

## SAAS MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2009

Present: David Stephen  
Tracey Slaven  
Bruce Nelson, NEBM  
Allan Forsyth, NEBM  
Dugald Mackie, NEBM  
Graham Gunn  
Audrey Heatlie  
Audrey Shimmons  
Maureen Shevas  
Linda Pender (Secretary)

1. The Agency had advertised for a NEBM to replace Eileen Marshall. The closing date for applications was 4 September. The advert had also been sent to Scotland's Colleges.
2. Allan Forsyth had left Cardonald College to work as a freelance consultant in the FE sector but had agreed to remain as a NEBM in the interests of continuity.
3. David would now be retiring on 30 September and Tracey would take over as Chief Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### Minutes of the previous meeting

4. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th June 2009 were agreed.

### Matters Arising

5. David updated the Board on the following issue:-
  - Lease on Gyleview House – SG estates were still awaiting any approaches from prospective buyers that might indicate whether the balance of advantage could lie in renewing the current lease in 2012/2013.

### Quarterly Report

#### Customer Services Unit

6. There had been a slow start to processing despite moves to encourage students to apply early. Processing had been in line with last year until the last week of July when numbers suddenly surged. There had been an 18%-30% increase in applications received over the last five weeks. CSU had processed over 80% of those applications. Over 99% of all applications this session had been received on-line. CSU staff had worked overtime on a voluntary basis the last few weekends to try to keep up with targets. Overtime had started earlier this session as part of the response to a possible flu pandemic.
7. ILA 500 – CSU had received 1,200 applications since July.
8. SAAS were unable as yet to tell if there would be an overall increase in student numbers or whether students – in a reverse of the trend over the last few years - were applying earlier. However, most indications were that an overall increase was inevitable.

9. Allan said that Cardonald College had a 6% increase in applications received for full-time courses. Bruce reported that Edinburgh University acceptances were up by around 6% - 7% despite efforts to manage numbers down. It was felt that this would be repeated in other HEIs and it was noted that some were actively using the present glut of applicants to pursue expansionist policies.

### Finance

10. There would be an overspend on capital expenditure. ELL Finance were aware of this overspend which was due to the delay in the StEPS project.

11. Programme expenditure – if the increase in applications for support was less than 6,000 it was possible that expenditure could be within budget. Anything above that would need extra funding. The majority of those gaining access to HE this year would remain in the system for an average of a further three years and this would have implications for future budgets and the next spending review.

12. The Finance team were meantime focusing on ensuring fees were paid only for students in attendance and were asking institutions to return any funding to which they were not entitled. This was highly labour intensive but on the basis of the limited returns so far received over £2m might be recoverable.

### Fraud

13. The Agency had engaged a specialist Auditor on a 6 month contract to carry out follow up work. An additional permanent member of staff had been appointed to the fraud team.

14. The Finance Team had advertised internally to fill two vacant A3 posts but only one internal candidate had applied.

15. The ELL Audit Committee had given the SAAS report on our responses to the frauds a good reception and had commended the actions being taken. The new DG Education, Leslie Evans, felt that there were lessons to be learned across SG from what SAAS was doing and that there was a need for more networking to share intelligence and best practice.

### Human Resources

16. There were 13 vacancies within the Agency – four posts filled internally had left 4 new vacant posts. These posts would be advertised internally to staff before being advertised externally.

17. E-HR Reports had not been available for the last few months for monitoring sick leave. SAAS HR were currently using the flexi system to monitor sick leave. SG hope to make these reports available by November.

18. Homeworking – SG solicitors have agreed the proposed scheme but the TUS had not yet commented. The Agency were unable to test the IT systems for homeworking before StEPS was up and running. **Action:** It was agreed to find out level of staff interest in homeworking and set up a larger pilot in due course.

### IS & Operational Policy

19. The Web upgrade had been successful at BT's 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt and was now working but the BT contract continued to cause some difficulties.
20. Telephony system – The BSU had negotiated the maintenance contract for the system for next year with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and had begun to look at options for a replacement system.
21. StEPS – The BSU had been split into development and maintenance teams headed at B3 level.
22. The ILA 500 system was now operational. This was a significant proof of concept for the software that was being used to deliver StEPS.
23. Phase 1 Steps – was now in test and a further phase was on schedule.

### CE Office

24. David said that it would be important to keep up momentum on health and environmental issues and not lose our ISO accreditation and HWL status.

### Balanced Scorecard

25. Bruce Nelson had emailed Ewhan with comments about the BS and had some queries on the indicators and targets. It was agreed that KPI 19 was unrealistic. It was also agreed that for KPI 13 we should show our performance against SG comparators.  
**Action:** David to discuss with Ewhan.
26. A revised risk register would be available at the next meeting.

### Committee minutes

27. The Board noted the H&S Committee minutes of 3 June 2009.

### Complaints Report

28. The Board noted the report. There were no trends requiring action.

### Any Other Business

29. In wishing David well in his retirement, the Board paid tribute to the levels of customer service nowadays offered by the Agency and the transformation that had been brought about in its overall performance.

### **Date of next meeting**

30. To be arranged.

Chief Executive's Office  
3 September 2009