

# West Lothian College

7 June 2016

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## Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Friday 11 March 2016** at 10.00 am in Pavilion B Barbour Suite in the College.

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

**In attendance:** Joanna Paterson (Minute Secretary)  
George Hotchkiss (Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation)  
Lindsay Seywright (Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Planning)  
Jenny Stalker (Head of Quality and Learner Services)  
Colin Miller (Head of Essential Skills and Progression)  
Russell McAdam (Marketing Co-ordinator) (Item 16.05)

### 16.01 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the Committee meeting. It was noted that Iain McIntosh would be chairing this and the June meeting, while Sue Cook was interim Chair of the Board.

Apologies were received from Hayley Cadden.

### 16.02 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 16.03 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2015 were approved as a true record.

### 16.04 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

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

It was noted that the committee papers had been made available electronically (via the virtual electronic environment Moodle). It was thought that this was an improvement. Any detailed comments should be made to the Executive secretariat.

In relation to the draft Regional Outcome Agreement, it was noted that this would not now be taken to the March Board, as final discussions were still taking place with the Funding Council. The Board had however agreed the priority outputs at its December meeting. Arrangements would be made with the Board Chair for the final sign off.

There were no other matters arising.

### **16.05 Student-On-Course Evaluation (SOCE)**

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented the outcomes of the 2015-16 Student-On-Course Evaluation (SOCE). This is a major survey that gives students the opportunity to comment anonymously on various aspects of their experience at West Lothian College.

The findings are used by the marketing team to highlight key findings such as the consistently high satisfaction levels with learning and teaching, and the 'you said, we delivered' materials, that highlight actions taken in response to student feedback.

It was noted that the response rate had increased significantly from previous years. There had been a major push to encourage participation, including initiatives from the Student Association. There were however variations in the rate of response from different Centres, and an even higher take up might be achieved by encouraging Centres to match levels elsewhere.

The Committee noted that the overall learner satisfaction rate remained high at over 80%. Feedback on first impressions was also high, and there were many positive responses in relation to the approachability of staff, and the teaching support provided.

It was agreed that it would be useful to continue to integrate survey work where possible, to avoid survey fatigue. The SOCE survey could be integrated with the Student Association survey, for example.

It was noted that a national student survey would be coming out shortly, and it would be important to encourage high levels of participation in that. It might be appropriate to offer incentives for taking part, and this should be explored in conjunction with the Student Association.

#### **Action 1: Head of Quality and Learner Services**

It would be important to pick up on areas where satisfaction levels had gone down and explore what, if any, improvements should be made. Although some issues such as the provision of ICT facilities might be on-going due the rapidly shifting nature of demand, others could be targeted more directly, such as automating the addition of students to the virtual learning environment, and issuing matriculation cards in good time.

**Action 2: Head of Quality Learner Services**

**16.06 Education Scotland Review – Summary Feedback**

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Innovation introduced the summary information from the Education Scotland review, including the Statement of Effectiveness, and main points for action.

It was noted that the full report was due for publication on the 29<sup>th</sup> March. Education Scotland would be available to make a presentation on the findings to a future Board meeting, or as part of a Board away day.

The Committee noted that the judgement of arrangements as ‘effective’ was the highest possible outcome, and that many strengths had been highlighted, including the student experience.

The areas for action reflected issues that were already on the agenda for improvement, and had previously been discussed by the Committee.

The importance of systematic analysis and evaluation of learning and teaching was a priority area to take forward. It was noted that a series of discussions would take place with staff to explore ways to open up reflective practice in a systematic way, including how to use the feedback from learners as a driver for improvement.

**16.07 Curriculum Strategy**

The Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Planning presented the draft Curriculum Strategy for 2016-18, for approval. Proposed changes to the previous strategy (previously named Learning and Teaching Strategy) had been highlighted in red for ease of reference.

It was agreed that one amendment should be made to paragraph 3.4 to avoid duplication with the new paragraph 3.7.

**Action 3: Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Planning**

Subject to that one amendment, the Committee approved the strategy.

**16.08 Quality and Improvement Strategy**

The Head of Quality and Learner Services introduced the draft Quality and Improvement Strategy, which brought together two previous strategies on learner engagement, and quality improvement.

It was noted that the section on equalities was still to be finalised, to focus on equality issues affecting learning and teaching specifically, rather than a more general statement.

The evaluation of learning and teaching was a priority issue to take forward, and had been identified as an area for action in the Education Scotland review. Feedback from the observation of teaching and learning practice was expected to be part of this. It was recognised however that there was the potential for resistance to this, and a need to take people on board.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to look again at the wording of this section to set the benefits of observation in the context of the wider improvement agenda.

**Action 4: Head of Quality and Learner Services****16.09 Quality and Learner Services Report**

The Head of Quality and Learner Services introduced the report on quality and learner services from November 2015 to March 2016, including Key Performance Indicators.

It was noted that some areas of the curriculum consistently under-perform, which has a negative impact on overall performance indicators.

Some courses have been 'red flagged' as at risk; this provides the opportunity for course teams to take action to improve performance, or to suggest adjustments to the courses provided.

In some portfolio areas, courses are over supplied and by reducing the number of courses the quality and performance has improved (e.g. Art).

It was noted that courses in some portfolio areas such as photography, and art, would however continue to be supported, to allow the college to continue to provide a broad based curriculum, and to enrich the overall life of the College.

In relation to the PIs it was noted that overall performance in relation to the sector was positive. There were however some variations within subject areas and it was important to keep learning from these variations to see

how performance could be improved, without sacrificing the breadth of provision.

**16.10 Student Association Update**

The Student Association Vice President presented the report on the work of the Student Association in the period from January to February 2016. The continuing high levels of activity and engagement were noted by the Committee.

There had been discussion about the possibility of moving to a different structure, with seven vice-presidents elected from each College Centre. One of these vice-presidents would be elected to serve on the Board alongside the President.

This proposed model would help to spread the workload of the Association, encourage higher levels of participation and engagement, and deliver a more sustainable model in the long term.

It was agreed that this proposed model should continue to be taken forward. Final proposals would depend on the level of funding that was available. It was noted that the revised constitution would need to be approved by the Board.

It was noted that the Association President had been off sick during this period, and the support of the Vice President during this time, which included the Education Scotland review, was noted with thanks by the Committee.

**16.11 Any Other Competent Business**

There were no other items of business.

**16.12 Review of Meeting and Training Needs**

No additional training or development needs were identified.

**16.13 Discussion on Future Dates**

It was noted that it would be useful to look for an alternative regular meeting slot on either a Wednesday or Thursday, to allow the incoming Chair of the Board to attend meetings of the Committee.

It might be preferable to arrange the meetings on a Wednesday, to avoid having all Board committees meeting on the same day.

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It was agreed that the Board Secretary should look for possible meeting dates on Wednesdays, from September onwards. If possible it would be helpful to have the schedule of meetings for a year in advance.

### **Action 5: Board Secretary**

#### **16.14 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 7 June 2016 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 .....