

Board of Management Meeting of the Students, Staffing & Equalities Committee

MINUTE OF 3rd MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2021 AT 1500 HRS (SSEC3)

Present	
Alisdair Barron (AB) (Convener)	Paul Hillard (PH)
David Cullen (DC)	Paul Little (PL)
Nicolas Garcia (DG)	May Miller (MM)
Iona Gibson (IG)	Audrey Sullivan (AS)
In attendance	
Paul Clark (PC)	Gillian Plunkett (GP)
Julie Dale (JD)	
John Gribben (JFG)	Ann Butcher (Minute)
Apologies for absence	
None	

Item SSEC3-1	Apologies for Absence	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no apologies.	

Item SSEC3-2	Declarations of Interest	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no declarations of interest.	

Item SSEC3-3	Identification of Items to be Discussed Privately	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	None notified.	

Item SSEC3-4.1	Minute of the Students, Staffing & Equalities held on 1 February 2021	
Paper No: SSEC3-A	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Approve
Decision/Noted	That the minute be approved.	
	<p>Matters Arising HR Q&A Session AS referred to Item SSEC2-4.2 and reminded that an informal Q&A session with HR would be welcomed. JFG will arranged a suitable date/time with PC.</p>	

Item SSEC3-4.2	CitySA Impact Report 2020-21	
Paper No: SSEC3-B	Lead: I Gibson/N Garcia	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>NG introduced the summary of work achieved by the Students' Association during 2020-21.</p> <p>The Committee was advised of recent discussions by the Student Parliament, particularly in relation to the Communication Plan. The valuable ongoing partnership with the College was noted. Student member attendance at future Committee meetings has yet to be finalized however it is anticipated that the new President will attend.</p> <p>AB referred to the review of the SA Constitution which had recently been undertaken and requested that the final endorsed document be submitted at the next meeting of the Board for approval. NG agreed and acknowledged that the consultation process with stakeholders (in particular members of the Board) will be improved in future.</p> <p>Discussion followed on potential ongoing barriers surrounding digital poverty and connectivity particularly given adoption of a new Blended Learning approach. NG recognized the significant challenges ahead and advised that the SA were entering into a process of reflection and improvement. He hoped the College would continue to champion the digital divide and lobby the Scottish Government for ongoing funding to tackle this issue. AB assured that matters of digital hardware and connectivity are at the forefront of discussions with Colleges Scotland and, Chairs and Principals meetings.</p> <p>PL affirmed that the level of funding required to support the role of the SA would continue however given the ongoing financial pressures, year on year increases may not be maintained. The Committee noted that in addition to the block grant provided, the College also provides additional wrap around support through Student Engagement and Student Services.</p> <p>Members commended the report which provides a good understanding of the work undertaken by the SA. They particularly praised the productive achievements made particularly during the ongoing pandemic crisis.</p>	
Decision/Noted	To approve the CitySA Impact Report 2020-21.	

Item SSEC3-4.3	Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Reports 2021	
Paper No: SSEC3-C	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>PC advised the Committee that N Dar was currently on sick leave and thanked her for the significant amount of work undertaken over the past few months on these reports. PC provided an overview of the Statutory Reports (2021) required in support of the Equality Act 2010, comprising the Equality Mainstreaming Report, College Equality Outcomes, Equality Outcomes Progress Report and Equal Pay Statement and Information. These documents were published prior to 30 April 2021 and are subject to Board approval.</p>	

Equality Mainstreaming Report

The report provided detail on the progress made in mainstreaming the PSED across the College functions following a systematic review. This approach allows current progress to be identified and shared, which in turn permits future action and support to be targeted. The key findings were noted and initiatives such as the Engendering STEM Project; STEM Girls Equality Champion Group; tackling equalities in Procurement through the development of an inclusive procurement process and achievement of the Employer Network for Equality and Innovation through Impact Award were particularly highlighted.

The College is also involved in equality work across the sector including membership of the steering group which led to the development of a campaign to tackle racism and addressed the provision resources to support this. The Principal has also signed the Declaration of Anti-Racism on behalf of the College sector.

Members also noted that CoGC was also the first educational institution in Scotland to be included in the Stonewall 100 top employers in the UK.

The College is committed to enhancing diversity of the Board and its Committees. All Board vacancies are positively promoted through a network of equality partner organisations which represent a wide range of under-represented groups. Opportunities for co-option to Board Committees are also made available to provide experience of working with the College Board. PC advised that following the recent recruitment exercise, the Board will achieve gender equality of the full Board by August 2021.

Equality Outcomes Report

67 areas of activity were identified to deliver demonstrable change. Work is progressing with 42 actions being successfully delivered, some exceeding expectation. 22 actions were partially delivered and are still in progress. 3 areas of work were suspended.

Equal Pay Statement and Information

PC acknowledged the valued contribution of HR staff in the preparation of this report. PC reported that the mean Gender Pay Gap for the College is 10.17%. This is under the Scottish average with the most recent gender pay gap statistics for 2020 showing that Scotland's mean gender pay gap is 10.4%. For comparison, the Mean Gender Pay Gap reported in 2017 was 11.69%.

The Committee were informed that the submission of equality data from staff is not compulsory, and whilst staff are encouraged to record information which includes sensitive data, this has proved challenging. Work is in progress to reassure staff that all equality data is anonymized and used only to progress equalities issues.

AB shared the Committee's thanks and appreciation to the ED&I team and other staff involved in undertaking the significant level of work required to complete the PSED reports to schedule. He further wished N Dar a speedy recovery.

Decision/Noted

To approve the PSED reports.

NG left the meeting during Item 5.3.

Item SSEC3-4.4	People and Culture Strategy	
Paper No: SSEC3-D	Lead: P Clark/J Gribben	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>PC introduced the People and Culture Strategy which was submitted in draft form for guidance. The Strategy will be further designed in line with corporate branding and will also include appropriate images.</p> <p>JFG provided an overview of the Strategy which has been updated to support the new College Strategic Plan 2021-30 and now incorporates changes under the elements of the “Shaping the Future of Work” model. The key drivers, aims and objectives were reviewed. The following updates/amendments were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim 2 – ensure relevant objective provides ‘all staff’ with the necessary skills and confidence to do their job. • Aim 3 – Add additional objective which recognizes student engagement through digital working ie include a more flexible approach to learning. • Consider an even balance of objectives under each Aim for example, include management support for staff under Aim 4. <p>JFG further confirmed that performance will be managed through a separate Performance and Development Review process which will also be linked to outcomes from the Staff Wellbeing Survey. The requirement to fully promote and embed the College values and behaviours was discussed.</p>	
Decision/Noted	To approve the People and Culture Strategy, subject to agreed amendments.	

Item SSEC3-5.1	Student Experience Annual Review 2020-21	
Paper No: SSEC3-E	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>GP provided a summary overview of the Student Experience service priorities, developments and performance achievements for students and staff in 2020/21.</p> <p>Student Recruitment and Admissions Applications for 2020-21 were well underway by the time the College closed on 17 March 2020. Whilst applications dropped slightly, CoGC remains the 1st choice destination for School Leavers across Scotland. All ‘Get Ready for College’ activities were moved online. This was further supported by colleagues in the Learning and Teaching Academy through remote access to the VLE. Despite reports in 2020 that only 1 in 5 students with offers were likely to take up their University/College place in the Autumn of 2020, conversion rates from application to enrolment at CoGC were higher than in previous years.</p> <p>Student Support Funding</p>	

As a result of continued support from the Principal and lobbying across the Sector, additional monies were received from the Scottish Funding Council and Student Awards Agency Scotland to cover additional spend resulting from the Covid-19 crisis. These funds have been utilised to address the changing financial needs of students.

Student Support and Wellbeing

A rise in counselling referrals were expected following ease of restrictions in July 2020 however referrals were slow in September, rising to normal levels in November. Referrals dipped again in January 2021 after the second lockdown announcement. Further work will be undertaken to better understand these results.

Students experiencing or self-isolating due to Covid were contacted and supported in a number of ways. Students were also informed that there would be no detriment to funding whilst absent. Welfare checks were also undertaken with vulnerable students.

The significant amount of communications, activities, workshops and campaigns undertaken throughout the year were acknowledged. A number of case studies were highlighted and the level of learning support provided was noted.

GP confirmed that a blend of digital and on-campus support will be provided to students next session. The Committee also noted that applications for 2021-22 are slightly higher than last year, with offers provided slightly down. Guided by Curriculum Heads, options to extend/defer/repeat are being considered for all current students.

The Committee congratulated the Student Services team for the range and standard of support provided to students over the past year. The ongoing collaboration and partnership with HR and Faculties was also recognised and commended.

Decision/Noted

- To note the Student Experience Annual Review 2020-21.
- To submit the Review for noting at the next meeting of the Board.

Item SSEC3-5.2

Staff HR Metrics Report

**Paper No:
SSEC3-F**

Lead: J Gribben

Action requested: Discuss

**Discussion/
Matters Arising**

JFG submitted the January to April 2021 report on key employment data and core HR activity. The various Key Performance Indicator graphs including overtime costs, headcount and absence reporting (including sickness costs associated with Covid related absences) were reviewed by the Committee. An additional appendix detailing the wide range of wellbeing services and practical support (including uptake) provided to staff was also submitted for information.

Committee members thanked the HR team for the comprehensive report and praised the significant extent of wellbeing activity and support provided to staff. JFG particularly commended J Loftus, Wellbeing Officer for her valued input. Areas of best practice are currently being shared with the rest of the College sector. PL further commended JFG, C Keenan and

	<p>all frontline HR staff for their part in supporting staff through this time of change and for promoting the various wellbeing services and initiatives.</p> <p>JFG reassured members that the information provided within the report is continually reviewed by senior managers. This is used as a proactive tool which helps inform a decision-making process and enables change and improvements to be made where necessary.</p>
Decision/Noted	To note the report.

Item SSEC3-5.3	Strategic Risk Review	
Paper No: SSEC3-G	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>PC reminded the Committee that following agreement at the Board meeting held on 17 February, the Risk Score for Risk 1 - <i>Failure to support successful student outcomes</i>, has been increased to 20 (RED). All other Risks which closely relate to the Committee's remit have remained unchanged.</p>	
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note and endorse the Risk Management Action Plans (MAPs) including Risk Scores. To note the Risk Register at 11 May 2021. 	

Item SSEC3-6.1	ED&I Current Priorities	
Paper No: SSEC3-H	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Note
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>PC provided a summary update on ED&I priorities for 2020-21. The following matters were reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Embracing Diversity' competition has now been running 10 years and has been very successful. Students registered and attending courses during 2020-21 are being encouraged to enter by 1 June 2021. A new action plan in response to the PSED reporting and revised Equality Outcomes has been developed and is being progressed. The ED&I internal working group is being restructured and a Short Life Working Group has been established to focus on individual protected characteristics. ED&I is currently being rebranded. Mandatory ED&I training is being renewed. 	
Decision/Noted	To note the update report.	

Item SSEC3-7	Disclosability of Papers	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Agree
Decision/Noted	<p>With exception of the Strategic Risk Review paper which was considered Disclosable, it was agreed that the disclosability status of papers as described on respective cover sheets be retained at present; however these may change over time.</p>	

Item SSEC3-8	Any Other Notified Business	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested:
Decision/Noted	None	

Item SSEC3-9	Date of Next Meeting	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Wednesday 27 October 2021	

The meeting closed at 1745 hours.

ANNEX TO THE MINUTE

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC3-4.1 19 05 21	HR Q&A Session: Arrange suitable date/time.	PC/JFG	
SSEC3-5.1 19 05 21	Student Experience Annual Review 2020-21: Submit to next meeting of the Board.	PC	16 06 21

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC2-5.6 01 02 21	That paper updates be provided in advance of meetings.	As appropriate/PC	Ongoing Complete
SSEC2-5.8 01 02 21	Mental Health & Wellbeing Support: Provide additional data on uptake of activities.	JFG	19 05 21 Complete
SSEC2-5.9 01 02 21	Submit workforce planning report.	PL/JFG	Ongoing Complete
SSEC2-5.9 01 02 21	Submit redrafted People and Culture Strategy	JFG	Ongoing Complete
SSEC4-10	SE Annual Review 2018-19: Consider student brief and reference documents.	GP	Ongoing
SSEC4-13	Staff HR Metrics Report: Consider update of College Values and Behaviours.	JFG	Ongoing