City of Glasgow College

Board of Management
Learning & Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	**Tuesday 28 April 2020**
Paper No.	**LTC3-B**
Agenda Item	**4.1**
Subject of Paper	**Learning and Teaching Response to Covid-19**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Dr Claire Carney**
Date of production	**17 April 2020**
Action	**For Discussion**

1.   Recommendations

The committee is invited to discuss and consider actions going forward.

2.   Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to provide a holistic overview of actions taken to maintain Learning and Teaching activities in advance of College COVID-19 closure and activities taken subsequently. It also provides an indication of some upcoming decisions required for academic year 2020/21

3.   Context

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College made the difficult (and correct) decision to fully close to staff and students on the 17 March 2020. In advance of that decision a Corona Advisory Group was established (week beginning 9 March) to consider the Colleges approach and associated actions required to ensure the health and safety of our staff and students. During this time, it was evident from other countries that large organisations and educational establishments were closing under early lockdown activities to prevent the spread of the virus and it was relatively clear that Scotland was coming close to making that decision. The advisory group met on a daily basis discussed issues around health and safety, communications and Learning and Teaching (L&T).

In anticipation of COP26 and the potential of closure during the month of November 2020, L&T discussion and activity had already taken place with Deans and their respective teams. The focus was on moving as much learning and teaching activities online for the month of November. However, this was very much accelerated in the two weeks prior to closure with the emphasis on moving all teaching activities online.

In outlining the range of activities undertaken (below) it is important to highlight some of the key principles/cornerstones regarding home working that in the circumstances, we can do little about. These Include but are not limited to the following:

- **Students:** Digital poverty where not all students have access to hardware, specialist software nor broadband, students didn't 'sign-up' for digital learning and may have digital capability issues, busy households with competing demands on study/work and living space, students (and significant others) losing jobs (through lock down) and students gaining work to contribute to household income, students with known mental health issues and those who develop them as a result of stress associated with lockdown.

- **Staff:** many of the issues above are replicated for staff and in addition capacity and capability for digital delivery and the added stress of developing and moderating their activities for online delivery and assessment.

It is important to outline these to ensure that there is realism in what is delivered online and at all times compassion and empathy is demonstrated in recognition of the unprecedented and challenging times our staff and students find themselves. The focus during this time has been to provide support for both in order to allow learning and teaching to continue**.**

The following account (below) is a summation of the communications and actions requested of faculty. It is provided to demonstrate an authentic reflective view of activities as they arose and how we responded. It is not comprehensive of all activity but provides a sense of the situation and in time a more comprehensive, 'rounded' and evaluative account can be devised based on outcomes. It is followed by 'Next Steps' sections which again will be an iterative and formulative process.

AN ACCOUNT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING MOBILISATION ACTIVITY IN RESPONSE TO COLLEGE CLOSURE:

Week -2 and Week -1

- Week beginning 4 March, decision made to STOP all international travel and reduce UK travel to only 'necessary' travel: immediate impact on student learning for example, sports students travelling to the Canaries for sports development activity and Creative Industry students travelling to London.
- Deans were asked to complete the following tasks by Friday 13 March:
    o Staff urged to test all home working equipment and ability to access college sites including 'MyCity', 'Connected', email, internal networks, including internal drives and any issues with connectivity advised to liaise directly with IT through enquirer;
    o Staff also advised to check readiness to support students' learning remotely by pivoting to online learning. Staff were asked to remind students that all teaching and learning materials and communications will go through 'Mycity' and as such it is students' responsibility to log-in. Some staff use google educate or other platforms in which case the same applied. Staff were also asked (if possible) to demonstrate this in class.
    o Staff were also advised to move as much teaching material as possible online and easy to digest crib sheets were requested from Head of Digital to provide guidance on online technologies including Zoom
    o All Face to Face Interviews were cancelled and replaced by telephone interviews and/or direct offers

Week Zero: week beginning 16 March

- Colleges closes and suspends ALL F2F teaching (17 March)
- Individual ADs/CHs communicate directly with students
- Laptop 'distribution' instituted for those students who met certain criteria (final year, no laptop, regular attender) Learning Support 'handed out' 73 laptops, 60 to students and 13 to staff.
- 19 March: [SQA statement on exams](), SQA exams cancelled.. gathering of evidence and student engagement now the imperative., the following message was sent to Deans:
    o we await info from SQA about how *they* intend to deal with a no examination system, in the meantime staff to gather as much evidence of student learning as possible.
    o the rule book has been torn-up, what was 'required' last week i.e. written submissions/exams/practical pieces now need 'fresh eyes' on what is feasibly possible to demonstrate knowledge/experience in a new world studying from home by someone who may not have a laptop or PC. They may be limited to using a phone. The reality is that many will be in busy households with limited resource.
    o teaching staff need to be realistic in what they are asking students to do from home. Is it dependent on specialist software/is it reliant on specialist equipment etc? If the answer is yes, then the reality of students will be unable to complete.
    o Student Services will hand out some laptops early next week, but not everyone will get one and therefore will not solve the problem either.
    o Teaching staff need to be creative and think beyond the 'status quo', simply asking students to apply for a hardship loan to buy a laptop will not 'solve' the

problem, asking students to continue as normal 'just at home' will not solve it either..

- A statement from the principal will go out today, but can I ask that your teaching teams also follow this up with some guidance and 'soothing' email for 'their' students i.e. we will work together to solve this, we will do our best to get you through, stay engaged in whatever way you can, while we work it out etc.
- As per last bullet, this is a HUGELY stressful time for everyone and we need to be realistic in what we can expect of students (and staff) during this time, the emphasis need to be on support and empathy and then learning may have a chance to happen.

- Throughout this time the emphasis has been on student experience and support and ensuring that students are engaging where possible. A Dashboard for student engagement with MyCity was developed and whilst the limitations of such a measurement are known, it is a useful tool to identify those students who have not accessed MyCity and follow-up communications can be made directly to those students.
- A range of online support workshop activities and 'how to' guides were developed by COPTE and actively taken up by staff over this period.
- Commendably, Learning and Teaching has continued throughout this time (apart from a small number of courses in Nautical and STEM) with staff adapting materials and activities to suit the online environment.
- ASSESSMENT (considered in separate paper) Head of Quality attended a number of SQA meetings over the course of this period and 'fed back' directly to VPSE and onwards to Deans and Associate Deans (ADs)
  - All ADs contacted (20 March) and asked to provide a range of assessment solutions for their curricular areas for presentation to the SQA. This was completed and supplied to SQA on 25 March.. Much of what was offered is contained in the SQA guidance including, gathering of evidence and the development of a "Board of Assessors'
  - SQA provided guidance on NQs and HNs between 26 March and 3 April and we are still awaiting further guidance on some practical and regulatory aspects. It has to be noted that Assessment and the speed at which SQA has provided guidance has been the most stressful aspect of this event.
- Easter Holiday for academic staff began Friday 3 April – Monday 20 April. The next focus will be on development of new internal processes (including development of an Internal Panel of Assessors) to allow progression of students.

NEXT PHASE: RESTART

Whilst we are currently working through the Assessment and delivery of L&T, attention has turned to the start of the next academic year and what that might look like given that social distancing may still be a feature and the associated challenge of how we might mobilise 12,500 students and 1600 staff back into the college. There are (currently) three potential scenarios, mentioned here briefly for information and comment and which will require further work and development. The three potential scenarios are:

1. Back to normal practice: fully open to all students at one time
2. Hybrid model: small classes, blended learning, multiple delivery points
3. Fully online

Option 2 and 3 have many potential implications including timetabling, support services, curriculum design/ordering, recruitment issues to name a few and these will be investigated in the coming weeks. It is also prudent to remember that the issues identified at the beginning of this paper may still have a bearing on decisions particularly around digital poverty and digital capability.

In anticipation, it is important to learn from our current experience of digital delivery and learning and we will undertake a survey of staff and students experience during this time. The outcomes of this will inform operational and strategic developments for digital learning

In addition, activity around online induction and creating 'digital learning' communities in advance of the start of the academic year has commenced to ensure that those students who have accepted a place for next year begin to develop an affinity with the college. This is important given the competitive student recruitment environment we are potentially entering.

4.   Impact and implications

The impact of the college closure and the rapid move to digital delivery and learning will be assessed via a student and staff survey. The long term implications maybe more profound in the design and delivery curriculum and the curriculum offer.