

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 1 March 2017** at 9.15 am in Pavilion B Barbour Suite in the College.

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)
Mhairi Harrington
Iain McIntosh
Alan Morton
Jarmila Slodyczka

In attendance: Alex Linkston (Board Chair)
Jo Mayes (Shadow Board Member)
Joanna Paterson (Board Secretary)
George Hotchkiss (Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation)
Jenny Stalker (Head of Quality and Learner Services)
Diane Mitchell (Manager, Workforce Development) - observer

17.01 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the Committee meeting, in particular Jo Mayes who was joining the Committee as a Shadow Board Member, and Diane Mitchell, who would be attending this and the next three meetings of the Committee as an observer.

Apologies were noted from Colin Miller and Michael Allan.

Members reflected on the opening part of the meeting, which had been a visit to the new childcare playroom learning facility. It had been very encouraging to see this active learning environment, and in particular how engaged the students were in their work.

It was noted that many benefits flowed from bringing together theory and practice in this way, and giving students the opportunity to gain practical experience ahead of their work placements.

17.02 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17.03 Minutes of Previous Meetings

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The minutes of the meeting of 30 November 2016 were approved as a true record.

17.04 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Members noted the paper detailing actions duly completed following the last meeting.

In relation to Action 2, options for gathering additional information on destinations, it was noted that discussions were ongoing with UCAS about the costs involved in changes to the current subscription arrangement. A further update would be brought to a future meeting.

In relation to Action 3, the Children's Hearing Training Unit, the Committee noted with pleasure that the College had just been advised of a year's extension to the contract.

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

17.05 Applications Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented a report on applications for the Academic Year 2017-18. It was noted that these were snapshot figures as the figures were changing on a daily basis.

The Committee noted that offers were already going out, reflecting a decision to make offers at an earlier stage given evidence that students who applied and were accepted earlier were more likely to stay on the course to completion. Offers were now being made by email rather than letter given reported problems with the receipt of letters in previous years. There was already a high level of activity with applicants making arrangements to come in for interview.

Application levels would continue to be monitored on a course by course basis and remedial action taken as required, including additional and targeted marketing. Hard to recruit courses would be reviewed and programmes could be taken out or other adjustments made to bring courses together. Any such decisions would however need to take account of the need for choice and a breadth of offering, and the added value of some courses such as photography.

There was some discussion of on-going issues around recruitment to Foundation Apprenticeship courses. It was noted that this had been flagged up as a national issue. There were concerns that setting these courses at Level 6 had both created competition with Highers programmes offered by schools and continued the gap in provision for young people who were looking for opportunities at Level 5. This was being reconsidered by

national agencies but any changes might not come in time for the 2017-18 programme.

17.06 Student On Course Evaluation (SOCE) Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented the analysis of the student feedback gathered through SOCE, the College's internal survey tool, from the survey completed in November / December 2016.

Improvements in satisfaction with arrangements for enrolment and matriculation were noted, reflecting changes in practice that had been introduced following issues raised by students in the previous year.

The Committee noted the 5% increase in awareness of the Student Association, reflecting both the restructuring and high levels of activity that the Association had been taking forward.

There was some discussion of areas that had emerged from the survey findings for action or improvement.

It was noted that a number of comments had come from the motor Vehicle and Construction workshops, highlighting a lack of and outdated equipment, and a limited range of vehicles to work on. Members noted that Health and Safety considerations had meant students were no longer gaining experience by servicing staff vehicles.

It was agreed that this was an issue that would need to be taken forward as a priority and that a variety of options should be explored including options to build on existing partnership arrangements with local garages as well as gathering intelligence on the approaches used by other colleges.

It was agreed that action to improve WIFI would also be a priority given both recurring comments about the quality of the service and that student expectations in this area would keep on increasing.

Members commented that in taking forward actions and improvements it would be important to build on areas that had been improved or were reporting high satisfaction rates, given increases in student expectations and the importance of maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.

17.07 Quality and Learner Services Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented a report on the work carried out across the Quality and Learner Services function in the period November 2016 to March 2017.

Three commercial courses were presented for approval, on the basis of market demand and cost effectiveness. The Committee agreed to approve these courses.

It was noted that a new quality framework had been put in place by Education Scotland. It was agreed that Scott Anderson, Education Scotland contact, should attend the next meeting of the Committee and also have access to relevant agendas and papers.

The Committee noted that the core Credit target for 2016-17 had already been met, and that the College was on target to achieve the total.

It was noted that a destination analysis report would be brought for discussion to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted that work was underway to improve the alignment of statistics gathered internally with the requirements and practice of the SFC.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to set aside time for a structured discussion about the KPIs at the next meeting of the Committee, supported by further analysis which broke down the available figures and helped to identify some of the factors that lay behind areas of concern such as early withdrawal, and any particular pressure points. This should help to support discussion around possible improvements and interventions.

It would also be useful to look at ways to express outcomes to more effectively reflect the student experience. For example, leaving a course early because a student had secured employment could be counted as a withdrawal despite representing a positive outcome for the learner.

Action 1: Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation

17.08 Equalities Mainstreaming Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented the draft Mainstreaming Report evidencing equalities work over the preceding two year period and including the four yearly Equal Pay and Occupational Segregation Statement.

It was agreed that the section on Pay Arrangements should be updated to provide an accurate description of national bargaining arrangements.

The Committee agreed that this was a very useful report and recommended it for approval to the Board.

Action 2: Head of Quality and Learner Services

Members commented that it would be helpful in the future to extend the equal pay analysis to include any gaps within the relevant sector (lecturing / support).

This would help to identify any patterns or unconscious bias in areas such as recruitment and selection arrangements or promotion opportunities.

Action 3: Head of Quality and Learner Services

17.09 Student Association Update and Constitution

The Student Association President presented the report on the work of the Student Association in the period from December 2016-February 2017.

The Committee noted the wide range of activities and initiatives that were being taken forward by the Association and the significant increase in awareness of their role amongst the student body as a result.

The Committee noted that the Student Association constitution had been revised following the restructuring and was now brought forward for approval. The revised constitution took account of comments made at the last discussion at the Committee and reflected the advice of HR in relation to the employment status of the President and Vice-Presidents.

The Committee agreed to approve the constitution.

17.10 Key Performance Indicators

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Planning introduced the Key Performance Indicators for 2016-17. The Committee noted the learner performance indicators which had been covered in discussion in the earlier discussion.

It was agreed that the presentation of the report should be adjusted to show the relationship with the ROA targets and allow more effective monitoring to take place.

Action 4: Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation

17.11 Women Into STEM Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented a report on activities and outcomes around the Women into STEM programme. This followed discussion at the last Board meeting. It was noted that the report identified the potential for improvements in several areas and that work was now being taken forward to turn these into specific interventions.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

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17.12 Self-Evaluation of Committee

The Board Secretary introduced a paper to support the annual committee self-evaluation exercise, including questions (repeated from the previous year), the Committee remit, and progress on recommendations agreed in the previous year.

General issues and recommendations were noted in discussion to be fed back both to the Board and into the Effectiveness Review that was currently being undertaken.

It was agreed that a forward development plan for the Committee should include a structured discussion (or ‘deep dive’) into a key issue, at least once a year. It would also be useful to build into opportunities for visits to parts of the campus as part of Committee meetings to see the learning environment first hand.

Action 5: Board Secretary

Other Committees should be encouraged to build this into their practice. There might also be opportunities to build a campus visit into the next Board away day.

17.13 Any Other Competent Business

There were no other items of business.

17.14 Review of Meeting and Training Needs

No additional training or development needs were identified and members were content with the quality of papers provided.

17.15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 7 June 2017 at 9.15 am.

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