

## West Lothian College

24 November 2021

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### Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of the Meeting of the **Learning and Teaching Committee** of the Board of Governors held on **Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 10.30am** via Zoom online.

**For information:** A pre-meeting was held with Committee Members and a representative from the TRAUMA RESPONSIVE TEAM. Informal introduction to 4 members of team, who provided insight on the work of team, including a range of special projects, aimed at expanding local partnerships and delivered tailored learning and support for vulnerable young people. Team shared examples of working collaboratively with other teams, looking to build self-esteem, volunteering and a positive learning experience for young people and their families. Committee praised the work of the team and raised comments around sustainable. Agreed that this is core to the college's strategic objectives.

**Present:** Iain McIntosh (Chair)  
Elaine Cook (Committee Member)  
Jeanette Dobson (President, Student Association)  
Jackie Galbraith (Principal and Chief Executive)  
Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors)  
Tom Bates (Committee Member)

**In Attendance:** Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)  
Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)  
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services)  
Beth Brownlee (Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources)  
Lesley Aitkenhead (Board Governance Advisor)  
Seamus Spencer (Scottish Funding Council) – Item 8(v) &9

#### 1 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the online Zoom meeting and introduced members to Diane Mitchell who presented Item 6 on the agenda. Sue Stahly was welcomed as a guest and observer.

Apologies were noted from Neil Sinclair and Kirsti Clark.

#### 2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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### 3 Minutes of Meeting of 16 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 16 June 2021 were approved as correct.

### 4 Matters Arising

The committee noted that all actions were closed or on track. The committee asked if there was feedback from the Scottish Government on action L5, in relation to unexpected changes to the articulation of the degree programme and were advised that the issue was acknowledged across the sector and would be part of the SFC review.

### 5 Curriculum Planning

The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment presented Paper 3 setting out the planned approach for curriculum planning for 2022-23, based on 6 key questions. The committee was advised that all Board Members have been invited to a Curriculum Planning event on 29 September, and will be asked to provide views on the 6 questions. The Committee Chair asked if the Board could be given some insight on the leadership team's views on those questions and when the Board would receive output from the planning session.

**Action 1 VP, L&A: A summary of the curriculum plan will be presented to the November Committee and December Board for discussion.**

### 6 Spotlight on Faculty – Workforce Development

Director of Workforce Development gave an informative presentation covering the areas of focus for this faculty. The committee found the presentation to be very positive and the presenter was able to highlight the impact of this work, connecting the data (performance indicators) with student experience.

The presentation prompted good discussion, particularly on the areas of growth, and the team was shown to demonstrate 'best in sector' performance. The committee discussed the achievements of the team, particularly in Social Care and Childcare and highlighted new initiatives aimed at developing partnerships that will enhance our offer to Life Sciences companies, working with West Lothian Council and Heriot Watt University.

The committee commented on the quality of the presentation and the clear articulation of the value of this work.

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Committee members asked what they could do to support particular growth initiatives, and asked for some additional insight on how the targets were set. The presenter responded and welcomed the Committees support.

**7 Student Association Update**

The Student Association President presented Paper 4 which highlighted the work being undertaken over the last few months. It was noted that the work on the Student Association is linked to the work of the Workforce Development Team and Trauma Responsive Teams, and provides a clear student voice.

The Student Association noted a positive 'buzz' about the college, since starting the new academic year, with new facilities in place for students. The committee shared views on the introduction of a revised SPARKLE survey, and recommended keeping it simple.

The Committee Chair asked about the role of Student Association President and absence of the Vice President (on maternity leave) and was advised that there was good support in place. In addition, a new role has been advertised for a part time technical support, aimed at supporting students online.

The committee thanked the Student Association President for their contribution and noted the paper.

**8 (i) Sector Performance**

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement, presented Paper 5 as a summary of Sector Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2019-20.

The committee noted the report and discussed the key points around how the college compared with the sector.

Although college PIs for 2019-20 had been previously discussed by the committee, the comparison with the sector provided new insight. The committee noted that, for overall student success, the college was third best of the 15 regional colleges and above sector average for all key groups identified by the Scottish Funding Council. This was driven by exceptional part-time success at both FE and HE levels.

However, full-time success and the ongoing difference between male and female student performance were noted as areas of concern. As highlighted at a previous committee meeting, there was excellent improvement in some full-time subject areas in 2019-21. However, significant decline in others impacted overall performance and contributory factors for this were

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previously highlighted to committee members. An analysis by subject area will be shared at the 29 September Board meeting, using Power BI.

The committee agreed that it was important to compare the data for previous years and to note the improvements made. It was noted that the college has taken action over the year to resolve known issues for particular subject areas, and improvements were starting to show for 2020-21.

The committee welcomed the open and honest discussion and noted that the college remains focused on improving the quality of learning for all students.

**Action 2 VP, P & I: A paper will be presented to the 24 November 2021 Committee, with a summary of the improvement plan for PI's.**

### 8 (ii) Predicted Key Performance Indicators

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented Paper 6 for noting. It is a summary of the predicted PIs for 2020-21, showing an improvement on the previous year. The committee welcomed the positive trend and noted the paper.

### 8 (iii) SQA Exam Results Analysis

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement asked the committee to note Paper 7 outlining analysis on SQA exam results, based on lecturer assessments. Overall the pass rate was noted as higher than the national average in 3 of 4 areas. The committee noted the paper.

### 8 (iv) Credit Updated 2020-21

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement asked the committee to note Paper 8, updating progress on the credit target agreed with the SFC. The committee noted the paper and discussed the difference in estimated credits with the targets. The difference provides a buffer for deferred students, or late applications and this will continue to change until the audit. The final figure is expected to be lower.

The committee noted the paper.

### 8 (v) Recruitment Update 2020-21

Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement asked the committee to note Paper 9, providing an update on recruitment.

The committee was joined by a representative from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and the Chair took the opportunity to ask for a SFC view on

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sector performance. The SFC representative recognised the college's ability to deliver and advised that there was a conversation to be had in the future about how this can continue to grow.

The SFC representative shared thoughts on the current SFC review that will include recommendations that will enable a more focused discussion on the future of the sector.

The committee turned the discussion to paper 9, and some robust challenges were raised in relation to the college's ability to satisfy high demand, within the SFC credit targets. West Lothian was noted as a growth area, with a young population, with high demand for education services. It was noted that this was an issue for SFC and the Scottish Government in terms of delivering against a growth strategy.

The SFC representative recognised the strength of feeling at the committee, but reflected on the fact that there are a number of different priorities to balance, and it is important to note improvements have been made including in-year additions to credit targets, allowing greater flexibility.

The Principal commented that all of these factors will be incorporated into the Outcome Agreement, and Financial Forecasting Return (FFR) submission.

**9 (i) Quality Report**

Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources presented Paper 10, on Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement. The committee discussed the importance of the Self Evaluation Report, and asked the presenter to provide some insight on how the evaluation is completed.

The presenter advised that the evaluation is validated in a combination of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (data based) evidence.

The committee noted the importance of ensuring the student voice is included in the evaluation, and was assured that this was part of the process. The presenter advised that the role of the QA team was to ensure the systems and processes were in place and operating effectively.

**9 (ii) Student Support and Learning Resources**

Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources presented Paper 11, providing insight into the work of the learning resources team. The committee noted the paper and the focus on mental health and well-being, working collaboratively with other areas to provide a positive learning experience. The committee noted the paper and appointments of a new Equalities and Widening Access role.

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## 9 (iii) Outcome Agreement

The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment provided a verbal update on the plans for developing an Outcome Agreement. The committee welcomed the opportunity for a more detailed discussion on the Outcome Agreement and Self Evaluation, but the timing will need to be considered, as the submission date is 30 November 2021, which is ahead of the next Board meeting on 7 December 2021.

**Action 3 VP, L&A: To agree target date for submission with SFC, and timeline for L&T Committee and Board review, advising BGA.**

## 10 Any Other Business

The committee noted that the Strategic Risk Register was not included in the agenda for the L&T Committee, as part of the agreed Risk Management Arrangements, and a new Risk Register will be presented at the 29 September Board for agreement on inherent risks and tolerance.

## 11 Review of Meeting, Development Plan and Supporting Papers

General comments were noted on the quality of the papers and contribution by all members and attendees. Particular note was given to the Workforce Development Presentation. No actions were noted for areas of improvement.

## 13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 10.30am (pre-meeting to be confirmed).

Signed .....  
Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Date .....