

## Learning and Teaching Committee

### Minute of Meeting of 6 March 2024

#### Present:

Alex Linkston (Chair of the Board of Governors and Non-executive member)  
Gavin Hamilton (Vice-Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee and Non-executive member)  
Elaine Cook (Non-executive member)  
Michael Greenhalgh (Non-executive member)  
Jackie Galbraith (Principal)  
Blair Stewart (Student Association President)  
Laura Murray (Teaching Staff member)

#### In attendance:

Hannah Wilson (Scottish Funding Council)  
Simon Earp (Vice Principal, People, Performance and Improvement)  
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance and Estates)  
Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)  
Beth Brownlee (Head of Student Experience and Improvement)  
Tom Thomson (Information Systems Manager)  
Todd Lumsden (Director Care, Health and Sport Faculty)  
Anna Styles (Learning and Skills Manager, Access, Employability and Schools Faculty)  
Hazel Brady (Director, Business, Creative and Enterprise Faculty)  
Diane Mitchell (Director, Workforce Development and Computing, Engineering and Built Environment Faculty)  
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

## 1 Committee Administration

### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The meeting was chaired by Gavin Hamilton, Vice-Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee. Members were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Tom Bates, Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee, Tony Sharkey, Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors and Margaret Forisky, Director Access, Employability and Schools Faculty

### 1.2 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest noted.

### **1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 15 November 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 15 November 2023 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **1.4 Matters Arising**

The committee noted that all actions from the meeting of 15 November 2023 have been completed and that action 4 will be taken as part of the agenda for this meeting.

## **2 Student Association Report**

### **2.1 Student Association Report and SPARKLE Survey Results**

The Student Association President gave a brief resume of the SPARKLE survey results presented to committee.

The committee discussed the results of the SPARKLE survey as well as actions that are being taken to continuously improve the student experience. The Committee noted that You Said, We Delivered posters will be prepared from the survey results.

The committee congratulated the Student Association and the college on successful achievement of the LGBT+ Gold Charter.

The Principal acknowledged both Student Presidents for their significant contributions to the work of the college over the last two years. The Chair of the Board echoed this and noted the Board's appreciation. The committee also congratulated Karine Bourdarias on her successful appointment to the NHS.

### **2.2 Directors Response to SPARKLE Survey Results**

#### **Workforce Development and Computing, Engineering and Built Environment:**

The committee heard that students and staff in this faculty have bought into the survey, recognising the rich and useful information it provides.

#### **Key points:**

- Most students feel positive about their course and the levels of support given to them
- The Course Tutor role has been positively received
- Teaching styles in a small number of areas received variable feedback

- Cold workshops in Automotive were highlighted by students and the faculty is making improvements.
- Lack of PPE was raised in one area and this is being addressed as a priority
- Maths masterclasses are being implemented to support students with this core subject
- All courses that are not apprenticeships have moved to national qualifications.

#### **Business, Creative and Enterprise Faculty Update:**

##### **Key points:**

- Faculty will address lower response rates for the next survey
- Teaching styles were generally acknowledged as positive
- Employment experience opportunities were positive for students
- Feedback on student assessment load is being addressed
- Students are being supported to be able to work effectively online.

The Faculty noted that student feedback is continuously used to inform improvements, not just at the point of survey. This work is evidenced in lower withdrawal rates and higher student success rates.

#### **Access, Employability and Schools Faculty Update:**

##### **Key points:**

- Very good response rate overall
- Faculty is addressing lower response rate to the survey from ESOL school groups which may be due to access skills or language issues
- Faculty is working well to support students with declining mental health
- Staff are highlighted as being helpful and courses enjoyable
- There is a large number of students with refugee status in this faculty who are positive about their college experience
- Faculty is working closely with Learning Champions and Course Tutors across the college to address student feedback.

#### **Care, Health and Sports Faculty Update:**

##### **Key points:**

- Most students are enjoying their course
- Faculty is using the data to dig deeper into student feedback and address areas of concern
- Course tutor role has been well received by students overall.

- Courses found to be challenging but enjoyable with good support from staff noted
- Students on higher level courses want more online learning in block 3
- A few areas of concern were noted around timetabling of assessments and user friendliness of the new Moodle
- HNC Childhood Practice had mixed feedback and will be reviewed with partners to find the best way forward
- Faculty noted that the survey allows staff to drill down into their own courses and to make improvements.

The committee noted the richness of SPARKLE feedback and the positive responses from faculty directors. The course tutor role was noted as popular across all faculties. Faculties were commended by the committee on their proactive responses to student feedback.

The committee queried the question about courses being not difficult and also discussed the responses to teaching styles. The committee noted that availability of different teaching styles was positive rather than negative.

The committee discussed approaches to working in partnership with schools to ensure pupils are well prepared to study at college.

**Action 1: Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment**

Meet with Elaine Cook to discuss support to be offered in schools in block 3 to better prepare learners for college courses.

## **2.3 College Response to SPARKLE Survey Results**

The Head of Student Experience and Improvement noted the work done in faculties to improve the student experience and to feed this into faculty evaluation and improvement actions.

The committee's attention was drawn to many instances of positive praise for individual lecturers in the survey feedback.

The committee noted that any areas of concern identified were being addressed.

The main areas of concern were:

**Assessment scheduling:**

The committee heard that a working group has been formed to pull together an assessment timetable that works for students and to

achieve a balance between student readiness for assessment and the planned timetable.

**Moodle:**

Student feedback regarding Moodle has been acknowledged and more training for students has been planned.

**Mental Health support:**

The committee acknowledged the positive work done to support good student mental health.

Positively, the committee noted that recurring complaints around car parking and IT resources in previous years were not been raised in this survey.

The committee noted the college response to SPARKLE.

**3 Matters for Approval**

**3.1 Curriculum Plan Revisions 2024-25**

The Head of Information Systems reported on the changes to the curriculum plan based on demand. The committee discussed the removal of 3 HNC courses from the Built Environment portfolio and asked whether this reflects demand from industry or a lack of applications for other reasons.

The committee noted there may be a need for a national discussion regarding built environment courses to develop an appropriate course offering.

The committee discussed the impact on staffing if courses are removed and noted that staff re-deployment across the curriculum is actively employed. The committee noted that loss of HN funding will be recovered through increased numbers in other curriculum areas and was assured the college is on target.

The committee was content to approve the changes to the curriculum plan.

**4 Matters for Attention**

**4.1 Student Experience and Improvement and Student Support**

**(i) Student Experience and Improvement Report**

The committee heard the new Quality Champions are making a difference within their faculties where they coach and mentor colleagues.

A new quality portal is now available which is facilitating analysis of staff engagement in quality processes.

The committee heard that all external verification events have been successful to date.

It was confirmed that Education Scotland's first thematic review of Care will take place week commencing 11 March 2024. Our Annual Engagement Visit will take place on 27 May 2024. The committee noted there are no actions from the previous annual engagement.

The Head of Student Experience and Improvement noted that our lead Education Scotland contact, Barbara Nelson HMIE, is retiring and passed on sincere thanks for the support she has given to the college.

The committee noted the achievement of the LGBT+ Gold Charter Award – the first college or university in Scotland to achieve this level and the first where a college and the Student Association worked in partnership to achieve this.

The committee was informed that Moodle has been upgraded but that future contract options are being explored. It was noted that continuing digital upskilling for students will be necessary.

Artificial Intelligence developments that can support lecturers to develop course materials while reducing workload were discussed. The committee noted there will be challenges in maintaining the integrity of assessments and ensuring students do not abuse artificial intelligence tools. It was noted that a code of practice is being produced for staff and students and staff training in the use of AI tools is being planned.

The committee discussed the quality assurance process for faculty self-evaluation. It was noted we are awaiting the new Tertiary Quality Management Framework to be implemented and that self-evaluation will have to change to fit the new framework. The committee noted the availability of accurate data now available to faculty staff and the positive difference this makes to the quality of self-evaluation.

The committee noted the report.

**(ii) Student Support Services Update**

The committee was informed of additional resources put in place in December 2023 to support student mental health and students in crisis.

The committee noted there have been 39 instances of safeguarding to date this year, an increase of 19 on the previous year. The college aims to expand the safeguarding team and improve support for school pupils.

The Principal noted that staff are facing challenges due to a rise in difficult behaviours, particularly from younger students, and discussed additional resources being allocated to address this.

A new Care Assistant post has been introduced to work with students with challenging behaviours and to work with Learning and Skills Managers and the Head of Student Experience and Improvement who is leading on the Respect Campaign.

The committee heard that some young people have not attended school and then come to college unprepared to sustain attendance on course. The committee discussed attendance at college and heard that course tutors, peer navigators and referrals to the TRUST team can support young people to sustain attendance and get to a point where they can engage in full time study. It was noted that there are only a small number of students in this category and the college is working with partners to take steps to address this issue. The committee noted the challenge to the college will be sustaining the same level of support for these students without additional resources.

The committee discussed the current concerns about violence in schools and how the college records the number and level of incidents. The committee heard the Respect Working Group has been set up to specifically address challenging behaviours and to support staff as well as students.

The committee suggested that the Health and Safety Committee should lead on reporting statistics for student incidents.

**Action 2: Vice-Principal, Learning and Attainment**

To work with faculties and the Head of Student Experience and Improvement to collate and report on instances of challenging behaviour.

The committee noted the paper.

**4.2 In-Year Performance 2023-24**

**(i) Credit Target Update 2023-24**

The committee was pleased to note the positive forecast of 750 credits above target. It was noted that we now have the ability to monitor credits in real time.

The committee noted that a number of SVQ students have been moved over onto Modern Apprenticeship programmes. This is positive in terms of delivering on the credit target and for improving revenue.

The committee noted this paper.

(ii) **Recruitment Update 2024-25**

The committee noted the positive update on recruitment, reflecting good progress against targets. Individual course targets will be continuously monitored. The committee noted there will be an open day on 27 March 2024 which may positively influence demand for places and that it is likely the college will not be able to fulfil all applications received.

The negative impact of the withdrawal of the Individual Training Account fund on part time course applications was discussed.

The committee noted this paper.

(iii) **Student Funds Update 2023-24**

The committee heard the college successfully bid for £750,000 of additional student support which will be distributed to students.

The committee noted the table on Childcare Funds due to changes in government provisions for childcare.

The committee was informed that the college was seeing a bigger demand on discretionary funding.

The committee heard that student support funding may reduce in 2024-25 which will negatively impact on the support the college is able to provide.

The committee noted this paper highlighting the positive use of student funds.

(iv) **Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2022-23**

The committee noted the sectoral position with regard to this national survey. The Vice-Principal Performance and Improvement noted the work that has gone into ensuring students complete the survey. The committee noted the college remains above sector average in all areas of response. This will be cross-referenced against performance indicator results when these are published.

The committee positively noted this paper.



**5 Matters for Information**

**(i) College Employers Scotland Update/Industrial Action**

The Chair of the Board of Governors updated the committee on the current impasse between the Unions and Employers regarding the 3-year pay offer.

The committee heard the EIS is moving to Action Short of Strike (ASOS) which may include withholding student results. The Chair expressed a sincere hope that no lecturers will take this action.

The committee heard an input from the teaching staff member reflecting the staff view on ASOS and the college's proposed response to lecturers withholding results.

The committee heard that 90% of colleges have agreed to withhold 100% of salary where student results are not submitted. The Principal confirmed this would be discussed in details at the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members acknowledged the very serious impact on students last summer whose results were not submitted. The committee stated that withholding results has the most serious impact on students, more so than other industrial actions, and agreed that decisive action should be taken in response.

The committee agreed that withholding student results would be a breach of contract and agreed with the content of the letter sent to lecturers. The Principal confirmed that colleges want to find a way through this national dispute.

The committee noted this paper.

**6 Any Other Business**

There was no other business

**7 Review of Committee and Supporting Papers**

The committee was content with the quality and sufficiency of the papers presented.

**8 Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Learning and Teaching committee will take place on Wednesday 5 June 2024.

**Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared a 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:** .....