

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
held in Kilmarnock Campus
on Wednesday 19 March 2014**



Present: Barbara Graham (Chair)
Kathryn Cole
Heather Dunk
Steven Fegan
Tom Wallace

In attendance: Moira Birtwistle (Director, Hospitality, Tourism, Business and IT)
Helen Canning (Director, Student Services)
Brendan Ferguson (Secretary to the Board of Management, Minutes)
Jackie Galbraith (V.P. Strategy, Planning & Performance)
Alistair Gordon (Director, Finance & Student Funding)
Elaine Hutton (Director, Creative)
Bernadette McGuire (V.P. Learning & Teaching)
Michael McHugh (Director, Quality Enhancement)
Jane McKie (V.P. HR & Organisational Wellbeing)
Julie Maxwell (Director, Care, Education & Sport & Fitness)
Carol Nisbet (Director, Access & Inclusion)

1 Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the excellent work undertaken by Carol Kirk as the previous Chair of this Committee. The Chair asked that the Committee's gratitude for Carol's work be recorded.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Bill Costley, Marie Macklin, Michael Breen and Gavin Murray.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minute of the meeting held on 11 December 2013 (*Paper 1*)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Steven Fegan
Seconded: Kathryn Cole

5 Matters Arising

Chaplaincy Teams (pages 1 and 2) - Helen Canning reported that while no formal Chaplaincy arrangement exists for the Ayr and Kilwinning campuses at the current time, with teams in place this would be a development for the future. The Learning and Teaching Committee would be kept informed of progress.

Action: An update be provided at the next meeting of the Committee on any progress made in relation to the Chaplaincy Teams.

6 Draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2014-17 (*Paper 2*)

J Galbraith introduced the paper by stating that the main task in producing the Outcome Agreement had been to reflect the Curriculum Development Plan (CDP) and in so doing capture and analyse the labour market data, which underpinned the curriculum and the development strategy of the College. In its preparation, all members of the Executive Management Team (EMT) had been consulted and kept informed and drafts had been shared with the SFC for comment. J Galbraith added that a new member of Staff, Richard Simpson, had just been appointed who, supported by data analysts, would be responsible for the capture and analysis of labour market data in the future. These data analyses would underpin the development and direction of future strategies designed to address the post 16 educational requirements of the Ayrshire Region, in addition to the wider demands of Scottish Government policy.

J Galbraith went on to say that the EMT was very interested to hear the Committee's views on the draft Outcome Agreement and, in particular, the evidence and analyses presented within it. The Committee was also reminded that the format of the draft document followed the Scottish Government template and this was the format in which the Scottish Government expected the Outcome Agreement to be presented.

During discussions a number of questions were raised and satisfactorily answered. Specific points discussed included:

- The term 7 star College and its understanding which was clarified by the Principal and acknowledge as being supported by the SFC.
- Under bullet point 5, Provider of Choice for Learners, the Committee asked if some specific examples could be included in order to further promote the College.
- The Committee welcomed the approach toward the development of a regional strategy for Quality, Learning and Teaching Enhancement, as outlined in paragraph 60, and looked forward to seeing the outcome of this when completed.
- There was discussion around the challenges associated with a consistent approach to data gathering and reporting to meet all stakeholders' requirements including Community Planning Partners. It was noted that the College is currently working with SFC on the national issues surrounding college systems.

- In relation to paragraph 80, “Commercial Courses” The Committee recognised the extensive developments that were taking place in this area and suggested enhancing this section. J Galbraith explained that work was currently being undertaken to expand the Commercial Activity section for the draft document and reflect the developments.
- In relation to the section on “Efficiency savings and financial management”, the Committee suggested an emphasis be placed on the use of the word “continue”, as in “*The College will continue to use the public funds effectively*” and “*...the College will continue to provide value for money...*”
- Within paragraph 95 “Non-SFC income”, the Committee felt that the paragraph could be enhanced by the use of the phrase “*re-invest in learners*”.
- In relation to the Annex section 15 – J Galbraith stated that the College and the SFC had to work together on the data capture for this section and how it would be achieved. A further report on this would be brought to the Committee when completed.

The Chair stated how impressed she had been with the Paper and the effort that had gone into its preparation, particularly the supporting evidence and analyses that underpinned the draft Outcome Agreement.

The Learning and Teaching Committee welcomed the draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2014-17 and commended the work that had gone into its preparation.

Action: J Galbraith to note the points raised in the above discussion-

7 2012-13 Ayrshire PIs Report – Scottish Funding Council Data (Paper 3)

J Galbraith introduced the above paper and stated that the SFC had published the 2012-13 College PIs in January 2014. SFC validated the PIs from the College FES returns. In considering the PIs in the report it was important to remember that they represent 2012-13, the year of merger preparation prior to the vesting of Ayrshire College. This meant the data were provided from three different sources and represents three different inputs. As such, it cannot provide the benchmark data from which Ayrshire College will work. A fully consistent and confident reporting on the PI’s for Ayrshire College would not be reflected until 2014-15 when the MIS processes were fully embedded.

J Galbraith continued by saying that future PI reports to this Committee would contain information in a more considered graphical format in order to present the data in a more accessible and comprehensible way and also to make analyses and comparisons easier to understand. E Hutton added that the Directors would seek to standardise the collection and presentation of the data across Ayrshire College and would use the analyses to ensure that the requirements of industry were being met.

In reply to a question from T Wallace on whether there were PIs not currently covered that the College would like to provide in the future; the Principal stated

that a post-code analysis would be a useful tool in the future identification of the percentage of students originating from the SIMD 20. This would considerably assist the work being undertaken by M McHugh with the Community Planning Partners.

The Committee thanked J Galbraith for the provision of the above paper and, in noting its content, also congratulated the staff responsible for putting together the data analyses.

8 2013-14 WSUMs Position as at 28 February 2014 (Paper 4)

In introducing the above paper B McGuire stated that a key strategic aim of the College was to meet the annual WSUMs activity target set by the SFC. Paper 4 had been prepared using figures from three separate campus systems. The challenges at the start of the academic year have been previously discussed with the Committee and are considered within the current WSUMs report. A single system for Ayrshire College was targeted to be fully implemented by August 2014.

B McGuire drew members' attention to page three of the paper, which highlighted a challenge in meeting the full WSUMs activity for 2013-14, and explained that this related to a greater extent to the provision of Extended Learning Support (ELS), in one campus in particular, and that the WSUMs had been realigned accordingly. The College was seeking to bridge the gap between the College's projections and the activity target set by SFC, however there was a real possibility of a shortfall.

The Principal stated that SFC had been made aware of this situation and the associated difficulties. They indicated that they understood the position and the underlying reasons. The Principal added that a request had been received from Prestwick Airport, recently taken into Scottish Government ownership, to train their staff. The SFC had been consulted to see whether it would be permissible to use WSUMs to undertake this training and a response was awaited. Work would continue across the campuses in raising student and staff awareness of ELS, and their role and responsibilities in ensuring that optimum use was made of this facility.

The Committee noted the report and asked whether there was a risk that a clawback of funding might result if the WSUMs fell short of the target set by the SFC. The Principal stated that clawback was a risk in those circumstances and the College would require to make provision for such an eventuality. T Wallace, in noting the position, stated that a possible WSUMs variance of 1.35% still represented a very good performance during this most complex of transitional years.

The Committee noted the content of the above report and the current 2013-14 WSUMs position.

9 2013-14 Student Support Funds as at 28 February 2014 (*Paper 5*)

A Gordon appraised the Committee of the figures contained within the paper while at the same explaining the sources of the funding. A Gordon went on to state that the College Management were confident that the projections had been prudently prepared and believed that there was the potential that the £450K set aside from the College reserves would not be required.

The Committee noted the increased pressure being placed on bursary funding, as demonstrated in the figures presented, and expressed their concern at the level of bursary funding being made available by the SFC. The Principal explained that bursary funding was allocated on historical basis, with a further in year allocation made across the sector on the basis of the funding available. Ayrshire College received an in year settlement of £1.2 million in December 2013. While that allocation significantly improved the overall student funding position, it was not based on need and left the College with an overall deficit of £422K that it was required to find. The College was taking this matter up with the SFC and would present the case for changing allocation modelling from one that was historically based to one that is needs based.

T Wallace asked what the impact would be if the in-year distribution of bursary support funding stopped and was informed that in such a circumstance the College would face the choice of ceasing recruitment or entering a deficit. T Wallace responded that it was important, therefore, to ensure that in the future an appropriate settlement in relation to bursary funding was agreed. The Principal confirmed that this was a matter of high priority for discussion with SFC.

The content of the above paper was noted and members' concern at the position in relation to bursary funding was recorded. The Committee requested that it be kept informed of the progress of the discussions on this matter between the College and the SFC.

10 Extended Learning Support (ELS): Interim Report 2013-14 (*Paper 6*)

The Committee noted the above report and the introduction to it provided by C Nisbet. Discussion took place around the cultural issues surrounding the provision of learning support. It was recognised that the provision of a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) requires to be needs led by the individual student in partnership with teaching staff and appropriate external agencies. It was also recognised, however, that students were not always forthcoming in recognising or identifying their needs. The Committee agreed that awareness raising of the provision available from ELS was vitally important and were very supportive of the College's work in this respect. The Committee was particularly impressed by the College's determination to ensure that all student ELS needs across the campuses were identified and addressed and of their work in ensuring that all teaching staff were aware of their role and responsibilities in supporting the students.

The Committee noted the content of the above interim report and recorded their support for the College's continued efforts to ensure that all staff and students were fully aware of the benefits available through ELS.

11 Safeguarding & Promoting Positive Behaviour Interim Report (Paper 7)

H Canning summarised the report, which described the situation in terms of the separate legacy safeguarding arrangements operational in the three main campuses during 2013-14. The purpose of the report was to progress towards establishing a baseline for the College which would support ongoing improvement of outcomes and reporting for students equally across the campuses.

The Committee welcomed the above report and the considerable amount of work evident in its production. In particular the Committee welcomed the strong proposals contained within the report for moving Safeguarding and Positive Behaviour forward across Ayrshire College as a single approach, addressing all campuses on an equal and consistent basis.

Some questions were raised, particularly around the issue of communication with students, and satisfactory answers were received. The Committee was pleased to hear that communication with students was at the forefront of the approach described, as would be the ongoing review of whether the communication techniques were working. The Committee also welcomed the role that would be played by the Students' Association in communicating with and explaining these arrangements to students.

The Committee noted the content of the above paper and supported the proposals contained therein.

12 Audit Report – Value for Money Review of Childcare Support (Paper 8)

A Gordon explained that the above paper represents the first stage of a review of the legacy childcare provision available across the three main campuses of Ayrshire College. The audit was undertaken by Scott-Moncrieff and was not carried out on the basis of being a money saving exercise. Rather it considered the three separate models of child care operating as legacy provision across Ayrshire College and whether this provision was meeting the needs of the carers and the College, and offering value for money from the funding available to the College. Scott-Moncrieff's audit report sought to provide evidence to assist the College in understanding the costs and the benefits of the existing legacy child care support arrangements.

H Canning added that the College had engaged the Nurseries' staff and managers in these considerations and had asked them to consider models of provision that would provide the optimum level of support for the majority of students in the most cost effective manner. H Dunk continued that much more work was required; with the involvement of all of the stakeholders in child care support, to identify the most robust model of provision. There would be further discussion on this matter at the Audit Committee. The operation of the revised

model of delivery would be reviewed after one year with further consideration taken forward as required.

The Committee noted the above report with interest and encouraged the College to continue with its considered approach towards securing the most efficient, cost effective and supportive childcare provision possible.

13 Early Withdrawal Report 2013-14 (*Paper 9*)

In considering the report the Committee was pleased to note the year on year decrease in early withdrawals across Ayrshire and the point made by J Galbraith that this was a positive indicator of performance. The Committee was further pleased to note that the figures presented were better than those contained within the Outcome Agreement and in that sense the College was outperforming its target. J Galbraith stated that these data could be used intelligently to assist the College in identifying the most likely time for early withdrawals and what support may be required.

T Wallace asked if any intelligence was available on the reasons for the withdrawals and was informed by J Galbraith that the SFC provides designated codes for withdrawals. In the future it was anticipated that College reports would provide more detail for the committee on these codes and the reasons for withdrawal.

The Committee noted the above report and welcomed the actions designed to reduce the number of early withdrawals. The Committee thanked the Directors and asked them to convey this to their teams whose hard work had contributed so much to the ever-improving trend.

14 Largs Campus Curriculum Delivery for 2014-15 (*Paper 10*)

The Committee noted that the above paper explained the background to the current situation and were pleased to note the very proactive nature of the College's response. Members regretted the delay of Sports Scotland in informing the College of its plans and thanked North Ayrshire Council for its role in ensuring that the College received the information it required.

The Committee noted with interest the progress being made towards the provision of the necessary facilities and looked forward to a further report on the agreements reached at its next meeting.

The Committee noted the above report and commended the College on its proactive response and the progress being made.

15 Phase 2 Organisational Review Update (*Verbal Report*)

J McKie briefed the Committee on the progress of phase 2 of the organisational review. The consultation phase had been completed and the implementation phase was now underway. The current priority was the appointment of the

Curriculum Managers. As a result of the feedback received during the consultation process, it had been decided to amend the teaching time per week allocated to the curriculum managers. The appointees will remain on curriculum staff terms and conditions and would be able to provide teaching where deemed appropriate. The revised job description was recently considered at a meeting with EIS/FELA representatives and it was hoped that this would be progressed positively in time for the start of the 2014-15 academic year.

The Committee noted the above report and the progress being made.

16 Directorates Update Report for March 2014. (Paper 11)

M Birtwistle stated that the above report provided a snapshot of the progress made by the Directorates and the successes achieved. Its aim was to provide the Learning and Teaching Committee with an update and selection of activities and developments from each of the Learning Skill's Directorates.

The Chair replied that the paper provided a very upbeat and informative summary of the success that had been achieved and welcomed it on behalf of the Committee.

The Committee noted the above paper and commended it on its content.

17 Student Association Report (Paper 12)

The Committee noted the Students' Association report and the summary provided by S Fegan. In particular members welcomed the report that a new Vice President, Sharon Graham, had been elected for the Kilwinning Campus.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee paid tribute to the Students' Association and its Officers for persevering and making progress through what had been a very difficult time for them. The Chair welcomed the many successes of the students during this year and looked forward to further anticipated success before the close of the academic year.

The above report was noted and welcomed and the Students' Association and its Officers commended for their achievements during a difficult year.

18 Risk Register – Learning & Teaching Extract at October 2013 (Paper 13)

B McGuire noted that the above extract was the same as that previously presented to the Committee, but stated that this would change prior to the next meeting. There was increased risk noted in L&T 1 and also in relation to the exit from the Largs Campus (as considered above). These would be considered at the next meeting of the Audit Committee before being approved by the Board and then being returned to this Committee.

The Committee noted the above extract and the intimation that changes to the risks relating to Learning & Teaching were being considered.

19 AOCB

The Chair reported that she had recently attended a training course run by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) specifically designed for board members. She had found this course to be effective and worthwhile and commended it to all Ayrshire College Board Members. J McKie added that the ECU had stated that they would be happy to deliver the course to members of the Ayrshire College Board.

Action: The Secretary discuss with the Chair of the BoM and the Principal the delivery of the ECU training course to the Ayrshire College Board of Management at an appropriate time in the future.

20 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 19 June 2014, 5.30 pm, Kilwinning Campus.