West Lothian College

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Tuesday 13 March 2018** at 1.30pm in Pavilion D Room G6 of the College.

Present:	Sue Cook (Chair)
	Tom Bates
	Mhairi Harrington
	Lorna Reid

In attendance:	George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
	Jenny Stalker (Quality Manager)
	Karine McNair (Secretary to the Board)

Tour – Engineering Department

The Committee were taken on a tour of the Engineering department which was followed by a presentation by Gordon Weir (Head of Engineering & Computing).

The presentation focussed on retention and attainment within the Engineering department which has seen some challenges in past years, in particular in 'Partial Success' rates where sometimes one credit or one assessment is the only factor for missing a full award.

It was acknowledged that some students who leave engineering sometimes transfer to either other engineering courses or other courses within the College and this affects the retention statistics. Work is being undertaken to ensure that students are given more of an induction to engineering before starting courses to ensure that they have chosen the correct course.

There is an action plan in place aiming to prevent late drop outs from courses such as reducing some programmes to 17 weeks rather than 35 weeks and focussing on SECTT apprenticeships.

The Committee suggested that there may be local employers who regularly employ large numbers of apprentices who might be interested in working with the College to develop a programme. A Committee member with particular contacts suggested that they get in touch with Gordon Weir after the meeting to discuss some potential opportunities.

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The Committee noted that there have been many action plans in the past and wondered how the department are tracking the success of their initiatives, as there was an overall impression that the best approach could be to deliver a smaller curriculum in a more focussed manner. It was confirmed that this was a strategy being pursued by the Engineering Centre.

The Committee thanked Gordon Weir for his very informative presentation and requested that the slides be made available to all Committee members for their information.

Action 1: Secretary to the Board

18.01   Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the rescheduled Committee meeting and thanked everyone for making the effort after the original meeting had to be cancelled due to the snow closure of the College.

Apologies were received from Sarah Kerr, Alan Morton and Iain McIntosh.

18.02   Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18.03   Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2017 were approved as a true record.

18.04   Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Members noted the paper detailing actions following the last meeting.

In respect of Action 1, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning confirmed that UCAS information is expected to be received at the end of April.

In respect of Action 4, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning confirmed that the Bursary Officer had been spoken with and they were not reporting any significant escalation in students reporting hardship. The Student Association have been asked to keep a note of students reporting poverty and ensure that they are directed to Student Support.

There were no other matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

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The Committee agreed agenda item 18.10 be presented next.

18.10   Student Association Report

The Student Association Vice President presented paper 8 and noted that the December Sparkle report had been delayed due to weather disruption, students being on placement and fewer Vice Presidents in role.

One theme from the Sparkle feedback had been IT issues such as laptops not being charged, poor Wifi, insufficient printers and lack of lectures using moodle.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning stated that a meeting was planned with IT to address some of the issues raised in the Sparkle report and the Committee commented that poor Wifi in particular was unacceptable in a modern learning environment and needed to be examined as a matter of urgency. The Committee also queried why printing was an issue as the College was following a sustainability and environmental initiative to reduce printing and students should be encouraged to reduce their use of printers.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning agreed to find out about printing requirements on courses and for assessments from the teaching Centres.

Action 2: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

Student Association Vice President reported that the Student Association had put a proposal to the Senior Management Team to amend the constitution for a full time President and Vice President. Currently the 7 Vice Presidents have 5 hours per week of Student Association allocation however in practice, the Student Association feel that there would be more value in having 2 full time representatives, removing the study conflicts currently felt by the Vice Presidents and providing a stronger team approach. The financial implications are the same and the Student Association hope to have the change in place before the start of the next election campaign.

West Lothian students have participated in a Fair Attendance Survey and initial results indicate that West Lothian College students are unfairly disadvantaged by the 100% attendance requirement.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning stated that it would appear West Lothian College's policy on 100% attendance differs from other Colleges who may have interpreted the Scottish Funding Council's requirement with a little more flexibility. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning agreed to

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investigate the West Lothian Policy in comparison with other Colleges and in line with the Scottish Funding Council policy.

Action 3: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

The Committee thanked the Student Association Vice President for the very informative report.

18.05 Applications Update

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented paper 3 noting that there has been a significant increase in applications and any interviews that were missed due to the snow closures have now been rearranged.

The Committee queried how the application figure related to the same time last year and were concerned if the figures have been overwritten, since the historical data was vital for comparative purposes. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning undertook to find the historical data and check that the figures are not being overwritten.

Action 4: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

It was noted that although the schools applications look quite poor, the report was written straight after the schools applications opened and the applications have now increased such that the Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning was confident that targets would be met. This is the first year that school applications are online which is an improvement to the admissions process.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

18.06 Student On Course Evaluation (SOCE) Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented paper 4 noting that the report was a work in progress with meetings planned with Centre Heads to discuss closing any quality gaps.

The Committee pointed out that on page 19, there was a discrepancy between the figures in the table and the figures in the text. Quality Manager confirmed that the figures in the table are correct.

The Committee also noted that there are huge variances in response rates between some of the courses. The Principal pointed out that this is due to some Centres offering a large number of part-time courses and the

questions in SOCE are mainly irrelevant for part-time students so they generally do not complete SOCE.

It was noted that students have multiple surveys to complete and SOCE is currently under review to establish its value and whether it could be combined with other documents.

The Committee noted the report and the overall very positive results on SOCE.

18.07   Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) 2017-18 Update - Dashboard

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning paper 5 highlighting that there has been good progress in a number of areas, which means that 2018-19 targets should be more attainable.

There has been considerable success in business engagement with credit to the Commercial team. Associate students have seen growth with excellent pathway, progression and articulation opportunities.

The Committee commented that it would be useful to see the previous dashboard paper to compare progress and Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning agreed to provide historical information in future papers.

Action 5: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

18.08   New Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) 2018-2021: PowerPoint Presentation

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented a PowerPoint slideshow on the New Regional Outcome Agreement 2018-2021. It was noted that the document will reflect the government's 'Attainment for All' strategy but with a focus on priority groups.

There was more work to be done in respect of advance standing at Universities and an example of this are the discussions currently underway with St John's Hospital to provide students with more practical experience which is a criterion of them obtaining advanced standing in their university courses.

The indicative credit allocation for 2018-2019 is of some concern since the increased credits for Childcare last year has been taken away for 2018-2018. This poses a problem for capacity at West Lothian College where the Childcare Centre is currently running at capacity with little scope for growth without an increased credit allocation. The Principal confirmed that there

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would be discussion with Scottish Funding Council over their proposed credit allocation.

18.09   Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented paper 7 noting good progress on the action points. Quality Manager confirmed that there is a now a higher level of reporting to ensure that the report is reflected in individual Centre's strategies.

Only 13% of learning observations are outstanding but they represent staff who only work a few hours in the evening. There has generally been positive feedback from the learning observation process.

The Committee noted the report.

18.11   College Key Performance Indicators 2017-18

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning presented paper 9 commenting that where the withdrawal rates are higher, the emphasis would now be on retaining students and successful completion.

The Committee noted the report.

18.12   Learner Attainment Sub Group Minutes

The Committee Chair presented paper 10, Learner Attainment Sub Group Minutes from 22 January 2018.

The Committee noted the paper.

18.13   Self-Evaluation of Committee

The Committee agreed that, due to time constraints, it would be necessary to reflect on the Self-Evaluation of Committee at the next meeting to ensure that the discussion had input from all Committee members and benefitted from an appropriate allocation of time.

Action 6: Secretary to the Board

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18.14   Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

18.15   Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The Committee were content with the updated Development Plan.

18.16   Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 6 June 2018 at 9.15am.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Secretary to the Board was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed   ……………………………………………….
              Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Date   ……………………………………………