

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
Held at the Ayr Campus,
On Thursday 31 May 2018**



(Paper 9)

Present: Barbara Graham (Committee Chair)
Nicki Beveridge
Margarette Bryan
Gordon James
Douglas McIvor
Lainey McKinlay
Juliana Pyper-McFarland
Tom Wallace

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Moira Birtwistle (Director – Business, IT, Sports Fitness and Social Science)
Helen Canning (Director – Student Services)
Jackie Galbraith (VP – Strategy & Skills)
Ann Heron (Head of Quality Enhancement)
Elaine Hutton (Director – Creative)
Julie Maxwell (Director of Learning and Skills - Care and Early Years Education)
Michael McHugh (Director – Quality Enhancement and Business Improvement)
Eleanor O'nions (Executive Assistant) (Minutes)

Guest: Ian Beach (Education Scotland)

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated Jackie Galbraith on her appointment as Principal of West Lothian College.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from committee members Alan McGregor, Julie Bradley, Heather Dunk, Fiona Fawdry and Lora Miller. Apologies were also received from EMT members Michael Breen, Jane McKie and Donna Vallance.

3 Record of the Inquorate Meeting held on 8 March 2018 (Paper 1) P

The above record was approved as accurately reflecting the discussion held by those in attendance.

It was noted that the record was circulated to all members and the content was approved, including the Learning & Teaching Strategy (Item 8, Paper 5).

4 Matters Arising

Page 2 Item 6: The Chair reported that the Education Scotland Revised “*How Good is our College?*” EREP Guidance was on the agenda as Paper 13. The Committee anticipated that the revised guidance would be well received within the sector. The College’s next Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan, based on the revised guidance, would be brought to the Committee in September 2018.

Page 5 Item 14: M Breen reported that the College did not receive the requested level of funds from the SAAS in year discretionary funding allocation. Rather a much smaller amount had been allocated. The College was currently seeking ways to manage the shortfall without detrimental impact on students.

The Committee agreed that a report on the progress towards preparation of the next Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan should be placed on the agenda for the September 2018 meeting of the Committee.

5 Student Association Report (Paper 2) P

L McKinlay took the Committee through the report and reported on the content, including the outcome of the student sabbatical elections; the handover period of one month between outgoing 2017-18 student sabbatical officers and their incoming replacements for 2018-19; the progress made on the 2017-18 Student Association objectives; and the awards season nominations.

The Committee noted the above Report and commended the Student Association on their achievements over the 2017-18 academic year. The Committee also noted that this would be Lainey McKinlay’s last meeting and commended Lainey and Lora Millar for their outstanding efforts and achievement on behalf of the Student Association and the College during their period of office. In addition, the recent initiative in relation to the Student Association input to the Bus Users Scotland Focus Group was considered to be a very worthwhile exercise which was highly commended by the Committee.

6 Sector Key Performance Indicators 2016-17 (Paper 3) P

J Galbraith introduced Paper 3 and commented that there had been significant improvements over the period as noted in the paper, but that further work remained to be done.

The Committee noted that Ayrshire College was one of only two colleges in Scotland to improve performance for both FE and HE full-time students in 2016-17. Progress at both levels was welcomed and attention would now be given to improvement in four curriculum areas where performance in HE full-time courses is below the College and the sector averages:

- Engineering and Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Business and Computing
- Hair, Beauty and Complementary Therapies.

Education Scotland was supporting this by working with the College, for example by observing teaching in some of these areas.

The Committee further noted that performance in FE part-time courses had declined over the previous three years, primarily due to courses for school pupils. This was being addressed through discussion with head teachers and by providing support for lecturers in teaching methods most appropriate for school pupils.

As part of the discussion, the committee noted and expressed its concern that college leavers' destinations surveys do not include students who were partially successful, especially as the reason for not completing a course was due in some cases to students leaving to enter employment. This lack of information across the sector skewed statistics on the true impact of college outcomes on Scotland's economy. The Committee considered that a more realistic indicator would be the number of college students who found employment as a result of their course, regardless of whether their course was fully or partially completed.

The Committee agreed that the above matter in relation to leaver destinations surveys was an important issue, and should be raised with the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government. This with a view to making a strong recommendation that research be carried out, through developing a survey which will provide valuable and meaningful data on the impact of the educational experience on students and the value added to the Scottish economy, regardless of whether individuals had formally completed their programme of studies.

7 15-24 Learner Journey Review Report (Paper 4) P

J Galbraith introduced Paper 4 stating that it had been brought to the Committee for information. It represented a summary of a much larger report that colleges would be expected to respond to. The report itself was a policy driver which may result in future actions by the Scottish Government being placed upon the sector. The College would be required to demonstrate that they are taking the content of the report into account as part of its future considerations.

The Committee noted the above Report.

8 Outcome Agreement Addendum 2018-19 (Paper 5) P

J Galbraith took the Committee through the above document which, the Committee noted, highlighted challenges in the Ayrshire context as the only region in Scotland with a decline in public and private sector employment – down by 10% between 2008 and 2016. In addition, the region had the lowest output and lowest productivity in Scotland. Population projections predicted that Ayrshire would suffer “significant decline” in all age groups except the 65+ group. This would

increase competition between the College and universities for a diminishing pool of younger students.

A lengthy discussion ensued and the Committee agreed that these factors combined to create significant challenges for Ayrshire College in relation to student recruitment, retention and positive leaver destinations.

A coherent regional skills investment plan was required involving stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council, local authorities, Skills Development Scotland, employers and the College. While it was recognised that the Ayrshire Growth Deal offered significant opportunities for the region, it was also recognised that without a coherent strategic approach across all of the stakeholders, those opportunities were unlikely to deliver maximum value. The Committee, therefore, urged the Board to adopt a horizon scanning approach to how the College can contribute towards finding solutions to the challenges facing the Ayrshire Region and how it can help the Scottish Government and SFC to recognise the extent of these challenges.

The Committee commended the Outcome Agreement Addendum to the Board for Approval.

In the light of the above discussion, it was recommended that the Board should dedicate a strategic planning session in 2018-19 to considering the impact of predicted future scenarios on the College and the Ayrshire Region, considering measures in mitigation which could be taken and how it could support the Scottish Government and SFC in recognising and addressing these challenges.

9 Digital Skills Strategy (Paper 6) P

M Birtwistle introduced Paper 6 and took members through it, answering questions as a part of the discussion.

The Committee commended the draft Digital Skills Strategy as an excellent, well-structured and valuable strategic development, which described how all students would become digital citizens who are safe, secure and creative in the 21st century. Committee members made constructive suggestions on the development of this paper, which would be included in a revised draft to be brought to the Board.

The Committee commended the Digital Skills Strategy to the Board of Management for approval.

10 Credit Activity Target 2017-18: Progress Report (Paper 7) P

M McHugh took the Committee through the above paper. The projection was that the College would deliver 126,261 by the close of the academic year, 800 credits (0.7%) above target. At this stage, the College was cautiously optimistic that it would achieve this figure.

The Committee noted the above report and recognised that a significant amount of work had been undertaken in reaching this position.

11 Enhancement Plan 2017-18: Progress Report (Paper 8) P

J Galbraith introduced the above paper and reported that good progress was being made. However, it was not realistic to achieve all of the actions over one year, and some may be spread over three years.

The Committee recognised that the Enhancement Plan Progress Tracker was being well used to check on development areas which the College pledged to improve in its 2017 Evaluation Report. The Committee studied the full document and, following suggestions from members, agreed that a concise version which identifies those actions closed and those still in progress, alongside a “traffic lights” indicator system, should be included. In addition, it was recommended that an executive summary be included setting out what had been achieved and what value had been added.

The Enhancement Plan 2017-18 Progress Report was noted and the comments contained in the above discussion commended to the authors.

The Committee asked that this be made a standing item at L & T Committee meetings, with regular reports made to the Board and a focus on any problematic areas where additional support may be required.

12 Industry Programmes 2017-18: Progress Report (Paper 9) P

J Galbraith introduced Paper 9 and took the Committee through the progress made. Key highlights included:

- the Modern Apprenticeship contract for 2018-19 offered more places – 138 compared to 115 starts last year. The contract value was noted as £680,000;
- Due to the College’s success in engaging with employers with regard to the Flexible Workforce Development Fund, the College’s Director of Industry Programmes was invited to deliver a presentation to the Scottish Parliament’s Cross Party Skills Group.
- GE Caledonian was so impressed by the College’s students that it raised its intake of apprentices from 9 to 13, all from Ayrshire College.

The Committee noted and welcomed the Industry Programmes 2017-18 Progress Report.

13 Student Support Funds 2017-18 as at May 2018 (Paper 10) P

J Galbraith introduced the above Paper and stated that outturn was as projected and there were no issues identified.

The Committee noted Paper 10.

14 **Corporate Risk Register: L&T Extract at May 2018** (*Paper 11*) R

J Galbraith introduced the Risk Extract as presented.

Following discussion, the Committee made only one small change, reducing L&T3 from 16 to 12 to take account of the decreased likelihood. This decrease took account of the Education Scotland observation on the quality of learning and teaching, and also the Curriculum Mapping Exercise.

The main discussion centred around the need to re-consider the risk definitions in 2018-19. This in light of the discussion recorded under Item 8 above around the shrinking pool of young people and applicants, and the increased competition from universities as entry rates are lowered in response to the declining market. When this was allied to the Scottish Government's imperative to the university sector to improve their widening access intake and other initiatives which could provide financial incentives to schools, resulting in them encouraging pupils to remain until S6, the potential exists for a further reduction in an already shrinking pool of potential applicants.

Risk L&T3 be reduced and the following amendments made to the page:

- **Under "Movement in period" – tick should be moved from "No Change" to "Decreased"**
- **Under "Existing Controls/Actions Taken" – last action, add "including peer review"**
- **Under "Other Controls Planned/Further Actions etc" – add new point "Education Scotland Observation of quality of learning & teaching on courses below the College and sector average for successful outcomes."**
- **Under the same section, add a reference to the Curriculum Mapping Exercise.**

The Committee recommended to the Board that the L&T Extract from the Corporate Risk Register be reviewed in 2018-19 to take account of the discussions and risks identified under Items 8 and 14 above, and that this should be the subject of deliberation at the next scheduled Board Strategic Planning Day.

15 **AOB**

The Committee noted with regret that this would be Barbara Graham's last meeting as Chair. Barbara was stepping down from the Board having served as a Board member for the legacy College, the Interim College Board and for a full term of office for the newly vested Ayrshire Regional College. N Beveridge, on behalf of the Committee, paid tribute to Barbara's contribution and leadership of the Learning & Teaching Committee at a critical time in the development of Ayrshire College. N Beveridge concluded by stating that Barbara would be missed, a sentiment echoed by all of those present.

N Beveridge informed members that it would be the final meeting that Alan McGregor, Vice Chair, would attend. Alan was stepping down from the Board as a result of business commitments. Alan's loss was also very much regretted by the Committee, which paid tribute to his knowledge, experience, wisdom and practical down to earth approach to the issues under deliberation. In addition, the Committee would miss the humour often attached to his contributions and wished Alan every success in his business activities.

N Beveridge also reminded the Committee that it would be Jackie Galbraith's last meeting before she takes up her new role as Principal of West Lothian College. The Committee thanked Jackie for considerable contribution both to the development of the College and to the work of the Learning & Teaching Committee. The Committee wished Jackie success in her new appointment.

16 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 6 September 2018 at the Ayr Campus.