

West Lothian College

6 September 2023

Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of meeting of 14 June 2023

Present:

Tom Bates (Chair, Non-executive member)
Alex Linkston (Non-executive member)
Michael Greenhalgh (Non-executive member)
Elaine Cook (Non-executive member)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal)
Blair Stewart (Student Association President)
Neil Sinclair (Teaching Staff member)

In Attendance:

Barbara Nelson (Education Scotland)
Sarah Halliwell (Education Scotland)
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)
Tom Thomson (Information Systems Manager)
Todd Lumsden (Director Care, Health and Sport Faculty)
Graham Clark (Project Director)
Diane Mitchell (Director of the Workforce Development Faculty and interim Director Computing, Engineering and Built Environment Faculty)
Margaret Forisky (Director Access, Employability and Schools Faculty)
Hazel Brady (Director Business, Creative and Enterprise)
Tony Sharkey (Non-executive member)
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

1 Committee Administration

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted this meeting was his first as the newly appointed Chair.

Apologies were noted from Gavin Hamilton and Hannah Wilson from the Scottish Funding Council.

1.1.2 Education Scotland Annual Engagement Report 21 March 2023

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Barbara Nelson and Sarah Halliwell from Education Scotland presented the college Annual Engagement Report. The committee heard that Education Scotland found the college performance so impressive that the word “wow” was all that was needed to feedback on the report.

Education Scotland highlighted the report is long but this is because there are so many areas of strengths and new innovations to report on that it was felt important to reflect this story in the report. Education Scotland informed the committee the college is being flagged as sector leading to other colleges seeking to improve their own performance.

Education Scotland reported on the value of the college culture which empowers staff to make decisions and to act in real time for the benefit of students. Students are able to build resilience and gain access to opportunities for work. The report also reflects positively on the staff culture.

There were no recommendations for improvement which is a major achievement for the college and testament to the work staff have done to achieve this.

The committee was delighted to note this report.

1.2 **Declarations of Conflicts of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

1.3 **Minutes of Meeting of 15 February 2023**

The minutes of 15 February 2023 meeting were approved as accurate.

1.4 **Matters Arising**

Action 1: Noted that this is to be brought to the September meeting of the committee.

Action 2: was noted as completed.

2 **Faculty Updates**

Graham Clark, Project Director:

The Project Director confirmed the EcoHouse will be complete within the next 3 weeks. The house will be used within the curriculum from August

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2023. The Project Director informed the committee that the contractor has been very supportive in allowing visits to the site from external partners, staff and students.

The committee was informed that the official ministerial launch will be 19 September 2023.

Todd Lumsden, Director of the Care, Health and Sport Faculty:

The Director of the Care, Health and Sport Faculty informed the committee of the very high level of student satisfaction. The faculty is using data analysis to hone in on problem areas and to take early actions. The committee heard the Course Tutor role is having a positive effect on student success. The faculty is focusing on promoting positive mind sets and keeping students motivated and engaged.

The committee heard that the faculty has rationalised courses offered at FE level in line with demand.

The Active Campus Coordinator role has been introduced and should be recruited to by August 2023. This role will promote active life and work across the whole college.

Margaret Forisky: Director of the Access, Employability and Schools Faculty

The Faculty Director reported on school pupil recruitment and discussed the shift in the school/college partnership. The school/college partnership showcase event will be held on Thursday 15 June 2023.

The committee heard how the TRUST Project continues to be successful with positive outcomes for students, with 26 students now able to take on the demands of a full time course.

ESOL and Assisted Programme students continue to have satisfaction rates. There is a timetable planned to take place over the summer for ESOL learners. This is being delivered in partnership with the local authority and in partnership with the Faculty of Care, Health and Sports.

The committee heard the Project Search contract has ended and we are now moving to Journey to Employment which will support older learners.

The committee was informed about a change in structure which will move the Student Support Team to join the Access, Employability and Schools Faculty team from August 2023 with the aim of providing a more integrated support for students.

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Diane Mitchell: Director of the Workforce Development Faculty and interim Director of the Computing, Engineering and Built Environment Faculty

The Director reported on levels of student satisfaction within the Workforce Development faculty where students are more distanced from college life.

Workforce Development has reported an overall 94% student success for FE and HE.

The Faculty Director discussed student satisfaction within the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment, reporting there were some areas of concern but no surprises.

The committee was informed there are a number of curriculum changes for 2023-24 to rationalise the range of curriculum courses and to take account of the real drop in demand for some HE courses such as Civil Engineering.

The committee was informed of the CyberDrive project which is travelling around schools in West Lothian to support engagement in computer science.

Hazel Brady: Director of Business, Creative and Enterprise

The Faculty Director reported positively on the success of student placements over the year. This is reflected in the high levels of student satisfaction across all key areas of the faculty.

The committee heard that the faculty has worked closely with the Information Systems Team to use data, linked to student feedback, to improve the student experience and ultimately student success.

The committee heard that the Beauty team had engaged in a quality deep dive that took place to address the issues in this area. This has resulted in a positive shift in student satisfaction and success outcomes in this academic year.

The committee heard that this Faculty is being fully renovated during the summer break and will provide a modernised learning and teaching environment of students in 2023-24.

The committee agreed that visits to faculties should be re-introduced as part of the committee meetings in 2023-24.

Action 1: Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment to arrange a faculty visit schedule for 2023-24

3 Student Association Report

The committee heard that 583 students have accessed the Student Association for support during the academic year. The Student President confirmed that all students will continue to have free access to breakfast and a soup lunch in 2023-24.

The committee was informed the Student Association has completed the Scottish Mental Health award and is working on LGBT+ Charter.

The committee noted the Student Association continues to play a very important role in the college and commended them on their work.

4 Matters for Committee Approval

4.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment presented the draft learning, teaching and assessment strategy for feedback from the committee.

The committee reflected that the strategy presents a clear vision and framework for decision making. The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment credited the Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources and Faculty Directors for their input to the Strategy. The strategy will be presented to staff in the new academic year.

The committee was content to approve the strategy.

5. Matters for Committee Attention

5.1 Student Success

5.1 (i) College Sector Performance Indicators 2021-22

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement presented the paper to the committee for discussion and highlighted the college's improved performance.

The college is not complacent and will continue to drill into the detail to address areas while there are still concerns about low results.

The committee noted that this is an excellent result, particularly in the current climate of funding cuts.

5.1 (ii) Predicted Student Success 2022-23

The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment reported on the picture of continuous improvement to the committee.

The committee noted the paper.

5.2 Regular Monitoring

5.2 (i) Credit Target Update 2022-23

The committee heard that the college has met the credit target again this year which puts us in a good position for growth.

5.2 (ii) Curriculum Plan Revisions 2023-24

The Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment confirmed the curriculum plan changes were carried out in a coordinated way in consultation with employers and taking account of demand.

The committee noted the revised plan.

5.2 (iii) Recruitment Update 2023-24

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement reported on the current recruitment position. The committee was informed that we are in a good position overall to recruit to target.

The committee discussed pre-Covid grades for students coming from school and the impact of knowledge gaps from this period on student preparedness for college courses.

The committee noted this paper.

5.2 (iv) Student Funds Update

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services reported that all funds have been used to support students. The committee heard that an additional payment of £500 had been paid to students in June and that students will be supported through the summer to enable them to remain on board to commence study in August 2023.

The committee was pleased to note the support being provided to students.

5.2 (v) Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey

The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement highlighted the work the Information Systems Team has put in to enable achievement of the high response rate. The response rates were achieved without incentives. Credit was also given to the faculty staff for their contribution to encouraging student engagement.

The committee heard that the high response rate enables us to have confidence in the levels of student satisfaction.

The committee agreed this is an excellent set of figures and noted the report.

5.3 Continuous Improvement

5.3 (i) Quality Enhancement Report

The Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources discussed the very positive feedback from Education Scotland.

The committee heard that 62 external verification visits have taken place and have been largely successful. Visits that have not been successful have centered around NQ units that are also delivered in schools who have a different understanding of quality processes. Collaborative meetings are being arranged with schools to resolve this.

The Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources reported that a team of five staff have been recruited as Quality Champions to work with staff across the college from August 2023.

The committee noted the quality improvements positively.

5.4 (ii) Student Support Services Update

The committee heard that the two fixed-term counsellor posts have been made permanent which will enable the Student Support team to continue to provide the right level of support for students.

The committee noted this report.

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6 Any Other Business (AOB)

6.1 Revised Committee Remit

The Committee approved the revised Committee Remit.

The Chair thanked Neil Sinclair, Teaching Staff member, for his contributions to the Learning and Teaching Committee over the last 4 years.

7 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The committee was happy with the quality and timing of papers.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 September 2023 at 10.00am.

9 Committee Self-Assessment

9.1 Learning and Teaching Committee Self-Assessment

Non-executive members of the committee participated in a self-assessment workshop after the formal meeting had closed. The Board Governance Advisor introduced the Self-Assessment framework for discussion.

The committee reflected that key elements of the framework were well covered, demonstrating areas of strength.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Board Secretary and Governance Advisor was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed
Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Date