

West Lothian College

5 June 2019

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Monday 11 March 2019** at 12 noon in Barbour Room, Pavilion B of the College.

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

In attendance: Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors)
George Hotchkiss (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)
Jenny Stalker (Head of Quality & Learner Services)
Phillip McGuinness (Scottish Funding Council) from item 19.05 (i)
Karine McNair (Board Secretary)

19.01 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee and thanked them for accommodating the change of dates and times for the meeting.

Apologies were received from Scott Anderson. The Chair welcomed the college's SFC Outcome Agreement Manager, Phillip McGuinness, who arrived at item 19.05 (i).

19.02 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19.03 Minutes of Meeting of 3 December 2018

Two amendments were requested to the minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2018. The last word of the third paragraph of 18.47 should read 'College' instead of 'committee'. On page 5, Abertay University should be described as 'one of the best *cyber security* degree courses in Scotland'.

Action 1 – Board Secretary

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The minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2018 were otherwise approved as a correct record.

19.04 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 3 December 2018

Members noted the paper detailing actions following the last meeting.

Action 1 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that having investigated the early withdrawals from professional cookery, it had been established that 10 out of the 17 leavers had left to take up employment in the catering industry and financial difficulties had been a factor in their departure. No information was available on the other 7 leavers.

Action 2 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that the articulation route with Napier permitted students with HNC qualifications to start in second year.

Action 3 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, noted that there had been some developments in STEM activity notably with Foundation Apprenticeships. The Principal also highlighted the recent Lego League, STEM Olympics, DYW Step into STEM and other STEM events. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, will bring a paper to a future meeting outlining the wide range of STEM activities in 2018-19 and planned for 2019-20.

Action 2 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

Action 4 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that the articulation agreements and progression routes for Computing & Engineering were aligned to Napier University.

All other actions were noted as duly complete.

19.05 For Discussion and/or Approval

i) Student Association Report

The Student Association President provided more background to the Recharge trial project, which was beginning to have a positive impact on students showing symptoms of mental illness.

The Committee also heard about a proposal to change the Class Ambassador structure for next year since it has proven difficult to

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recruit and retain Class Ambassadors this year. The Student Association propose to recruit 10-15 Centre Ambassadors who will be given more extensive training and will cover the whole College. They will report to the Student Association on a monthly basis or on a weekly basis when the SPARKLE evaluations are underway.

The Committee supported the proposal and thought that the Centre Ambassadors should approach classes in pairs rather than alone which can be quite daunting. The Student Association may also want to approach Core Skills Lecturers to establish whether the volunteer Centre Ambassadors could receive unit credits for their roles which may incentivise students to undertake the roles and reward them for their contribution.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Student Association for a very informative report and recorded their thanks to the Student Association for the important impact they are having on students and the College.

ii) College Response to SPARKLE Feedback

Head of Quality & Learner Services confirmed that the first round of SPARKLE had been completed and reviewed at a January evaluation event. Since then, the second round of SPARKLE has been launched and the Student Association President confirmed that the “You Said, We Delivered” feedback has been read out to classes before their SPARKLE feedback has been taken.

The Committee commented that previous year students could take part in student inductions to help give current year students an insight into the courses.

The Committee wanted to note their appreciation of the work of the Student Association and Micole Cochrane as the amount of information collected is extremely helpful to improving the College.

iii) Draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2019-22

The Principal confirmed that the draft Regional Outcome Agreement (“OA”) had been produced after extensive consultation with staff, the Student Association and external stakeholders. It is intended to be ambitious but has to also acknowledge the challenges faced by the College. The Finance & General Purposes Committee have suggested developing a College strategic plan at the next Board Strategy Day and the OA will feed into this as a rolling operational plan.

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The Committee commented that the plan assumes investment for infrastructure and the Principal confirmed that the College are actively seeking funding from the SFC as well as external sources.

It was noted that the plan was ambitious and the College would need to invest in staff to ensure that they had the right skills and resources to deliver it. The Principal stated that the OA reflected the ambitions of staff who have a good appetite to invest in their own skills to benefit students.

The Committee acknowledged that the OA had to comment on many areas stipulated by the SFC but wondered if the College could comment on the differentiation of West Lothian College to other colleges and focus on the priorities. The Principal commented that the priorities of the College were driven by the local labour market and STEM was one area in which investment was going to be made as well as ongoing investment into other areas. The aim to be an ACE aware, trauma Informed college is also a differentiator for West Lothian College.

Regarding equality, the Committee queried whether it was possible to engage more with external partners to help each other deliver for targeted disadvantaged students. The Principal commented that the College is looking to work more closely with universities regarding equalities targets and would articulate this in the OA.

Some minor amendments were also requested to page 3 and page 9

The Committee approved the draft OA to be presented to the Board.

Action 3 – Board Secretary

iv) 2017-18 Sector KPIs Analysis

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, presented paper 6 noting that benchmarking against sector average was a starting point but that the College's ambition is to go beyond average to excellent.

Regarding Table 6 – Partial Success and Withdrawals, it was suggested that the College's success in helping students with Protected Characteristics could be expanded across the student population to ensure fewer early withdrawals. The College are also currently working with students who have outstanding Block 2 work to ensure that this is completed as quickly as possible.

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Regarding Table 7 – Key Groups, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning highlighted that all care experienced students are offered a support interview. Student email addresses, introduced this year, will enable Support for Learning staff to communicate with students.

The Principal acknowledged the good job being done by Learning Support and also the Student Association in identifying students in need.

19.06 For Regular Monitoring

i) Credit Update 2018-19

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, informed the committee that an additional 500 credits for 2018-19 has been agreed with SFC. These will support ICT skills for Workforce Development students and additional January start programmes.

ii) Outcome Agreement Targets 2018-19

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, commented that most targets had been delivered however male student recruitment had not been achieved. The recent introduction of Power-Bi is proving helpful in providing up-to-date and relevant data to managers to monitor performance and act on it.

It was noted that the target for 'work placement experience' in part 6 of the table was increasing from 10% in 2017-18 to 70% in 2018-19. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that discussions have been undertaken in the College to ensure a consistent interpretation of 'work placement' to ensure that proper records are taken. It is considered that most courses have some element of 'work placement' and once this is properly recorded the target is very achievable.

iii) 2018-19 Early Withdrawals

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, confirmed that at 11 March the early withdrawal part time figures were 3.1% (FE) and 2.8% (HE). The message to all staff is to focus on full completion and this is being undertaken on a student by student basis to ensure the correct support is in place. Student Advantage was introduced this year which allows students to see their current status for each unit and it will be interesting to see if this has any impact on helping students obtain full completion.

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The Committee queried whether there was any information regarding the number of students at risk of partial completion currently receiving remediation support to help them complete Block 2 work with a view to supporting them to full completion. It was requested that this information be provided to the Learner Attainment Sub Group.

Action 5 – Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning / Head of Quality & Learner Services (Learner Attainment Sub Group)

iv) Applications Update

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Planning, confirmed that at 11 March applications totalled 3,219 and there is a focus on securing interview dates for applicants as soon as possible. Recent recruitment activities have included a Computing & Engineering recruitment event, hospitality interviews and an Open Day will take place at the College on 16 March.

There has been a drop in students applying for Business & Creative courses and it is felt that perhaps the titles of some courses are not obvious to students. Some course titles are being reconsidered.

The Committee was content with the recommendations put forward.

v) 2018-19 Student Funds Update

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 11 and noted that although the indicative funding allocation has increased from last year, the funding will be required to finance the weekly £5 increase in student bursaries and the transfer of some EMA students to bursary support.

vi) Enhancement Plan 2018-21 Update

The Committee was content with the information presented outlining progress being made on the College's Enhancement Plan actions.

19.07 For Information

i) Quality Assurance & Enhancement Report

The Committee noted the report.

ii) Learner Attainment Sub Group Minutes

The Committee noted the above minutes.

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iii) Income Generation Report

The Committee noted the report.

19.08 Self-Evaluation of Committee

Management left the room and the Committee discussed the various prompts for self-evaluation. A separate paper will be produced showing the feedback from this exercise at the next meeting.

Action 6 – Board Secretary

19.09 Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

19.10 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The Committee were content with the information received and the Development Plan.

19.11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 5 June 2019 at 9.30am.

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