

## 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, 22 September 2020 from 2.00pm, held remotely via MS Teams.

**Members present:** Pat Kirby (Chair) Sue Livermore  
Ian White Delia Holland  
Rob Orr Hugh Carr  
Bronwyn Brown – Student Acc. President Amy Farley – Student Acc. Vice President

**In attendance:** Douglas Dickson Vice Principal (VP) Learning, Skills & Student Experience  
Janet Weir - Director of Curriculum  
Peter Woods (Dumfries) - Academic Staff  
Penny Davis - Interim Secretary to the Board

**Apologies:** Joanna Campbell - Principal  
Paula Hainey (Stranraer) - Academic Staff  
Lorraine Grierson – Secretary to the Board  
Gillian Pearce (Stranraer), Academic Staff  
Barry Graham

**Minute Taker** Alex Elkins, Executive Assistant

### 1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Joanna Campbell, Lorraine Grierson, Paula Hainey, Barry Graham and Gillian Pearce.

The Interim Secretary to the Board confirmed the meeting was quorate.

### 2 Declaration of Interest

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

### 3 Minute of Meeting of 30 June 2020

The Minute of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 30 June 2020 was approved with the following amendment.

- Page 1 – Naomi Johnson to show as present.

**ACTION:** - The Executive Assistant would amend the minute.

### Decision: -

The minute was approved by D Holland and seconded by I White.

### 4 Matters Arising not on the Agenda

#### 4.1 Board Chair Letter to Scottish Ministers

The Chair updated the committee on item 6, *The Committee recommended that The Interim Chair of the Board write to the Scottish Government to highlight the regional issues encountered.*

Following a conversation between the Chair and the Interim Chair it was decided not to send a further letter.

### Matters for Decision/Approval

#### **5 Strategic Risk Register**

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the Strategic Risk Register and the risks relevant to the Learning and Teaching Committee were discussed.

Item 2.5 *Failure to achieve credit (activity)* was discussed and the potential to achieve the college's credit target due to factors relating to COVID-19. It was confirmed that this had been discussed by the Finance and General-Purpose committee and recommended to be increased.

Opposing views on the suggested change were expressed.

#### **Decision: -**

The Chair would recommend to the Board that a further discussion take place.

Item 3.5 – *Industrial Relations Problems (including industrial action)* – the committee were informed of a national dispute that had been raised regarding the use of 'Trainer Assessors'. The Committee noted the update.

Item 3.9 – *Failure to reach aspirational standards in learning, teaching and service delivery* – the Chair welcomed the detail in the item.

Item 3.11 – *Failure to meet the deadlines in our SoSEP Project regarding the provision of Hub and Spoke model for Engineering, Construction and Care* - No Change

Item 3.13 – *Failure to address Climate Emergency* – The committee recognised that the college was leading in the sector and had a unique selling point, it would continue to be a challenge to continuing the work. A change to the wording of the item was suggested.

#### **Decision: -**

Item 3.13 – Change wording to 'Failure to implement appropriate climate emergency measures'.

**Action: - The Secretary to the Board would update the Risk Register.**

#### **6 Welcoming new Student Association officers as members**

The Chair welcomed Bronwyn Brown – President and Amy Farley – Vice President of the Student Association who had taken up post on 1 September 2020. The Chair reaffirmed the committee's interest in the work of the Student Association.

### Matters for Noting

#### **7 Three Block System Report**

The Chair introduced the item and gave the background of the Three Block System change. Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report which had been previously presented to the LJNC. It was agreed that key changes which impacting the student experience needed to be clearly managed. The model had received positive feedback and had been adopted. Adaptations to the three block system had been recognised due to the impact of COVID-19. Reassurance was given to the committee that retention had improved since the move to the three-block system.

It was commented and agreed by members that staff responses shown in the report had been low. The Chair endorsed the recommended that sufficient planning and consultation time be recognised before any large changes are implemented in the future.

The committee noted the report.

### 8 Regional Skills Update

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience introduced the report which had been published by Skills Development Scotland. As a result of the report the college had brought together a suite of short courses in tandem with Borders College with a focus on economic recovery, applications for the courses would open in January. The report also highlighted some specific figures relating to Dumfries and Galloway and showed the potential for youth unemployment.

The Chair was reassured by the furlough figures showing alignment with the Scottish average.

R. Orr commented that the report represented a snapshot and during economic recovery young people in rural regions would be most at risk, the impact on Dumfries and Galloway had not been unexpected. Tourism and Food and Drink sectors had been badly affected in the Region.

Redaction ...

A discussion on the severe impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship pathways took place. The college would seek to ensure that cohorts aligned to create and encourage pathways whilst attracting young people into apprenticeship programs. The Chair confirmed that the reduction in employer engagement with the impact of COVID-19 and the apprenticeship pathways would be of interest to the committee.

The committee noted the report.

### 9 Student Association - NUS Review

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report and introduced the Student Association action plan which had been formulated following a detailed review by the NUS. Further enhancement of the Student Association would be supported by the college. It was confirmed that COVID-19 had delayed some development however where possible all elements had been progressed. The new director of Curriculum would work closely with SA and further develop the action plan.

Recruitment of the volunteer officer roles had provided a robust interview process and plans to implement a recruitment action plan had been put in place. The SA had built stronger relationship with both Sparks and the NUS with support from the Executive Leadership Team.

The committee were updated on the 'Vocalise' website, a dedicated student platform which was designed by students and provided a good place for students to engage. Vocalise also provided a polling mechanism allowing students to vote for ideas which directly impacted the student experience.

#### Decision: -

The committee requested that the NUS review be circulated to members.

**ACTION:** - Executive assistant would distribute the NUS review to members.

### 10 Annual Complaints Summary

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The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report which was issued annually. Complaints had been dealt with in two stages in line with the ombudsmen scheme. Some changes to the system would be anticipated to further develop and enhance the service. Complaints were considered very low with the majority of complaints resulting in poor customer service.

The committee noted the report.

### 11 Annual External Verification Summary

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report. SQA had provided an overview of visits and 45 visits did not take place due to COVID-19. The college had agreed to be part of a virtual pilot being implemented by SQA and improvements in reportage had been recognised.

Some members proposed that college staff who also work as External Verifiers share best practice and would welcome involvement with the development and pilot. A further discussion took place on the impact of EV visits on achievement and influence on practice.

The committee noted the report.

### 12 Annual Academic Appeals Summary

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience informed the committee that no appeals were reported at the time of the meeting and confirmed that the mechanism would be implemented as necessary.

The committee noted the report.

### 13 Mental Health and Wellbeing Update

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience gave an overview of the report which the Chair welcomed. The college had signposted students to the 'Togetherall' website (previously called the Big White Wall). A virtual 'wobble room' had been made available to provide students with a virtual 'safe space' and additional support. The committee were informed that Safeguarding would be embedded via the development of a whole college team across both campuses.

The Scottish Funding Council had announced a grant of £86k for student councillors via virtual sessions. One member commented that the additional funding was welcome but would welcome a more direct, face to face approach.

It was suggested that the name 'wobble' name maybe off putting, it was agreed that Vocalise would be used to poll students for a new name.

#### Decision: -

- A new name for the wobble room would be investigated.
- The Director of Student Experience would be asked to provide additional data around the use of support services at future meetings.

**ACTION:** - The Student President and Vice President would develop the student poll for a new name for the 'wobble' room.

The committee noted the report.

### **14 Terms of Reference and Committee Membership**

The Chair informed the committee that the Board development Committee would carry out a review of all committee terms of reference to identify gaps and harmonise terminology, further recommendations would be presented to the Board.

### **15 SFC Review – Consolation**

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report and gave context for the review. A submission to the Scottish Funding Council had been made following a request for all Colleges and Universities to submit suggestions for phased changes over a 4-year period.

A discussion on the content of the report took place. Some concern was raised for the new tertiary model for the South and the possible impact on the college with any suggestion of a wider model across the Border region. The committee were reassured that there was a willingness for further collaboration between the college and schools with the suggestion of further collaboration between universities. A willingness to collaborate was recognised.

The interim regional Chair commented that the paper was cautious in the outline of the Tertiary model and the college would demonstrate a willingness to work with all parties whilst considering the needs of both the college and its students.

The committee noted the report.

D. Holland left the meeting 15:30hrs

### **Matters for Monitoring/Review/Discussion**

### **16 Academic Council Report**

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience gave an update on the academic Council, the next meeting would take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> September. The Chair requested that a higher-level report be provided for future meetings.

#### **Decision: -**

A higher-level report would be provided for future meetings.

### **17 Education Scotland Approach - Update**

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience informed the committee that the college's new contact with Education Scotland would be Margaret Rose Livingston. Education Scotland had published a series of toolkits designed to be implemented within the college which would be customised by the college in order to identify key components of the evaluative report after October. Education Scotland had indicated this would be the level of engagement with the college at this time.

### **18 General Update on Impact of COVID-19 on Curriculum**

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience shared a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the various communication which had been made to students and staff. The committee was informed that the college would become one of only two WorldSkills Centres of Excellence in Scotland.

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The Chair on behalf of the committee congratulated the work with WorldSkills and commended the college on the volume of work around communications.

### 19 PIs and Outcome Agreement Situation

The Vice Principal, Learning, Skills and Student Experience spoke to the report and commented on the position and reported that some results had been outstanding at the time of publication. FTHE had improved by 10%, showing a significant change with a change also shown for FTFE provision. The three year trend had shown improvement, the final position would be shown at the next meeting.

### 20 Any Other Business

The Chair informed the committee of her intention to stand down at the end of December, leaving vacancies for both The Chair and member roles. Current Board member Ann Hill had agreed to join the committee and would attend the next meeting – the committee would seek expressions of interest and progress recruitment with assistance from the Secretary to the Board.

**ACTION:** - The Secretary to the Board would seek expressions of interest to present to the next meeting.

The Committee was informed of several award nominations the college had received; these were: -

- Innovative Education – for work by photography lecturer Steven Taylor.
- Colleges Development Network - Student of the Year Award, Climate Emergency Action Award and Digital Learning Award.

The committee gave congratulations to the college for the nominations.

The Chair advised the committee that the Annual Review was required – The Chair would progress this with the Secretary to the Board and allow members to respond and outline the content to review prior to the meeting on the 17 November.

### 21 Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee would be held on Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 2pm.