



For the future you want

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 02 JUNE 2017

14:00hrs, Boardroom, Sighthill Campus

Present: I Aitchison; C Arthur; N Black; A Landels; E Lashley-Scott; K Maloney; F Riddoch (Chair); J Stevenson; C Turnbull

In attendance: J Buglass; A Craig; S-J Linton; M Walker (Clerk); S Warden

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Annette Bruton, Amanda Clark, Tia Cotton, Juliet Harkin, Neil Manning, Jennifer Russell, Justin Sales and David Tait.
- 1.2 The Committee Chair welcomed Jeanette Stevenson, a newly appointed Non-Executive Board Member, to her first Academic Council.
- 1.3 The Committee Chair advised members that as the Principal had given her apologies, the Depute Principal had been invited to attend the meeting.
- 1.4 The Committee Chair welcomed the Head of Engineering and Built Environment, Scott Warden, to the meeting to discuss best practice in the Faculty under Item 5.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes of the Academic Council from 17 March 2017 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda, with the exception of the following:

4.1.1 INDUCTION SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee NOTED that the issue of benchmarking had been considered by the College Development Network's Quality Network Group. The Head of Performance, Policy & Planning informed the Committee that whilst greater parity towards surveys was sought across the sector, there would not be a quick solution to enable colleges to gather comparable data. The Committee NOTED that the Head of Performance, Policy & Planning would continue to advocate for greater survey parity at national level through appropriate forums.

5 ENGINEERING AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT BEST PRACTICE

5.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Head of Engineering and Built Environment on current best practice with the Faculty, which included a number of initiatives to work with partners to deliver the curriculum.

5.2 The Committee DISCUSSED, in small groups, the best practice highlighted and the potential for its incorporation into other faculties. The following points were given in feedback to the Committee as recognition of transferable best practise from the Faculty:

- (i) The engagement of the Faculty with less engaged young people, and ongoing work with schools in areas of deprivation is considerable and commendable;
- (ii) the integration of digital technology in areas of practical skills, for example the use of iPads to capture evidence for assessment is innovative and should be encouraged elsewhere;
- (iii) the use of 'real' work environments through engagement with partners in the region is well developed and potentially a good model;
- (iv) efforts to address gender imbalances within construction and engineering, including outreach to P7 classes is very positive and recognises the very early start such work requires. How this could be used in other area of the college (e.g. child care) should be explored;
- (v) the efforts of the Faculty to provide training courses throughout the summer period is innovative and should be explored;
- (vi) cross-collaborative working, and the potential to ring-fence opportunities to work cross-collaboratively in the timetable is innovative and should be explored.

5.3 The Committee AGREED that following the four best practice sessions at successive Academic Councils this year, there should be an opportunity to consider how best practice across the college could be replicated and followed up (Academic Council meeting in February 2018). The Committee Chair reminded members that presentations from the Heads of Health Wellbeing & Social Sciences and Hospitality, Tourism & Business would be received by the Committee in September and November 2017.

- 5.4 The Committee Chair, on behalf of members, thanked the Head of Engineering and Built Environment for his presentation and engaging in discussions with the Academic Council.

The Head of Engineering and Built Environment left the meeting

6 EDUCATION SCOTLAND ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED a summary of recommendations arising as a result of the Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit (AEV) conducted in May 2016. The Head of Policy, Performance & Planning advised the Committee that all AEV actions had been directly linked to the Business Transformation Plan, in order to consolidate workstreams.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had engaged with the college, on a monthly basis, to promote the new *How Good is Our College* framework - which would supersede the AEV Action Plan in September 2017. The Head of Policy, Performance & Planning informed the Committee that the summary of recommendations provided would be the final update on the AEV Action Plan, prior to the implementation of the new framework.
- 6.3 The Committee DISCUSSED progress against the AEV Action Plan, and AGREED that ongoing actions would be addressed through the college's Enhancement Plan under the arrangements for *How Good is Our College*.

7 LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2017-20

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED a Draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) 2017-20, and an accompanying presentation by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design and Development. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that a first draft of the LTAS was considered by the Academic Council on 20 January, and that feedback from members had been incorporated into the document.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED a summary of the following five strategic themes of the LTAS: Staff skills; Evaluation of Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Core and essential skills; Blended learning; and, Support for learning.
- 7.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of the LTAS:
- (i) The role of Connect Groups in performance monitoring, and the use of these forums as a means to engage and empower staff;
 - (ii) the ways in which the Academic Council could channel into the outputs of the various Connect Groups;
 - (iii) the extensive consultation with staff and student from across the college;
 - (iv) the use of acronyms and abbreviations within the LTAS, and the potential inclusion of a glossary of terms.
- 7.4 The Committee APPROVED the LTAS, subject to the minor amendments highlighted in Paragraph 7.1(iv). The Committee Chair asked members to

feedback any further minor editorial changes to the Assistant Principal for inclusion in the final document.

8 CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DESIGN STRATEGY 2017-20

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED a Draft Curriculum and Design Strategy 2017-20, as presented by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum Design and Development, which outlined the main drivers and processes for curriculum planning over the next three years.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that with a new college strategy imminent, and the approval of a new Regional Outcome Agreement (2017-20) it was now appropriate to review the extant Curriculum Strategy. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that the internal auditors had also advised the college that it would be good practice to capture recent curriculum developments, through the Business Transformation Plan, within a new strategic document.
- 8.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of the Curriculum and Design Strategy 2017-20:
- (i) The 'extremely useful' context provided around curriculum planning in order to meet the demands of the region;
 - (ii) The value of a course creation diagram and the clear overview of the process it provides;
 - (iii) the options of development and proposed consultation around a communication plan to support the implementation of the Strategy;
 - (iv) the need to eliminate the use of acronyms and abbreviations within the Strategy wherever possible, and the potential inclusion of a glossary of terms.
- 8.4 The Committee APPROVED the Curriculum and Design Strategy 2017-20, subject to minor amendments highlighted in Paragraph 8.3(iv). The Committee Chair, on behalf of members, thanked the Assistant Principal and his team for producing such a well-considered Strategy.

9 COLLEGE SATISFACTION SURVEYS

- 9.1 LEARNING AND TEACHING SURVEY 2016/17
- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the results of the 2016/17 Learning and Teaching Survey, which was designed to assess students' opinions regarding key aspects of their experience at the college. The Head of Performance, Policy & Planning advised the Committee that where possible survey questions had been aligned with specific prompts contained within Education Scotland's *How Good is Our College* framework.
- 9.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the survey was made available to 8,937 students, of which 38.3% responded. The Head of Performance, Policy & Planning informed the Committee that although this was a decrease of 6% on last year's survey, there was a 38% increase in the number of student targeted overall.

- 9.1.3 The Committee NOTED that in comparison with last year's results, the college-wide satisfaction rates had increased across 17 of 19 comparable questions. The Head of Performance, Policy & Planning advised the Committee that overall satisfaction with courses at the college was high, with 91% of respondents stating that they were satisfied with their course. An increase on over 10% on the previous year. The Committee NOTED that 94% of students stated that they had greatly developed their knowledge and skills during their course.
- 9.1.4 The Committee NOTED that whilst rates of satisfaction increased across almost all surveyed questions, satisfaction was still low in relation to: learner involvement in planning and delivery of course content (62%); suitable arrangements being made when lecturers were away (65%); and, assessment-spacing (74%). The Head of Performance, Policy & Planning informed the Committee that the adoption of the new quality framework, coupled with the launch of the LTAS, would improve approaches to planning and delivery in the classroom through CPD and new techniques/tools to improve engagement.
- 9.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the following matters related to the Learning and Teaching Survey results:
- (i) The response rate, which the Head of Performance, Policy & Planning considered high for a student satisfaction survey;
 - (ii) the three areas (as highlighted under Paragraph 9.1.4) which were to be addressed by the Quality Team, and progress monitored through the Committee's survey recommendation summary report;
 - (iii) the need for clear survey questions and additional support to help student understanding, for instance the use of emoji and/other graphics.
- 9.1.6 The Committee welcomed the positive survey results and AGREED that the Quality Team should consider further the constructive ideas put forward by members.
- 9.2 INDUCTION SURVEY 2017/18
- 9.2.1 The Committee NOTED the content and format of the draft Student Induction Survey 2017/18, which would be made available to new students in the next academic year.
- 9.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Induction Survey 2017/18 and were content to APPROVE the survey for dissemination.
- 9.3 SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY
- 9.3.1 The Committee NOTED a summary of satisfaction survey recommendations arising from the previous academic year.

10 STUDENT FUNDING OVERVIEW

- 10.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of the student funding mechanisms in place for new starters in 2017/18, as provided by the Head of Student

Experience in response to a request by the Academic Council at its last meeting.

- 10.2 The Committee NOTED the range of funds the college was responsible for disbursing, and the administrative challenges faced by colleges relating to each funding stream. The Head of Student Experience outlined the steps taken by the college to enhance the disbursement of student funds, and the positive impact this could potentially have on student retention in the future.
- 10.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to student funding:
- (i) The range of information provided to students and staff by the college;
 - (ii) the college's payment of FE/HE Discretionary Funds directly to nurseries, which was recognised as a positive development;
 - (iii) the national issues faced relating to the completion of appropriate paperwork and the receipt of funding by students.
- 10.4 The Committee Chair thanked the Head of Student Experience for her report, and recommended that the college continued to shares its best practice with other colleges in the sector.

11 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2016/17

- 11.1 The Committee NOTED that at the end of each academic year the Committee is required to review its annual activity. The Clerk advised the Academic that the same evaluation form, which asked members to consider the committee's operation and its performance monitoring and strategic roles, would be completed by all committees of the Board.
- 11.2 The Committee NOTED that its operation was compliant with its terms of reference, and DISCUSSED the following matters in relation to its performance monitoring, strategic roles, decision-making and relationships:
- 11.2.1 The Committee AGREED that external partners and employers should be invited to address members, to provide a broader overview of vocational activities.
 - 11.2.2 The Committee AGREED that papers presented to Academic Council should avoid acronyms and abbreviations where possible.
 - 11.2.3 The Committee AGREED that, on a practical level, name plates should include members' names and roles.
 - 11.2.4 The Committee AGREED that at least one Head of Faculty should be invited to each meeting of the Academic Council.
- 11.3 The Committee AGREED that the Committee Chair should work with the Clerk to finalise the review of committee operation checklist, prior to its recirculation to the Committee for further analysis and comment.

12 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- 12.1 None.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 The date of the next meeting is 01 September 2017 at 14:00, in the Boardroom, Sighthill Campus.

The meeting closed at 16:00