

Board of Management Learning & Teaching Committee

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| Date of Meeting | Tuesday 17 November 2020 |
| Paper No. | LTC2-F |
| Agenda Item | 5.1 |
| Subject of Paper | Academic Board Minute – 29 10 20 |
| FOISA Status | Disclosable |
| Primary Contact | Paul Little, Principal |
| Date of production | November 2020 |
| Action | For Noting |

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the Academic Board minute of the meeting held on 29 October 2020.

Meeting of Academic Board

Minute of meeting held on 29 October 2020 at 1400 hrs

| Present | |
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| Sheila Lodge (SL) (Vice Convenor) | Jon Gray (JGr) |
| Claire Carney (CC) | Colin McCrum (CM) |
| Elodie Nowinski (EN) | Siobhan Wilson (SW) |
| Gus Grubb (GG) | Mark Stagg (MS) |
| John Gribben (JG) | Ryan McKellar (RM) |
| Scott Harrison (SH) | Nicolas Garcia (NG) |
| Stuart Thompson (ST) | Tom Duff (TD) |
| In Attendance | |
| Audrey Sullivan (AS) | Sharon Ritchie (SR) (Minute Secretary) |
| Apologies for absence | |
| Paul Little (PL) | Paul Clark (PC) |
| Bernadette Savage (BS) | Roy Gardner (RG) |
| Gillian Plunkett (GP) | |

| Item 1 | Apologies for Absence | |
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| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note |
| Discussion | Apologies were received from PL, BS, GP, PC and RG. | |
| Decision | The apologies were noted. | |

| Item 2 | Membership of Committee & Membership of Committee | |
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| Paper No: AB1-A & B | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Approval |
| Discussion | <p>The Membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/21 were approved, subject to minor amendments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Associate Director, Centre of Professional and Technical Education (COPTe) changed to Associate Director, Learning & Teaching Academy. 2. Performance and Improvement Director changed to Director of Excellence. | |
| Decision | Approved | |

| Item 3 | Minute of Meeting (13 May 2020) | |
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| Paper No: AB1-C | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Approval |
| Discussion | <p>The minute of the meeting held on 13 May 2020 was approved without amendment.</p> <p>The Digital Steering Group, chaired by the Vice Principal Student Experience, superseded action item 7.</p> <p>SL indicated that Tracey Howe's employment contract had come to its end, and that tDAP (Taught Degree Awarding Powers) had been on hold due to the pandemic, but would progress as planned in the future.</p> | |

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| | A College Ethics Committee, agreed in principle at the last Board meeting, would be set up along the lines suggested by Tracey Howe. |
| Decision | Approved |

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| Item 4 | Chairs Business | |
| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note |
| Discussion | SL welcomed Audrey Sullivan, Board Member and Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee, Jon Gray, Director of Excellence and Nicolas Garcia, Student President to the first Academic Board meeting of 2020/21. | |
| Decision | Noted | |

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| Item 5.1 | Response to COVID19 in 2020/21 | |
| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Discussion |
| Discussion | <p>SL spoke about the pandemic and colleagues were thanked for their ongoing commitment and professionalism. She pointed out that staff have settled into a new way of 'blended' working (at home and on campus).</p> <p>SL advised that a new cohort of students had joined and as expected would very new to the College buildings.</p> <p>She stressed the importance of the critical 6 months that lay ahead, and asked colleagues to be kind and support each other through the crises.</p> <p>SL reiterated that the health and safety of all staff and students remained the College's top priority.</p> | |
| Decision | Noted | |

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| Item 5.2 | Staff Questionnaires/Surveys | |
| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: JF Gribben | Action requested: Discussion |
| Discussion | <p>JG outlined that there was a fair amount of energy at the outset of Covid. However, as time passed, people are finding themselves facing additional challenges.</p> <p>He indicated that a new and comprehensive survey for all staff would be undertaken. He pointed out that the College would look at engaging with an expert external partner to assist in delivering the survey, in partnership with the Trade Unions. This would allow for a relatively deep dive into establishing an overall state of wellbeing of the College, and would be completed on three different levels.</p> <p>On completion of the survey, a report will allow for break down into individual teams, Faculties and/or Directorates.</p> <p>One will be able to drill down as needed, without breaching confidentiality.</p> <p>Areas such as physiological and physical wellbeing, workplace stress, engagement, resilience and productivity would be covered. To the College, the health, wellbeing and welfare of staff was of utmost importance.</p> | |

JG pointed out that he was confident that the Trade Unions would be supportive of the project, as their key area of concern has been centred on staff stress.

JG indicated that a communication plan pertaining to the launch was underway and that was what would make this survey different from previous ones. He hoped that patterns could be identified for improving areas. The underpinning message will be 'We may not have got it right first time, but what can we do differently now?'

He indicated that he aimed for a better response rate than the previous Transmission questionnaire (which achieved 1000 responses out of 1400 staff). Granting folk reasonable time to complete the survey would be considered.

The communications plan would entail informing staff about available resources and signposting them to utilise them.

Communication is set to commence by the beginning of November 2020. The actual survey may take place immediately after the Christmas period/New Year. This timeframe will allow JG sufficient lead-time to introduce the survey and allow staff to understand it.

JG indicated that previously the College had not articulated to folk 'this is what you have told us, and this is what we have done'. This time round, there will be full disclosure.

In addition, instantaneous live feedback from staff will be introduced, allowing them to highlight their issues and concerns. In conjunction with the survey, submissions will indicate staff concerns.

JG left the meeting at 14h25.

Decision

Noted

Item 5.3 Student Questionnaires/Surveys

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| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: C Carney | Action requested: Discussion |
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| Discussion | <p>CC indicated that the Student Experience survey took place annually. The survey opened on Monday 19 October 2020, with a closing date of Friday 6 November 2020.</p> <p>The details have been provided to all the students and the response rates are updated on the dashboard, allowing folk to have sight of it.</p> <p>CC indicated that the survey was originally titled the 'First Impression Survey', and she did believe it to be a great name. Simply put, it was about students' first impressions of being at the College.</p> <p>CC went on to say that the survey was made up of 25 different questions, covering various topics, such as the online application process, induction, the blended learning experience, Library and IT resources, student representation and equality diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Whilst the survey was a regular standing item for this time of the year, this year's experience has been entirely different. CC pointed out that the results would shape how things are done going forward.</p> |
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| | <p>Student Experience and Performance will work with Faculties to ensure that the focus will not be on seeking praise ('aren't we great at induction?') but on areas that require attention and developing associated action plans.</p> <p>She pointed out that the more students who completed the survey, the more reliable the data would be. It was noted that the information was available on Connected (Student Engagement), along with a FAQ section.</p> |
| Decision | Noted |

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| Item 5.4 | College Financial Update | |
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| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note |
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| Discussion | <p>ST provided a financial overview for 2019/20 and indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At lockdown, a substantial projected loss was expected. However, through multiple actions and mitigations, additional funding from the furlough scheme, additional online delivery and cost controlling, the end figure provided to the Auditor reflected a £360k loss for 2019/20. This was a much-reduced loss than originally anticipated. ✓ The College did have the greatest amount of risk from a financial point of view in terms of the impact of COVID, compared to any other College. ✓ The College has the lowest proportion of Government funding. ✓ Non-public money was the highest portion and value in the College sector in Scotland, and those income streams were most impacted by Covid. ✓ The Government and the Funding Council have been supportive in terms of their funding. ✓ The College's international, commercial, student accommodation and catering income have all been impacted substantially and reduced dramatically, which trails into 2020/21. ✓ In 2021, all four incomes streams are dramatically reduced. The College is trying to replace them where possible and decrease costs to reduce the impact. ✓ Currently a loss of £1.6 million is projected for 2021. It is a substantial loss and the College is trying to look at ways of reducing that. ✓ At present, there are a number of challenges around income sources and controlling costs. ✓ There is added pressure on staff costs in terms of keeping them within budget. ✓ The College is now operating in a position of a £2 million loss over the course of last year and this year. This position affects the cash position of the College, planning and flexibility. ✓ The College is trying to support staff and students as far as possible within the financial constraints. ✓ The College relies on everyone to contribute to cost saving. Overtime, agency staff, printing, etc have been reduced to drive savings, while keeping the staff volume where it was before. ✓ Affording additional new staff remains a challenge. | |
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- ✓ Discussions around moving to blended learning and in some areas, fully online learning and developing material are ongoing discussions.

ST ended by indicating that in 2019/20, a reduction of 18 hours teaching time had been agreed and implemented on most full time courses. However, there were some exceptions, with justifiable reasons as to why those hours could not be reduced. This was part of the drive to meet the Government's expectation that Colleges make 3% efficiency savings each year.

Year on year, every public sector body is expected to deliver the same activity levels, with more efficient delivery. The course hours for 2020/21 are the same as 2019/20.

This does pose a challenge going forward, as teaching is the core business and trying to establish a balance between how to deliver efficiencies and reduce cost without touching teaching time is difficult.

Benchmarking data had been investigated. The fulltime HE programmes are more generous than anyone in the sector. Some colleges are down 500 hours but the College is still at the very high end of the sector.

It was noted that teaching hours would be reviewed year on year.

Decision

Noted.

Item 6.1

Assessment Policy, Procedure & Handbook

Paper No:
AB1-D & E

Lead: T Duff

Action requested: Note

Discussion

TD introduced his paper and advised that the Assessment Policy and Assessment Procedure were discussed at the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and it was agreed that amendments were required. The papers had been brought to Academic Board to allow for a quick implementation in this academic year.

The Learning and Teaching Academy was requested to review the papers in line with the College's review process.

This minor amendments requested at QAEC were:

- ✓ 10-day turnaround time in terms of assessment feedback to be amended to 15 working days;
- ✓ communication piece to be developed, highlighting the changes/difference between the old and new policies to students and staff;
- ✓ there was an implication in the policy around the second and third attempts that needed clarification, as the third attempt could only be due to mitigation. After further instigation, it was found that this was already stipulated in the policy;
- ✓ the changes for students to be simplified in collaboration with the Student Association;
- ✓ an assessment handbook should be developed for staff.

TD indicated that there was student representation at the QAEC meeting, and the timeline was discussed at length. The committee agreed 15 days as a maximum timeframe. The policy would be explained to the students,

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| | <p>and that is what they should expect from their course leaders. The difference with this policy is that for the first time there will be a target period for returning marks and feedback.</p> <p>TD indicated that the Academy was looking at assessments, as most folk are currently using only 3 or 4 types of assessment. L&TA are looking at developing an assessment practice that is digital with a quick turnaround time. With the Academy's input, staff can be assisted to assess more digitally.</p> <p>The revised version will go to QAEC members via email for approval.</p> |
| Decision | Approved, pending QAEC's approval. |

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| Item 6.2 | | New Course Proposal | |
| Paper No: AB1-F | Lead: G Grubb | Action requested: Note | |
| Discussion | <p>GG introduced his paper. The new course proposal was for an HND in Fashion Business, to be added to the 2021/22 portfolio. The new course had been approved at the Faculty Board meeting.</p> <p>GG pointed out that this would start to build a platform in the e-commerce world and the College was in discussion with the institute of e-commerce about apprenticeships.</p> <p>He pointed out that it was a standard HND course and that evidence suggests a level of demand which would make it financially viable for the College.</p> <p>GG pointed out that the new course (retail) would be a separate entity from Fashion Design (creative), as this would be more retail targeted.</p> <p>GG will confirm the teaching resource needed and demand for continuation in future years to understand the financial underpinning.</p> | | |
| Decision | Approved, pending further development. | | |

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| Item 7.1 | | QAEC Minute 6 May & 21 October 2020 | |
| Paper No: AB1-G | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note | |
| Discussion | The draft minutes of the QAEC meeting held on 6 May and 21 October 2020 were noted. | | |
| Decision | Noted. | | |

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| Item 7.2 | | SAEC Minute 6 May & 21 October 2020 | |
| Paper No: AB2-H | Lead: C Carney | Action requested: Note | |
| Discussion | The draft minutes of the SAEC meeting held on 29 April and 9 September 2020 were noted. | | |
| Decision | Noted. | | |

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| Item 7.3 | SSC Minute 09 October 2020 | |
| Paper No: AB2-I | Lead: S Thompson | Action requested: Note |
| Discussion | The draft minute of the SSC meeting held on 09 October 2020 will be circulated once received. | |
| Decision | Noted. | |

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| Item 8 | Any Other Business | |
| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note |
| Discussion | SL ended the meeting by reminding everyone that Academic Board was a very important forum for the College. Members of the Board were encouraged to relay meeting information to their colleagues. | |
| | There was no other business for noting. | |
| Decision | Noted. | |

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| Item 9 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| Paper No: Verbal | Lead: S Lodge | Action requested: Note |
| Discussion | The next meeting date was noted as 25 February 2020. | |
| Decision | Noted. | |

ANNEX TO THE MINUTE

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

29 October 2020

| Item | Description | Owner | Target Date |
|-------------|--|--------------|--------------------|
| 6.2 | GG to develop the costings for the proposed HND Fashion Business | GG | 30.11.20 |