommendation that the Scottish Government should redesign the process for how funding of all learning and training provision, including apprenticeships, is allocated to ensure it is prioritised to deliver strategic outcomes and best value for public investment. It also recommended the establishment of a single funding body and parity of esteem between colleges and universities.



**22 June
2023**

The Hayward [review of qualifications and assessment](#) will have implications for the qualifications that colleges consider when selecting students and employees, and for the courses that colleges provide.



**28 June
2023**

The Scottish Government's [Purpose and Principles for post-school education, research and skills](#) includes a target outcome that the system is 'financially and environmentally resilient; trusted to deliver, and subject to effective governance'. The programme of reform, signalled through the Scottish Government's [Initial priorities for implementation](#) and the Purpose and Principles, outlines the key actions that the Scottish Government will be taking forward to deliver on the vision and outcomes it has set for the system.

24. In May 2023, the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People (ECYP) Committee **concluded** that 'If additional funding is unavailable, and flexibility within current funding arrangements is also not forthcoming, then the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council need to provide colleges with a clear steer on what they should be prioritising.'

25. In June 2023, the Scottish Government took some initial steps in response to these developments:

- It **advised** the Scottish Parliament's ECYP Committee that it had 'heard loud and clear the calls for reform and won't shy away from decisions which will deliver better services for learners and employers and simplify the operating environment for our colleges, universities and training providers.'
- It **advised** the ECYP Committee that it is considering ways to give colleges more financial flexibility. It also **asked** the SFC to play an active role in helping colleges to use their funding allocations more flexibly; and to intervene in the sector where necessary.
- It **announced** that it plans to take over national responsibility for skills planning, and that there will be a new national model of public funding for all colleges, universities, apprenticeships and training.

26. The SFC has introduced a new funding distribution model and associated guidance for AY 2023-24. This is to provide colleges with enhanced flexibility and greater opportunity to decide how best to respond to local, regional and national needs. The Scottish Government is exploring the potential for further changes in colleges' funding arrangements.

The Scottish Government and the SFC urgently need to build on their ongoing work with colleges and help them become sustainable now, while structural arrangements at a national level evolve

27. Overall, 25.5 per cent of school leavers went into further education at college in AY 2021-22, compared to 35.6 per cent from the most deprived areas (Scottish Government **statistics**, February 2023). These figures exclude school leavers undertaking a higher education course in a college. Colleges therefore play a vital role in providing people, particularly those from more disadvantaged areas, with the training, qualifications and life-skills that can help them to succeed in life and make a valuable contribution to society. More widely, colleges also contribute to achieving the Scottish Government's three national 'missions':

The Scottish Government's three missions

- 1 Equality:** tackling poverty and protecting people from harm.
- 2 Opportunity:** a fair, green and growing economy.
- 3 Community:** prioritising our public services.

28. A significant reduction in a college's range of courses, student capacity, or its closure altogether could have an unequal impact on students from more deprived areas, plus ramifications for the wider community. In many rural, remote and island communities, there is no alternative college nearby.

29. Policy and structural changes by the Scottish Government have the potential to improve colleges' operating environment but colleges face daunting challenges now to their business models and finances. For example, colleges need to maintain and, if possible, enhance the learning they provide and improve outcomes for their students. At the same time, they are managing complex change across the college sector and considerable strain on their finances.

30. Addressing the challenges facing the college sector cannot be avoided or postponed. While recognising the role of college leadership teams in managing their finances, it is also critical for the Scottish Government to work with the SFC during AY 2023-24 to support colleges in planning for change now and making best use of available funding. This should help to secure colleges' future while the Scottish Government considers its response to the reviews featured in [Exhibit 3 \(page 10\)](#), and the funding it allocates to the sector.

Next steps

31. We report annually on the audits of Scotland's incorporated colleges. We will continue to monitor and report on developments across the sector as their impacts become clearer.

Scotland's colleges 2023

A briefing paper



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Audit Scotland – Scotland’s Colleges 2023 Analysis – September 2023

Audit Scotland published its [annual report](#) on the college sector in Scotland on Thursday 7 September 2023.

Key Messages

- Scotland’s colleges are vital to learners and local communities. Risks to the college sector’s financial sustainability have increased since we reported in 2022. Rising staffing costs are colleges’ biggest financial pressure.
- The Scottish Government’s funding for the sector has reduced by 8.5 per cent in real terms between 2021/22 and 2023/24, while the sector’s costs have increased. Effective, affordable workforce planning is now a greater than ever priority and challenge for colleges.
- Significant changes to how the college sector operates have been recommended by recent reviews. However, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) urgently need to build on their ongoing work to help colleges plan for change now, and make best use of available funding so that they are sustainable for the future.

Financial Sustainability

- Audit Scotland has identified that the risks to the college sector’s financial sustainability have increased since their previous report in 2022, in which they reported that change was needed to ensure the sector’s financial sustainability in the long term.
- It is advised that the sector reported an adjusted operating surplus of around £8 million in AY 2021/22, considerably less than its surplus of £19.3 million for the previous year.
- Audit Scotland is of the view that the anticipated reduction in the surplus is partly due to increases in staff costs, reflecting the impact of the sector’s pay award in AY 2021/22 and some additional recruitment as well as rising inflation, fuel costs and other pressures.
- With regards to Scottish Government funding, Audit Scotland has noted the revenue funding for the college sector comprising £675.7 million in each of 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24, and has advised that “After taking account of inflation, this represents a reduction in real terms of 8.5 per cent from 2021/22 to 2023/24”.
- Grant funding provided via the SFC accounted for around three quarters of the college sector’s total income in AY 2021/22. One college relied on the SFC for less than half its income, whilst all other colleges relied on the SFC for more than half their income, including seven that obtained over three quarters of their income from the SFC.

Staff Costs

- It is noted that rising staff costs are colleges’ biggest financial pressure, with staff costs accounting for more than two-thirds (around 70%) of the sector’s expenditure in AY 2021/22, whilst staff pay awards remain a pressure on college finances.

Infrastructure

- The report makes clear that “Without investing in maintenance, colleges risk their estate becoming a worsening environment for learning” and that “Emerging issues around Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete will only add to this pressure”.

Significant Areas of Risk for Colleges

Audit Scotland also articulate a cross-section of the numerous risks affecting colleges, composed of the following:

- Inflation, interest rates and energy costs
- The investment required to achieve public sector net zero targets, especially in relation to the college estate
- Investment required to invest in digital
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining students and staff
- The requirement for colleges to self-fund staff restructuring and voluntary severance package costs
- Competition from private sector training providers
- Competition from some universities
- The challenges of raising income from non-teaching activities
- The impact of cost efficiencies on staff wellbeing and the student experience.

Education Reform Agenda

- Audit Scotland is of the view that the recent reviews associated with the Education Reform Agenda bring both challenges and opportunities for the Scottish Government, and advises that there are questions about what can realistically be achieved in the short term and what may require a longer timescale, possibly involving new legislation.
- Against the context of reform, Audit Scotland has recommended that “The Scottish Government and the SFC urgently need to build on their ongoing work with colleges and help them become sustainable now, while structural arrangements at a national level evolve”.
- In particular, Audit Scotland is clear that it is “critical for the Scottish Government to work with the SFC during AY 2023-24 to support colleges in planning for change now and making best use of available funding”.
- The role of colleges in delivering the Scottish Government ambitions of Equality, Opportunity and Community is also touched on, with it being noted that “A significant reduction in a college’s range of courses, student capacity, or its closure altogether could have an unequal impact on students from more deprived areas, plus ramifications for the wider community”
- Audit Scotland believes that “Policy and structural changes by the Scottish Government have the potential to improve colleges’ operating environment but colleges face daunting challenges now to their business models and finances” and that “Addressing the challenges facing the college sector cannot be avoided or postponed”.

Colleges Scotland
September 2023

The Lanarkshire Board

Self – Evaluation Report 2022-23 and Board Development Plan 2023-25

“The Board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process. There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness every three to five years.”

Extract from the Code of Good Governance for Scotland’s Colleges

DRAFT

Self-Evaluation Review

Over a 3-month period in 2022-23 the Lanarkshire Board undertook a self-evaluation exercise on its effectiveness as the Regional Strategic Body for Lanarkshire as required by the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.

The assessment is based on the principles contained in the sector's Code of Good Governance; the Board Effectiveness questionnaire ([Appendix 3](#)) reflects the various sections in the Code. The sections take on board the principles of the Code but are adapted to the position of The Lanarkshire Board as a multi college region.

Background

The Lanarkshire Board is the Regional Strategic Body (RSB) for Lanarkshire comprising New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire College. South Lanarkshire College undertakes a separate evaluation of its own Board and retains responsibility for staffing and estates (The Lanarkshire Order 2014). The gathering of information from RSB members was an iterative process undertaken over a number of weeks.

The **1:1 sessions with the Chair** were initiated in March 2023 and 99% completed by the end of May 2023. The two missing sessions being because of the work commitments of the Board members concerned and are scheduled to take place as soon as their availability allows. [Update: one of the outlying 1:1 sessions was completed in early July 2023.] The outline questionnaire for 1:1 discussions and Personal Development Plans, is attached for information at [Appendix 2](#).

The survey of the **RSB Committees**, together with the relevant remits, was circulated in May 2023 separately to all committee members and the chairs of the respective committees. The questionnaire is attached at [Appendix 3](#) and the feedback from the committees is summarised in section 3 of this report.

The **Board operational effectiveness** survey, was distributed later with members being asked to provide comment on specific aspects of Board operation as well as offering the opportunity for Board members to reflect on Board activity over the previous 12 months and identify their ambition for the Board in the coming 12 months. The questionnaire is at [Appendix 4](#)

The comments and suggestions gathered in the 1:1 sessions, the Committee survey and the Board Effectiveness questionnaire, together with feedback from college senior management, are collated into the **Board Development Plan** at [Appendix 6](#).

The Senior Independent Board Member carried out an **appraisal of the Regional Chair** and contacted all members of the Board for their views. His report is at [Appendix 5](#).

This report covers:

1. The Board self-evaluation process undertaken during 2022-23;
2. Feedback from the 1:1 discussions with the Regional Chair;
3. Feedback on the effectiveness of the 4 main RSB committees;
4. Analysis and findings of the Board Effectiveness survey, section by section, including general comment on the structure of the Committees;
5. Appraisal of the Regional Chair (Confidential);
6. The Board Development Plan for 2023-25;
7. Next steps;
8. List of appendices:

- Appendix 1 The Lanarkshire Board self-evaluation process 2022-23;
- Appendix 2 Outline questionnaire for 1:1 interviews and Personal Development Plans;
- Appendix 3 The Committee operation and structure questionnaire;
- Appendix 4 The Board Operating effectiveness questionnaire;
- Appendix 5 Appraisal of the Regional Chair (Confidential)
- Appendix 6 Board Development Plan 2023-2025

DRAFT

1. Self- evaluation process: Appendix 1

The stages of the self- evaluation process are described in more detail in [Appendix 1](#).

We have included the following broad areas which we believe meet the requirements of the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges:

- Personal Development Plans for Board members following 1:1 discussions with the Regional Chair;
- A separate evaluation of the effectiveness and operation of the 4 main RSB Committees;
- A full Board operational effectiveness review including a general question on the Committee structure covering:
 - leadership;
 - quality of student experience;
 - accountability and staff governance;
 - overall effectiveness;
 - relationships and collaboration.
- An evaluation of the Board Chair carried out by the Senior Independent Member;
- Next steps to address the issues and ideas generated in the different sections of the evaluation.

The full Board operational effectiveness questionnaire elicited responses from **12** members of The Lanarkshire Board and one from the senior management team. At the time of the survey there were 2 vacancies on the RSB, reducing the full complement of Board members to 20; 3 of the 5 Board members from SLC elected not to respond to the questionnaire. At the time of the evaluation a recruitment exercise was in process as the terms of 5 RSB Board members were due to finish over the summer period 2023. In addition, the dissolution of the Region, as recommended by SFC in its report 'Coherence and Sustainability: A review of Scotland's Colleges and Universities Phase One Report: Insights to Develop Further', published in October 2020, had still not been advanced. The Region Transformation Group, chaired by the Scottish Government and run by SFC, has not met since before COVID. Both colleges continue to press for the group to be re-energised to enable NCL and SLC to progress independently while collaborating for the benefit of the learners in Lanarkshire.

2. Feedback on the 1:1s and Personal Development Plans

Questionnaire/outline for discussion at Appendix 2

Post COVID return to face to face meetings were welcomed, although the convenience of Zoom meetings was acknowledged. Remote meetings were considered particularly counterproductive for newer members of the Board for which this format did not provide the opportunity for informal discussion with longer serving members which would normally have taken place around face to face meetings. This had proved to be considerable drawback to their understanding of some of the more complex issues discussed by the Board and therefore their development as major contributors to meetings.

Follow up actions to address the points raised in the discussion sessions:

Information sessions:

There was particular Interest in information sessions on:

- finances in the college sector and how they are organised, specifically income streams;
- the organisation of the college sector in Scotland and the roles of partner agencies;
- sector jargon and acronyms;
- regional strategic planning;
- cyber security;
- risk appetite.

Additional actions:

- Reintroduction of the buddy/mentor scheme;
- In addition to sessions organised by the Board Secretary of the RSB, ensure members have the opportunity to attend development modules such as those offered by the College Development Network on governance, and relevant modules provided by the NCL Staff Development Academy;
- Investigate how to improve the presentation of papers for meetings and ensure that a context/summary is always provided;
- Follow up with the Principal and his senior team on the development of more regular strategy sessions with the Board;
- Develop closer links with the NCL senior team to gain better insight into potential strategic issues requiring Board decisions;
- Improve updating members on key issues between Board meetings, especially around decisions taken in the Chairs' Committee where time constraints had not enabled full Board discussion prior to the event.

3. Feedback on the Committee structure Questionnaire at Appendix 3

There are 4 main RSB Committees which meet quarterly before regular Board meetings:

- Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
- Curriculum, Student Affairs and Outcome Committee (CSAO)
- Finance Committee
- Resource and General Purposes Committee (RGP)

There are also 3 ad hoc committees which meet as necessary:

- Chairs' Committee
- Nomination and Search Committee
- Remuneration Committee

i) Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

Overall members are happy with the way this committee is chaired and how it operates, responses being mainly “1”s.

Comments include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months:

- The ARC has been very successful in supporting the review and corrective actions around the SLC governance challenges. Particularly, the engagement of the Chair of the ARC in supporting the Board and the Board Chair in resolving the complex issues;
- Provision of clear and straightforward navigation of the various challenges associated with the SLC position and the impact upon the RSB/NCL. Strong and sensible guidance on matters relevant to college risk;
- Partnership working with the assigned college, much of which has taken place out with the committee meetings. Very refreshing to see such collaborative working;
- Risk Management controls, understanding of Risks and actions;
- Excellent transparency;
- External auditor’s management and control of internal audits and follow-up;
- The Audit committee and the especially the Chair has held individuals, groups, responsible areas to account.

Development I would like to see in the next year:

- Perhaps an opportunity for joint meeting/working with the finance committee in order to ensure a more joined-approach to the development of a clear financial strategy for NCL;
- When a review of a college service has an overall conclusion of weak/unacceptable it might be useful to include the manager of the service when the report is discussed.

ii). Curriculum, Student Affairs and Outcomes Committee (CSAO)

Members’ responses are mainly “1”s. Where members recorded “2”s they were against the questions relating to the CSAO being forward looking and whether members have sufficient knowledge to contribute to discussion. These points will be addressed in the proposed next steps to work more closely with the Principal and senior team to identify strategic developments and provide the appropriate briefings.

Comments include:

What we have done well in the last 12 months:

- Engagement with student representatives, but perhaps we should encourage them to not only update CSAO on their activities, but also what students want from us;
- Excellent engagement of Student representatives from SLC and NCL;
- The CSAO Committee was actively involved in the development of the enhanced curriculum through the partnership with UWS. There should be more partnership working for the benefit of the learners in Lanarkshire;
- I think that the Committee has provided good focus upon examining, challenging and enhancing the performance characteristics of the College. I think, too, it has provided an excellent mechanism by which the student voice can be expressed;

- Despite the extraordinary difficulties over the last 12 months with funding cuts, COVID recovery, cost of living crisis to name a few, our committee members have remained professional, focused, and dedicated to doing the best we can for our students and college. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve on the board and committees;
- Sharing student initiatives across the region;
- The CSAO has successfully been inclusive and welcoming to South Lanarkshire College colleagues. The group has worked well discussing challenges faced by the college sector and has highlighted good practice achieved by both colleges;
- The committee has been proactive in addressing the current SFC funding deficit and the funding issue going forward.

Development I would like to see in the next year:

- More regular updates on funds such as bursaries, and how hardship funds and access funds are used;
- Enhanced scrutiny of targets linked to with an overview of budget implications regularly considered;
- I think it may be worthwhile looking at the performance successes of SLC in relation to their Education Scotland performance – with a view to determining benefits to be gained for NCL;
- To develop a Board and committee space on Teams to negate the distribution of papers by email.

iii). Finance Committee

Committee members' responses were very broadly in the "1"s category 'strongly agree', however there were some "2"s mainly in relation to 'is the committee forward looking', and 'do members have sufficient knowledge to contribute'. The comments on this were helpful. As for the CSAO Committee above these points will be picked up with the Principal and Senior Team. A particular concern was raised about the lack of development of a regional approach to planning and monitoring of financial matters. This has become entangled with the SFC decision to dissolve the Regional Strategic Body (see section 1 of this report) and the lack of progress being made by the suspension of the activities of the Region Transition Group

Comments include:

What we have done well in the last 12 months:

- Chair of committee brings useful challenge and reflect to those attending the committee

Development I would like to see in the next year:

- Further financial challenge of senior executive to ensure we provide clear and sufficient information to the committee to enable wider participation in the discussions and decisions;
- Longer term planning/visioning which reflects the financial situation within the sector.

iv). Resources and General Purposes Committee (RGP)

Responses were mainly "1"s and "2"s though there were a couple of "3"s in relation to being forward looking and around engagement with strategic partners. These points were also reflected in the responses of one of the senior team who has recently started attending the RGP.

What have we done well in the last 12 months

- Overall estates review

- Developed and utilised not only an ongoing and improved understanding of the College's and Region's business, but also a greater awareness of the environments they operate in – the relationships and partnerships that affect and impact upon engagement and delivery overall;
- Being as informed as is possible, but also demonstrating a willingness to listen, to be pragmatic and to be as adaptable as possible whenever a situation demands it.
- Level of detail on what can be complex issues is always good. We have done well with what we can control.

Development I would like to see in the next year:

- Issues relating to cladding often take a lot of time, perhaps given the very specialist aspect a separate meeting should be held and only an update at RGP;
- The FE Sector is facing numerous challenges with its colleges bearing the brunt of these. The impact upon learners, staff and management is likely to be significant. From a Lanarkshire perspective, it will be crucial for the improved operating arrangements with South Lanarkshire College to continue and, as a result, for the Region to be in a much better position to respond far more effectively and efficiently than would otherwise have been the case.
- Additionally, I would like to see a continuing return to more “face to face” environment where, to my mind, the benefits over online meetings are fundamental and offer:-
 - An improved ability to gauge others' reactions during discussions and to work in a more positive way to address concerns;
 - An increased opportunity to judge and spark new thoughts and ideas; and
 - More generally, an opportunity to create improved prospects of a more engaging Board and Committee structure where individual characteristics and personalities are better known and can be better utilised.

4. The findings of the Board operational effectiveness survey

A copy of the questionnaire is attached at **Appendix 4**

Summary: The overall feedback on the Board's operational effectiveness was positive; by far the responses were “1”s and “2”s (strongly agree/agree) with a smattering of “3”s and one “5” (strongly disagree). Alongside the “3”s, the comments made by some Board members indicate the areas we need to focus on in order to improve Board performance and at the same time encourage informed participation in discussion by a wide range of Board members. The one “5” in the survey is in connection with Staff Governance and clearly this response cannot be overlooked.

SECTION 1 of the questionnaire: THE BOARD'S LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY ROLE

This section was subdivided into:

- ethical leadership
- strategic leadership and
- corporate social responsibility

The majority of Board members scored “1” or “2” (strongly agree/agree); two scored “3” in the 3 subdivisions in this section but there were no scores “4” or “5”. In addition to being asked to rate Board performance, Board members were invited to give their comments on “what we did well in the last 12 months” and “developments I would like to see in the next 12 months”.

Among the comments on the leadership section of the survey some examples are:

What we have done well over the last 12 months:

- Working with College senior management to help provide strong focus and direction on the tasks in hand; this during an ongoing period of stress & strain on different fronts. The social elements were not forgotten either, with the continuing provision of meals to learners and, subsequently, the launch of the [NCL Education] Foundation;
- Board being aware timeously of issues;
- We have focused on the student experience;
- The Board is always thoughtful regarding the impact of any decision on students, staff and the wider community;
- Having witnessed some issues that have occurred in other FE colleges, I believe that our board operates collegiately but with the correct amount of challenge when required.

Developments I would like to see in the next 12 months:

- Strategy to address the financial challenges ahead;
- Increased opportunities to focus on forward looking strategic considerations;
- The key issue is effective use of resource. As resource is a challenge that may impact the leadership we can provide. Lack of resource also means time being allocated to mitigate that as opposed to providing leadership;
- Constant financial monitoring will be required;
- To continue developing initiatives that improve outcomes for the students, the staff and the local community.

SECTION 2 of the questionnaire: QUALITY OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The subsections covered here are:

- student engagement
- relevant and high-quality learning
- quality monitoring and oversight.

At each of its meetings the Board is updated on student projects and activities by the Students' Association Presidents from both colleges; the Board has maintained its strong relationship with both Students' Associations. The Chair has an open access policy to all Board members, especially the Student Presidents, should they wish to raise any issues with him outwith regular Board and Board Committee meetings.

Feedback in the questionnaire from Board members was very positive in relation to the Student Associations' contributions with some constructive ideas for further development. All questionnaire respondees marked this section with "1" and "2" ("1" = strongly agree/agree) with one "3" in the section on 'student engagement'.

Comments in relation to the quality of the student experience section include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months:

- The continuing development of Student Association/Board interactions has been very positive and, in my opinion, is now light years ahead of where we were previously. I believe that this view is shared by the SA Presidents. With changes to the Board and SA positions imminent, it is my fervent hope that these improvements continue offering a better learning environment for all concerned;

- I think there are challenges in terms of working with external agencies who are also suffering from the current economic position;
- There is a focus on the student learner;
- In terms of student voice, I believe students have a strong voice at the table through the student reps;
- SA reports have developed and become very informative.

Developments I would like to see in the next 12 months:

- Board should interact more with staff – in the past the Board were assigned to different departments;
- While we have mechanisms in place, what are the outcomes? Can we evaluate the impact of cuts on the college student experience?
- We need to be even more closely linked in with the Lanarkshire region to ensure that the college is providing the right courses;
- It is increasingly difficult to improve, or indeed maintain, the student experience with an ever-decreasing budget.

SECTION 3 of the questionnaire: ACCOUNTABILITY

This section has subsections:

- Accountability and Delegation arrangements
- Risk Management
- Committee Structure

Predominant responses in the 3 subsections are “1”s and “2”s, (strongly agree/agree) however there are several “3”s in the first two subsections given by 2 individual Board members. These could be interpreted be as ‘don’t knows’ as they came from newer or less experienced members of the Board, or that the Board’s performance in these areas is perceived as average and needs to be tightened up. Further information is required before appropriate action can be decided.

One member felt that the ‘scoping and monitoring sources of evidence (internal and external to the region) to ensure that risks and potential new risks, are understood and controlled’ should be strengthened while another commented that some of the decision making could be more transparent. Neither of these concerns were reflected more widely but they remain points to be followed up.

The **Committee structure** was supported by all respondees. Please see section 3 of this report for the detailed feedback on the 4 main RSB committees.

Comments in relation to Accountability include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months:

- Continued to deliver professionally and appropriately despite the difficulties and barriers eg credit delivery, finances and the governance situation at South Lanarkshire College that persisted for much of the year;
- We have maintained focus on the financial performance of the College;
- Committees from NCL and SLC have formed stronger working relationships;
- Majority of papers issued with adequate time for Board members to have meaningful discussions/debates.

Developments I would like to see over the next 12 months:

- Increased opportunities to better include all Board Members into College life. The benefits of doing so should enable improved awareness and understanding of the “working” college, thus allowing more knowledgeable and informed contributions across a wider range of matters for the benefit of the Lanarkshire Colleges;
- Less “regular” use of the Chairs’ Committee;
- Resourcing committees (increasing committee member numbers perhaps) so that they remain quorate for all sessions;
- Now COVID is away is there a requirement for a Chairs’ Committee?

Staff Governance

All responses in this section were either “1” or “2” with one exception which was a “5”.

Comments include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months

- Albeit with well identified and conveyed concerns about the process, handled the governance situation at South Lanarkshire College in as good and appropriate manner as was possible;
- I feel like the board treats and listens to everyone equally.

Developments I would like to see over the next 12 months:

- The effective and positive conclusion of the dissolution of the current Regional College/Assigned College structure in Lanarkshire;
- We are able to work within the parameters that we can in terms of management of staff;
- Unions having access to the Board to assist in resolving the poor unions/management relationship.

SECTION 4 of the questionnaire: EFFECTIVENESS

Sections in this part of the survey were:

- The Regional Chair
- Board members
- Board Secretary
- Board member recruitment, induction and development
- Board evaluation and Development Plan

Feedback on the role of the Regional Chair was overwhelmingly positive with “1”s and “2”s, as were the comments on the knowledge and skills of Board members and the role and effectiveness of the Board Secretary. Three Board members gave “3”s in their responses on the induction process and the ‘regular review and updating of the Board Development Plan’ and on ‘Board members keeping their own development requirements under review’.

From the responses and the comments to this section it is important to ensure that these issues are taken forward with the Chair and Board Secretary and to put improved arrangements in place to address the concerns raised. Board members need to be confident that they are well briefed and can confidently contribute to Board discussion and its overall effectiveness. It was also suggested that a

more manageable self-evaluation process both for the annual Board performance review and for the appraisal of the Chair should be found.

Comments include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months

- Clerk to the Board's knowledge is invaluable, Chair makes himself available to all Board members, the Independent member is very caring;
- The Chair and secretary have shown great leadership;
- Worked together! (Although would like to see a return to face to face meetings as opposed to the Zoom/Hybrid models used – of necessity – over the last period);
- I think the board operates relatively efficiently and effectively. I know who to contact for any issue or for developmental support, and the chair is very responsive and can be called on at any time.

Developments I would like to see over the next 12 months

- For the benefit of the two colleges and the region as a whole, it will be imperative for the dissolution of the current operating arrangements – the regional and assigned college structure – is dealt with as sensitively, but as timely as is possible. We are now some considerable time from when it was decided these arrangements would be curtailed and, even considering the impact COVID had on the process, real progress is required.
- Also, in keeping with comments elsewhere and especially considering the number of new Board Members that will be recruited in the new term, renewed attention to such as supporting and developing the Board – individuals and as a whole – be given and applied.
- I think there should be a more structured training program for board members. The initial training is helpful but I think there should be training given that is tailored to specific committees and also on specific topics.
- I would like to receive board papers as one PDF to make it easier to digest as a recipient.

SECTION 5 of the questionnaire: RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

This responses to this section were very positive, all "1"s and "2"s.

Comments include:

What we have done well over the last 12 months

- We have continued to build on the internal and external relationships required to help deliver an effective education platform for staff and learners alike;
- We have strengthened relationships with SLC and associated committee structures. That said the assigned college has consumed a lot of time and attention;
- Staff rep invited to meeting with SFC for transparency and allowed to feed into process;
- SLC reports made available and presented well.

Developments I would like to see over the next 12 months

- Whatever the eventual dissolution agreement looks like, the impact upon the colleges, the region, staff and learners should not be a negative one;
- Whilst outside of our immediate control, it would be good to reach a resolution with the assigned college. Whilst SLC have their own board, we are the board of NCL AND the assigned college and NCL deserve more of our focus and attention.

5. Chair's review: Appendix 5

This was undertaken by the Senior Independent Member. His full report is at [Appendix 5](#).

Summary

There is no question that the last year has been a particularly challenging one and that there remain a number of difficulties which will continue for some time yet – financial concerns, regional needs and the dissolution of The Lanarkshire Order etc. However, it is clear also that the Regional Chair is regarded as being an effective leader of the Board, that he communicates confidence in his leadership and in his guidance around/navigation of issues. While work remains to be done, he has advanced the environment in which Board Members contribute - noteworthy in itself because of COVID and the Assigned College challenges - as well as, in robust conjunction with the College's Senior Management Team, strengthened the relationship it enjoys with Board Members, the benefits of which are then evident at all levels within the College.

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6. Board Development Plan

Arising from the questionnaires (Appendices 2, 3 and 4) a number of constructive suggestions were put forward by Board members:

- To strengthen the Induction programme for new Board members;
- To revise and reintroduce the mentoring/buddying programme;
- To have Information sessions on:
 - Partner agencies, their structure and how they interact with colleges;
 - Sector jargon and acronyms;
 - Sector finances and how they are constructed;
 - Cyber security;
 - Risk appetite;
- To work with the senior team at NCL to ensure members have sufficient and appropriate information to enable them to participate in discussions at the Board and in committees;
- To consider better interaction between the Board Committees on key issues especially in relation to finance and risk where crossover meetings between the Finance and Audit and Risk Committees could be beneficial;
- How to involve more Board members in important matters;
- Having strategy sessions outwith the regular Board meetings which of necessity are heavily laden with process issues leaving little time for discussion and the generation of new ideas;
- Closer collaboration between the Lanarkshire colleges and the region's agencies;
- Setting a defined annual meeting date for the Remuneration Committee;
- To review how papers are presented to the Board and to ensure there is a cover sheet setting out the context with clear direction for the Board on the action needed.

7. Next steps following approval by the RSB and submission to SFC:

1. To put in place regular information sessions as noted in the section above, and to advise members of forthcoming events run by third parties;
2. To research and implement additional methods of induction for new Board and Committee members;
3. To work with the Principal and his senior team on future strategy events with Board members;
4. To investigate ways to improve the presentation of papers at Board and Committee meetings;
5. To consider how to we engage the wider board members in a more active and participative manner;
6. To continue to engage closely with, and give support to, the students through the Students Association;
7. To find more timely ways to keep Board members informed of developments, especially when decisions have been taken in the Chairs' Committee because of the need for speedy action.

8. Appendices:

- Appendix 1 The Lanarkshire Board self-evaluation process 2022-23
- Appendix 2 Outline questionnaire for 1:1 interviews and Personal Development Plans
- Appendix 3 The Committee operation and structure questionnaire
- Appendix 4 The Board Operating effectiveness questionnaire
- Appendix 5 Chair's appraisal undertaken by the Senior Independent Board Member
- Appendix 6 Board Development Plan 2023-25

Lanarkshire Board Development Plan 2023/4

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7. To find more timely ways to keep Board members informed of developments, especially when decisions have been taken in the Chairs' Committee because of the need for speedy action.

Students' Association

August 2023 Board Report.

The future is bright.

Meet the NCLSA Student President.

We are delighted to announce that this years Student President has been elected to represent New College Lanarkshire's Students' Association (NCLSA) for the 23/24 academic year.

Mark Frame will be the voice of every student at NCL and will work to "make the student experience the best it can be".



Mark Frame

NCLSA Student President.

Marks priorities are to:

- Improve the quality of education at our college by working with staff and faculty to develop innovative and engaging learning experiences.
- Increase transparency on our sustainability goals and our race to net-zero by 2042.
- Promote diversity and inclusion on campus by working closely with reps to tackle issues experienced by the students whilst also encouraging students to create groups and clubs that appeal to their interests.
- I would like to incorporate students more into social media projects to tackle problems facing students. These could be used to showcase the skills of students but also help others who may be struggling.
- Enhance student life and celebrate the accomplishments we achieve along the way by organising activities and events which can bring all students together.

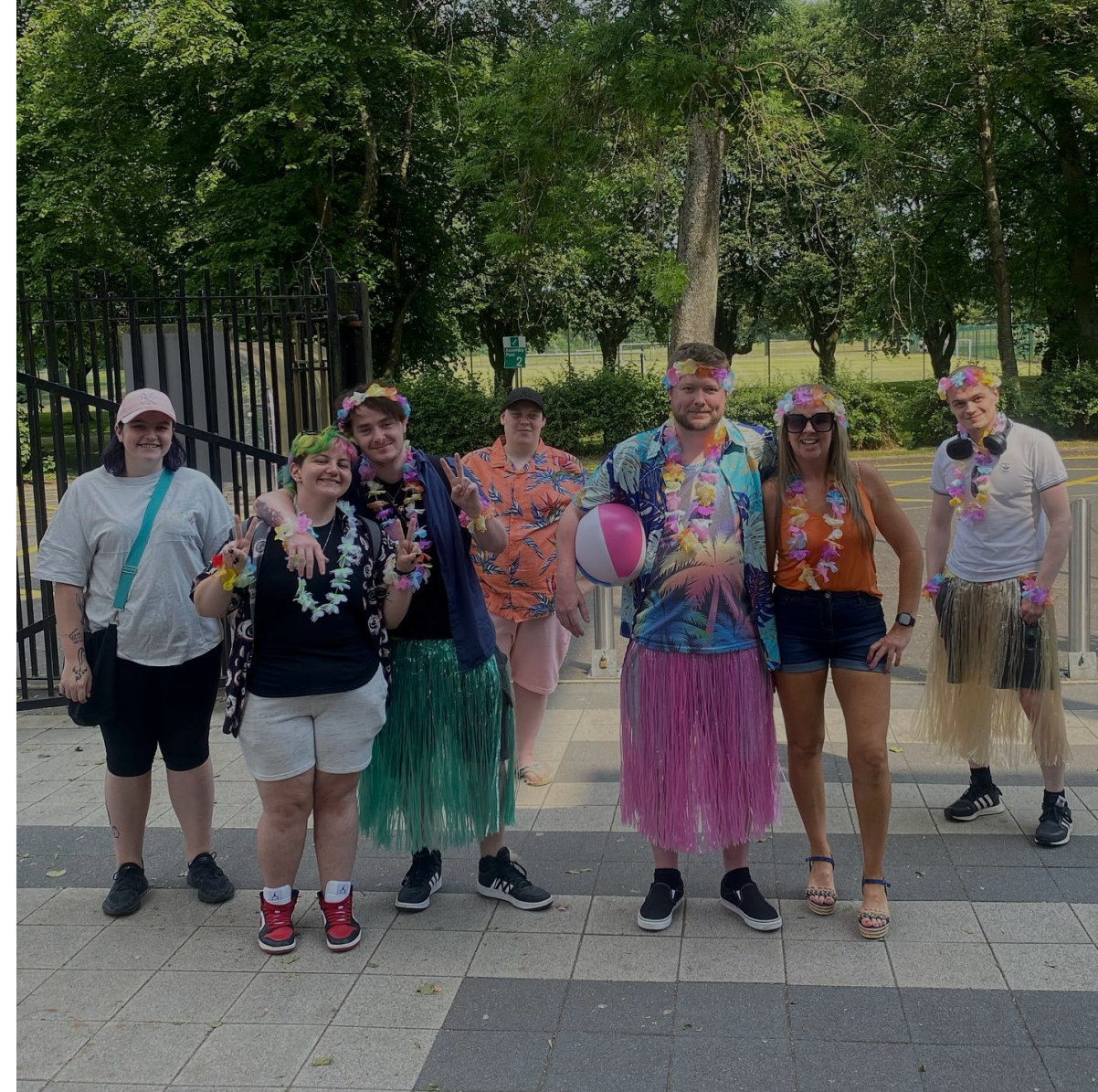
These are important issues and Mark is confident that there will be more issues to come, and is committed to tackling these with a fresh perspective and to work with the college and staff to make NCL a better place for all students.

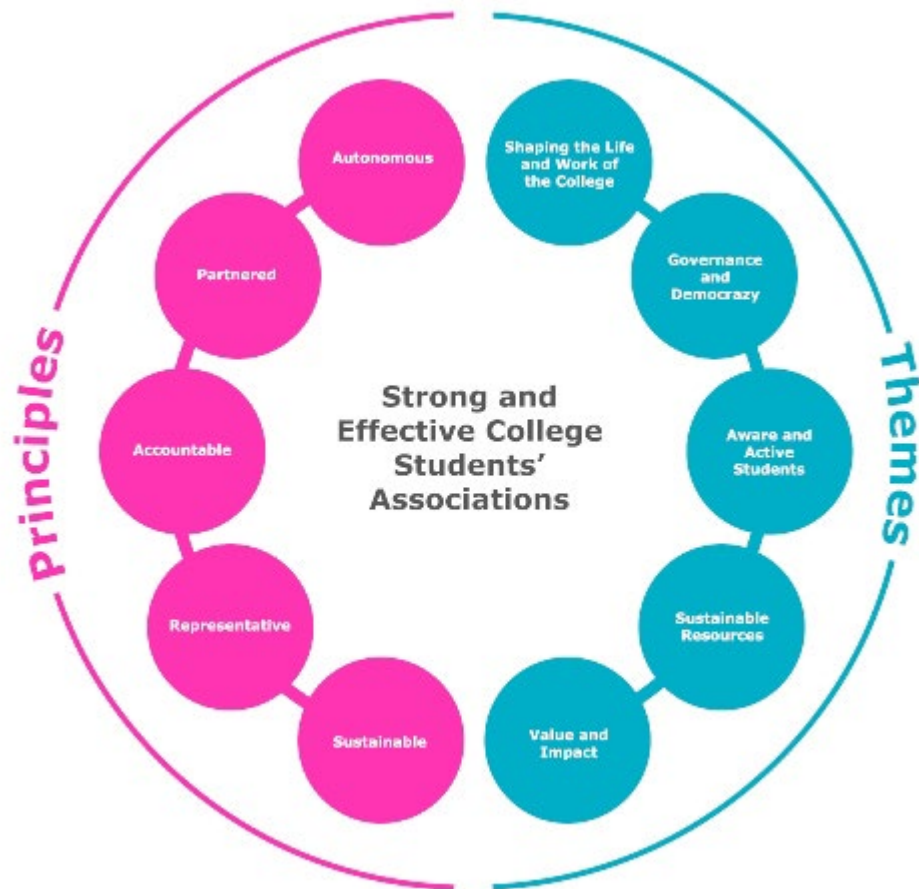
[Read Marks full manifesto](#)

Developing a **strong effective SA!**

The NCLSA will continue to focus on developing the association around the 'Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Association. This framework, which has been sector-agreed, focuses on how colleges and students' association can work in partnership effectively, with the support of sector agencies and the NUS charity.

The framework sets out shared vision for students' association development and has a set of standards and indicators which offer students' associations and colleges a structure and guidance to help them to jointly plan their development.





Key Principles and Themes

The Framework aims to provide a shared vision for students' association development and a common understanding of its key concepts and qualities. It identifies five key Principles that set out the aspirations for students' associations in the college sector. These are:

- Partnered
- Representative
- Sustainable
- Accountable
- Autonomous

The Themes section outlines five areas of development that colleges and students' associations will need to work together to put in place. These are:

- Shaping the Life and Work of the College
- Governance and Democracy
- Aware and Active Students
- Sustainable Resources
- Value and Impact.

With the aim to work collectively to develop a strong and effective students' association, the SA has been involved in sessions over the last year and were involved in three workshops this summer. These workshops were based on how to develop a strategic plan and the team are currently in the process of drafting their strategic plan for 2022-2025.

The team have also agreed on specific KPIs and expected sources of feedback on methods of collection. These are currently awaiting approval by the Executive Board.

That's quality! Colleges.

The logo for sparqs features the word "sparqs" in a bold, lowercase, blue sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a blue starburst icon with six points.

student partnerships in quality scotland

That's Quality! Colleges is a quality induction event hosted by sparqs that offers training and guidance to college officers and those who support them. The aim of the event is to help newly elected officers engage in quality processes at college level and to equip them with the knowledge and ability to run an effective students' association.

This year's event was split into three parts. The first part was a one-day online event on Thursday 16th June, followed by an online self-study module, providing officers with a more detailed overview of quality in Scotland. The final part involved a residential event on Monday 8th & Tuesday 9th August in Queen Margret University Musselburgh, which was a joint event with delegates from the university sector. The joint event included a dinner on the first evening, allowing for some much-missed social and networking opportunities.

During the event, NCLSA gained valuable information on topics such as student partnerships, national quality arrangements, the role of officers as they prepare for back on-campus president experience and how officers can engage with sector developments to help improve the student learning experience.



Super student engagement.

sparqs' 2023 Student Engagement Awards

NCLSA student outreach efforts have been recognised after we were shortlisted for two awards.

New College Lanarkshire has been shortlisted in two categories in the sparqs' 2023 Student Engagement Awards.

Outstanding Academic Representative

Kellyann McGraith has been nominated for her work as student president. During her two years in office as a president of the student association, Kellyann always went over and above and had the student at the centre.

Digital Partnership award

Working with MIS, we developed a way of using Teams that strengthened 'the effectiveness of the Student Rep function and provided a platform for their voices to be heard on their terms'

This approach streamlines and increases accessibility for active dialogue for the student voice to be recorded. We feel we are only scratching the surface of the potential of these resources and look forward to harnessing its full capability in the new year.

Development of the course review.

The SA recently met with Jennifer Low - Assistant Principal: Education and Student Success and Barry Skea - Dean for Learning and Teaching to discuss the effectiveness of NCL's current course review system and ace.

During the review process, the team took a look at operations of the course review overall to see what was working and what wasn't and identified that there were many gaps in the review process.

After a long session, taking into account structural changes within the organisation, the team were able to devise a new system of operating which they feel will benefit both students and staff.

The structure, which was presented to and approved by Heads of Department and Academic Leaders, will hopefully increase student and staff engagement and make the student voice very much at the centre.

The team will be able to provide further updates once the new structure has been implemented in the next few weeks.

NCLSA's – It's good to see you campaign.

NCLSA launched their new 'It's good to see you' campaign along with the promotion of their services to students. The NCLSA aim to raise their profile and also make sure students are aware of what services are available from their NCLSA.

These visuals are at every point a student can see within the campuses and also digital in classrooms.

NCLSA



**IT'S
GOOD
TO SEE
YOU!**

**WELCOME TO
NEW COLLEGE LANARKSHIRE**

- ✉ Studentvoice@nclan.ac.uk
- 📧 NCLstudentvoice
- ✕ NCLstudentvoice
- 👤 New College Lanarkshire Students' association

Campus posters

**YOU ARE
EXACTLY
WHERE YOU
NEED TO BE.**

**Welcome to
New College
Lanarkshire**

- ✉ Studentvoice@nclan.ac.uk
- 📧 NCLstudentvoice
- ✕ NCLstudentvoice
- 👤 New College Lanarkshire Students' association

YOUR VOICE. OUR SERVICES.



MENTAL HEALTH
& WELLBEING



ADVOCACY



STUDENT
SUPPORT



ENTERPRISE



REPRESENTATION



STUDENT
CLUBS



VOLUNTEERING
OPPORTUNITIES



PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY

Digital Screens



Active Campus Coordinator.

First in post across Scotland – **Kellyann McGraith**

A groundbreaking initiative aimed at promoting health and well-being among students in higher education delivered in partnership with **sportscotland** and Colleges Scotland.

Funded by **sportscotland**, the £1.45m investment will strengthen the existing network of sport and physical activity staff already working within the college sector through the appointment of new Active Campus Coordinators.

18 out of the 26 Scottish colleges have been given a new Active Campus Coordinator and NCL are fortunate enough to be one of the 18.

In a two year action plan, Kellyann will work to increase participation opportunities for students and staff at NCL, improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Providing opportunities for everyone to lead more healthy active lives.. Kellyann is excited to fully immersing herself into the new role and over the coming months will:

- Attend a residential stay at **sportScotland** Headquarters the other 17 active campus coordinators from across the sector to share ideas and best practice
- Reach out to students and staff to gauge where the interest lies in sport and physical activity
- Explore in house expertise to call upon for the delivery of sport and physical activity, whether that's within our student population or work force

NCLSA Student Welcome.

NCLSA have decided this year to focus on supporting and preparing the student for their first couple weeks in the transition into college.

The team will be facilitating 2 weeks of fun team building events for students along with external agencies who will be delivering talks and information stalls.



Prepare to succeed team building.

Staff and students have been engaging well in selecting slots to attend.

Building Canadian connections.



NCL Student President Mark Frame was part of a Turing trip who visited Canada's Niagara College earlier this Summer. Pictured here with Niagara college student President Depal, they agreed to continue to build the relationship between our two colleges through online meetings this year.

He was one of 22 students from NCL and four accompanying faculty who were in Niagara for a two-week customized study tour from May 26 to June 9. In addition to attending courses from ten different schools of study at NC, NCL students participated in workshops focused on Leadership, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), Personal Brand, and Entrepreneurship/Intrapreneurship.

Mark said he hopes to implement in NCL what he has learned and experienced at NC.

"Niagara College actively creates opportunities for its students to better themselves, the environment, and the community," - he said. "In my new role, I hope to create the same atmosphere NC radiated. Something that stuck with me was that NC openly stated the Land Acknowledgement during the seminars, showing the College not only cares about the future but also recognizes that the past plays a pivotal role."

Senior Learning Engagement officer John O'Hara was also present and said 'I think this is a great partnership - NC has so many similarities to NCL and we can really benefit from this partnership. I think we might be the first College in Scotland to build partnerships with an international student union. It's a good energy!'

Our partnership with Niagara College started in March 2021, when [we signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) intending to allow students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to benefit from best practices in education in Scotland and Canada. Students from Niagara visited NCL back in April and loved getting a feel for Scottish culture.



Join the conversation.

Facebook: NCLStudentVoice

Instagram: NCLStudentVoice

Twitter: NCLStudentVoice

Email: studentvoice@nclan.ac.uk



South Lanarkshire College

Students' Association

Board Report

August 2023

YOUR COLLEGE
  **YOUR WAY**

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Overview

Student Engagement

Throughout summer, the Student Association has completed a draft Operational Plan, Social Media Plan and are finalising our Strategic Plan. We are aiming to complete all these key documents prior to students returning so that we can turn our focus to welcoming them onto campus. We have also completed a welcome PowerPoint to introduce ourselves during class visits.

The Student Association Office has had a refresh over the summer months. We had the walls painted, replaced the carpet and requested a full deep clean of the space. The furniture has been moved around to create a more welcoming and inviting space for students to visit. We have also had the cabinets moved away from the window to make the office more visible to students.

The Student President and Vice President have been working with Guidance and Support Advisor Maggie Farrell to produce an Anxiety Webinar. This webinar will provide an overview for students on how to manage anxiety, featuring different tips and techniques that they can put into practice. We have recorded over a PowerPoint that will be shown to students when they come back from their summer break.

The Food Larder has been refilled so that we can immediately help students who are struggling for food. Students have already been made aware of this via promotion on social media for when they return. We will also shortly be confirming dates with Inspire for free soup and sandwich/breakfast starting in September. We have arranged a supply of free stationary for our students to pick up including notepads, pens and folders. Alongside this we have worked with Student Services to order in more free sanitary products for students and will be creating holiday packs for students to collect prior to the September Weekend and October break.

The SA have been very busy planning Freshers, which will take place from 11 to 13 September. We have reached out to different organisations and companies to invite them to our Freshers Event. Many companies have confirmed that they are coming, and spaces are filling up quickly.

The SA is very excited to welcome students back after the summer break. We will be working hard to raise awareness of the Student Association with students and promoting the services that are available to them. This will include hosting more activities and events on campus, visiting classes, working in partnership with Curriculum Areas and Departments, and being more involved in the Class Reps process.

As this report will highlight, 2022-23 was a busy year for the SA and we look forward to building on this for the upcoming academic year.

Emily Test Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Charter

Our full EmilyTest submission took place earlier this year and we are eagerly awaiting the final response to this. We are confident of a positive outcome for our Charter submission due to the huge amount of work that has taken place over the last year.

The SA has been directly involved in much of the activity, including co-ordinating gender-based violence prevention workshops with students to help raise awareness of our zero-tolerance approach to GBV, as well as gaining valuable insight from students on the work being undertaken. This important work will continue into the new academic year with the introduction of a new e-learning module for students about GBV, created by Lanarkshire Rape Crisis, in addition to continued promotion of the support available. We will also be re-launching our Report and Support software to all new and returning students so that they are aware of how to raise any concerns to staff.



Student Poverty/Cost of Living

The ongoing cost-of-living crisis continues to have a major impact on our students, and we are committed to continuing to support them through this difficult time. As part of our initiatives for this upcoming year, we will continue to provide free soup and a sandwich to students one day per week. We would like to take this time to sincerely thank the SLC Foundation for their support in being able to provide this to our students. This support means we can continue to provide a healthy breakfast and lunch to those most impacted by rising food costs, which in turn will help them to focus on their studies. In 2022/23, in partnership with Inspire, we provided an amazing 17,186 servings of both soup and sandwich and breakfast to our students. Student testimonials to this offering have been overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to being able to continue to provide it.

Alongside this we will continue to operate the Student Larder where students can visit the SA office and collect much needed food and toiletries. We will also be providing students with free pens, notebooks and blank folders to ensure they have essential stationary products. Throughout the year we will work closely with our colleagues in Student Services to signpost students to discretionary funding, as well as promote financial support through the SA fortnightly newsletter.

Student Mental Health Agreement

We were delighted to launch our Student Mental Health Agreement for 2022-2024 last year and look forward to continuing to deliver the initiatives from it over the upcoming year. The working areas for the SMHA were as follows:

- Continuing to Address Student Poverty
- Peer Support through Games & Activities
- Supporting Men's Mental Health

We have already achieved a great deal in addressing these areas but look forward to building the great work already done. To find out more about our SMHA, please visit the Student Associations' webpage here: <https://www.slc.ac.uk/students/student-association/>

2023-24 Operational Plan

The SA has completed the 2023/24 Operational Plan and Social Media Plan, plus we are finalising our Strategic Plan.

Our focus for the upcoming year is the following three priorities:

- empowering the student voice;
- Making sure all of our students feel welcome and included;
- organising games and activities to make sure our students have fun.

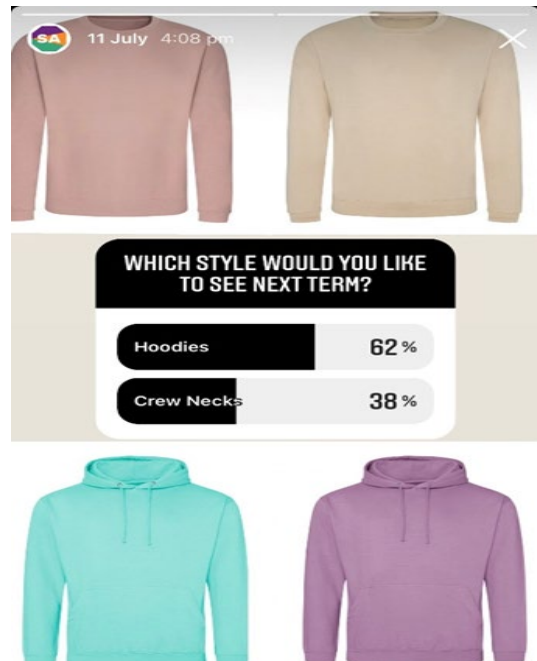
We have prepared a SA Induction PowerPoint and we will send out emails to all departments to book class visits. We want to be as visible as possible and have created an induction video for our social media accounts. This will help us to make sure all students know who we are and the support we offer.

We want to create lots of fun activities for our students to get involved in throughout the year and look forward to engaging with students.

College Hoodies

The Students Association have sent out emails to request three quotes for hoodies. This is still to be approved but we are hoping to order 355 hoodies for our students. We believe it is important to provide these fantastic products to our students and to maintain the low price of only £5 per hoodie. This initiative is important as part of our commitment to tackling student poverty and providing a high-quality garment at a subsidised costs to students.

We have decided to continue with the same design of hoodies that was decided by students last year, however we will be putting out a new poll via social media for students to decide on the colours they would like to see. We believe that our students deserve to choose what they will be buying.



We are empowering the student voice by making sure they are included in decisions such as these. We will post on our social media a poll & post where students can vote and have their voice heard, thereby helping build their confidence, trust, and a relationship with the SA.

Lead and Change

During the summer holidays we attended Lead and Change, an exciting and informative event. We learned about self-care, and helpful tips for starting this new opportunity within the SA.



We were able to discuss what to expect from the second-year officers. We learned more about adopting a balanced lifestyle focusing on mental, physical, and sociological wellbeing. This is key to our roles because if we take good care of ourselves, it will enable us to take greater care of our students. This will also help us maintain our passion by always reflecting and remembering our values and what we stand for.



We have also learned about barriers, as well as the importance of saying 'NO' without feeling guilty for it because it is about self-love/care. We discussed and learned about our values, i.e. what we stand for, goals in life and aspirations.

We learned about the struggles students are facing during this cost-of-living crisis. We were given space and encouragement to create ideas on how best to support our students.

We had the opportunity to meet SA representatives from across all of Scotland and it was great to see what other institutions are doing. We were able to share ideas and we found out that SLC is doing great at supporting the SA! This has resulted in us having much more appreciation for the support we have from the College!

Overall, we learned a great deal and enjoyed our time. We made friends and gained a wider perspective on what it means to be a great, caring, successful leader.

Events

Staff Conference

Tuesday 15 August

The SA were delighted to be invited to the College's All Staff Conference on 15 August. It was great to hear from different speakers, including Principal, Stella McManus, on what the College's plans and goals were for the upcoming academic year. It was also a great opportunity to meet staff from across the College and talk with them about how the SA can work with different areas to support our students. Overall, it was great to be involved in such an engaging event!

Forthcoming Events

Freshers'

Monday 11 – Wednesday 13 September

Freshers' Week is scheduled to start on Monday 11 September and we're looking forward to engaging with students! We will be hosting a SA stall where we can promote the different initiatives the SA are involved in, as well as signpost to all the fantastic support services available within the College.

As with previous years, we have invited various stall holders for the College Atrium to give students the opportunity to learn more about what's available in their local area.

Organisations confirmed to be attending include Police Scotland, Covey, Samaritans, Carers Trust Scotland, Dominos, Women's Aid, Money Matters and many more.

In addition to all these fantastic organisations being available, we are also arranging wellbeing sessions and the always popular Prize Pong! The Library will be set up as a Wellbeing Zone where students can talk with organisations such as NHS Inform, Breathing Space, JD Gyms, LAMH and more. There will also be mindfulness classes, arm/hand massages provided by LUSH and manicures provided by SLC students. Throughout the week we will also be selling the SLC hoodies to students. We will be taking photos and promoting on social media throughout the day so ensure as many students as possible can take part in the event.