

GLASGOW FOCUS

Ambitious, Regional and Collaborative
Newsletter for Glasgow college staff
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"The Glasgow college region's response to the pandemic has been truly exemplary, thanks to the dedication of the region's staff, stakeholders and students."

Janie McCusker

Chair, Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board

WELCOME FROM THE GCRB CHAIR

Our Focus

Welcome to Glasgow Focus, our newsletter featuring regional news and opportunities for Glasgow college staff.

We started this new year working in more challenging circumstances and I want to thank you all for your continued commitment and dedication in supporting our learners and colleagues.

While the landscape is changing, our commitment to collaborative working to deliver the best possible experience for staff and students remains the same.

I wish you all the very best for a very successful term and year with Glasgow's colleges.

GLASGOW FOCUS

Regional Work

GCRB focuses on successful outcomes for the region's colleges, 2,300 staff and 55,000 learners.

We work closely with Glasgow's three colleges, City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College.

Together, the region helps students to build their careers, develop their ambitions and strengthen the wider community and economy.

[More about GCRB](#)



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Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board

Staff and student voices have clearly articulated the scale of the current challenges and the very real impact on people's lives. We must ensure that Glasgow's college system is seen as a key national asset, and it will be critical that we continue to champion it and provide a clear voice for its role in supporting learners.

We continue to engage with staff, the college Student Associations, and college management, and this focus will be at the heart of our on-going work across funding, regional planning and review. GCRB would like to thank everyone across the college system engaged in this vital work.



 **Martin Boyle, GCRB
Executive Director**

WRITTEN BY GCRB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARTIN BOYLE

Executive Director Update

There can rarely have been a more important time to safeguard college provision in Glasgow, and to ensure that our students have the very best access to the very best college experience. The impact of a global pandemic has magnified financial and societal pressures, and it is vital that college education in the city provides a clear and compelling answer.

That is the clear message that we send to government and other key stakeholders as we all continue to seek to manage in these challenging times.

College has long been at the heart of the city's education offering, providing life-changing opportunities to students from across the region, and indeed far beyond, attracting students from across Scotland and the world. New opportunities, experiences, friendships and learning are fostered by the college system every year.

Dedicated staff across a broad range of areas support that experience, and it is clear that the Glasgow college system must play a central role in continuing to deliver that inspiration, aspiration, opportunities and life chances for all. Colleges have a decisive, pivotal part to play in widening access and delivering the chance for everyone to thrive, not just survive, in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.

"The Glasgow college system must play a central role in continuing to deliver inspiration, aspiration, opportunities and life chances for all."

Glasgow Review

GCRB launched the Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability of Glasgow College Region in November 2020.

The review followed the Scottish Funding Council's Phase One report findings on colleges and universities. The first stage of the Glasgow review invited submissions from interested organisations to consider changes needed to funding, operations and structure frameworks, in order to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

GCRB Executive Director Martin Boyle said: "The Scottish Funding Council's review recognised the significant positive progress in the Glasgow college region. We are now taking forward the report's key challenge points and recommendations as part of our regional focus.

"We are committed to working collaboratively with Glasgow's three colleges and stakeholders to drive forward change, with current and future learners at the heart of this process. Colleges provide an absolutely critical route into, and through, education, transforming lives and opening opportunities to progress into work or further study. Now more than ever, it is vital that we safeguard delivery of those life-changing opportunities to people right across Glasgow."

[Find out more](#)



Climate Change

Glasgow is set to host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) this year.

The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to take place from 1 – 12 November 2021.

Regional Response

With the arrival of COP 26 in Glasgow, recruitment is underway for a brand new regional role of Environmental Sustainability Manager with GCRB.

This presents an exciting opportunity for GCRB and Glasgow's colleges to work collaboratively and create a regional response to this global issue, making a difference to our campuses, colleges, city and beyond.

[Find out more](#)



"Climate post announcement coming soon."



Scottish Budget

The Scottish Government published its Draft Budget for 2021/22 on 28 January 2021.

The Scottish Budget sets out proposed spending and tax plans for 2021 to 2022.

SCOTTISH BUDGET:
2021-22

The Scottish Government has increased current levels of revenue funding for the college sector by 5.6% in cash terms, with the Draft Budget for 2021/22 confirmed as £675.7m. This represents an additional £35.7m against the Budget for 2020/21.

The Scottish Government has reduced current levels of capital funding for the college sector with the Draft Budget for 2020/21 confirmed as £33.7m. This represents a reduction of £2m against the draft budget for 2021/22. Further detail on the regional budget allocation will follow.

"There will be another spending review for 2022/23."

Find out more



The Scottish Budget has a dedicated Education and Skills section, which highlights key priorities.

In this 2021/22 the Scottish Government has pledged to:

- boost resources for colleges to mitigate the effects of COVID, including the challenges of blended learning;
- maintain links with Europe following the UK's exit from the EU and promote Scottish learning and research internationally through the Global Alumni Network and expansion of the Saltire Scholarship Programme;
- provide support for world-leading university research to allow Higher Education Institutions to secure substantial additional funding from other research funders and strengthen international collaboration opportunities - including COVID research projects; and
- offer apprenticeship opportunities that are open to all by investing through Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to maximise apprenticeship starts.

The Young Person's Guarantee

"The further and higher education sectors and skills provision priorities will continue to support the development of well-educated, highly skilled people, supporting sustainable and inclusive growth and delivering our Young Person's Guarantee." Draft Budget for 2021/22

Colleges' COVID Update

Scottish Government publishes publishes regular COVID guidance for college and university students.

Colleges are currently following the level guidance for their local authority area which in practice means, with limited exemptions, the majority of college students' studies are online, due to the new coronavirus strain.

The current state of the pandemic, the impact of suppression measures and the roll out of the vaccine will all be taken into account in considering the return to colleges.

Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, said: "The return of students to campus, including returning to term-time accommodation, involves the mass movement of thousands of people across the country. The mixing of people on that scale, including the potential movement of tens of thousands of students to university halls and private-rented flats, simply isn't safe right now.

"We will review plans in light of the state of the pandemic nearer the time."

To keep updated with the latest Scottish Government guidance, click the link below.

[Latest news](#)



[Guidance](#)



Virtual Celebrations

Glasgow's colleges have been marking the very special graduates of 2020 with virtual graduation ceremonies.

Glasgow Clyde and City of Glasgow College graduation ceremonies took place at the end of last year while Glasgow Kelvin hosted their graduations in January 2021.

GCRB Chair Janie McCusker said: "These virtual graduation ceremonies mark the culmination of a great deal of hard work, effort and success.

"Thank you too all involved in supporting students with their learning throughout this extraordinary year. We wish our Glasgow graduates every success in the future."

Applications for courses starting in August 2021 are now open.

[Celebrating Class of 2020](#)





GCRB NEWS

Mental Health Resources

UK mental health charity Charlie Waller Memorial Trust has developed new online resources for college staff.

Mental health videos, resources, e-learning modules and top tips are available for Glasgow colleges and staff.

GCRB Executive Director Martin Boyle said: "It is more important than ever to be looking after ourselves and our mental health. Charlie Waller Memorial Trust's resources offer practical solutions to dealing with every day tasks, including managing the difficulties of remote working and managing stress."

All staff and students have access to award-winning mental health platform, Togetherall.

Mental health support and resources are available for staff & students



[Find out more](#)



GLASGOW FOCUS 2021

Scottish Apprenticeships Week

Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2021 takes place from 1-5 March 2021. The week aims to share the value apprenticeships can bring to individuals, employer and the economy.

This year's theme is Business Backing Talent, to showcase the great things that happen when employers back talent through apprenticeships.

There's more support from Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland to help individuals get the chance of an apprenticeship and for businesses to benefit from employing apprentices.

[Find out more](#)



Scottish Apprenticeship Week will take place in March 2021.

Introducing...

Caroline Macdonald joined GCRB as a Board Member in 2015. She also leads GCRB's Performances and Resources Committee.

"I joined Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board after coming back to Glasgow permanently on my retirement from Teesside University. I've worked in Higher Education all my life and been active in developing and sustaining links between colleges and universities in several jobs, so it seemed a good fit to my interest and experience.

"I think it is important that there are lots of ways to access education and training. Colleges provide that in a huge range of subjects and at different levels. College qualifications are an important end point though and are much more than another route to university, though that is important.

"Team working was a big part of my research and I find it stimulating to work with others who come at a project from a different perspective.

"I think working together with GCRB the colleges can achieve more than working in isolation and competition. I'd like to see even more joint working and joint projects where efforts can be shared for the benefit of all, especially the learners."

[GCRB Board Members](#)



Caroline Macdonald -
GCRB Board Member

Caroline is passionate about providing educational opportunities to everyone who can benefit from them. She studied Molecular Biology and went on to have a career in higher education, holding positions at Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities before moving to the University of Paisley. She held Executive posts in Paisley, Glasgow Caledonian and Teesside Universities before retiring from her post as Deputy Vice Chancellor at Teesside University in 2014.

Caroline is also Vice Chair at the University of the West of Scotland.

[More about Caroline](#)



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