

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

Learning & Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 4 September 2019 at 9.30am** in Barbour Room, Pavilion B of the College.

Present: Iain McIntosh (Chair)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal & Chief Executive)
Tom Bates
Elaine Cook
Neil Sinclair
Michelle Low

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)
Graham Clark (Head of Construction & Motor Vehicle)
Gordon Weir (Head of Computing & Engineering)
Karine McNair (Board Secretary)

Visit to Cyber Classroom

The Committee visited the newly created Cyber classroom during an HNC class chatting to the students and asking questions. The students were excited about the job opportunities presented by a career in cyber security. The students commented that the new facilities were an improvement on last year and were also looking forward to the new course content which seemed more relevant to the associated university course. The Committee were impressed by the enthusiasm of staff and students.

19.23 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Graham Clark and Gordon Weir who were representing their curriculum areas and Neil Sinclair for his first Committee meeting. Apologies were received from Gemma Reynolds.

19.24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

19.25 Minutes of Meeting of 5 June 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 5 June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

19.26 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2019

All actions were noted as duly complete.

19.27 i) Student Association Report

The Student Association President presented Paper 3 noting that the Student Association had developed 4 strategic aims for the year ahead. Sparkle will be a priority again and it has been heavily promoted at all the student inductions. A mini Sparkle will be introduced for school groups and part time students. The Student Association had a meeting with the Principal, SFC, Sparqs and NUS Scotland to explore obtaining a better platform for Sparkle to streamline the reporting.

The Principal noted that at the aforementioned meeting, the SFC had commended the good level of support the Student Association enjoys from the Board at West Lothian College.

Recruitment for volunteers, executive posts and class ambassadors has been promising and it is hoped that all vacancies will be filled and trained by early October. The Student Association has linked with an events class and media students to help with the Student Association's events, providing opportunities for students to use course skills.

The Fresher's Fair will take place on 18 September and all are welcome to attend.

The Student Association President and Vice President have been invited to Armadale Academy along with SAMH to talk to school pupils about support for mental health at West Lothian College.

It was suggested that the Student Association may wish to join a Health & Safety Committee meeting to discuss their pursuit of a smoke-free college.

The Committee praised the report and the work of the Student Association and encouraged the President to consider succession planning and forward planning for sabbatical officers, which the Student Association President confirmed was underway.

ii) Strategic Review of the Curriculum**• Update on Progress**

The Principal presented Paper 4 noting that it was a commitment of the Outcome Agreement to review the curriculum and its delivery. The purpose of the paper was to assure the Committee that the work was underway and to illustrate that work with some examples.

Engaging with stakeholders

Head of Computing & Engineering commented that, at a recent stakeholder event, employers had spoken of a skills shortage in the local manufacturing sector and it was important to identify the skills required and deliver a relevant curriculum.

Modernising our course portfolio

Head of Construction & Motor Vehicle commented that there is a desire to replicate 'live site' working areas to better prepare students for the work environment. The Committee suggested following a precedent set elsewhere in the UK whereby a 'live site' can also become a test centre with the benefit of providing a service to local companies and generating income. The Principal confirmed that a meeting will be arranged to explore the suggestion and sources of potential funding e.g. Scottish Enterprise.

The Chair of the Committee volunteered to be involved in selecting project from proposals submitted to the Learning and Teaching Innovation Fund.

• STEM Curriculum

As part of the STEM curriculum review, there will be a meeting of the Engineering and Construction centres to consider better use of the available accommodation and upgrading facilities. Sparkle feedback consistently criticised the age of equipment and the utilisation of space and the departments are committed to addressing the feedback.

The new computing facilities in Engineering have already improved the student experience as the Centres have been able to upload the newest version of software programmes, which was not possible with the old machines.

It was noted that STEM applies to all curriculum areas as was evidenced by the STEM Olympics which involved photography, hospitality and many other areas of the College.

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

The Committee noted that there was a gender inequality in STEM courses. The Principal commented that there needed to be a creative response by all managers to address gender imbalance and remove any barriers as individual initiatives have had little impact on the problem.

The Committee acknowledged that the inequality in STEM courses was a cultural issue which needed engagement from employers and schools, however the College should continue to encourage gender equality.

- **School Leaver Destinations**

It was noted that the school leavers without a positive destination comprised young people who would be unlikely to be able to sustain a college course but need further support and intervention from educational services at West Lothian Council. The Principal confirmed that the College was working with West Lothian Council to see if there is more that the College can do in communities to help.

19.28 Performance

i) Initial Analysis of College KPIs 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented Paper 7 noting that the figures were subject to change albeit the changes were not expected to be significant. All curriculum areas were reflecting on their 2018-19 performance to ensure improvements for 2019-20.

The Committee noted the provisional figures and commented that the anticipated improvements in all areas would be a good result.

ii) SQA Exam Results 2018-19

The Principal presented Paper 8 commenting that the paper contained comprehensive information to help the Committee understand the poor results and the steps being taken to address any issues. In many instances, staff were working with the SQA to make improvements.

The Committee discussed the appropriateness of studying for certain SQA qualifications as part of a vocational course and noted that action has been taken in some areas to remove these from the curriculum. The Principal confirmed that robust discussions were taking place

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

across all curriculum areas to decide which National 5 and Higher qualifications were to continue.

The College has purchased SCHOLAR materials to support students undertaking National 5 and Higher subjects and that it will be compulsory for all staff teaching these qualifications to make use of the resources.

The Committee commented that school pupils coming to College should also be being tracked by the school to ensure attendance and completion of courses.

iii) Outcome Agreement 2018-19 Progress Report

The Principal presented Paper 9 and highlighted that the College had attracted more students with a declared disability than expected. The Committee commented that the College should argue for further funding to help provide for the additional resources required to support disabled students. The Committee was concerned that there has been no notification on the how the government's commitment to mental health counsellors will be implemented.

19.29 Quality

i) Quality Report

Head of Quality & Learner Services presented Paper 10 noting that the systems verification across all awarding bodies were approved. The majority of verifications were highly commended however there were some areas for concern which were being addressed by the newly established Kaizen Improvement Team.

ii) Enhancement Plan 2018-21

Head of Quality & Learner Services presented Paper 11 noting that this was the final outcome for the previous academic year. The curriculum teams are currently evaluating their performance and will use these reflections to refresh the Enhancement Plan progress for the current year.

It was commented that the curriculum teams should also consider the impact of their actions to see if they were successful or unexpected, and that impact should be reflected in reports on the actions in the plan. Some actions may have a longer term impact that is not yet

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

visible and there should always be the option to change an action for the benefit of the student experience.

19.30 Credit Target Update 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services presented Paper 12 highlighting that the figures were subject to final audit and data cleansing, however no significant reduction in credits was anticipated.

The Committee commended the College on exceeding the credit target but noted the financial implications of delivering learning with no associated funding. The Principal noted that some additional credits were for teaching skills which would improve employability which the Committee agreed should continue.

The Committee recognised that the additional credits delivered by the College strengthen the College's case with the SFC for growth funding given the demand in the region and the young demographic of West Lothian.

19.31 Recruitment Target Update 2019-20

Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise confirmed that recruitment was on target with more interviews this week and some late matriculation slots available next week.

The Committee asked if the college held data on the success rates of late matriculating students. That data has not been recorded previously, however it was agreed the college should consider if it could be tracked.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Curriculum & Enterprise

The Principal acknowledged the hard work undertaken by support staff to enhance the early experience of the College for students. They have been focussed on streamlining the transition processes and making many resources more accessible for students from their first day which has a positive impact on retention of students.

19.32 Any Other Business

The Principal noted that the College has been shortlisted for 2 awards at the CDN Awards.

Claire Glen and Anna Styles are supporting the Scottish Funding Council at a Men in Early Years conference in England to share their initiatives for the Childcare courses.

West Lothian College

27 November 2019

The Chair thanked the Principal for her fortnightly updates which were very interesting and encouraged all Committee members to follow the College on social media.

There were no other items of business.

19.33 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Development Plan

The new Committee Development Plan for 2019-20 was discussed and the Committee suggested a curriculum focus at each meeting which would be attended by representative staff and students from that area. The campus visit would also be to the curriculum focus area at the start of the meeting.

The Committee Development Plan should also take into account the migration of the Learner Attainment Sub Group to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Action 2: Board Secretary

The Committee were content with the information received.

19.34 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 27 November 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