

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
Held via Video Conference using Zoom,
On Thursday 4 March 2021**



Present: Fiona McQueen (Chair)
Elaine Anderson
Steven Fegan
Steve Graham
Janette Moore
Hazel Murphy
Steven Oliver
Mike Stewart
Alison Sutherland
Carol Turnbull
Steven Wallace
Matthew Wilson

In attendance: Brendan Ferguson (Board Secretary)
Yvonne Melvin (Board Administrative Officer)
Michael Breen (Vice Principal – Finance)
Anne Campbell (Vice Principal – Curriculum)
Jane McKie (Vice Principal – People)
Elaine Hutton (Director of Curriculum)
Julie Maxwell (Director of Curriculum)
Gavin Murray (Director of Curriculum)

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no declarations of Interest.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Committee members Beth Clelland, Lauren Howieson, Mary McClung and Sathish Srinivasan and from SLT member James Thomson.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 12 November 2020 (Paper 1) (C/P)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: M Stewart

Seconded: E Anderson

It was noted from the minutes that benchmark comparison data from the College sector on College Leaver Destinations 2019-20 was to be provided at this meeting of the Committee. A Campbell confirmed that the data had not yet been published by SFC and it was the intention that it be provided to the Committee at their meeting in May 2021, subject to SFC publication. It was agreed this be logged on the Action Tracker.

Action Tracker (Paper 1a)

The Chair introduced Paper 1a.

All outstanding actions had been completed to March 2021

4 Student Association Report (Paper 2) (P)

S Oliver introduced Paper 2 and took the Committee through it as presented. It was noted that the number of students involved in the Ayrshire College Gaming Society continued to rise and feedback had been very positive. S Oliver also highlighted that a music appreciation group was being discussed and could potentially be incorporated into the students' coursework.

It was noted that the Student Association worked with the newly recruited Student Ambassadors throughout December 2020 on delivering student focus groups. The Committee further noted that the Student Ambassadors would be working with curriculum areas on the second round of focus groups scheduled to take place in March 2021.

S Oliver also updated the Committee on the support provided by the Student Association to the College's Marketing Department on the Keep Calm Cameras On campaign, to encourage more students to take part in online classes with their cameras on. It was noted that the Student Association would be consulting with NUS on potential resources that could be used in a short session with students to encourage them to engage with cameras on, the first session of which would be held in March 2021.

The Committee noted and welcomed the above report. The Committee also congratulated the Student Association on achieving the Carers Scotland, Student Carers Recognition Award. This was considered to be a worthy achievement and recognition of the tremendous work in this area undertaken by the Student Association.

5 Covid-19 Update (Paper 3) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 3 as presented and updated the Committee on the changing and continuously evolving situation. As part of the Scottish Government's updated Strategic Framework, the First Minister had announced that from 15 March 2021, colleges would be able to prioritise the return of those students requiring in-person provision to complete or progress their studies but that the total number of students on campus at any one time should be restricted to 5%. A Campbell further advised that, at present, the number of students studying with the College whose return to campus was critical for their studies was more than 5%. The Committee noted that the current restrictions on the number of students permitted to attend campus to undertake the practical element of their coursework may result in a number of students being deferred to AY 2021-22. This would have a resultant negative impact on the College's staffing and resources in the next academic year.

The Committee noted that A Campbell and C Turnbull were actively discussing a possible increase in flexibility on the 5% cap at a national level and were working on various scenarios and the implications of the deferral of students to be presented to the Scottish Government for consideration.

A Campbell added that the College was working closely with the various Awarding Bodies on possible adaptations to practical assessments in certain course areas,

which would potentially allow those students affected to complete their course within this academic year. A caveat to this was that while any adaptations agreed may reduce the number of students deferred, it would not mitigate the possible high numbers of students affected.

A discussion followed during which questions were asked and satisfactory responses provided.

The Committee noted the content of Paper 4 and commended the work of the College and the commitment of staff toward students during this most challenging of times.

6 2020-21 Interim Outcome and Impact Framework (Paper 4) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 4 and reminded the Committee that this year's Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) had been replaced by the new streamlined Outcome and Impact Framework.

A Campbell outlined the three outcome areas; Outcomes for Students, Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal, and Responsiveness and Collaborative. The Committee noted that the 2020-21 Interim Outcome and Impact Framework would be provided to the Board for consideration at their meeting in March and, if approved, would be published in April 2021.

Further discussion took place, with various questions raised and answered satisfactorily. In response to one question, it was noted that the College did not foresee any issues with student progression in the area of Health and Social Care in relation to the nationwide vaccination roll-out. In circumstances where students were unable to undertake work placements as part of their course, simulated training had been agreed as an acceptable alternative.

Discussion moved on to Phase 1 of the National Transition Training Fund. The Committee was advised that priority for the initial phase would be the upskilling and re-skilling of displaced Engineers located at Prestwick Airport. It was noted that a temporary moveable facility would be placed at the airport for bespoke training to take place, and that future training sites were being considered.

The Committee confirmed its support of the 2020-21 Interim Outcome and Impact Framework and recommended it to the Board for approval at their meeting in March 2021.

7 2020-21 Credit Activity Target (position as at 17 February 2021) (Paper 5) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 5, confirming that the College is projecting a shortfall against its credit target by 565 credits. The Committee noted that this was primarily down to the reduction in planned activity and operational constraints imposed by Government public health guidance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were reminded that, normally, SFC reserves the right to clawback funding should the College not meet the agreed activity target. The Committee noted that confirmation had been received from SFC that it will not seek to recover funds for AY2020-21 for shortfalls against Outcome Agreement targets which were Covid-19 related.

The Committee noted Paper 5 and the projected credit position of the College. The Committee also noted the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on the ability of the College to meet its Credit Activity Targets and welcomed the pragmatism of SFC in recognising the challenges inherent in this situation and reacting accordingly.

8 2020-21 Early Withdrawals at November 2020 (Paper 6) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 6, advising that the figures presented had yet to be verified. Figures presented demonstrated a slight increase in early withdrawals across HE full-time courses but a decrease in early withdrawals in FE full-time courses. A Campbell further advised that as a result of recent Curriculum Area Review meetings, she had cause to question the data on HE full-time programmes and that further analysis would be provided to members in due course.

It was noted that course teams would be analysing data for their own respective curriculum areas, with actions and intervention being discussed at the Curriculum Area Review meetings.

The Committee noted Paper 6 and the interventions as listed.

9 2020-21 Student Support Funds (position as at 11 February) (Paper 7) (P)

M Breen took the Committee through Paper 7. The caveat on page 1 advising members on the significant number of variables still to be factored in to the projected expenditure was noted.

The Committee noted that the total 2020-21 SFC provided student support funds included circa £1.9m in relation to 255 care-experienced students. The Committee was aware that the College actively promoted the additional support available to care-experienced students, with the number of identified care experienced students potentially increasing during AY2020-21. M Breen highlighted to the Committee a projected underspend in the College's Education Maintenance Allowance allocation for AY2020-21 and noted that the figure included January 2021 starts.

M Breen also advised the Committee on a recent announcement by SAAS on additional HE Discretionary Funding, of which c£280k had been awarded to the College. It was noted that the additional funding was to be used by 31 March 2021 and that any unused funds were to be returned to SAAS in April 2021. M Breen advised the Committee that SAAS guidance stated that funds were to be prioritised to those students facing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19 and that the Student Funding team was working on proposals for how this additional funding could be effectively utilised within the timescales and guidance issued by SAAS.

The Committee noted Paper 7 and the position of the College as at 11 February 2021.

10 Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Report (Paper 8) (P)

G Murray introduced Paper 8 and took the Committee through it in detail, advising that the content of the report described the current position, taking into account the

impact of COVID-19 on the College's Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning provision.

The Committee noted that the pace of recruitment for Modern Apprentices in 2020-21 had been impacted by Covid-19, however, there were signs of recovery in most sectors. G Murray advised that, despite the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the College had received a positive level of enquiries in both Construction and Engineering, which it hoped would translate into new starts at a level close to the contracted volume. The Committee also noted that SDS and SQA had recognised that work placements for Foundation Apprentices were likely to be significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic situation in 2020-21, but alternative solutions were being explored. G Murray highlighted that it had been indicated that future funding for Foundation Apprenticeships would be dispersed via SFC, rather than SDS, in the form of additional credits from academic year 2021-22. The implications of this change were unclear at present and would be reported to the Committee when further details became available.

In addition, G Murray advised the Committee on recruitment incentives to encourage employers to recruit apprentices during the period until 31st March. The Committee noted that the Adopt An Apprentice scheme was currently underway to encourage employers to recruit an apprentice who had been made redundant recently. G Murray advised that incentives in the scheme have increased interest in the apprenticeship programme and that the College had received a number of new enquiries.

G Murray noted that the College was working closely with the local authorities to finalise agreements and would continue to work with employers and partners to promote apprenticeships to industry and young people, to maximise recruitment in 2020-21 and minimise the impact of COVID-19 on the skills pipeline.

A discussion followed during which a number of questions were asked and satisfactory responses received

The Committee noted the contents of Paper 8 and commended the ongoing work and positive news despite the impact of the ongoing pandemic restrictions on apprenticeships and work based learning.

11 Risk Register – Learning and Teaching Extract at February 2021 (*Paper 9*) (R)

A Campbell introduced the draft LTC extract from V2 of the Risk Register, advising that a total of 5 Risks had been identified for discussion. Following discussion, the Committee agreed a minor change to the wording used to describe the risk in L&T3. It was agreed that this would be updated to read 'There is a risk that the College will fail to achieve its SFC credit activity target, resulting in SFC clawback'.

A Campbell then took the Committee through each Risk as outlined in Paper 9.

The Committee agreed the following in relation to the Risks contained within the extract:

- **L&T1 - Risk Assessment increased to 20 to reflect the Scottish Government announcement of a 5% cap on the number of students allowed on campus at any one time.**

- **L&T3 - Risk Assessment increased to 20 to reflect the projected shortfall in the AY2020-21 Credit Activity Target due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.**

The remaining Risks were within the Risk Appetite of the Committee and were maintained at the same levels.

The Committee approved the Risk Register – Learning and Teaching Extract at February 2021.

Action: The wording used to describe the risk in L&T3 is to be updated to read 'There is a risk that the College will fail to achieve its SFC credit activity target, resulting in SFC clawback'. This will align the wording with that used in the other risks.

Received for Information

12 2019-20 ROA Self-Evaluation Report (Paper 10) (P)

13 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 27 May 2021 at 4.00pm

(C/P) Confirmed minutes will be published (P) Papers will be published on the College website

(R) Papers will not be published for reasons of commercial sensitivity or for reasons of personal data confidentiality

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