

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
Held at the Ayr Campus,
On Thursday 25 February 2016**

(Paper 16)

Present: Alan McGregor (Acting Chair)
Angela Alexander
Holly Bates
Nicki Beveridge
Bill Costley
Heather Dunk
Juliana Pyper-McFarlane

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Michael Breen (VP)
Moiria Birtwistle
Helen Canning (Director, Student Services)
Jackie Galbraith (VP)
Elaine Hutton (Director, Creative)
Julie Maxwell (Director, Care, Education & Sport & Fitness)
Bernadette McGuire (VP)
Michael McHugh (Director, Quality Enhancement)
Jane McKie (VP)
Gavin Murray (Director, STEM)
Carol Nisbet (Director, Access & Inclusion)

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from: Barbara Graham (Committee Chair), Julie Bradley and Tom Wallace.

3 Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 17 December 2015 *(Paper 1)*

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Angela Alexander
Seconded: Nicki Beveridge

4 Matters Arising

Page 2, Matters Arising; Course Leaver Destination Survey: M Breen confirmed that the Working Group had met and agreed a number of changes in the reporting within the Course Leaver Destination Survey, in line with the comments provided at previous meetings. This included the disaggregation of leaver statistics to report on the employer destinations. The Acting Chair, A

McGregor, as a member of the Working Group, confirmed the progress that had been made

The Committee noted and welcomed the progress made and looked forward to it being reflected in future Course Leaver Destination Surveys.

5 Extended Learning Support (*Presentation*)

H Canning provided a presentation on the Extended Learning Support services provided for learners, within which it was noted that the current Review being undertaken by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has taken on the position of also being a review of funding. The Committee was concerned at the potential implications of this and of any decision to change the funding status of students could bring about a decrease in the funding available. The uncertainty the Review was bringing was not welcomed and it was noted that students had stated in a meeting with the reviewers that any decrease in the funding provided would be likely to bring about a decrease in success rates and increase the number of early withdrawals. The Committee welcomed the information that the College was preparing its evidence base demonstrating the positive impact on student performance of the current Extended Learning Support funding provision.

The Committee welcomed the presentation on the role of Extended Learning Support, but was concerned to note that the Review being undertaken by SFC had become a funding review. The Committee wished to record its concern at the implications of any change in the funding status of students which would decrease the level of funding provided, thereby putting at risk the continuation of their opportunity to learn. The Committee welcomed the news that College would prepare its evidence base and vigorously oppose any funding decrease in Extended Learning Support.

6 Learning and Teaching Strategy (*Paper 2*)

B McGuire introduced the above paper and stated that she would welcome comments from members prior to its submission to the Board of Management. Members welcomed the Learning and Teaching Strategy document, which was considered to be comprehensive, vibrant and dynamic. M Breen reported a comment provided by the Chair of the Committee, B Graham, who unfortunately could not be present at this meeting. B Graham had welcomed the document and had suggested an addition to page 10 which would seek to highlight enhancement of the articulation and transition processes for those students making the transition to HE partners. B McGuire confirmed that this suggestion would be acted upon.

The Committee welcomed, approved and commended the Learning and Teaching Strategy to the Board for approval.

7 Internal Audit Programme – Curriculum Area Review (Paper 3)

M Breen reported that the Audit Committee had asked for the views of this Committee on the proposed Curriculum Area Review topics which would form part of the College programme of internal audits to be undertaken by Scott-Moncrieff over the next three years. The proposal was as set out in Paper 3. M Breen added that the Chair, B Graham was supportive of the proposal, but had commented that she would wish to see the Student Experience Review, scheduled for 2016/17, being widened in scope.

The Committee welcomed and approved the proposals contained in Paper 2 and asked that the suggestion of the Chair noted above be included.

Action: M Breen revise the content of the proposals contained in Paper 2 to accommodate the comments of the Committee Chair.

8 Student Association Report (Paper 4)

A Alexander introduced the above report and took members through it as written, adding that she would be leaving the College at the end of June 2016, after completing her period of office, and would take up her new post with the National Union of Students (NUS). A Alexander explained that the Student Association was currently preparing for the 2016/17 Student Sabbatical Officer elections.

The Committee noted and welcomed the content of the above report and the Acting Chair commended the excellent work being undertaken by the Student Association. A number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received.

The Committee welcomed the above report and commended the Student Association on the work being undertaken. The Committee also congratulated A Alexander on her appointment by NUS following completion of her period of office as President of the Ayrshire College Student Association.

9 Performance Indicators: SFC College Performance Indicators 2014/15 (Paper 5), Ayrshire College Performance Indicators 2014/15 (Paper 6)

M McHugh introduced papers 4 and 5, explaining that the performance indicators (PIs) contained within each paper reflected the performance of Ayrshire College against the sector averages. M McHugh took the Committee through this in some detail, highlighting all of the salient points. A lengthy discussion ensued with Committee members asking a number of questions and making a number of comments. The following points were noted:

- The Scottish Government expected to see an improvement in the withdrawal and partial success rates across the sector.
- There is evidence to show that PIs have previously take a significant dip in Colleges at this stage following merger.

- Ayrshire College faced significant challenges in 2014/15, including press coverage over lack of student funding, which impacted on Semester 2 enrolments, and industrial action at the Kilwinning Campus.
- There was a need to review the approach in a number of areas e.g. the enrolment process and retention activities.
- There had been a very significant increase in HE provision since the merger. There is further need to reflect on this and consider in planning terms.
- Continue to refine the understanding of annual student cohorts and their access requirements.
- Further enhance the work currently being undertaken with schools designed to improve the advice being provided by schools and improve the course and career choices being made by school leavers.

The Committee thanked M McHugh for his insightful presentation of Papers 5 and 6 and commended the points raised in the above discussion for further consideration.

10 2015/16 Credit Report as at 11 February 2016 (Paper 7)

M Breen introduced Paper 7 and took members through it as presented. M Breen added that the College was confident that it would meet its credit target for 2015/16.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report.

11 2015/16 Student Support Funds as at 20 January 2016 (Paper 8)

M Breen took the Committee through the above standing item which, it was noted, showed a significantly improved position from that of a year previously. M Breen reported a comment received from the Chair, B Graham, that she was pleased to note the improved funding position from that of the previous year and that discretionary funding remained available to support student retention.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report.

12 2015/16 Semester 1 Withdrawals Report (Paper 9)

J Galbraith introduced the above report and took members through it as presented. J Galbraith stated that a lot of work was taking place across all of the curriculum areas designed to improve the knowledge and understanding of why students withdraw from their course of study. M McHugh added that a new retention strategy was being implemented in this semester which had been designed to predict and identify where issues may arise for individual students and seek to pre-empt them.

M Breen stated that the Chair, B Graham, had commented that she acknowledged the context of the above report and the work completed to date. He added that M Graham was keen to understand the practical actions being taken to support improvement. The Committee noted that some of these actions

had been had been explained in the contributions made to the discussion on this item by H Dunk, M McHugh and J Galbraith.

The above report was noted and the proactive steps designed to continuously improve retention rates were welcomed.

13 Risk Register: Learning and Teaching Extract at December 2015. (Paper 10)

M Breen introduced the above extract and reminded the Committee of the changes currently being rolled out, particularly the new focus on identifying "Risk Appetite". It was noted that the Risk Appetites as presented had been approved by the EMT and were presented as a starting point for debate by each Committee. M Breen added that he would collate the comments of each Committee for presentation to the Audit Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

The Committee noted and approved the Risk Register Extract as presented, including the Risk Appetite. The Committee commented that further consideration could usefully be given to the nomenclature surrounding the Risk Appetite in order to help clarify what is being expected of the Committees.

Action: It was noted that that there was the possibility of a decision to undertake industrial action by some members of EIS (FELA) in response to the progress of the National Pay Bargaining negotiations. If this were to be the case, authority was delegated to the EMT to update Risk L&T3 as appropriate.

14 Directorate Update (Paper 11)

M Breen reported comments made by the Chair, B Graham, that she would welcome further information on the outcome of the visit by the Indian Delegation and that she was encouraged to note the provision of the PEZ course being delivered in Cumnock.

The Committee noted within the Directorate Update the decision of the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) to withdraw from the articulated BEng programme and instead present the programme themselves. Despite the reasons provided, the Committee considered this to be a regressive step on the part UWS and one that was very much regretted by this Committee.

12 Date of Next Meeting – The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 2 June 2016 at the Kilmarnock Campus.