

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 18 June 2018
Paper Title	Communications Planning Report
Agenda Item	19
Paper Number	BM5-Q
Responsible Officer	Robin Ashton, GCRB Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Information

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1** To provide members with an overview of communications related activity undertaken by GCRB over the course of the 2017-18 academic year and to present for Board feedback draft communications planning for the 2018-19 year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Board is invited to:

- **note** this report; and
- **consider** and provide feedback on the draft GCRB communications plan for the 2018-19 academic year.

3. Overview of 2017-18 Communications activity

- 3.1** GCRB has an identified need to communicate strategically and effectively with a range of stakeholders. All significant audiences for GCRB's communications have a vested interest in the Board's activity, decisions and success, while very few groups have a short term or simple transactional relationship with the organisation. Our reputation is largely dependent upon how key agencies perceive our work, and its alignment with, and success in delivering, their own policies.
- 3.2** In June 2017, working with an external consultant, GCRB developed a communications strategy to develop and managing GCRB's reputation, and to support regionalisation and the development of Glasgow's colleges.
- 3.3** Over the course of the year, the following communication outputs have been delivered:
- A revised GCRB website;
 - six e-bulletins: strategy launch, new Chair, creative hub, annual review, childcare and capital spend;
 - documents: strategy, annual report, annual review, ROA;

- event: strategy launch;
- video: strategy launch, childcare (in progress);
- spotlight: childcare; and
- three board updates.

3.4 Our defined audience consisted primarily of stakeholders including Scottish Government, SFC, Colleges Scotland, the three Glasgow colleges, SDS, local authorities, etc.

3.5 A key element of this communications activity has been the development of a distinct graphical identity for the Glasgow Colleges Region brand, used consistently across documentary, email and video communications.

3.6 This communications activity has developed and managed GCRB's reputation with consistent and cumulative messaging that has established values, highlighted success, defined opportunities and advanced the case for regionalisation. Communications have illustrated and supported GCRB's work and helped to strengthen its reputation with key stakeholders.

3.7 We have yet to develop consistently collaborative communications activities with the colleges and we will work to develop these in 2018-19.

4. 2018-19 Communications Plan

4.1 Our 2018-19 communications plan is designed to support the development of the Glasgow College Region by optimising communications strengths and opportunities and addressing weaknesses and threats.

4.2 The key messages for our communications plan in 2018-19 will be:

- Our mission: to build Scotland's most inclusive, responsive and effective regional college system.
- Our values: ambitious, regional and collaborative.
- Stories of regional progress, success and potential.
- A clear line of sight from policy to people.

4.3 Our communications aims for 2018-19 are:

- To develop and manage GCRB's reputation.
- To support the success of the Glasgow region.
- To support the colleges' success.
- To support the Scottish Government's and SFC's agenda.

4.4 Our communications principles for 2018-19 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.

- 4.5** Our primary audience will consist of stakeholders and partners. We will aim to grow and strengthen this community of interest through strategic, regular and relevant communications.
- 4.6** Because of our emphasis on direct communications with stakeholders, we will be reactive in our use of national and regional media but may use more specialised press (TESS, Holyrood, etc.) to convey specific messages.
- 4.7** In 2017-18 we mapped our stakeholders, the extent and nature of the information we want to convey to them, and we have assessed their attitudes to GCRB. In 2018-19 we will now log, monitor and measure our activities with these stakeholders to ensure that each receives the messages we need to convey. We will also produce regular communications update which review the previous period's activities and outline forthcoming communications, key messages, and opportunities.
- 4.8** Specific areas of improvement in 2018-19 will be to develop our communications channels to reach key audiences more effectively, efficiently and flexibly, to strengthen our delivery of key messages: our mission, values, success and potential, and to further develop the Glasgow College Region Brand.
- 4.9** Operational activity for 2018-19 will include the following communications outputs:
- Monthly e-bulletins to create a cumulative awareness of the levels of activity within the region and of GCRB's commitment to keeping stakeholders informed.
 - We will produce and develop three or four spotlight magazines on topics of national interest each year.
 - Following the success of our video featuring the Regional Apprentices, we will produce two videos each year.
 - Our launch highlighted the reputational value of events and we will deliver one or two events over 2018-19.
 - We will continue to develop our website as an information resource and as a 'base' for other electronic communications.
 - We will produce and distribute a key facts booklet and use its branded style and content to convey progress.
 - We will develop our use of Twitter to amplify our messages and to reach and support key stakeholders and partners
- 4.10** We will also work in partnership with college communications staff in order to identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment of activity.

5. Risk Analysis

- 5.1** The development of a communications plan to promote benefits of regional approach will mitigate *GCRB Risk 003: The reputation of the College Sector in Glasgow is damaged as a result of adverse publicity.*

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1** No legal implications are identified.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The existing GCRB budget contains sufficient resources to support the communications plan presented within this report.

8. Strategic Implications

8.1 Enhancing stakeholder understanding of the role and value of regionalisation within the Glasgow College Region will support the development and delivery of regional strategic ambitions.