

**Minute of the Learning & Teaching
Committee Meeting
Held via Video Conference using Zoom,
On Thursday 27 May 2021**



Present: Fiona McQueen (Chair)
Elaine Anderson
Beth Clelland
Steve Graham
Mary McClung
Janette Moore
Hazel Murphy
Mike Stewart
Alison Sutherland
Carol Turnbull
Matthew Wilson

In attendance: Pauline Donald (Board Governance Adviser)
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)
Gavin Murray (Director of Curriculum)

1 Welcome and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Pauline Donald to her first Committee meeting as Board Governance Adviser.

There were no declarations of Interest.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Committee members Lauren Howieson, Steven Oliver and Steven Wallace and from SLT members Julie Maxwell and James Thomson.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 4 March 2021 (Paper 1) (C/P)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: H Murphy

Seconded: S Graham

Action Tracker (Paper 1a)

The Chair introduced Paper 1a and members agreed the following:

- **Action 1** – This remain on the Action Tracker until such time as benchmarking data be published by SFC.

4 Student Association Report (Paper 2) (P)

In the absence of L Howieson and S Oliver, the Chair asked the Committee to provide feedback on the Student Association Report and advised that any queries would be raised with the student representatives.

It was noted that the Student President Elections for AY2021-22 had taken place and had successfully returned two officers to the positions of Student President and Student Vice President. In response to a query from the Committee, A Campbell advised that she would confirm the percentage voting turnout figures for AY2021-22 and comparison with the previous year. The Committee congratulated the new Student President, Ellie Jamieson, who will take up position on 1 July 2021 and returning officer Steven Oliver, who will serve a second year as Student Vice President.

The Committee noted and commended the Student Association on their achievements over the 2020-21 academic year. The Committee also noted that this would be Lauren Howieson's last meeting and commended Lauren for her outstanding efforts and achievement on behalf of the Student Association and the College during their period of office.

Action: AY2021-22 Student President Elections voting data and comparison with previous year will be provided to the Committee.

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 17 May, all of mainland Scotland (with the exception of Glasgow City and Moray) would move to Level 2 of the Strategic Framework, wherein colleges would operate a blended learning model. The Committee noted that the College was taking a cautious approach to supporting the return of previously identified category 4 students to campus, where appropriate, and that course teams had been asked to make a judgement on a return to campus based on the overriding principle of supporting students to successfully conclude their studies in AY 2020-21.

It was highlighted that the main focus for teams would be supporting as many students as possible to complete their studies in the current academic year, and that a number of activities had been planned over the summer period to help facilitate the completion of qualifications and to mitigate the number of deferred students. The Committee also noted that School-College Partnership Programmes had been extended to maximise attainment of vocational qualifications.

A Campbell added that the College was working closely with the various Awarding Bodies and the Covid-19 Further and Higher Education Ministerial taskforce to highlight those qualifications and subject areas most at risk of non-completion. It was noted that, at present, a high percentage of students enrolled with the College, were scheduled to complete in the current academic year and that most final-year apprentices should also complete by the end of the term.

A discussion followed during which questions were asked and satisfactory responses provided. In response to a query, A Campbell assured the Committee that the College was working closely with staff to support their flexibility during the planned summer activities and that staff remained engaged and committed in supporting students to complete their studies.

The Committee noted the content of Paper 3. The Committee commended the work of the College and the commitment of staff toward students during this most challenging of times and the tenacity and resilience of students in continuing to complete their studies.

6 Empowering, Supporting and Inspiring Student Success (Ayrshire College Learning and Teaching Strategy) (Paper 4) (R)

A Campbell introduced Paper 4, highlighting that the College's current Learning and Teaching Strategy covers the period 2018-20 and was due to be refreshed and implemented for AY 2020-21, but was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. A Campbell then took the Committee through each of the strategic aims in detail.

It was noted that the draft strategy covers the period 2021-24 and is aligned with, and informed by, various College strategic documents, including the draft Statement of Ambition and draft Refresh and Renew Strategic Plan 2021-24.

A Campbell proposed that, following full consultation with curriculum teams and groups of students, and following feedback from the Committee, the strategy for 2021-24 be launched and implemented for AY 2021-22.

The Committee discussed the content and appearance in further detail and provided feedback to A Campbell. The Committee commended the readability and overall presentation of the document.

The Committee agreed the implementation of the strategy following full consultation with curriculum teams and groups of students and subject to amendments based on feedback received.

7 Internal Audit Report – Partnership Working (Paper 5) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 5 as part of the 2020-21 Audit Plan. The Committee was advised that the Report had been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting in March 2021.

H Murphy, in her capacity as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, provided feedback from the meeting in March 2021, advising that members had agreed the Report was very positive and had been well received by the Committee.

The Committee noted Paper 5.

8 2020-21 Credit Activity Target (position as at 14 May) (Paper 6) (P)

E Hutton introduced Paper 6, confirming that the College is expected to exceed its credit target by 145 credits. The Committee noted this as a very positive position.

The Committee noted Paper 6 and the projected credit position of the College. The Committee also commended the work of staff in achieving the positive position.

9 2020-21 Student Recruitment Report (position as at 13 May) (Paper 7) (P)

A Campbell introduced Paper 7 and reminded members that the 2021-22 Curriculum Delivery Plan (CDP) was approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 12 November 2020. A Campbell continued, noting the updated CDP planning target in Table 2 of the paper as a result of SFC's indicative credit allocation.

A Campbell also advised on a reduction in student recruitment figures compared to AY2020-21. The Committee noted that the reduction in figures may be primarily due to staff being unable to assist applicants in schools and also applicants in the area of Inclusion due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic. A Campbell advised that, following the full-time return to school, college staff were now liaising with schools to assist with applications and this is returning a positive impact.

The Committee was also advised on a letter issued to SFC, jointly signed by a number of colleges in the sector, which highlighted concerns about the decision taken by SFC to adjust the balance between core credits and ESF credits and the material impact this may have. It was noted that a recent response from SFC had been positive and had indicated a reduction in future ESF credits, though written confirmation of the decision had not yet been received.

The Committee noted the contents of Paper 7 and the position of the College as at 13 May 2021.

10 2020-21 Student Support Funds (position as at 14 May) (Paper 8) (P)

M Breen took the Committee through Paper 8. 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 additional SFC funding received in the period of circa £380k as part of a £5,000,000 FE in-year redistribution exercise for the sector. It was noted that the additional funding was to meet student hardship needs, including digital poverty.

M Breen reminded members of 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 College successfully utilised 83% of the additional funding for students facing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19 by the deadline date of 31 March 2021, and that all unused funds were returned to SAAS in April 2021. The Committee was encouraged to note that the College would continue to support students who have been adversely affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the summer period.

The Committee noted Paper 8 and the position of the College as at 14 May 2021.

11 **Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Report (Paper 9) (P)**

G Murray introduced Paper 9 and took the Committee through it in detail. The Committee noted that the pace of recruitment for Modern Apprentices in 2020-21 had been impacted by Covid-19 and the overall figure was reduced, however, there were signs of recovery in most sectors. G Murray advised that, despite the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the College had supported a total of 20 companies across the Ayrshire region through the Apprenticeship Employment Grant and a further 2 through the Adopt and Apprentice Grant. G Murray further advised that the College had recently received its Modern Apprentice allocation for 2021-22 and that work for this was underway. The Committee noted that the awarded volumes would support growth of the College's Modern Apprenticeship provision and recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

G Murray highlighted that a number of claims had been submitted to SDS for Foundation Apprenticeships and were being monitored. The Committee noted that it was projected that the College would reach its revised target in this area. In addition, G Murray advised the Committee that commercial SVQ contracts had been agreed with two local authorities for the College to deliver SVQs to care at home staff, with 100 candidates signed-up so far and assessment activities underway.

G Murray noted that discussions were currently underway with SECTT and SNIPEF, the trade bodies for Electrical Installation and Plumbing and Gas respectively, to negotiate and establish a new fee structure to ensure provision of apprenticeships for these sectors is sustainable in the future. The Committee looked forward to receiving further updates.

The Committee noted the contents of Paper 9 and commended the ongoing work and positive news despite the impact of the ongoing pandemic restrictions on apprenticeships and work-based learning.

12 **Risk Register – Learning and Teaching Extract at May 2021 (Paper 10) (R)**

A Campbell introduced the draft LTC extract from V3 of the Risk Register, advising that a total of 4 Risks had been identified for discussion.

A Campbell then took the Committee through each Risk as outlined in Paper 10. During discussions, the Committee commended the work of the College in its ongoing support of mental health and wellbeing. It was agreed that a presentation/paper for the next meeting in September 2021 on the various mental health activities on offer would be beneficial.

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

- **L&T1 - Risk Assessment decreased to 15 to reflect the easing of restrictions by the Scottish Government.**
- **L&T3 - Risk Assessment decreased to 12 to reflect the College's positive position in the AY2020-21 Credit Activity Target.**

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 May 2021.

Action: A Campbell to organise for a presentation/paper on the various mental health activities on offer to the next meeting of the Committee in September 2021.

Received for Information

13 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 2 September 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