

Board of Management Learning and Teaching Committee

Minute of meeting of the Learning & Teaching Committee of the Board of Management held at the Dumfries Campus on Tuesday, 17 November 2020 from 2.00pm, held remotely via MS Teams.

Members present: Pat Kirby (Chair) Sue Livermore
Joanna Campbell - Principal Bronwyn Brown – Student Acc. President
Ian White

In attendance: Douglas Dickson Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) Learning, Skills & Student Experience
Hugh Carr – Interim Chair of the Board
Janet Weir - Director of Curriculum
Phil Storrier – Director (SE&AP) Student Experience and Academic Performance
Lorraine Grierson – Secretary to the Board
Peter Woods (Dumfries) - Academic Staff
Gillian Pearce (Stranraer) - Academic Staff

Apologies: Barry Graham
Delia Holland
Rob Orr
Ann Hill
Naomi Johnson
Amy Farley – Student Acc. Vice President
Paula Hailey (Stranraer) - Academic Staff

Minute Taker Alex Elkins, Executive Assistant

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular Phil Storrier the newly appointed Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance. The chair also congratulated Janet Weir for her successful appointment to the post of Director of Curriculum. Phil Storrier and Janet Weir gave an overview of their experience and responsibilities.

Apologies had been received from Delia Holland, Rob Orr, Ann Hill, Naomi Johnson, Amy Farley, Paula Hailey and Barry Graham.

The Secretary to the Board confirmed the meeting was not quorate and the Chair agreed to hold the meeting with comments recorded for information.

2 Declaration of Interest

Members agreed to indicate declarations of interest as appropriate throughout the meeting.

3 Minute of Meeting of 22 September 2020

The minute of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020 was approved and it was noted that no changes had been received from members following circulation of the minute prior to the meeting.

4 Matters Arising not on the Agenda

Item 13 – Mental Health and Wellbeing Update

It had previously been discussed that the 'Wobble Room' name might be off putting, and it was agreed to circulate a poll to students to establish a new name. The committee were informed that the poll had been promoted using the 'VocalEyes' platform however there had been no decision to change the name at this

time. It was noted that the NHS also use the term.

ACTION: - B. Brown to provide an update on the progress of the campaign at the next meeting.

Matters for Noting

5 COVID-19 and the Curriculum Update

The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) introduced a presentation which was shared with the committee. The following additional comments were noted: -

- Slide 1 – Performance indicators had showed a positive trend and online delivery looked favourable. Focus remained to keep students engaged and student advisors had been supporting this activity.
- Slide 2 – The Principal and Vice Principal had continued to work closely with SQA and additional guidance from SQA regarding assessment had been provided. Communication to students would continue to be issued regarding changes to assessment.

The Principal advised the committee that challenges had been identified with SQA across the sector and through the Qualifications Committee a recommendation would be progressed to inform Scottish Government of the issues which had been identified.

- Slide 3 – The Director of Curriculum reported that students returning to campus had been impacted by COVID-19 and a phased approach had been adopted, deferred students returning to campus had remained a priority. Social distancing measures had reduced class sizes and guidance for students had been issued in advance of their arrival on campus. It was anticipated that the majority of deferred students would complete their qualification this year, however some additional guidance was required for a number of courses and staff continued to work with SQA and other awarding bodies to provide detailed guidance to allow assessment to be undertaken. Virtual delivery had worked well for many students in some areas.
- Slide 4 – The Director of Curriculum reported 28 College Academy programs had been delivered at the start of the Academic Session and positive feedback had been received from Schools. The development of a blended delivery model with schools had progressed well. Further onsite practical activity with the College Academy was planned to provide students with a positive pathway to College.
- Slide 5 – The Director (SE&AP) updated the committee on the recent findings of the student ‘pulse’ survey regarding on-line learning. Following the survey findings, suitable quiet spaces for students to utilise on campus had been provided. It was confirmed that the survey had shown a 12% response rate and staff had begun to work towards strategies to increase student response rates.
- Slide 6 – The Director (SE&AP) updated the committee on the proposals to utilise funding which had been received to develop the College’s counselling services. A discussion relating to the data provided on the use of Togetherall took place and it was noted that student feedback had identified a preference for an increase in face to face counselling provision.
- Slide 7 – The Director (SE&AP) updated the committee on the developments on the current priorities for improvements to the Student Experience.

P. Woods voiced concern on the likelihood of some reduction in retention with student withdrawals in the near future. It was confirmed that close monitoring of retention was ongoing.

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The committee acknowledged the volume of work that had been undertaken by staff to support students and the planning involved in returning students to campus which had been very positive.

The Chair requested information regarding the impact of School pupils reporting COVID-19 cases. It was confirmed that some incidents amongst students and staff had been reported. Protocols and procedure had been provided in collaboration with the local authority and guidance issued to staff regarding incident management.

The Chair thanked members of the Senior Leadership Team for the information provided.

6 Annual Curriculum and Portfolio Review

The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) spoke to the report which had been issued, updating members on the process introduced to develop the curriculum Portfolios. The committee were informed that consideration with regard HE provision, alignment with the College's unique selling points and the Regional Skills Assessment had been examined in the review process. The committee were asked to note that staff engagement in the process had been encouraged and further analysis of the portfolios was anticipated and would be supported by the Director (SE&AP).

The Chair welcomed the inclusion and focus on career management skills.

The Director (SE&AP) acknowledged the quality of the information provided from curriculum supporting the reviews and updated the committee on a number of future developments to support the curriculum including working with partner organisations.

The committee noted the report.

ACTION: - The Portfolio Review document to be distributed to all members.

7 Academic Council Summary

The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) introduced the summary report for the Academic Council which had taken place in September 2020. The committee welcomed the format of the report and had been reassured that the information provided gave a clear overview of the activity of the Academic Council. The large number of attendees was noted.

The committee noted the report.

8 Strategic Risk Register

The Secretary to the Board introduced the report and outlined the 2 risks relevant to the committee. A discussion on the likelihood of an EIS National Dispute and the risk of strike action by teaching staff took place. It was confirmed that the risk relating to strike action had been included in the overall risk register and members agreed that it would be appropriate to include the risk for consideration at the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The committee noted the report.

ACTION: - The Secretary to the Board will discuss with the Principal the inclusion of the risk relating to industrial action.

9 Student Experience strategy

The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) introduced the report informing members of the process of developing the strategy. The strategy included a series of initiatives with targets set over the coming 3 years. The Strategy had been provided in draft format as additional information would be included. The committee were

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informed that the SFC had yet to issue information regarding the Evaluative Report and the Regional Outcome Agreement. The strategy would seek to drive changes in teaching practice and embrace the transform learning model.

Initiative 1

A query was raised with reference to 'transform learning and active learning' contained in the strategy. The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) informed the committee of the ambitions of the strategy to address comments previously received from Education Scotland and outlined approaches to further develop the online pedagogy.

The Chair asked about the effectiveness of employer forums and it was commented that some curriculum areas had positive relationships with forums. The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) reported that moving forward, further activity to optimise existing links and improve communication between the College, employers and industry would be encouraged and developed.

Initiative 2

Clarification on the term BME (Black, Minority and Ethnic) acronym was provided. The committee were advised that the term BME is appropriate for use in the Region at this time. The baseline of 13% in relation to SIMD was confirmed and the Chair commented on this being higher than expected.

Initiative 3

The Student Association President was content with the information included and confirmed that the VocalEyes platform had been introduced and expressed confidence that student engagement would increase with familiarity of the platform. The Student Association and Director of Student Experience and Academic Performance would continue to work together to improve student engagement.

Initiative 4

The committee were informed that further information would be incorporated into the strategy regarding the digital delivery of the curriculum. A further comment regarding the impact and benefit of digital technology improving accessibility and success was noted.

A discussion took place regarding the use of stock imagery in the document and the challenges of obtaining images which represented a true reflection of the College's diversity was noted. It was agreed that the imagery currently presented was unsatisfactory. The VP (VPLS&SE) Skills and Student Experience advised the committee that the newly appointed Director for marketing would seek to address the issues discussed.

The committee noted the report.

ACTION: - The Secretary to the Board will contact the committee members who had not attended the meeting to request any additional feedback on the Strategy via email.

ACTION: - The Secretary to the Board to distribute the final draft of the Strategy to all members.

9 Learning and Teaching Committee Annual Review

This item was not discussed.

10 Appointment of Chair

The Chair confirmed the intention to resign the position of Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee at the end of December 2020. It was reported that at the time of the meeting there had been no expressions of interest received from Board members. It was agreed that the matter would be raised with the Board of Management in December 2020 and the committee members were encouraged to consider and promote the post where appropriate.

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12 Learning and Teaching Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair confirmed that the Terms of Reference would be developed with the Secretary of the Board.

13 Regional Outcome Agreement

The Vice Principal (VPLS&SE) informed the committee that publication of the Regional Outcome agreement had not taken place. A further update would be provided to the committee at the next meeting.

ACTION: - The Secretary to the Board will include the ROA on the agenda at the next meeting.

14 Any Other Business

Hugh Carr and the attendees expressed thanks to the Chair for her contribution to the Learning & Teaching Committee and the Board of Management.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

16 February 2021 14:00hrs