City of Glasgow College

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	**Wednesday 01 September 2021**
Paper No.	**BoM1-E**
Agenda Item	**6.3**
Subject of Paper	**Stakeholder Engagement Plan**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Paul Little/Will McLeish**
Date of production	**July 2021**
Action	**For Discussion**

1. Recommendations

The Board is asked to discuss the content of the Stakeholder Engagement plan. Should any Board member wish to comment or provide feedback they are, of course, welcome to do so.

2. Purpose

To outline the College's overarching approach to its stakeholder engagement as we seek to protect our interests and influence the influencers and decision makers.

3. Key Insights

The Communications Team has worked with our external PR agency, Dram Communications, on a Stakeholder Engagement Plan which combines the theoretical context with the operational process to capitalise on the experiences, skills sets and contacts of our staff, board members, and even external champions.

4. Impact and Implications

To better coordinate stakeholder engagement activities with the objective of maximising the positive influence of and outcomes for the College – and, in some instances, of the sector, too – as well as to help us deliver relevant aims in the new Strategic Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Board of Management

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

How we interact with influential individuals and organisations is critically important. Here at City, we have internal and external stakeholder mapping to consider. Our most important stakeholders are our students and staff, and both constituents can be broken down into components, for example, by faculties and courses.

The Communications team – working with Dram Communications – will lead on stakeholder engagement for the College, however, Board, ELT, SMT, and other staff members, as well as elected student representatives, have roles in positively shaping the views of our influencers and decision-makers. Part of the Communications team's tasks in this process is to identify and marshal stakeholder planning for colleagues and oversee the means to record and analyse activities. Our collective objective is to yield a maximum positive influence on our stakeholders and garner support for relevant strategic aims.

Although our media, social media and digital activities, and internal communications, are directly connected to and complement our stakeholder engagement approach, they are not the focus of this paper.

We need to work collaboratively to simultaneously engage with as many stakeholders as possible if we are to successfully represent and advocate primarily for the College's interests, and then on behalf of the college sector more generally. In addition, we will utilise stakeholder engagement activity and relationships to support mitigation of potential issues.

Our stakeholder engagement approach should help achieve relevant objectives within the College's new Strategic Plan through developing, enhancing, and maintaining relationships at desirable levels.

Engaging internally and externally with organisations in tertiary education – and in education more widely – and in other key areas such as business, politics, enterprise, and the environment, needs to be done regularly and effectively to provide positive outcomes for the College.

Stakeholder engagement is a continual process requiring regular planning, recording, and evaluation to discern whether engagement activities are successful or there is a need to improve relations and/or outcomes with some stakeholders.

As well as an overarching Stakeholder Engagement Plan, customised plans can also be developed for bespoke projects or campaigns where required – and either have been done already or are being produced – such as for COP26, political party manifestos, and the SFC review of coherent provision and sustainability.

The key steps are:

1. Identify stakeholders
2. Categorise stakeholders
3. Classify stakeholders
4. Prioritise stakeholders
5. Understand stakeholders
6. Harness college expertise
7. Develop message matrix
8. Record and monitor engagements
9. Evaluate and measure.

Step One – Identify Stakeholders

The first step is to identify and list our stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or organisations with influence or interest in City of Glasgow College – and the college sector – which are affected by what we do.

Internal:
- Board members
- Students (and potential students)
- Staff
- Supply chain.

External:
A distinction can be drawn between sectoral and non-sectoral stakeholders. Sectoral stakeholders include Colleges Scotland, College Development Network, ESP, other colleges in Scotland, as well as colleges in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, plus their representative bodies and the Four Nations College Alliance.

Non-sectoral stakeholders include Scottish Government and their agencies, employers, tertiary education partners, political parties and their elected members, Glasgow City and other councils, businesses, third sector organisations, and Chambers of Commerce.

Step Two – Categorise Using the Advocate-Blocker Scale

To effectively undertake stakeholder analysis, each stakeholder is categorised to determine where they are currently positioned within a supportive or unsupportive scale consisting:

1. Advocate
2. Supporter
3. Neutral
4. Critic
5. Blocker.

Once the stakeholders have been positioned according to this scale, the next task is to outline a desired relationship emanating from our proposed engagement. This assessment must be honest and realistic about what the current relationship is and where we think it could go. This process helps us assess the level of work required for all the stakeholders.

Step Three – Classify Stakeholders Using the Power/Interest Grid

Many organisations are affected by what we do, with some capable of hindering or assisting the College with our ambitions, and once our stakeholders have been categorised, they should be classified according to the power/interest grid. This allows us to calculate how much time and effort should be spent on them.

Level of Interest

	LOW	HIGH
LOW	**A. Minimal Effort** - Inform via general communications - Monitor for increase in interest	**B. Keep Informed** - Involve in area of interest - Keep informed and consult - May be ambassadors
HIGH	**C. Keep Satisfied** - Identify their area of interest - Consult as appropriate - Keep well informed	**D. Key Players** - Keep closely involved - Consult on all key decisions

(Power — vertical axis label)

A. **Low power, low interest organisations:** monitor these organisations but regular engagement is not necessary.

B. **Low power, high interest organisations:** keep these people appropriately and adequately informed, while having regular dialogue to ensure there are no major issues developing. These organisations can often be useful collaborators and helpful in providing details to our campaigns/initiatives/projects.

C. **High power, low interest organisations:** put enough work in with these people to keep them content, but not so much that they become immune to or annoyed with your narrative, which could be counterproductive.

D. **High power, high interest organisations:** these are the people you must fully engage with and make the greatest efforts to influence and satisfy, or, as in the case of detractors, work hard to negate their attacks on us.

Step Four – Prioritising Stakeholders

Even among those stakeholders categorised the same letter, there are differences in how we engage depending on whether they are high priorities or low priorities within that category. Therefore, we need to:

- Combine analysis and relationship
- Determine the time and effort required
- Calculate who is most likely to have an impact.

Naturally, we focus more on the high-power/high-interest stakeholders more than those in the low-interest/low-power category and devise our engagement plan which effectively communicates and delivers the right volume, so we are neither overly nor under engaging.

Our approach encompasses what we need to do to keep our supporters engaged and on-side, while examining the most appropriate means of improving relationships with any opponents.

Whenever we are embarking on a new campaign or advocating a different or new policy we should inform our stakeholders to minimise the impact of any possible disruption or opposition.

Step Five – Understanding Stakeholders

Assessing the motivations of our stakeholders is the next important step as understanding what makes them tick and what their expectation is of us as an institution provides valuable insight.

Once this assessment is conducted, we are in a better position to evaluate what the most effective means of engagement are and how they are likely to react to our methods. To help establish the best ways of communicating with stakeholders, the answer to key questions will help us determine our approaches.

- What is their fundamental motivation?
- What is their overarching interest in City of Glasgow College and the college sector?
- Are these interests positive, negative or a combination of both?
- What is it that they desire from us and how could they help deliver our objectives?
- How do they view the College and the sector and what is that opinion based on?
- Which channels of communications are deemed to be the most effective?
- What information/skills/outcome do they want from us and what is the best means to deliver it?
- Who are their influencers and how can we reach those organisations or individuals with our narrative?
- If opinions are positive, what do we need to do to maintain that confidence in our operations?
- If opinions are negative, what do we need to do to improve relations?

We can gather some information on our stakeholders by consulting with colleagues who have the most contact with them, but we can also ask the stakeholders directly as this is often the best way of finding out the most effective ways to communicate and what

they are looking for from us. Even this open approach can help build or cement relationships.

Step Six – Harnessing College Expertise

There are opportunities for the College to marshal the talent, expertise, and knowledge we have to raise awareness of our achievements and ensure there is a better understanding of the critical work we do. Board, SMT and other staff members can showcase our excellence and influence the influencers and decision-makers. Therefore, after engaging with colleagues, we will put forward a list of experts in particular topics to help us identify the right person for the right opportunity. The Communications team and Dram will identify these opportunities and help prepare our representatives for engagements by providing contextual information, key messages, briefing papers, speaking notes, undertaking mock interviews, and media training, when appropriate.

1. College Visits and Events

We have a world-class twin-site campus which we capitalise on by hosting visits, dinners, symposia, and other events, to showcase our excellence to internal and external stakeholders. By holding appropriate events and attracting the right people to them, we can meaningfully engage with and leave positive impressions on key stakeholders.

2. Representing the Sector at External Conferences and Events

By participating and speaking at conferences across a wild range of policy areas, College representatives can ensure key influencers in civic Scotland are aware of the positive impact we make on individuals, our communities, and on Scotland's society and economy.

The Communications team and Dram Communications will identify opportunities by liaising with event organisers to secure speaking slots for College representatives at relevant conferences and also to encourage conference agendas to complement our priorities and focus.

3. Appearing at Parliamentary Committee Evidence Sessions

Seek positive opportunities for College representatives to appear at appropriate Parliamentary Committee meetings and use the list of identified experts to articulate a positive narrative.

4. Participation in the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Groups

There are opportunities for our spokespeople to participate at relevant Cross-Party Groups within the Scottish Parliament, particularly the Cross-Party Group on Skills and the Cross-Party Group on Colleges and Universities, although others may also be relevant on occasions. We will find speaking slots and panel discussion opportunities for College representatives, where appropriate.

5. Opportunities to Contribute to Consultations

Consider submitting material for relevant consultations undertaken by relevant bodies, such as Scottish and UK governments plus their respective agencies, Scottish and UK parliamentary committees, Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board, Colleges Scotland, and CDN.

6. College Ambassadors

It can be extremely effective when external advocates publicly endorse the College, so explore further opportunities to capitalise more on alumni and supportive stakeholders.

7. Thought Leadership

Undertake bespoke pieces of work to position the College and its staff as trusted advisers and experts in the development of policy proposals.

Step Seven – Developing Message Matrix and Determine Tactics

The College is currently developing a series of one-page briefing documents which include succinct key lines to take on a range of topics. These briefings can help familiarise or remind our representatives of the pertinent discussion points.

These key messages provided on topical and critical issues are also useful for whenever College representatives have impromptu opportunities for short discussions with government ministers, politicians and other prominent stakeholders.

We then identify goals and methods of engagement for each stakeholder plus insert timeframes to make sure we all know what we are trying to achieve and by when:

• Develop key messages
• Choose messages for stakeholder – probably no more than three of four
• Determine ideal outcomes and tactics – there are many different types of engagements and methods, including face-to-face and virtual meetings, written briefings, events, media interviews, articles, and statements, using social media platforms, and parliamentary protocols, such as motions, written questions oral questions, topical questions et cetera.
• The briefing paper will also include rebuttal points, where appropriate.

Step Eight – Record and Monitor Engagements

City of Glasgow College is not required to comply with the Lobbying (Scotland) Act, however, we maintain a comprehensive log of meetings for best practice.

The mechanism for recording engagements must be simple and quick to complete to help us with analysis and evaluation of our activities' effectiveness or otherwise, and we have deliberately devised a straightforward process to use. Below is an example of the recording system:

Who	What	Where	When	Outcome
Paul Little, Principal, supported by Will McLeish	Presentation at CPG on Skills to stakeholders, such as MSPs, including the Education and Skills Parliamentary Convenor	Virtual event	16/3/21	Raised profile of CoGC role in socio-economic recovery & led to Ed & Skill Parl Ctte legacy paper suggesting future focus on skills/colleges

Step Nine – Evaluation and Measurement

The final phase is to analyse the success or otherwise of the stakeholder engagement plan. There are many ways of measuring impact, such as by examining levels of media coverage, political support or opposition, influence on policy, and scrutinising whether there have been any changes to the relationships with our stakeholders according to the A-B scale, changes to social media engagement, supportive or disparaging correspondence, and directly seeking views from stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process. We should continually be seeking to maintain or enhance our relations according to the techniques outlined in the plan.

NEXT STEPS
- The Communications team and Dram will develop an indicative Stakeholder Engagement approach and target list linked to relevant Strategic Plan aims with agreed express outcomes from stakeholder engagement activity
- Determine how best to record and assess activities internally across directorates/faculties
- Agree quarterly progress updates with annual reviews of stakeholder engagement efficacy.