

West Lothian College

3 December 2018

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 5 September** at 9.15am in Barbour Room, Pavilion B of the College.

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal & Chief Executive)
Iain McIntosh
Alex Linkston
Alan Morton
Tom Bates
Michelle Low

In attendance: George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)
Jenny Stalker (Quality Manager)
Karine McNair (Secretary to the Board)
Scott Anderson (Education Scotland)
Neil Campbell (Staff Observer)

18.34 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially the Principal and the Student Association President who were attending their first meeting in their new roles. The Chair highlighted that the full Board value the contribution of the Student representatives. The Chair also welcomed the Staff Observer to the meeting and noted that the Board are very supportive of staff attending meetings. Scott Anderson of Education Scotland was also welcomed to the meeting.

18.35 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18.36 Minutes of Meeting of 6 June 2018

The minutes of the meeting of 6 June 2018 were approved as a true record.

18.37 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 6 June 2018

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Members noted the paper detailing actions following the last meeting.

Regarding Action 1, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning stated that the UCAS information would be available for the next Committee meeting. Increasing the membership level of UCAS had been investigated but any additional information would be minimal so it was concluded that a change in membership level did not represent sufficient value for money.

The Committee felt that it was important to know where students were going to further their education after College given the target of 60% articulation to university. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning agreed to provide a paper at the next meeting showing the articulation routes of West Lothian College students.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

Regarding Action 3, the Principal confirmed that growth had been included in the draft Financial Forecast Run and it would feature in the meeting next week with the SFC.

The Committee commented that there was a need for greater engagement between local businesses and the College. Currently, some local employers are sending employees to Dunfermline or Falkirk for training which results in wasted travel time and a barrier to the employees' engagement in learning. The Principal welcomed the comment and suggested that a meeting in later in the autumn would be appropriate to discuss local business engagement in more detail. The Principal was interested to learn more about local businesses and would set up a meeting with the Chair of the Committee and Tom Bates to take this further.

Action 2: Principal

Regarding Action 6, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that some Student Association work could be taken forward as accreditation of prior learning for future study.

All other actions were noted as duly complete.

18.38 Student Association Report

The Student Association President verbally updated the Committee with the highlights of their activity so far. A recruitment drive was currently underway to encourage students to become Class Ambassadors and lecturers were being invited to show a short video to students in class to provide them with

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information on the Class Ambassador role. The Class Ambassador training had been restructured to ensure training did not encroach on class time as much as in previous years. Class Ambassadors were also being introduced for the schools programmes to encourage school pupils to get involved.

The Student Association Facebook page and Twitter feeds had proven very popular with some fantastic engagement statistics. Many of the Committee who follow the Student Association social media concurred with the positive student feedback.

The Student Association President confirmed that the new structure of the Student Association would consist of; Class Ambassadors reporting to Centre Ambassadors (likely to be different individuals), who would report to the Executive comprising the Student Association President, Vice President and 3 executive members.

The Committee noted the paper and thanked the Student Association President for the hard work undertaken to date.

18.39 Initial Analysis of Key Performance Indicators 2017-18

The Principal presented paper 3 highlighting it was a summary of the latest figures which were still subject to final SFC approval. In summary, Further Education Full Time, Further Education Part Time and Higher Education Part Time are all expected to show improvement from last year but Higher Education Full Time success has declined.

The Principal directed the Committee to the annexes and noted the improvements in a range of curriculum areas such as Construction and Motor Vehicle. In relation to the heat maps, the College's 2017-18 figures were likely to move West Lothian College to a mid-table position for FE Full Time and around the sector average, but potentially below the sector average for HE Full Time. The Principal stated that it was useful to see where West Lothian College was positioned within the sector so that ambitions could be set and suggested South Lanarkshire College as a realistic peer given its relatively similar size.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Finance presented a PowerPoint on the target areas of improvement for West Lothian College.

The presentation noted particular courses which had improved in Motor Vehicle, Engineering and Hair & Beauty and some of the reasons for improvement, which included;

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- more integrated guidance support within courses rather than waiting on referrals,
- changing the sequencing of units to focus on success as early as possible,
- applied core skills rather than a separate classroom course,
- improved course administration,
- adapting learning and teaching to suit the audience and
- more remedial support to finish outstanding work before moving onto new units.

The presentation then focussed on areas which are targeted for improvement this year being Professional Cookery and Beauty Therapy & Hairdressing. In general it was noted that part time Higher courses can have low success rates.

Work has been undertaken in the schools courses to better align the College course to the school year, although there can still be issues at prelim time since there is not a set timetable for prelims. There can also be attendance issues with schools HNC courses as a 2 year commitment may be difficult for some students to maintain especially if they have unexpected Higher results between year 1 of the course and year 2. It was agreed that parents and influencers need to have a better appreciation of the benefits of a College course especially if it means that students can progress into second year university.

Overall the Principal commented that the College's offering of Highers would be reviewed in the first instance by looking more closely at the poorest performing Highers and discussing with the Learner Attainment Sub Group. She suggested that the Committee might find it interesting to see the paper presented to the Learner Attainment Sub Group showing the Higher success.

Action 3: Board Secretary

The Committee commented that the Government has a target of 75% success by 2021 and it would be necessary for the College to focus on the curriculum to ensure it has a plan to achieve the 2021 target. However, the Committee emphasised that less than 75% success was acceptable if the College was still equipping students to gain employment. The Principal confirmed that bespoke targets for curriculum areas would be presented to the Learner Attainment Sub Group which would report to this Committee.

The Committee also suggested that the road to improvement needed to be constantly reviewed as it could not be assumed that one year's factors for success would work another year.

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It was noted that the improvement in data capture for partial success had improved some Performance Indicators and part time figures had increased due to recording more complete successes. Work was underway to ensure staff better understood the group award requirements.

The Committee requested evidence of the reasons Professional Cookery students withdraw from the course. It was suspected that the main reason was positive employment opportunities and the Committee were interested to know whether retention is any better in city Colleges where job opportunities would be even more abundant.

Action 4: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

It was also suggested that any employers should be engaged with to see if there are opportunities for the Professional Cookery students to continue their studies once in employment. The Committee asked the College to consider introducing placements at the end of courses so students would gain qualifications before being offered permanent employment as a result of a placement.

The Committee agreed to note the report and thanked Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning for an informative presentation.

18.40 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report

Head of Quality & Learner Services presented paper 4 noting that work is starting on the 2019-20 plan.

Head of Quality & Learner Services confirmed that the figures for Personal Learning Plans (“PLPs”) are monitored and the figure in the paper is correct.

It was accepted that the Teaching Observations will be unlikely to reach 100% due to absent staff being recorded in the system or evening class teachers only having sporadic contact with the College. However, all full time staff and most temporary staff will have taken part and received feedback. In the coming years, staff had expressed a preference for less formal Teaching Observations and more spontaneous ‘drop in’ observations which the College was keen to implement.

The Education Scotland representative commended the College on the good achievement of completing so many Teaching Observations and emphasised that the success will be measured partly on self-reflection but mainly on the team work resulting from the observation feedback. It was commented that since the team leaders undertook some of the

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observations, they were in a valuable position to spread good practice among the team.

Head of Quality & Learner Services, thanked the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board for attending the Staff Development Day which had been well received. This year, some of the successful departments had delivered presentations on the improvements they had undertaken in the year to allow other colleagues to learn from their experiences.

It was discussed that although the release of Professional Teaching Standards had been delayed, they are unlikely to change significantly from the most recent draft. Therefore the College should be able to use the draft as a platform for discussion of minimum standards with staff but additionally the College needs to consider what will differentiate West Lothian College and any additional expectations of West Lothian College staff.

The Committee thanked Head of Quality & Learner Services for the report.

18.41 Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan Process

Head of Quality & Learner Services presented paper 5 highlighting that since the Evaluative Report needs to be submitted by 31 October there is limited opportunity for the Committee and Board to scrutinise the final document.

Regarding the potential grading for the College Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan, it was agreed that Head of Quality & Learner Services would provide a more detailed definition of each grading for the Board Secretary to circulate to the Board.

Action 5: Head of Quality & Learner Services / Board Secretary

Head of Quality & Learner Services confirmed that the grades had been presented by the Centre Heads for discussion and although the final grades were important, the development of the College to either maintain good grades or achieve more was equally important.

The Committee commented that the College needed to be clear on its strategy for achieving improvement and enhancing the student experience. The Principal confirmed that the first steps to a comprehensive 'business plan' for the College were being taken next week at a Senior Team meeting and the Committee suggested that clear milestones were set enable progress to be tested.

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Regarding the timescale for approval of the Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan, the Committee requested that an extra-ordinary meeting of the Learning & Teaching Committee be arranged after the Board meeting on the 18 September but before the submission deadline of 31 October to enable a final review of the document by the Board.

Action 6: Board Secretary

The Committee noted the paper.

18.42 Learner Attainment Sub Group Minutes

Chair of the Learner Attainment Sub Group summarised the minutes highlighting that more course by course data had been requested. The next Sub Group meeting would also examine the over or under recruitment of courses in more detail. The Sub Group had been surprised at the lack of students from Bathgate Academy participating in the schools programmes and the transition of Sub Group matters to the Learning & Teaching Committee had been considered. The Chair suggested that the information on take-up of college courses by schools should be circulated to Committee Members.

Action 7: Board Secretary

The Committee noted the report.

18.43 Key Financial & Non Financial Performance Indicators 2017-18

Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning presented paper 7 commenting that the 2017-18 figures were almost confirmed KPIs but were still subject to a final audit.

The Committee noted the report.

18.44 Any Other Business

The Committee were provided with a brief update regarding recruitment for 2018-19 and it was noted that the College was close to target but would probably achieve 93% which was consistent with some other Colleges in the sector. The Committee commented that this left a 7% gap in the credit allocation on which the College budget had been based and wanted to know how the College would plan for this gap.

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It was noted that the Finance & General Purposes Committee received an update on the credit target and the Committee suggested that a standing paper should be brought to the Learning & Teaching Committee showing any gap in the credit target and the plan for bridging the gap.

Action 8: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning

In general, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning commented that there had been good recruitment in Health, Social Care & Childhood Practice whereas Engineering had struggled.

The Committee noted that there seemed to be a reasonably strong engineering industry locally and therefore more employer engagement might be required to examine whether the courses offered are relevant for the local industry.

The Committee also requested an update from Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise regarding the reason why 50% of attendees for a schools recruitment event had not turned up, as was discussed at the last meeting.

Action 9: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

There were no other items of business.

18.45 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The postponed 'deep dive' into recruitment and applications will take place at the next Learning & Teaching Committee meeting.

Action 10: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

The Committee requested a campus visit to the new 'Collaborative Classroom' after the next Learning & Teaching Committee meeting.

Action 11: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise / Board Secretary

18.46 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 28 November 2018 at 9.15am.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Secretary to the Board

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

Signed
Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Date