

West Lothian College

4 September 2019

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 5 June 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
Michelle Low
Gemma Reynolds
Elaine Cook

In attendance: Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors)
Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise)
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)
Jenny Stalker (Head of Quality & Learner Services)
Scott Anderson (Education Scotland)
Karine McNair (Board Secretary)

19.12 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Elaine Cook as this was her first Committee meeting. Apologies were received from Tom Bates and George Hotchkiss.

19.13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19.14 Minutes of Meeting of 11 March 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2019 were approved as a correct record.

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19.15 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 11 March 2019

Action 2 was noted as ongoing and to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise / Board Secretary

The Principal confirmed that a justification for the additional credit claim would be circulated to the Committee.

Action 2: Principal

Regarding Action 5, Head of Quality & Learner Services confirmed that all Centres were working hard to ensure that as many students as possible finish courses. Students officially finish this week however arrangements have been made for students to come into College next week should additional work be required. In particular, 2 HN groups had been highlighted as at risk of not completing and support has been put in place to help the students complete the course. It was considered that higher demands from employers and mental health issues can be two of the major factors for students failing to complete courses at this time of year.

All other actions were noted as duly complete.

19.16 For Discussion and/or Approval

i) Student Association Report

The Student Association President presented Paper 3 noting that discussions had taken place with staff to credit students with an accredited unit for the completion of core skills work done in the course of the class ambassador job role. It was hoped that this would be an incentive and encourage other students to apply for these roles. The Student Association have been invited to a meeting with the NUS later this month to showcase the work of the West Lothian College Student Association as an example of best practice. Work has also been undertaken to improve Sparkle and align it with professional standards. The Student Association Executive also plan to spend 2 nights per month at the College so that they can support part time evening students.

The Student Association President noted a special thanks to the Level 4 Health & Social Care students who organised a fundraiser and raised money for the Welfare Packs provided by the Student Association. Work is also being done with Quality to produce more website

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information for students so that they are more aware of the support available and where they might find it.

The Committee thanked the Student Association President for the report and commented on the excellent work being done by the Student Association.

19.17 For Regular Monitoring

i) Credit Update 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, noted that the College was 602 credits ahead of the SFC target. It was explained that the shortfall of 915 credits was against the College's curriculum plan target which was a separate target. This target is higher than the SFC target to build in a cushion for courses having to be cancelled and classes not recruiting to target. The Principal confirmed that the curriculum plan target is being carefully planned for 2019-20 as it is a balance of planning for additional credits in case courses do not run while not over delivering on the SFC target given that this additional activity is unfunded.

ii) Recruitment Update

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, commented that the figures are changing daily and updated the Committee that total applications had risen to 4,828 currently.

It was noted that the schools application figures had improved not only due to the increase in Foundation Apprenticeships but also due to quicker offers being made and due to the College induction coinciding with the start of the new school year timetable.

Where courses have been highlighted as under recruiting, the College are making sure interview waiting lists are actioned as soon as possible. There has also been a Curriculum review to identify whether under recruiting courses need any changes, further marketing to promote or removed from the offering.

The Committee noted that in a number of instances there is a considerable difference between applications being received and offers made by the College. Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, confirmed that some of the reasons could be that students expectations of the course can be different to the academic requirements which make them unsuitable for the course. Other courses may generate a lot

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of interest however the College may not have the capacity for additional students where work placements are limited or articulation routes have restricted numbers. It was noted that where possible, College staff will always try and find an alternative course should the interview reveal that the student is unsuitable for the course originally applied for.

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, confirmed that the College was working closely with West Lothian Council to ensure that the current and future need for Early Years Practitioners was being planned into the College curriculum.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of the College offering more computing courses where schools had limited resources and the Principal confirmed that the College would be interested in working closer with the schools to provide a solution for students.

The Committee commented that overall the recruitment picture was improved from last year and highlighted the importance of making early offers to students as well as keeping in touch with students to ensure that early offers convert to course attendees. It was noted that longer term the College may need to be more flexible in its entry requirements if the universities are changing their candidate requirements.

iii) Outcome Agreement 2018-19 Progress Report

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise, presented Paper 6 noting that the College was on target to meet its overall credit target and also that the targeted groups (e.g. SIMD 10 and care experienced) were ahead of target.

There had been some misunderstanding of the SFC's guidance in relation to senior phase activity, however this has now been corrected and more realistic targets have been set for 2019-20.

iv) Enhancement Plan 2018-21

Head of Quality & Learner Services, presented Paper 7 noting that the availability of data analysis is having a significant impact on the monitoring of targets.

Student Advantage is being underused at the moment but it is hoped to improve the student uptake by building it into the induction process for all new students. The Committee also suggested that using the College's social media to remind and encourage students to use Student Advantage might be effective.

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Scott Anderson provided further detail of the proposed formal visits from Education Scotland highlighting that the purpose would be to establish whether satisfactory progress was being made by the College against the Enhancement Plan taking into account the time of year the visit will take place. It is expected that visits will happen between Autumn and Easter lasting approximately 2 days for West Lothian College although this is yet to be confirmed. The Committee noted a concern about the separation of the scrutiny and development roles within Education Scotland and wondered whether this was being properly executed when undertaking the formal visits.

The Board Secretary was requested to send copies of the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan to the new Board Members.

Action 3: Board Secretary

- v) College KPIs 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 8 which the Committee noted.

19.18 For Information

- i) Quality Assurance & Enhancement Report

Head of Quality & Learner Services presented Paper 9 noting that out of the 49 completed External Verification visits so far, 46 were passed with high confidence. Of the negative reports, the required changes were within the College's control and will be addressed.

The Principal commented that she will be starting to include updates on the External Verification visits in her fortnightly staff emails to bring attention to them and help focus staff on improvement.

The Committee queried the follow up from teaching observations and commented that feedback of the lecturer to the students was very important. Head of Quality & Learner Services noted that development from teaching observations formed part of team self-evaluations and 1-2-1 discussions with line managers. Any learning and teaching development issues are dealt with as soon as possible. It was also accepted that input from Student Association Sparkle feedback is a major factor for improvements to teaching since it is a direct report of the student voice.

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ii) SFC Articulation Report

The Committee noted the link to the SFC Articulation Report in the agenda.

iii) SFC Allocation of Additional Credits

The Committee noted the link to the SFC Allocation of Additional Credits in the agenda.

19.19 Committee Remit Review

The Committee requested that the end date of the Learner Attainment Sub Group be removed and otherwise recommended the Committee Remit for approval by the Board.

Action 4: Board Secretary

19.20 Any Other Business

The Chair announced that she would be leaving the Committee to take up the Chair of the Audit Committee. The Committee expressed their thanks to the Chair for her contribution to the Committee.

The Principal commented that there was a recently published Audit Scotland College report which the Committee requested to be added to the 18 June Board meeting agenda for discussion at the Board.

Action 5: Board Secretary

There were no other items of business.

19.21 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The final Committee Development Plan for 2018-19 was noted. It was decided that the discussion of the Committee Development Plan for 2019-20 be postponed until the next meeting of the Committee in order that the new Chair of the Committee can lead the discussions.

Action 6: Board Secretary

The Committee were content with the information received.

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19.22 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 4 September 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