

**THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART**  
**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**BOARD AWAYDAY, FEBRUARY 2016**

**Minutes:** 1st February 2016 (Website version)

<b>Present:</b>	Ms Muriel Gray	Lay Governor (Chair)
	Ms Kerry Aylin	Support Staff Representative
	Ms Alison Lefroy Brooks	Lay Governor and Vice-Chair
	Mr Douglas Brown	Lay Governor
	Dr Janet Brown	Lay Governor
	Professor Tom Inns	Director
	Mr Douglas Kinnaird	Lay Governor (item 10)
	Ms Eleanor McAllister	Lay Governor
	Mrs Linda McTavish	Lay Governor
	Professor Ken Neil	Academic Council Representative
	Mr Lewis Prosser	President, Students' Association
	Mr Ken Ross	Lay Governor
	Sir Muir Russell	Lay Governor and Vice-Chair
	Ms Lesley Thomson	Lay Governor
	Professor Alison Yarrington	Lay Governor

<b>Attending:</b>	Mr David Dalziel	Head of Human Resources (items 9-10)
	Professor Vicky Gunn	Head of Learning and Teaching (items 9-10)
	Mr Alan Horn	Director of Development (for items 8-10)
	Mr Eliot Leviten	Director of Finance and Resources
	Dr Steve Love	Digital Design Studio (for items 9-10)
	Professor Irene McAra McWilliam	Head, School of Design (for items 8-10)
	Mr Scott Parsons	Director of Marketing, Communications and Strategic Planning (for items 8-10)
	Ms Shona Paul	Head of Professional and Continuing Education (items 9-10)
	Mr Alistair Payne	Head, School of Fine Art (items 9-10)
	Ms Sally Stewart	Deputy Head, School of Architecture (items 9-10)
	Dr Craig Williamson	Registrar
	Mr John Martin	Assistant Secretary to the Board

*(Note: this meeting was the Board's annual Awayday meeting, so did not have the usual Board agenda, including Board and Committee minutes).*

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Ms Christa Reekie, Dr Sarah Smith

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

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### 3. Recruitment of New Lay Governors

As already approved by the Board by correspondence, five new Lay Governors had been appointed following advertisement and interviews. The five new Lay Governors were:

- Mr Charles Beattie
- Dr Susie Mitchell
- Professor Nora Kearney
- Ms Victoria Nairn
- Mr Andrew Sutherland

Charles Beattie and Susie Mitchell would join the Board on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and Nora Kearney, Victoria Nairn and Andrew Sutherland would join on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016.

### 4. Appointment to Audit Committee

As Alison Lefroy Brooks would leave the Board at the end of February 2016, it was proposed that Charles Beattie, a qualified accountant, should join the Audit Committee from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The Board approved this appointment.

### 5. Annual Survey of Board Effectiveness 2014/15

The Registrar introduced the results of the Annual Survey of Board Effectiveness, details of which had been circulated together with the results of the equivalent survey on the effectiveness of Academic Council. There had been a 75% response from Governors to the survey. With few exceptions, the answers to most of the questions in the Board survey were either 'yes' or 'yes, but with scope for improvement'. The Registrar drew attention to the following areas highlighted in the analysis of responses, and in doing so received suggestions from members of the Board:

- Risk Management: as discussed at both recent Board and Audit Committee meetings, the School was keen to establish a robust and dynamic mechanism for considering and reporting risk management. A template for consideration of risk was being developed by the Director of Marketing, Communications, and Strategic Planning, to ensure linkage with the School's Strategic Plan. The Audit Committee would be appropriately consulted. It was suggested that an annual review of Board decisions would be a useful exercise, perhaps in the form of a special meeting (additional to the existing Awayday), which might again be linked closely to consideration of progress with the Strategic Plan. Part of the challenge for the School in devising the best reporting mechanisms for risk management and strategic objectives was to keep information as concise as possible for Governors, whose roles concerned strategic overview and accountability, not detailed management.
- Balance of skills represented on the Board: the new appointments to the Board (see item 3 above) had already sought to address this question, e.g. by appointing new Lay Governors with financial qualifications and expertise.
- Induction of New Governors: the School would be seeking to strengthen this process as new Governors joined the Board, taking into account both the comments of existing Governors and the guidelines outlined in the Scottish Code.
- Size of agendas: this was a difficult question as, while the Board's agendas had increased in size, it was difficult to identify items of business which could readily be withdrawn, given the need to keep Governors fully aware of legislative developments and obligations. It was suggested that one helpful step would be to provide standard summary sheets to enable Governors to gain a swift understanding of the purpose and content of Board papers. (With reference to the timing of Board meetings and the

occasional need to carry out business quickly, e.g. in relation to property acquisition, it was suggested that recent conduct of such business had been very well handled in that Governors had been kept well informed by email of developments in-between meetings, accompanied by clearly defined options).

## 6. Board Intermediary

The above-mentioned Board effectiveness survey had indicated a highly positive response in relation to the leadership of the Board, but members were reminded that Linda McTavish held the role of Board Intermediary and that members were free to contact her in confidence if they had any concerns regarding the conduct of Board meetings. It was agreed that if members had any such concerns, they should signal these in advance of the next Board meeting (March 2016) and that Linda McTavish would liaise with the Registrar if necessary.

## 7. Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill

The Chair provided an update on the progress of the Scottish Government's Higher Education Governance Bill. While there had been welcome amendments to the Bill, including removal of the potential threat to HEIs' charitable status, it seemed likely that the Bill would progress to Stage Three of the legislative process with some of its fundamental aspects still in place, notably the proposed election of chairs of HEI governing bodies. The chairs of all 18 Scottish HEIs were about to send a joint letter to the media to restate their concerns regarding the Bill.

*Part of this minute has been withheld from the website version of the Minutes on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.*

## 8. Estates Development and Communications

*This minute has been withheld from the website version of the Minutes on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.*

## 9. Transitions In, Transitions Out

*This minute has been withheld from the website version of the Minutes on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.*

## 10. Towards 2020

The final session of the Awayday took the theme of 'Towards 2020', i.e. consideration of some of the broad issues likely to influence the next iteration of the School's Strategic Plan, notwithstanding the fact that the academic and infrastructural challenges already underway would take a number of years to be fully delivered. Discussion included the following points:

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- What benchmarking tools would allow Governors to gain improved perception of where GSA stood in relation to other institutions?
- How might the future student population of the School differ from the present population, and what would be future students' aspirations? It was suggested that teachers and pupils at school level were finding it difficult to stay abreast of contemporary career opportunities and that the School could therefore play a role in helping to explain the employment landscape. It was also suggested that HEIs in general should increasingly be viewing their students less as 'pupils' and more as 'professionals in training'.

- Was public perception of GSA focussed too heavily on traditional disciplines at the expense of other specialisms and activities? New subject areas were developing apace, not least those relating to technological advances, and the School, while not losing sight of its traditions, must continue to adapt to the future and seek to increase awareness of the breadth of its activities.

**11. Dates of Remaining Meetings 2015/16**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 1.30pm  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 1.30pm

JM