

West Lothian College

7 September 2016

Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Tuesday 7 June 2016** at 9.15 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 (Board 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)

16.15 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the Committee meeting. Members congratulated Jarmila Slodyczka on her recent election as Student President for 2016-17.

16.16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16.17 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2016 were approved as a true record.

16.18 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

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

In relation to Action 1, the National Student Survey, it was noted that the level of engagement had increased from 12% to 33%. The efforts of the Student Association had helped to deliver this increase. It was noted that the national results would be issued shortly and agreed that the results should be circulated by email to members of the Committee when they became available.

Action 1: Head of Quality and Learner Services

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In relation to Action 2, the evaluation of learning and teaching, it was noted that this issue had been explored further within the context of the briefings and workshops that had been run with staff to share the findings and recommendations of the recent Education Scotland review. Ideas had been emerging from those discussions about ways to review learning and teaching, including team teaching and shared observations.

This issue would be brought back to a future meeting in the context of the Quality and Continuous Improvement Strategy.

Action 2: Board Secretary (future agenda item)

There were no other matters arising.

16.19 Applications Update

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented an update on applications for full time courses for 2016-17.

It was noted that many courses were either fully recruited or almost fully recruited. Some courses were currently attracting fewer applicants than needed. It was noted that some of these courses traditionally recruit at a late stage.

It was also noted that some courses such as Photography were traditionally low in numbers but were retained in the portfolio given the added value that such courses added to the cultural life of the College.

Members noted that although there might be issues affecting particular courses the prediction was that the overall target would be met.

A concern was raised regarding anecdotal evidence that prospective students were not receiving the information about their interviews in good time, and that this was leading to a low response rate. It was noted that the system was designed to issue a letter, an email and a text message to each student.

It was agreed that this concern should be explored to confirm that students were receiving the information in good time.

Action 3: Head of Quality and Learner Services

It was noted that a project group was reviewing systems including admissions to identify improvements for future years in relation to timing and process, including reducing the number of manual interventions.

16.20 Quality and Learner Services Report

The Head of Quality and Learner Services presented a report on work carried out within Quality and Learner Services during March to June 2016.

It was noted that the College had been successful in achieving the Bronze Investors in People standard, and that significant strengths noted included the emphasis placed on developing autonomous teams, and high levels of trust and respect for the College Principal.

Members noted the update on the Volunteering Project including the recent event hosting the Volunteer Network Annual Awards ceremony. This had been a very positive way of building links with the local community, and helping to raise awareness of what the College could offer.

The high levels of learning and development activity across the College were noted. It was agreed that it would be helpful to modify the chart detailing hours of learning and development by centre as the references to Board of Governors and Student Association were potentially misleading, referring to training undertaken by paid staff rather than members.

Action 4: Head of Quality and Learner Services

Members noted that the annual Celebrating Success event had taken place on 3 June, including the presentation of Star Awards. It was agreed that this would be a useful event for Board members to attend as a way of learning about the work of the College, and that the 2017 date should be identified as early as possible so members could be invited.

Action 5: Head of Quality and Learner Services

It was noted that the Student Association (SA) had continued to develop its approach to build in long-term sustainability. A new structure was now in place with a President and 7 Vice-Presidents. Voting in the elections had been run via the Moodle system and there had been a significant increase in the numbers taking part.

Thanks were expressed to both Jarmila (Vice-President, who had taken on additional responsibilities following the resignation of the President) and Nicole Robertson (SA Development Officer) for the work they had taken forward. The positive relationships between the College and Association were noted and it was agreed that this was important for both a quality learning experience and good governance.

Members expressed their thanks for a very positive report.

16.21 Equalities Progress Report

The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Planning presented a report highlighting equalities activities during 2015-16 and documenting progress made.

There was some discussion around the systemic issues surrounding the recruitment of women into STEM courses. It was noted that expert advice was that although there were many actions that could be taken to shift attitudes with parents, schools and young people, evidence suggested that offering a women only course was the action that made the biggest difference. Members noted that 12 women had been recruited into a fast track Women into STEM course and that they were currently progressing well towards successful attainment.

Members noted the range of interventions that were available to support young male learners, including different ways to offer extended learning support. This had been positively received but it was too early to identify specific impact on results.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

16.22 Student Association Update

The Student Association Vice President presented the report on the work of the Student Association in the period from March to June 2016.

This had been an extremely busy period including a number of important initiatives. This had included a visit to the Netherlands in the spring as part of the Erasmus Voice of Young Europe project.

The work that had been taken forward to build a more sustainable model was noted, including detailed work on terms and conditions to ensure all members understood expectations, processes and procedures in relation to duties, payments, absence, holidays and sick leave.

It was noted that there had been a high level of turn out in the recent Student Elections. Seven Vice Presidents had been elected as follows:

Sarah Kerr (Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing), Michael Allan (Business and Creative), Aimie Neilson (Childhood Practice and Sports and Fitness), Hassan Muhammad (Computing and Engineering), Louise Dunn (Construction and Motor Vehicle), Angela Reilly (Health and Social Care, Science and Social Science) and Katarzyna Kowalska (Hospitality and Communities).

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It was noted that the students would identify the second Board member from this team.

The Committee expressed their thanks for this helpful report.

16.23 Any Other Competent Business

A question was raised about concerns amongst lecturing staff regarding the possible impact of a reduction in temporary teaching hours. It was understood that this was a result of budget pressures but there were concerns about the impact on quality and the learning experience, and the ability of the College to deliver its PIs.

It was noted that this was an issue that was being explored by the management team in the context both of budget pressures and the move to the new credit based model which demanded more efficient delivery. The intention was to take this forward without detriment to quality.

The Committee noted that there would be further discussion as to how this was to be achieved including communication to offer reassurance in the light of these concerns.

There were no other items of business.

16.24 Review of Meeting and Training Needs

No additional training or development needs were identified.

16.25 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 7 September 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