

## Board of Management

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>2 October 2024</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>BoM1-J</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>7.3</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>Principal's Report: September 2024</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Dr Paul Little CBE Principal and Chief Executive</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>16 September 2024</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>For Discussion &amp; Noting</b>

### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1.** To discuss the Principal's quarterly report to the Board of Management.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. To update the Board of Management on the College's work and key matters of interest since the last meeting of the Board.

## 3. Consultation

- 3.1. In progressing the matters outlined in the report, colleagues in the College and across the sector, as well as regional, national and international partners, have been engaged.

## 4. Key Insights

- 4.1. The Principal is responsible for the operational management of the College, as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation, subject to the strategic and policy direction of the Board.

- 4.2. The Board has the responsibility of setting the strategic direction of the College. The College's [Strategic Plan 2021-30](#), refreshed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, outlines our commitment to Let Learning Flourish through the inspiration, excellence and innovation of our leading teaching methods and world-class facilities. Our eight strategic priorities, shown below, are mapped across four strategic themes:

- **Students**  
Priorities 1 and 2
- **Growth and Development**  
Priorities 3 and 4
- **People and Processes**  
Priorities 5 and 6
- **Finance**  
Priorities 7 and 8



- 4.3. Five supporting strategies – [Student Academic Experience](#), [People & Culture](#), [Corporate Development](#), [Digital](#) and [Sustainability](#) – have been developed to deliver on the Strategic Plan. Progress is measured and tracked through the College’s Balanced Scorecard.
- 4.4. By delivering on our strategic priorities, the College will facilitate opportunities for our students, support industry, build communities and, in so doing, affect positive change in people’s lives in and beyond the city whose name we are proud to bear.

## **5. Impact and Implications**

- 5.1. The Principal’s report ensures that Board members remain informed of the work of the College, delivery of the Strategic Plan and key developments affecting the College and sector.

### **Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Principal’s Report

**Appendix 2:** Annual Planning Cycle

## Principal's Report to the Board of Management: September 2024

### Students

1. I was really pleased to see our 6500 first year students and our 2000 2<sup>nd</sup> years returning on a phased basis. They brought a lively buzz back to our twin super campus in August. They were warmly welcomed by hundreds of colleagues from across our faculties and directorates, enthusiastically volunteering to greet our students and help them find their way around campus. I know the Board will join me in thanking Team City for, as ever, delivering an outstanding induction and an engaging Freshers' Fair for our students.
2. I am especially pleased to report that our campuses have returned to be as busy as before pre-pandemic times four years ago. I am particularly delighted that the new academic year has begun without industrial action and associated disruption. College Employers Scotland and EIS-FELA, with financial support from the Scottish Government, reached an agreement in August to end the long-running national pay dispute and industrial action – please see [here](#) for full details. I hope this marks the first academic year in almost a decade with no disruption, allowing us instead to concentrate on the transforming the life choices and livelihood of our students, raising attainment and improving retention. I have challenged our Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team to significantly raise attainment, improve retention expectedly in year 2 and to encourage a greater uptake of our digital investment.
3. Our College still remains a top destination for students in Scotland to progress to College, with enrolments currently at 104%. Usually, our College is the third most popular of Scottish school leavers for all 45 tertiary institutions. In the last academic year, 85% of our students were satisfied their college experience and we were able to retain student satisfaction levels, despite the significant impact of local and national industrial action that ultimately saw a loss of 38% of the academic year. Resulting was also affected by action short of strike action, though I am pleased to report that only 2.3% of student results remain outstanding.
4. Education Scotland (ES) conducted its annual and possibly final visit to the College in May, and once again recognised many areas of effective practice across the College, concluding and concluded that, again, they “are confident that the College has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve”. Education Scotland’s report was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee and it was noted that this is their final report, since the advent of a new [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) replaces the current arrangements. Our Director of Excellence, Jon Gray, will join us at the Board meeting to provide members with an introduction to TQEF. Our VP, Dr Carney, is part of an expert group of senior academics, guiding the implementation of the TQEF.
5. Our Dean of Creative Industries, Alison Bell, will also deliver a presentation to the Board on City Attributes. Alison has led a Team City effort to develop and now implement a framework that will ensure our students’ essential skills and attributes, as well as their qualifications, to succeed in the modern world of work are of the highest order. I am sure that the Board will, like me, find City Attributes to be purposeful, inspiring and impressive.
6. I am forever proud to celebrate the success of our students and alumni, with recent examples including:
  - Yasmin George, a former HND 3D Computer Animation student, who won a gold medal in 3D Digital Game Art at the Global Skills Challenge in Melbourne.

- Finley Graham, a former HND Computer Networking student, who was awarded a Medallion for Excellence in IT Network Systems Administration at the World Skills Competition 2024 in Lyon, effectively placing him 4<sup>th</sup> in the World.
- Jemma Reekie, a former City student who studied HNC Sports Coaching, represented Team GB in the 800 metres event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.
- NQ Television and Podcasting student, Kara Gillespie, has won BAFTA's prestigious Young Presenters Competition.

## Growth & Development

7. Through our Trade Union Education Centre (TUEC), the College has delivered specialist training and education to union representatives and members throughout Scotland for over 8 years. However, a 72% decline in demand for courses over 2018-19 to 2023-24, coupled with an increase in the College's running costs, saw the College opening a consultation into the longer term future of the Centre. Following constructive discussion and pragmatic cooperation over the summer, the College and the TUC have committed to a new partnership agreement with additional funding and a promise of greater trade union buy-in in order to safeguard essentially the last remaining specialist trade union education provision in Scotland. This is the best possible outcome for the College and our partners, and I am delighted that we have secured it together.
8. Our Business & International team are pivotal in promoting our world-class institution to new global audiences. Notably, they co-hosted a conference in India this month with the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology and our staff; moreover, our staff have also travelled to Ghana, China, Singapore, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan. These initiatives strengthen our international partnerships and provide valuable learning opportunities, further enhancing our reputation and global reach.
9. The College Local Innovation Centres (CLIC), a partnership between six colleges as part of a £1.2 million 12-month pilot project funded by the Innovate UK Further Education Innovation Fund, has been [launched](#). The College will lead the Centre for Innovation Leadership supporting businesses in developing innovation skills through accredited solutions, attracting forward-thinkers to drive growth and improve performance in the Glasgow City Region.

## People & Processes

10. Innovation remains at the heart of our College, demonstrated by the launch of the Learning and Teaching Fund for 2024-25. The £50,000 fund supports initiatives – such as the exploration of new pedagogical approaches, development of digital tools or facilitation of small-scale research projects – that enhance learning, teaching and assessment. This aligns with our [Student Academic Experience Strategy](#) which champions an Active, Blended, and Connected learning environment, ensuring that our curriculum remains dynamic and responsive to the needs of our students. I look forward to seeing creative proposals from Team City.
11. I also met with the CEO of Scottish Futures Trust and our CFO to consider a possible procurement route for our proposed Innovation campus. On reflection I consider it not the Best Value option as I am required to do, as an Accountable Officer.
12. In the latter half of the last academic year, the College partnered again with external wellbeing specialists Robertson Cooper to conduct a second biennial Staff Wellbeing and Engagement Survey. Robertson Cooper delivered a presentation on the results to a meeting of All Managers in June ahead of team reports being released this month. Teams

will be supported by Organisational Development to review their results and develop action plans for their areas. Progress on this will be reported to the People & Culture Committee as a regular item and the Board will receive a presentation at a future meeting.

13. We stand ready to support Glasgow in hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games with excellent sporting and other specialist facilities includes 4 gyms (one of which is Commonwealth Games ready).
14. The College is wholly committed to Fair Work and we have previously reported on this to the Board in December 2023. We are also a signatory to a college sector-wide statement on Fair Work. With an end to industrial action and, as covered later, organisational change, I hope that the College and the local branch EIS-FELA and UNISON – with the support of the STUC – can now progress discussions on a Fair Work statement. This work has already begun early in this academic year. I will keep the Board apprised of progress.
15. ELT are currently reviewing a span of control analysis of our organisational structure. We subsequently hope to roll out a staff corporate values handbook and outlining pathways of progression to accompany the rollout a cross-college performance and development review.
16. Over the summer, the College saw an escalation in phishing and cyber-attacks, including one successful breach. A staff member clicked a phishing link, compromising their Microsoft 365 account, which held personal data. The incident was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which advised no further action was necessary but recommended a review of security measures. Cyber security consultants have been engaged and, while the breach is unlikely to pose a high risk to individuals, steps have been taken to strengthen data protection. A full report is being prepared, and staff have been reminded to follow the College's IT and data protection policies. This matter was reported to and discussed by the Audit & Assurance Committee at the most recent meeting held in September.

## Finance

17. I am delighted to report to the Board that, as a result of our early and decisive action, the College is projected to achieve a surplus of circa £100,000 for 2023-24. As a result of our return to financial health, I have been able to offer staff a commitment that there will be no risk of compulsory redundancies in 2024-25, in addition to 2023-24, and confirmed that the College-wide organisational change process is now at an end.
18. The College has faced unprecedented financial and funding challenges over recent years as a result of Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, significant inflationary cost pressures and repeated cash-flat funding from the Scottish Government. Facing a projected £18 million deficit, the College has taken difficult decisions to improve our long-term financial sustainability while continuing to be an inspirational, excellent and innovative place of learning.
19. While public finances remain under considerable and growing pressure, as highlighted by the Auditor General for Scotland's latest [report](#) and the recent emergency spending controls and cuts announced by the UK and Scottish Governments, the College has emerged in a stronger position as a result of our work over the last three years.
20. Many tertiary institutions and public sector organisations will still face difficult decisions and are likely to require drastic measures. Indeed, reporting by the Scotsman in early September suggests very large numbers of college staff are leaving or have left their institutions through redundancy programmes. The Scotsman's data, sourced from the SFC, identifies the institutions with the highest number of voluntary redundancies over the

past five years as Edinburgh College with 179, New College Lanarkshire with 171, followed by Fife College 148, 139 at West College Scotland, 133 at SRUC, 130 at City of Glasgow, and 126 at Dundee and Angus College.

## Strategic Positioning

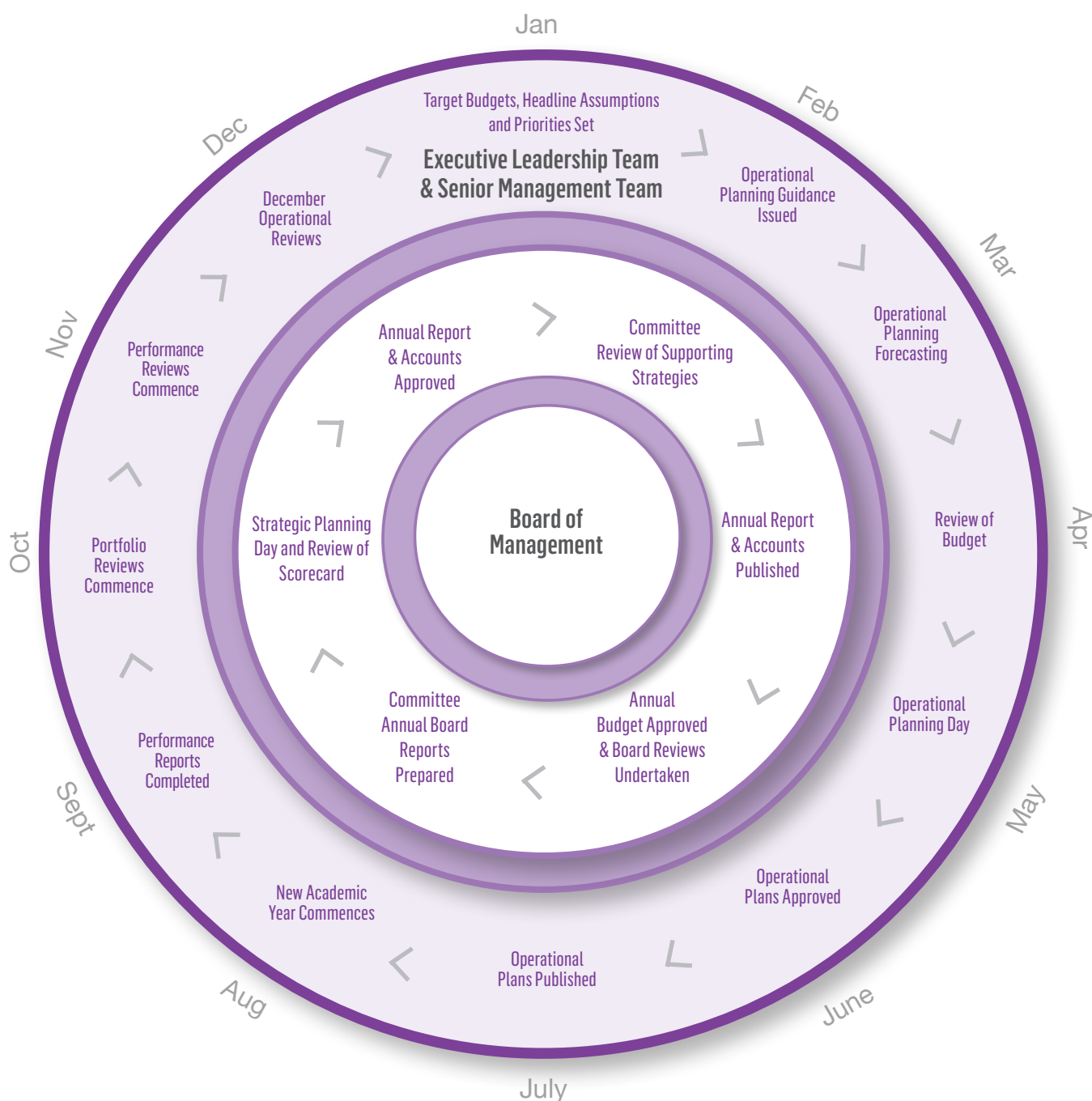
21. On Merchant Navy Day, I joined our Merchant Navy cadets for the annual wreath-laying ceremony at George Square. The College, which nowadays trains nearly half of the UK Merchant Navy officers, is the premier maritime and engineering institution. It is therefore fitting that we honour and remember those who made significant sacrifices in the past. Our students are preparing for a global industry and events like this reinforce our standing to the wider Scottish and UK Maritime industry.
22. I was delighted to welcome the Rt Hon Ian Murray MP, the UK Government's newly appointed Secretary of State for Scotland, to our City campus. During this afternoon visit, we discussed the pioneering apprenticeships, technological and higher skills training the College delivers, and the UK Government's priorities for Scotland. He asked for our assistance to support his discussions with the Norwegian Government. He subsequently name checked our college wearing our corporate tie to several hundred business leaders at the annual CBI dinner.
23. Of course, I have also welcomed Dave Anderson as the new Chair of the Board and have organised several meetings with him and colleagues in the College and across the sector. With the support of our Director of Corporate Support, Michael Cross, the Chair and I have been engaging with the Chairs and Principals of our sister institutions in Glasgow on a joint response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the dissolution of the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB), outlining how our colleges will work in partnership to serve the region in a post-GCRB landscape. We have similarly worked on a separate Government consultation on its post-16 reform proposals.
24. I shall continue to participate as a member of the RSE's Education Committee and will be one of 3 senior fellows to engage with MPs and Lords and UK Think Tanks at Westminster next month. I am also supporting the Royal Navy in answering 5 specific questions asked of our institution for the UK Strategic Defence Review.
25. We build brand equity and diversify our income through such strategic positioning, whilst also creating new opportunities for our students. We are constantly positioning ourselves as an anchor institution within Glasgow and the Greater Glasgow Region, so I am delighted to report that I have been appointed a Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Glasgow by the Lord Lieutenant and the Palace. This will prove helpful to our Super College in Glasgow's 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and in the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

## Forward Look

26. Dr Sheila Lodge, our Depute Principal and Chief Operating Officer, has made the personal decision to retire by Christmas. Dr Lodge joined us from the University of Edinburgh (Medical School) over six years ago; previously, she held senior roles at the London Metropolitan University, UHI and Edinburgh Napier University.
27. I have been fortunate to work with many talented and dedicated Depute Principal's in the various colleges where I have been Principal, but I can honestly say that Sheila has been the standout Depute. Her exemplary leadership, diligence and tenacity have been second to none. We worked closely together as a Principalship over the past six years to steer our Super College compassionately and successfully through the storms of a global pandemic then transformational organisational change, to now calmer waters.

28. I fully understand Sheila's decision to bring her distinguished career in academia to an end on a high; and we will now put a process in place to recruit her substantive replacement. I will advise you of interim arrangements in due course. Meantime, Sheila is still very much the Depute, so until her departure it is 'business as usual'.
29. The Board of Management's Strategic Planning Day will take place on Wednesday 6 November at our Riverside campus. This is an invaluable opportunity to review progress against the Strategic Plan, horizon scan, and have in-depth discussions about the challenges and opportunities for the College including the consideration of strategic alliances. I am conscious that we have several new Board members and therefore attach the College's annual planning cycle for your information (Appendix 2).
30. Our summer and winter graduations are the highlights of the College calendar, and we are noted for the high-level speakers we are able to attract who inspire and enthuse our graduands. Our winter graduation will take place on Monday 25 November 2024 at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, with three ceremonies (11:00, 15:00 and 19:00). Board of Management members are always encouraged to attend these highlights in our academic year. If you can attend, please email [graduation@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk](mailto:graduation@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk).





The College's annual planning process consists of a cycle comprising of the:

- Delivery of operational plans for the College's faculties and directorates
- Reporting progress on operational plans quarterly to the Executive Leadership Team
- Annual review of faculty and directorate performance by the Principal
- Strategic planning sessions with the Board of Management and Executive Leadership Team
- Level 1 Balanced Scorecard performance reported to the Board of Management
- Review of progress in delivering on the supporting strategies by the Board's committees