

West Lothian College

6 September 2017

Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 7 June 2017** at 9.15 am in Pavilion B Barbour Suite in the College.

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)
Mhairi Harrington
Iain McIntosh
Colin Miller
Alan Morton

In attendance: Alex Linkston (Board Chair)
Sarah Kerr (elected Student Association President)
Jo Mayes (Shadow Board Member)
Joanna Paterson (Board Secretary)
George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
Jenny Stalker (Head of Quality and Learner Services)
Diane Mitchell (Manager, Workforce Development) – observer
Scott Anderson (Education Scotland)

17.16 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the Committee meeting, in particular Sarah Kerr, who had recently been elected as the next Student Association President, and Scott Anderson.

Apologies were noted from Jarmila Slodyczka and Michael Allan.

17.17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17.18 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 1 March 2017 were approved as a true record.

17.19 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

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

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

17.20 Deep Dive - Attainment

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, shared a presentation on the detailed analysis of attainment figures for 2016-17, exploration of possible causes and correlations, and identification of potential areas for further analysis and action.

Members expressed their appreciation for the level of analysis and comparison which had been undertaken.

In discussion the following points were raised:

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- The student population was now significantly younger: course design and teaching methods needed to be adapted to reflect and accommodate different needs and learning styles
- Course design should take into account patterns of behaviour – for example if it is known that some youngsters are likely to be ‘Christmas leavers’ then programmes should be designed to allow them to achieve a result in that first term
- The TFQE model was based primarily on teaching adult returners and was not necessarily offering the best preparation for teaching younger learners
- Classroom observation through the new QUILTS programme should include a justification of methodology
- There should be a more consistent approach to the use of assessment as a motivational tool, getting better results for students earlier in the year
- There had been programmes to support learners in maths and communication skills but there may be a need to do more of this, or differently
- Demand and referrals for guidance and support had increased and investment had been made to increase capacity; there was a need to better understand what the impact of this activity was and its relationship with attainment
- The Student Association had a significant role to play in driving learner-centred approaches

Recruitment and Matching

- Further analysis was needed on the different outcomes of students progressing to higher programmes compared to direct entrants (recognising this in turn might vary from programme to programme)
- Smarter recruitment approaches should help to ensure students were on the best courses for them
- Some teams might need additional support or capacity in the 'softer' skills required for effective interviewing, selection and matching
- There may be a need for more sophisticated understanding in schools of the skills required for some College programmes, such as the level of science required for Beauty Therapy – this could help teachers advise and guide students on subject choices at an earlier stage
- The College was there to serve the needs of the local community and the inclusion and opportunity agenda would continue to be central

Performance Information

- There was a need to develop better ways to capture the reasons for withdrawal to reflect positive reasons (such as getting a job) as well as better understanding reasons for leaving
- It would be useful to learn from the approaches followed by West Lothian schools given the significant improvements in educational attainment they had achieved; there might be opportunities to work with and share learning with head teachers

Improvement

- The analysis pointed to particular areas where improvements could reap rewards – for example the figures for partial success were relatively high in some programmes and a push to get students to completion could make a significant difference
- There were administrative improvements that could and should be made (such as the scheduling of entering students for units)
- Centres and teams should understand and own their data and use it to drive improvements

- The analysis demonstrated variations in practice as well as outcomes; there was a need to shift to following best practice consistently
- Interventions should be targeted rather than broad-brush
- Continued analysis of the data should drive targeted interventions

It was noted that an improvement programme for 2017-18 would now be developed and progress reported back to the next meeting.

It was agreed that it would be useful to share a shorter version of the analytical material with the Board at its September meeting, alongside the proposed improvement programme.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning; Board Secretary

Members agreed that the debate and supporting analysis had been very useful and was a model that could be further deployed in the future.

17.21 Applications Update

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, provided a verbal update on applications. Applications were currently looking healthy although there would continue to be additional recruitment efforts in particular areas.

It was noted that there were concerns about the potential impact of the change in the ILA system on the recruitment of part-time learners. This had not so far demonstrated a major impact but this would continue to be monitored in relation to recruitment for ESOL and workforce courses.

17.22 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented a report on quality activities from March to June 2017 including progress on actions from the Education Scotland review of March 2016.

It was noted that there were still a large number of external verification visits scheduled for block three and that efforts should continue to encourage Centres to schedule these visits earlier in the year to avoid end loading.

It was agreed that the shorter format of the report was easier both to read and to identify key issues.

17.23 Student Association Report

The incoming Student Association President presented the report on the work of the Student Association from March to June 2017.

It was noted that one of the key priorities of the Association over the last year had been initiatives in relation to health and well-being and providing support for students.

The report included some reflection on the impact of the new model, with a Vice President now operating in each Centre.

It was noted that there had been some issues with students being able to access the electronic voting system (through Moodle) for this year's elections and this would be addressed ahead of the next elections.

It was noted that a new SPARKLE model would be rolled out next year adding structure to the class representative system and supporting student led evaluation. It was agreed that it would be useful for evaluation findings from the new model to be fed back to classroom level to support effective learning and teaching.

17.24 Key Performance Indicators

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

The positive contribution of commercial and workforce activity was noted, contributing to performance not just financially but also in terms of educational results.

There was some discussion of the nature of any sanctions in relation to any non-delivery by a college of agreed outcomes. It was noted that financial sanctions were primarily in relation to any under-delivery of credit targets. Failure to deliver outcomes in relation to attainment did not currently attract any direct financial penalty, although this was likely to affect confidence and financial support for any institution in the longer term. There would also be reputational damage and increased levels of external scrutiny.

17.25 Destination Analysis

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning, introduced two reports providing summary details of learner destinations from the academic year 2015-16. The full reports were available for members in the Moodle library.

It was noted that work was continuing to explore and develop articulation routes for students.

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It was noted that the destinations reflected the many success stories of students at the College, and how many individuals who completed their course of study went on to positive destinations.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

17.26 Development Plan

The Board Secretary introduced a new template to capture improvement actions identified by the Committee in a Committee Development Plan. It was noted that the plan would be updated as appropriate and included at the end of each agenda, ensuring that actions were kept in view.

The Committee noted the plan and agreed this was a useful approach.

17.27 Annual Review of Committee Remit

The Board Secretary introduced the annual review of the Committee remit, which had last been comprehensively reviewed in November 2015. One change was recommended to take into account the role of the Committee in monitoring KPIs.

The Committee agreed to recommend the remit with this one amendment to the Board.

Action 2: Board Secretary

17.28 Any Other Competent Business

There were no other items of business.

17.29 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

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

It was agreed that it had been a very useful meeting, and the Chair was thanked for both allowing so much time for discussion and finishing in good time.

17.30 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 6 September 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

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aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed
Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Date