

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
held in the Boardroom, Ayr Campus
on Thursday 30 October 2014 at 5.30 pm**



Present: Barbara Graham (Chair)
Angela Alexander
Nicki Beveridge
Julie Bradley
Heather Dunk
Alan McGregor
Tom Wallace

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Secretary)
Sharon Graham (Observer)
Moiria Birtwistle (Director, Hospitality, Tourism, Business and IT)
Michael Breen (VP, Corporate Services)
Helen Canning (Director, Student Services)
Jackie Galbraith (VP, Strategy, Planning, Performance)
Elaine Hutton (Director, Creative)
Bernadette McGuire (V.P. Learning & Teaching)
Michael McHugh (Director, Quality Enhancement)
Julie Maxwell (Director, Care, Education & Sport & Fitness)
Gavin Murray (Director, STEM)
Carol Nisbet (Director, Access & Inclusion)

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular new members Angela Alexander, Julie Bradley and Alan McGregor to their first meeting of the Committee.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Bill Costley, Stephen Greenwood and Jane McKie.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 19 June 2014 (Paper 1)

Subject to the insertion of a paragraph number 13 on page six, the minutes were approved as a correct record.¹

Proposed: Barbara Graham

5 Matters Arising

Page 1, Item 5: H Canning reported that significant progress had been made with respect to the Chaplaincy arrangements and it was expected that the existing arrangements covering the Kilmarnock Campus would be extended to cover all other campuses.

Page 6, Item 12: J Galbraith reported that the pilot is well underway and a full report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

6 Governance Arrangements: Learning & Teaching Committee Terms of Reference (Paper 2)

B Ferguson reported that the revised Terms of Reference were as approved by the Board of Management at its meeting of 30 September. The revisions made are minor and as reported to members at the Board Meeting.

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference, as considered and approved at the recent meeting of the Board of Management, and were pleased to confirm their support.

7 Marketing and PR Report (Paper 3)

J Galbraith stated that the report was largely for information and to provide members with an insight into the activity which had been taking place. The performance and activity of M&PR had been impressive, particularly in its approach towards the use of Social Media. In addition the College was in the process of seeking to extend its current dedicated student page in the Kilmarnock Standard to the Irvine Herald and the Ayrshire Post in order to achieve dedicated coverage across the Ayrshire regions.

A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received. In response to a question on how the impact of the marketing and PR activity would be reviewed, the Principal stated that the EMT would welcome suggestions in that respect. It was agreed that an evaluation of marketing and PR activities should be brought to a future meeting of the Committee in summary form for information

¹ As the only member of the Committee present at this meeting who was present at the previous meeting, Barbara Graham confirmed the accuracy of the minutes in association with those "In Attendance" at the previous meeting.

The Committee noted the above report congratulated the Marketing Team on their achievements.

Action: A report on the evaluation of marketing and PR activity will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for information.

8 2013-14 Education Scotland: Annual Engagement Report (*Paper 4*)

B McGuire introduced the above report and noted that, as a result of the timings of the various meetings, members would already have received it. Nevertheless, it represented a very positive document for the College and presented an excellent report, undertaken as it was during the first year of operation as Ayrshire College.

A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received. In particular B McGuire and H Canning noted the excellent engagement of staff and the positive feedback being received from students within the areas identified for improvement in page 3 of the report.

H Dunk added that a further measure will lie in the School/College engagement. The College has made improvements, but the engagement from the Schools required further enhancement. Discussions to this effect were taking place with the local authorities, including the standardisation of timetables across the schools.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report as a positive review of the progress being made in the establishment of Ayrshire College. The Committee also welcomed the feedback provided on the areas identified for improvement within the report.

9 2013/14 WSUMs: Final Position (*Paper 5*)

B McGuire introduced the above paper and stated that members were aware of the background and the issues involved. The SFC had been made aware of the potential under delivery from early in the 2013/14 academic year and had been regularly updated since.

The final position had just been confirmed in the FES return for 2013/14 (which includes total WSUMs delivered) and showed a 1.85% shortfall on target for the College as a whole. Table 3 in the report contained an analysis of the WSUMs delivered against the targets set in each of the main campuses. From the analysis undertaken it was clear where the issues lay and what would need to be addressed for the future.

In response to a question, B McGuire stated that, while no figures were yet available, it was clear from discussions with colleagues elsewhere that similar challenges were being faced across the sector.

The Committee noted the work being undertaken at the Kilwinning Campus designed to bring about a clearer understanding of the issues being faced and

to ensure that the levels of demand evident in South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire are reflected in the provision being made available in North Ayrshire.

The Learning & Teaching Committee noted the content of the above paper and the 2013/14 WSUMs Final Position.

The Committee also commended B McGuire and her team for their tremendous effort over the previous months in limiting the WSUMs shortfall for 2013/14.

10 National Course Results 2013-14 (*Paper 6*)

J Galbraith and M McHugh introduced the above paper and stated that the results, as shown, still related to the legacy colleges. The first results relating to the performance of Ayrshire College would be for 2014/15.

M McHugh continued that while the results for 2013/14 show a small improvement on the results of the previous year, there was still plenty of scope for further improvement as Ayrshire College. An analysis of the results was underway and, with the teaching teams now in place, we have a much clearer understanding of the issues to be addressed was emerging.

A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received. In particular B McGuire confirmed that, following analysis of the patterns contained within the raw data, a strategy was being developed to address legacy issues and to ensure that the right programmes and the best advice was available to students.

The Committee noted the above paper and its content and encouraged the continuing analyses of the data available and the development of the strategy as described above.

11 External Verification Report 2013/14 (*Paper 7*)

B Graham, from the Chair, noted that the visits had gone extremely well as reflected in the above report. M McHugh stated that the visits had been very positive and where issues had been identified these had subsequently been addressed.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report and commended the College on the positive outcome of the visits and for the prompt action taken to address those issues which had been identified.

12 **Report on Extended Learning Support 2013/14** (*Paper 8*)

B McGuire introduced the above paper and the Committee discussed issues raised by the analyses.

The Principal, H Dunk, emphasised during discussion that the provision of Extended Learning Support (ELS) is, by its very nature, needs based. As such, the number of referrals and the precise level of requirement for any given period will always be unpredictable. Work is being undertaken to analyse the statistics contained in the above paper with a view to gaining a clearer understanding e.g. of the relationship between ELS and positive outcomes and to identify where this needs to be more clearly directed towards specific areas.

The Principal also reported that discussion had taken place with SFC on the need for a flexible approach to ELS funding which reflected the fact that it is needs based. In response to a question, the Principal confirmed that there is a danger, if SFC moves towards the provision of fixed ELS funding, that Ayrshire College could see funding decrease despite continual increase in referrals.

The Committee noted the content of the above report with interest and was concerned by the reported implications of the imposition of fixed ELS funding. The Committee encouraged the College to maintain its position of discussion with SFC, emphasising the importance of ELS in encouraging student success and the need to maintain a flexible approach to its ongoing funding.

13 **Looked After & Accommodated and Young Carer Students** (*Paper 9*)

B McGuire and H Canning introduced and took members through the issues identified in the above paper. It was explained that the biggest challenge faced had been data sharing and accessing the appropriate data. While partnership working was improving, reflected in increasing success rates, this remained a challenging area of work.

A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received, including confirmation that the smooth and properly prepared transfers to HE and the workplace of those students achieving success was being achieved in liaison with SDS and University partners.

The Committee noted the content of the above report.

14 **2013/14 Outcome Agreement Self-Assessment** (Verbal Report)

J Galbraith reported that the Self-Assessment report would be on the agenda for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting. However, as a result of the timings of the cycle, by that time it would already have been received by SFC.

The Committee noted the above verbal report and looked forward to receiving the 2013/14 Outcome Agreement Self-Assessment.

15 2013/14 Student Support Funds Final Position (Paper 10)

M Breen introduced the above paper and members noted the critical nature of the management and disbursement of student support funds within the College Risk Register. The Committee also noted the funding shortfall in this area against annual requirement and the reliance on an unpredictable amount of in-year funding, allocated by the SFC, to offset the shortfall. A £1.1 million in-year allocation received in December 2013 permitted a break even position on student support funding in the 2013/14 annual financial statement, however, the amount received was unknown up to the point where the allocation was made. The Committee considered the financial planning uncertainty engendered by this situation and the consequent impact this may have in sustaining student bursary payments to be unacceptable.

The Principal added that the SFC is aware of the sector-wide concern on this matter and has established a “Funding Group” to consider the matter and to provide advice. S Graham added that Student Associations across the country are also coming together to work on this issue.

The Committee noted the contents of the above Report and reiterated its concern at the situation where reliance was placed on an unpredictable amount of additional in-year funding, provided by the SFC, to enable the College to meet its student support funding obligations for 2013/14.

16 2014/15 Student Support Funds Allocation (Paper 11)

M Breen introduced Paper 11, which followed on directly from the above item and discussion. The Committee noted that the risks and concerns remain precisely the same as above, with the College again reliant on an unspecified amount of in-year funding to enable it to meet its obligations to current students and those who will enrol in January 2015. As things stood, the Committee was aware that a minimum £1.2 million of in-year funding was required to reach a similar break-even point to that achieved in 2013/14.

While an overall funding increase of 1.2% over 2013/14 was noted, this did not align with the increase in WSUMs the College must deliver, leaving an imbalance between delivery requirements and funding available.

The Committee noted that the SFC was working from a historical model in making its funding projections, which leads to a mismatch between delivery levels and student funding requirements. In the Committee’s view this position was unsustainable and a realisation must be brought to bear within the SFC that if targets are to be met, then funding must match the Scottish Government’s aspirations.

The Committee noted the content of the above paper and further expressed its concern that the position being adopted by the SFC was unsustainable.

The Committee encouraged the proactive involvement of all parties in seeking a resolution to this challenging situation.

17 2014/15 Recruitment (*Verbal Report*)

B McGuire stated that a verbal update was being provided at this stage of the year with a full written report to be provided to the Committee in December. The Committee noted that the enrolment numbers looked positive at this stage, but how that translates itself to weighted sums (WSUMs) would be the crucial issue.

The Committee noted the verbal update on recruitment and looked forward to receiving a written report on the figures achieved at its next meeting.

18 Team Evaluation Update (*Verbal report*)

M McHugh provided a verbal update on the Team Evaluation process, as begun at the All Day Staff Event held at Ayr Racecourse in August. M McHugh confirmed that the teams had been evaluating their performance during 2013/14. A large amount of data had been collected and was being analysed. Feedback from employers had also been obtained. Good progress was being made on what was a very positive approach to team evaluation.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above verbal update and looked forward to further reports on the progress and outcome of the Team Evaluation Exercise.

19 Directorate Update (*Paper 12*)

B McGuire introduced the report and commended it to the Committee.

Members noted the significant amount of activity taking place, as evidenced in the report, and asked that the Directors be informed how impressed the Committee was with the work being undertaken.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report and commended the Directors on the work being undertaken.

20 Student Association Report (*Paper 13*)

S Graham introduced and commended the above report to the Committee as written and commented that a great deal of activity, as outlined in the report, had taken place.

The Chair commended the work and effort of the Students Association, as exemplified in the report and the updates provided by S Graham. The Chair also noted that the Association was undertaking a major structural change in 2014/15 and that they were still in the process of bedding that change in and

finding the most efficient and practical way of operating effectively as a single entity with one voice across all of the campuses.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report and commended the Student Association on the progress they have made, particularly in terms of operationalising their new structure, being rolled out in 2014/15.

21 Risk Register: Learning & Teaching Extract at August 2014 (*Paper 14*)

The above extract was received and noted by the Committee. Members also noted the forthcoming Risk Management Workshop, to be facilitated by Scott-Moncrieff, and stated that they would welcome the opportunity to consider the appropriate ratings of the Learning & Teaching risk cluster within the scope of the workshop.

The above extract was noted and approved.

It was agreed that the opportunity would be taken to consider the rating of the risks contained in the Learning & Teaching cluster in light of the outcome of the forthcoming Risk Workshop.

22 AOB

- **The Committee joined with the Principal in wishing Angela Alexander good luck at the forthcoming SQA Star Awards at which Angela was a nominee.**
- **The Committee welcomed the information that the forthcoming Scottish Student Sport Executive & Management Meeting will be held at Ayrshire College.**

23 Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 2 December 2014, Kilwinning Campus.