

West Lothian College

29 November 2017

Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 6 September 2017** at 9.15 am in Pavilion B Barbour Suite in the College.

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)
Mhairi Harrington
Colin Miller
Alan Morton
Sarah Kerr
Lorna Reid

In attendance: Simon Ashpool (Board Member)
Tom Bates (Board Member)
Alex Linkston (Board Chair)
Joanna Paterson (Board Secretary)
George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
Claire Glen (Interim Quality Manager)
Diane Mitchell (Manager, Workforce Development) – observer

17.31 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the Committee meeting, in particular Lorna Reid, Student Association Vice-President and nominated Board member, who was attending her first meeting of this Committee, Sarah Kerr, who was attending her first meeting formally as Student Association President, Board members Simon Ashpool and Tom Bates who were attending as part of Board induction and development, and Claire Glen.

The Committee noted that Jenny Stalker was on sick leave and asked the Principal to write on their behalf to send their best wishes.

Apologies were noted from Iain McIntosh and Jo Mayes (Shadow Board Member).

17.32 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17.33 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2017 were approved as a true record.

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17.34 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Members noted the paper detailing actions duly completed following the last meeting. It was noted that there would be a presentation on the KPIs and opportunity for discussion at the next Board meeting.

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

17.35 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning presented a report on quality activities from June to August 2017.

It was noted that a more proactive approach was being taken to the External Verification process this year including early engagement with the SQA. It was hoped this would lead to better scheduling of visits during the year and improved connections with other related quality initiatives.

There was some discussion of the early data on external exam results. Although there were some very positive results there were also some subjects where the results were disappointing and out of line with the expectations of teaching staff.

Some additional analysis was being undertaken to see if it was possible to identify any particular patterns, including any particular topics within subject areas that might have been problematic.

Development work was also being taken forward including sharing best practice around supporting students for exams as well as assessments and a number of interventions to strengthen support for National 5 Maths, including partnership work with local schools who had achieved positive results in this area.

The Committee noted that a new programme of classroom observation was being rolled out this year. Lecturers could choose an observer from their Centre Head, Depute Centre Head, a member of the quality team or someone from Education Scotland.

Arrangements were in place to pick up themes and recurring issues from these observations which could then be addressed through learning and development across teams and centres. This new model was closely tied with the emphasis on continuous improvement in learning and teaching.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

17.36 Student Association Report

The Student Association President gave an update on the work of the Association. Although it was still early in the academic year there was already a good deal of activity going on, including various training events that the President and Vice Presidents had attended during the summer.

It was noted that two of the Vice Presidents had had to withdraw from their positions as a result of receiving two very positive offers for employment and an apprenticeship. Elections were just about to get underway for the two vacancies.

The Association had already met with 1,701 students as part of the student induction programme. It was noted however that the introduction of a new centre-led induction programme had led to some gaps in opportunities to meet students, which had caused a delay in the planned timetable of work. The Committee noted that this would be picked up as an action point for next year as part of the review of the new induction arrangements.

The Association had introduced a new role description as part of the 'SPARKLE' quality approach they were taking forward and this was helping with the recruitment of Class Representatives. It was hoped that all Class Reps would be in place by mid-September and their training complete before the October break.

The Committee noted that a number of campaigns were being taken forward including the 'Cos You're Worth It' campaign to reinforce student behaviour around for example smoking and mental health awareness, and continued emphasis on the Healthy Body Healthy Mind Campaign.

It was noted that the Freshers' Fair would take place on the 13th and 14th of September. A Well-Being Fair was also being organised for 25th January. It was noted that external organisations were approaching the Association to ask for stalls at these events which was a positive demonstration of their success. It was agreed that Board members should be invited to these and similar events to give them an opportunity to see some of the student organised events first hand.

Action 1: Board Secretary

It was noted that dates for further lunchtime sessions for Board members to meet the Association team were being organised and information would be circulated once available.

The Committee thanked the Student Association for a very positive report.

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17.37 Key Performance Indicators

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, introduced the Key Performance Indicators for 2016-17.

It was noted that these were as previously reported to the Committee, and that action planning was being taken forward including in conjunction with Education Scotland and the Funding Council.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

17.38 Access and Inclusion Strategy

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, introduced the Access and Inclusion Strategy. It was noted that the strategy was required by the Scottish Funding Council and had been produced in keeping with their guidance and feedback.

In discussion the Committee noted some of the challenges around planning resources for learning support given the unpredictable nature of individual needs. The emphasis was on shifting the assessment of needs to an earlier stage in the cycle to ensure appropriate support was available as early as possible. However, for a variety of reasons students might not be willing to declare all their support needs at an early stage of engagement with the College. It was noted that there had also been some delays in processing information from application forms which had led to delays in offering interviews on learning support. The processes in this area would be tightened up to ensure support was in place by the end of September.

The Committee noted that equalities was one of the issues that would be specifically looked at in the new classroom observation programme, including how extended learning support was being delivered at this level.

There was some discussion of the needs of care experienced learners and the importance of close collaboration with the local authority and other agencies to provide the right kind of interventions and support both at an early enough point and at continuing stages to ensure individuals did not get left behind. There may also be opportunities to learn from the work of other multi-agency partnerships who were developing joined up approaches to support care experienced learners.

The Committee agreed to recommend the strategy for approval to the Board.

Action 2: Board Secretary

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17.39 Gender Action Plan

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, introduced the Gender Action Plan. It was noted that this Plan was required by the Scottish Funding Council to ensure the College addresses gender segregation and facilitates entry into non-traditional career paths.

It was noted that the target was that by 2020 no subject will recruit fewer than 10% from the under-represented gender. It was recognised that while this in itself was not an unrealistic target, the wider issue of shifting subject and career choices was complex including many social factors that were outwith the immediate sphere of influence of the College.

It was noted that there could be challenges for individuals in a course at the target level (that is, 10%-90%) and that a range of interventions and support arrangements might be required to support individuals and cohorts, as well as learning from individuals who had already successfully navigated these non-traditional paths as to what had helped and worked for them.

The Committee noted that this was an area where projects and initiatives could start to make some difference but that it was important to build on and consolidate these into longer term programmes and approaches.

It was agreed that, if appropriate, reference could be made within the report to the Board's commitment to achieving 50:50 gender balance on the Board by 2020.

The Committee agreed to note and approve the Action Plan.

17.40 Any Other Competent Business

There were no other items of business.

17.41 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The Committee were content with the meeting, the information received and supporting papers presented. The Committee noted the updated Development Plan and agreed to organise a visit for the start of the November meeting around the theme of learner support, allowing sufficient time for a short presentation, discussion and engagement.

Action 3: Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning; Board Secretary

It was agreed that it would be useful to have a short report from Manager, Workforce Development at the next meeting, reflecting on observations and learning from the four meetings she had attended as an observer.

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This would be useful feedback for the Committee as well as of value in explaining the potential benefits of this type of involvement to other managers.

Action 4: Manager, Workforce Development; Board Secretary

No further changes to the Development Plan were required.

17.42 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 29 November 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