

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 28 October 2019
Paper Title	Communications Update (June – October 2019)
Agenda Item	17
Paper Number	BM1-Q
Responsible Officer	Breea Keenan, GCRB Marketing and Communications' Lead
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Information

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1** To provide an update in respect of GCRB communications and provide a plan of future activity.

2. Recommendations

- 3.** The Board is recommended to **note** the past activity in respect of GCRB communications and the future plans.

- 3.1** Our Communications Strategy paper proposes to produce regular Communications Updates for our Board, reviewing the previous period's activities and outlining forthcoming communications plans. This would replace our Board Briefing and would be presented at each Board meeting.

- 3.2** This is GCRB's first Communications Update, giving an overview of Communications Activities and Messages.

- 3.3** The purpose of this communications paper is to show the progress against our Communications Strategy to highlight the work carried out since the last Board meeting and will be produced regularly to keep Board Members updated on key activities and messages.

- 3.4** From June 2019 to October 2019 (since the last Board Meeting), Communications Activity has included:

- Development of **2019/20 Communications Strategy** and accompanying **Communications Planner** (included below) which outlines planned activity
- **E- bulletins** issued around our Foundation Apprenticeship event, Diversity Competition, Strategic Board Development Day and Self Evaluation on Regional Effectiveness
- Enhanced **Social Media** focus has seen our audience grow on Twitter by over 28% in the last six months (March 2019 – October 2019) and we are increasing our presence on career/professional social network LinkedIn.

- We have shared 30+ key messages on our Twitter and LinkedIn pages around GCRB activities including:
 - **GCRB activities:** hosting the Strategic Board Development Day, Self Evaluation meeting and publication, meeting with MSPs)
 - **college achievements/ significant staff activity:** Clyde College shortlisted in The Herald Pioneer Awards, SDS and City of Glasgow College shortlisted in Financial Services Award and Glasgow Kelvin's White Ribbon campaign
 - **Stakeholder communications:** supported the Scottish Government's No Wrong Path campaign around Exam Results Day, sharing key messages and advice from partners Skills Development Scotland and Glasgow City Council.
- GCRB Marketing and Communications' Lead is **developing relationships** with key partners and stakeholders' communications managers, including three college teams, Skills Development Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Action for Children, Bridge 2 Business etc. A quarterly communications meeting with GCRB and the three colleges' communications managers has been established and will meet for the first time in November 2019, where the Communications Strategy will be presented for discussion.
- **Communications briefings** provided for the Chair's key meetings with stakeholders
- **Staff newsletters:** Issued in June 2019 and October 2019, highlighting collaborative successes in the region. We plan to send these bi-annually from 2020.
- **Media communications:** In June 2019, we secured coverage of our Foundation Apprenticeship event in a local [Community magazine](#), which included a quote from Chair Janie McCusker (P31). Chair Janie McCusker is being interviewed about GCRB's Programme of Action by TES in October 2019.
- **Local government meeting/communications:** Chair Janie McCusker and Financial Director Jim Godfrey met with John Mason MSP in October 2019, following a motion in the Scottish Parliament on 5 September which mentioned all three colleges.
- **Strategic documents/publications:** produced and published our Self Evaluation on Regional Effectiveness; co-ordinated copy for Glasgow City Council's Social Mobility Brochure, liaising with each of the three colleges and providing GCRB content.
- **Campaigns:** Working with Action for Children on the planning, development and delivery of a launch event of the service for care-experienced students, with support from the Scottish Government, and communications plans to promote activities in our Programme of Action.
- **National Spotlight Magazine:** the theme of the next national Spotlight magazine is expected to be Skills Alignment.

3.5 The future communications activity is planned in advance and an outline is provided in the annex below for the Board's information.

4. 2019-20 Communications Plan

4.1 Our communications aims for 2019-20 are:

- Promote the benefits and successes of the Glasgow region

- Build stakeholders' understanding of GCRB's role and positive impact of the region
- Develop and manage GCRB's reputation
- To support GCRB's strategic direction and brand
- To support stakeholder relations and deliver complementary communications

4.2 Our communications principles for 2019-20 are:

- Consistently positive and authoritative.
- Values driven: Ambitious, Regional, and Collaborative.
- Audience driven: recognising the particular interests of specific audience groups.
- Collaborative: Joint communications and shared messages.
- Practical: recognising our limited resources and defined audiences.
- Regular and cumulative: to meet our communications aims and convey and develop a community of interest in our work.
- Human: connecting policy to its benefits to learners, staff and Glasgow's people.

We will maintain and develop:

- Our values-based identity that supports organisational aims and strengthens our reputation.
- Channels which reach our stakeholders and deliver our messages effectively, including further digital developments.
- A narrative based on the benefits of regionalisation, our values and aims. Our communications will develop this narrative by updating on progress and highlighting successes.
- Our collective voice, which is stronger when we work together as one region.

We aim to further develop:

- Collaborative communications activities, joint activities and highlight the region's successes with other key stakeholders, including the media.
- A stakeholder communication strategy to support the Chair, the Executive Director, the Board and GCRB's activities and reputation. The key messages for our communications plan in 2019-20 will be:
- Our mission: to build Scotland's most inclusive, responsive and effective regional college system.
- Our values: ambitious, regional and collaborative.
- Stories of progress and success, showing a clear line of sight from policy to people
- Positive impact and value for money generated by regional coherence and collaboration.

4.3 Our primary audience will continue to consist of stakeholders and partners, including Scottish Government, SFC, Colleges Scotland, the three Glasgow colleges, SDS, local authorities) and our strategy continues to target this audience group.

4.4 We will aim to grow and strengthen this community of interest (including politicians/ local government, stakeholder groups and education institutes) through strategic, regular and relevant communications, working with the communications teams from the three colleges to highlight the region's successes.

- 4.5** We will produce regular Communications Updates for our Board and stakeholders, reviewing the previous period's activities within the region and outline forthcoming communications, key messages, and opportunities.
- 4.6** We aim to develop consistently collaborative communications activities with the colleges through quarterly communications meetings.
- 4.7** Our staff newsletter will be a bi-annual publication, highlighting Board achievements, events and activities which also features interviews with Board members/Regional Leads.
- 4.8** We aim to strengthen relationships with media and politicians and proactively communicate positive news items around successes. We will be more proactive in our use of national and regional media and may use more specialised press to convey specific messages.
- 4.9** A key element of recent communications activity has been the development of our digital communications, including an enhanced social media focus. We will continue to develop this, including our presence on career/professional social network LinkedIn.
- 5.** Specific areas of improvement in 2019-20 will be to:
- continue to develop our communications channels, including social media and video channels, to reach key audiences more effectively, efficiently and flexibly
 - work in partnership with college communications staff to identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment of activity
 - develop a stakeholder communications strategy to support the Chair, the Executive Director and the Board
- 6.** Operational activity for 2019 – 20 will include the following communications outputs:
- Regular e-bulletins to highlight news items and keep stakeholders informed.
 - Produce and develop two or three Spotlight magazines on topics of national interest at key points each year.
 - Produce two videos during the year, to bring policy to life through stories
 - Deliver/co-host three events in the next twelve months and supporting communications to highlight what has been discussed, developed and delivered
 - Provide the Board with updates of previous and planned communications activities at each Board meeting
 - Support the Chair and GCRB with regular communications briefings and speeches
 - Identify and suggest a calendar of events where GCRB Chair, Executive Director and Board Members can represent the Glasgow College sector.
 - Develop our strategic use of social media, produce an annual social media calendar with key messages and share relevant college content, successes and stakeholder posts on GCRB's social media channels with around four messages each month.
 - Produce fully branded statutory and strategic documents throughout the year
 - We will continue to develop our website as an information resource and as a 'base' for other electronic communications.
 - Develop a quarterly communications meeting with three colleges to discuss forthcoming activities and plans and deliver a joined-up approach.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 This policy mitigates the risk that 'The reputation of the College Sector in Glasgow is damaged as a result of adverse publicity.' (Risk 003)

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

10. Resource Implications

10.1 The implementation of this work requires the commitment of staff resources and some additional expenditure. This is contained within the GCRB operational budget.

11. Strategic Plan implications

11.1 This policy contributes to the effective working environment of GCRB and the delivery of the Strategic Plan for the Glasgow college region.

Glasgow College Region / GCRB Communications Work

October 2019

ACTIVITY/PROJECT	KEY ACTIONS	PLANS	TIMELINE FOR ACTION
GCRB Staff Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - News items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self evaluation - Regional CPD activity update - Interview – Gillian Plunkett, Regional Lead for Student Experience - Strategic Board Development Day - Trade Unions update - Spotlight on: Financial Services’ Hub - Regional Events - Board member profile – Lesley Garrick 	To be issued in October. Stories to be promoted Oct – Jan on social media
Board Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photography for website/staff newsletter 	28 October 2019
GCRB – Board Appointment/staff changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media/network sharing: LinkedIn 	October 2019
Media – TES interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview with Janie McCusker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme of Action key points and messages for interview 	October 2019
Stakeholder Communications/Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glasgow City Council – Social Mobility Brochure with colleges intro and section from each college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content finalised with colleges 	Submitted 8 October 2019
Stakeholder Communications/Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Comms meeting 		7 November 2019

Social media strategy/planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop calendar of activity for academic year - Share appropriate college content, especially relating to regional/collaborative work 	November 2019
Collaborative Project: Action for Children / care experienced learners GCRB Commitment: 'established a new proactive student support service for care-experienced young people with the Action for Children charity, providing support beyond the college walls to learners who are most at risk of not completing their studies and of failing to meet their full potential'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch event with Scottish Government - Support workers to identify students/former students who may be interested in attending event - Press release with relevant stats and Media photo/interview opportunity to be arranged - Speech from Janie and Action for Children CEO - Q&A with former student/current student on the benefits the new service will bring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GCRB invite list TBC - Speech writing - Media release and invitation - Social media messages - Ebulletin 	Date to be confirmed
Collaborative Project: Mental Health GCRB Commitment: 'developed a joined up and high quality mental health and well-being service for students and staff which includes professionally-qualified Mental Health Services leadership capacity and an improved counselling offer'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health tenders received - Comms planning underway 	October 2019
Collaborative Project: Bridge 2 Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with Bridge for Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree approach and opportunities 	8 October 2019
Collaborative Project: Skills Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Services Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Newsletter 	October 2019 October 2019

<p>GCRB commitment: ‘aligned our curriculum more closely to regional and national skills needs, with more of our delivery targeted at areas of employment growth; meet the needs of employers, ensuring that the volume and content of delivery is matched to employer demand. We will meet replacement demand in sectors such as business services, - financial and professional services, retail, social and child care, and tourism. We will meet existing and anticipated skills gaps throughout the labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Conversation: Skills Alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media content and Sway update following event - Spotlight magazine on Skills Alignment 	<p>November 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>
<p>Professional Development GCRB Commitment: ‘expanded a programme of regional CPD opportunities that includes courses and initiatives from our colleges and from national bodies such as the Colleges Development Network;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational Development plan identifying key themes and dates has been submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update in staff newsletter - Announce each confirmed session on social media 	<p>October 2019</p> <p>As confirmed</p>
<p>Collaborative Project: STEM strategy launch GCRB Commitment: ‘implemented our refreshed regional STEM strategy and increased the proportion of learners undertaking STEM-related learning, ensuring our regional curriculum offer responds to the needs of the STEM economy’</p>			<p>TBC</p>