

Item: 9

Policy and Resources Committee: 19 February 2019.

College Management Council Sub-committee.

Student Representatives.

Joint Report by Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the appointment of student representatives as members of the College Management Council Sub-committee, with voting rights.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, at present, two student representatives are entitled to attend meetings of the College Management Sub-committee but are not members of the Sub-committee and, therefore, do not have voting rights.

2.2.

That the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges, published by Colleges Scotland in 2016, suggests that student board members, as full board members, bring essential and unique skills, knowledge and experience to the board and that they must not be excluded from board business unless there is clear conflict of interest, in common with all board members.

2.3.

The expectation from the Scottish Funding Council that membership of college boards should include student representatives, with voting rights.

2.4.

The current membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee as follows:

- Five Elected Members (1 vote each).
- Four Business Community representatives (1 vote each).
- Four Community representatives/Third Sector representatives (1 vote each).

2.5.

That there are currently two vacancies on the College Management Council Sub-committee, namely a business representative and a community representative.

2.6.

The principles to be adopted, as outlined in section 7 of this report, should the proposal that membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee be increased to include student representatives, with voting rights, be approved.

It is recommended:

2.7.

That membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee be increased to include student representatives, with voting rights.

2.8.

That, accordingly, membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee be amended to comprise:

- Five Elected Members (1 vote each).
- Three Business Community representatives (1 vote each).
- Three Community representatives/Third Sector representatives (1 vote each).
- Two Student representatives (1 vote each).

2.9.

That powers be delegated to the Chief Executive to amend the Scheme of Administration in relation to the Orkney College Management Council Sub-committee, together with the detailed constitution, to reflect the amended membership and the principles referred to at paragraph 2.6 above.

3. Background

3.1.

At its meeting held on 5 November 2018, the College Management Council Sub-Committee considered a report on student representation. The Sub-committee recommended that, in principle, membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee be increased to include student representatives, with voting rights.

3.2.

The Sub-committee further recommended that, should the principle of students becoming members of the Sub-committee, with voting rights, be accepted, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a joint report, to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to be held on 19 February 2019, setting out detailed arrangements, including the principles outlined in section 7 of this report.

4. Current Membership

4.1.

Membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee currently comprises:

- Five Elected Members (1 vote each).
- Four Business Community representatives (1 vote each).
- Four Community representatives/Third Sector representatives (1 vote each).

4.2.

The student representatives, although attending meetings, are not members of the Sub-committee, and, as such, have no voting rights.

4.3.

There are currently two vacancies on the College Management Council Sub-committee; one for each of a business representative and a community representative.

5. Review of Student Membership

5.1.

Students are key stakeholders in colleges and the importance of the student voice is recognised within the 'Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges' published by Colleges Scotland in 2016 which states "...student board members are full board members and bring essential and unique, skills, knowledge and experience to the board.". It goes on to state that "... Student board members must not be excluded from board business unless there is clear conflict of interest, in common with all board members".

5.2.

Although Orkney College is part of Orkney Islands Council and is an "unincorporated college" and the College Management Council Sub-committee is therefore bound to follow the Council's Standing Orders, cognisance requires to be taken of Orkney College's association with the University of the Highlands and Islands.

5.3.

The Highlands and Islands Students Association (HISA) has an expectation that students will play a full and active role in the colleges that they attend and this extends to contributing to the governance of the institution.

6. Benchmarking

6.1.

As noted at section 5.1 above, the presence and voting rights of student members of college boards is an expectation as set out in guidance from Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council.

6.2.

With the current exception of Orkney College, all other colleges in Scotland include student members with voting rights on their boards.

6.3.

For information, Shetland Islands Council has recently completed a review of the status of Shetland College and NAFC Marine Centre. The Board of Shetland College now comprises seven voting members – six Councillors and one student.

7. Principles to be Considered

7.1.

As the principle of student representatives becoming members with voting rights has been agreed, several matters require to be considered in greater detail. The College Management Council Sub-committee considered a number of these matters and recommended the following:

- The number of student representatives elected to sit on the College Management Sub-committee should be two, both of whom should have voting rights.
- One of the student representatives should be the Highlands and Islands Student Association representative.
- Should the Highlands and Islands Student Association representative be a Further Education student, the other representative should, where possible, be a Higher Education student or vice versa if the Highlands and Islands Student Association representative was a Higher Education student.
- The duration of the term of office of the student representatives should be one year.
- The minimum age of a student representative should be 16 years old.

7.2.

It is proposed that the election process take place at the start of the academic year, in the same format as the election for the Highlands and Islands Student Association representative.

7.3.

Students who are also employees of Orkney Islands Council are not eligible to sit on the College Management Council Sub-committee, as a voting member, be that as a student, business or community representative. Further, students enrolled at Orkney College are not eligible to sit on the Sub-committee, as a voting member, in the capacity as a business or community representative.

8. Options Appraisal

8.1.

There are several options which could be appraised, however the main themes, within which there can be variations, are as follows:

8.2.

Option 1: Remain with the status quo.

8.2.1.

This option would mean the current student representatives would remain as observers during meetings of the College Management Council Sub-committee without voting rights.

8.2.2.

The voting membership of the Sub-committee would remain at 13 members as detailed in section 4.1 above.

8.2.3.

This option does not meet the expectations of students, Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council.

8.3.

Option 2: Increase the voting membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee to include one or two students.

8.3.1.

This option would see the total voting membership increase to 14 or 15 voting members.

8.3.2.

This option is good practice and meets the expectations of students, Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council.

8.4.

Option 3: Retain the voting membership of the College Management Council Sub-committee at 13 members but adjust the number of Business and Community representatives to accommodate one or two voting student members.

8.4.1.

This option would allow student members to have voting rights without increasing the overall voting membership of the Sub-committee.

8.5.

The preferred option is Option 3, which would retain overall voting membership at the existing level, should two student representatives be appointed.

8.6.

Should the voting membership of the Sub-committee, together with the principles outlined in section 7 above, be approved, the Scheme of Administration and the detailed constitution relating to the Orkney College Management Council Sub-committee will require amendment.

9. Corporate Governance

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

10. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

11. Legal Aspects

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

12. Contact Officers

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