

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

MINUTE OF 3rd MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2021 AT 1500 HRS
(SSEC1)

Present	
Alisdair Barron (AB) (Convener)	May Miller (MM)
David Cullen (DC)	Bernie Savage (BS)
Paul Hillard (PH)	Audrey Sullivan (AS)
Zahra Khan (ZK)	
In attendance	
Paul Clark (PC)	Sheila Lodge (SL)
Naira Dar (ND)	Gillian Plunkett (GP)
John Gribben (JFG)	Ann Butcher (Minute)
Apologies for absence	
Paul Little (PL)	

Item SSEC1-1	Apologies for Absence	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Apologies were received from PL. SL attended in his absence.	

Item SSEC1-2	Declarations of Interest	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no declarations of interest.	

Item SSEC1-3	Identification of Items to be Discussed Privately	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	None notified.	

Item SSEC1-4.1	Minute of the Students, Staffing & Equalities held on 19 May 2021	
Paper No: SSEC1-A	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Approve
Decision/Noted	That subject to one minor amendment, the minute was approved.	

Item SSEC1-4.2	Committee Annual Report 2020-21	
Paper No: SSEC1-B	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Approve

Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>PC introduced the Committee Annual Report 2020-21 which provides a reference of progress and achievement under the Committee's areas of responsibility. He highlighted the main areas of focus including student mental health and wellbeing, recruitment and admissions and, corporate care duties. Successful completion and publication of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) reports were also reported. PC thanked all colleagues from across the College for their support in this process. Members noted that member attendance was 100%.</p> <p>PC further informed members that all 5 draft strategy documents are now complete or near completion. Approval has been devolved to the relevant Committees prior to submission to the full board for information. PC will review and clarify wording as indicated by the Committee.</p>
Decision/Noted	Subject to minor review as discussed, the Committee Annual Report 2020-21 was approved.

Item SSEC1-4.3	Committee Programme of Work 2021-22	
Paper No: SSEC1-C	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>The draft Programme of Work for 2021-22 was reviewed. PC confirmed that Board members were previously encouraged to become involved with Faculties and to 'Champion' specific areas of interest. This will provide members with better insight on relevant subject areas and enable them to share information with the Committee. It was agreed that the current focus on student and staff health and wellbeing should be specifically considered as a priority during AY 2021-22.</p> <p>GP further advised on a joint holistic approach towards both student and staff health and wellbeing which is being progressed for further review and approval by ELT/SMT. Once agreed, this will be submitted to the Committee for consideration. JFG added that the comprehensive output from the recent Robertson Cooper Survey would also be considered as a key topic at the February 2022 meeting.</p> <p>AS enquired regarding the potential to consider the College Regional Outcome Agreement at a future meeting. AB confirmed that this was not devolved to any Board Committee and members would have the opportunity to input into this process through full Board meetings and planning events when appropriate. GP confirmed that different elements of the ROA are also considered individually by relevant Committees - for example credit delivery under the remit of the FPRC.</p>	
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to discussion, the Programme of Work 2021-22 was agreed. • To provide paper on output following Robertson Cooper Survey at February meeting. 	

Item SSEC1-4.4	People and Culture Strategy	
Paper No: SSEC1-D	Lead: P Clark/J Gribben	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/	The final draft People and Culture Strategy was submitted for review. PC	

Matters Arising	<p>confirmed that the Strategy has been structured in line with the other 4 supporting strategies and provides a focus on the delivery of relevant priorities and aims within the overall College Strategic Plan 2021-30.</p> <p>AB commended the clarity of aims provided within the document and particularly recognised the complexity of work required for delivery. JFG agreed and considered that additional HR and Student Experience resources would be required to deliver all aims and objectives. He also confirmed that in terms of outcome delivery, all relevant information is reviewed by ELT/SMT and will be submitted to the Committee for further review in due course.</p> <p>Separate reporting on the action plan is being developed following the outcomes raised from the recent Robertson Cooper Survey, and will also be submitted.</p>
Decision/Noted	To approve the People and Culture Strategy.

Item SSEC1-4.5	Corporate Parenting Action Plan & British Sign Language Action Plan	
Paper No: SSEC1-E	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Approve
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>GP advised that, in light of experience during the COVID pandemic, both the Corporate Parenting and British Sign Language Action Plans have been reviewed and updated. The actions achieved and future ambitions were considered by members. GP further outlined some of the practical areas of support provided and informed on the difficulties encountered engaging with the care experienced society.</p>	
Decision/Noted	To approve the Corporate Parenting and British Sign Language Action Plans.	

Item SSEC1-5.1	Students' Association (SA) Update - Representation	
Paper No: SSEC1-F	Lead: B Savage/Z Khan	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>BS provided an update on progress of the Class and Faculty Rep systems. Recognising the importance of student representation and continued participation in College decision-making processes, students have been actively encouraged to participate however response and uptake has been slow. The implication of late class rep.elections, and the potential impact on Faculty rep elections were highlighted. BS requested that staff continue to encourage student involvement.</p> <p>GP provided members with an update on current student rep. figures. Whilst representation is low, some courses have not yet commenced, and numbers are currently on a par with this time last year. She further considered that representation may have been impacted by challenges faced when participating online, combined with continued limited access to the College Campus. Progress is being made to increase student representation through the student parliament and "meet the Dean" sessions.</p>	

	<p>AS suggested that students returning for year 2 courses should elect class reps at the end of year 1. Setting election milestones (including part of induction) in preparation for 2022-23 was also suggested. GP will discuss this with the SA team. An alternative title for Student rep. will also be considered.</p> <p>DC raised the issue of class reps for PT courses which are not currently being represented. GP advised on the different, nuanced approaches for PT courses such as apprenticeships and commercial courses. GP highlighted the challenges in providing this support for PT students, particularly for those in employment. The Committee considered that different types of representation for different modes of attendance should be considered in the longer term, however the added strain on current resources was acknowledged.</p> <p>BS updated the Committee on current societies (including the disabled student network) which in some cases, are still being undertaken via a blended approach. Members noted that methods for reducing stigma surrounding care experienced students are continually being explored.</p>
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the update report. To consider methods to further increase Class rep participation including PT courses.

Item SSEC1-5.2	Student Recruitment and Admissions Review 2021-22	
Paper No: SSEC1-G	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>GP provided the Committee with a high-level summary of student recruitment activity for full time courses where entry is based on selection. Applications for 2021-22 has decreased by 1.7% compared to last year however the volume still represents a ratio of approximately 3:1 applications to places available. Demand for courses is variable and curriculum reviews are undertaken to review performance and retention rates.</p> <p>Results of the Student Satisfaction Survey are slightly down (or similar to previous years) however the overall satisfaction remains high at 88%. Applicant expectations and positive experience levels are being met. The drop in trend over the past few years is largely due to: the decline in the number of young people in Scotland; students staying on at school; the impact of widening access policies implemented by universities, and government youth employment strategies offering part time access for Senior Phase school pupils. The Admissions Survey results were reviewed.</p> <p>AB suggested that additional outreach programmes providing guaranteed work experience opportunities (eg within the hospitality and leisure industries) should be explored to help improve overall student perception. AS also considered that FE should not be viewed as a feeder for HE and its importance should be raised with potential employers. The value and benefits of HNC/D qualifications, topped up with workplace training, should be marketed. GP informed the Committee that this is being investigated,</p>	

	<p>however unless University graduate levies are applied this will remain challenging.</p> <p>GP further reported that conversion of applications to enrolments was down compared to last year. However, rates during 2020 were exceptionally high resulting from less take up of University courses than anticipated. This downturn will be further investigated with an 'open door' approach being piloted next session for applicants meeting all entry requirements. January start courses will be reviewed to make up any shortfall in enrolments.</p> <p>Recruitment and enrolment targets continue to be monitored for continued financial stability and assurance of fair access to protected groups.</p>
Decision/Noted	To note the update report.

Item SSEC1-5.3	Staff HR Metrics Quarterly Report	
Paper No: SSEC1-H	Lead: J Gribben	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>An overview of key employment data and core activity in the HR team for the period 1 January to 30 September 2021 was submitted for review. AB commended the updated information and format of the report.</p> <p>AS referred to the informal Q&A session with HR which had been helpful and informative and suggested that another informal meeting with the new Project Management Office (PMO) would be welcome. SL will organise suitable dates/times.</p>	
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the report. • To arrange an informal meeting with PMO staff. 	

Item SSEC1-5.4	ED&I Current Priorities: Update	
Paper No: SSEC1-I	Lead: P Clark/N Dar	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>ND provided and update on the progress and future actions associated with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). The College commitment to achieving the LGBT Youth Charter Foundation status has been delayed due to a delay in procuring appropriate services. It is anticipated work will commence early next year.</p> <p>NC further reported that value for money of continued membership with Stonewall was reviewed. It was recognised that productive contact and direct support is not currently being utilised and membership will not be renewed at this time. Appropriate procurement of training programmes will continue if required.</p> <p>PC reminded members that the Principal has signed the Declaration of Anti-Racism on behalf of the College sector. An Anti-Racism session has been scheduled for the Board Planning event on 17 November.</p>	
Decision/Noted	To note the update report.	

Item SSEC1-5.5	Strategic Risk review	
Paper No: SSEC1-J	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>The scoring of risks which most closely relate to the Committee's remit were discussed. PC advised that a reduced Risk Score of 15 (RED) for Risk 1 - <i>Failure to support successful student outcomes</i> had been agreed by the Learning and Teaching Committee during September.</p> <p>Risk 9 - <i>Failure to recruit, retain, and develop suitable staff</i> was discussed. Members were mindful of the impact of Covid and the increased stress levels of staff as they continue to help and support students during the delivery of learning and teaching. AB raised some concern relating to potential targeted headhunting of CoGC staff which added to the challenges faced in the recruitment of high calibre staff. Acknowledging that staff turnover was decreasing, it was suggested that an analysis of staff reasons for leaving should be provided. JFG will provide feedback on this matter.</p> <p>Risk Scores for Risks14 and 21 were retained.</p>	
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To endorse the Risk Scores as discussed. • To note the Risk Register • To note the latest Risk Register at 19 October 2021. • To provide analysis on Staff Reasons for Leaving. 	

Item SSEC1-6.1	Review of Corporate Caring Duties 2020-21	
Paper No: SSEC1-K	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	To note the KPIs related to College Corporate Caring duties and responsibilities for AY 2020/21.	

Item SSEC1-6.2	Careers Guidance Plan	
Paper No: SSEC1-L	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Note
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>GP provided the Committee with a detailed update on the roles, responsibilities and activities undertaken in relation to the Careers Guidance Plan which covers 4 areas; Career information, advice and guidance; careers provision in the classroom; employer engagement activities, and support for progression to HE or employment. An employer vacancy service offering permanent and short-term work for students is provided on the career's website and new volunteering hub.</p> <p>To inform future developments, the Plan will be reviewed using Gatsby Benchmarks and the Scottish Government Careers Strategy and will offer a more comprehensive framework for mapping careers information, activities and guidance offered across the College.</p> <p>Members commended the helpful overview which will contribute towards achieving the aims set within the new Student Academic Experience</p>	

	Strategy. AS stressed that appropriate resources must be allocated to each guidance initiative, including the vacancy service including a coordinated approach with Faculties and sharing of information following interaction with employers. It was suggested that CC and Faculty Deans further consider the development of an employer engagement data base including details on the purpose and need. This will be set referencing a range of outcomes relating to both learning and teaching and future careers.
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the update report. To consider development of employer engagement process.

Item SSEC1-7	Disclosability of Papers	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: P Clark	Action requested: Agree
Decision/Noted	It was agreed that the disclosability status of papers as described on respective cover sheets be retained at present; however it was noted that these may change over time.	

Item SSEC1-8	Any Other Notified Business	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested:
Decision/Noted	None	

Item SSEC1-9	Date of Next Meeting	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Wednesday 2 February 2022	

The meeting closed at 1730 hours.

ANNEX TO THE MINUTE

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC1-4.3 27 10 21	Programme of Work: Provide paper on output following Roberson Cooper Survey.	JFG	Feb 2022
SSEC1-5.1 27 10 21	Students' Association Update – Representation: Consider methods to further increase Class Rep participation including PT courses.	GP	Ongoing
SSEC1-5.3 27 10 21	Staff HR Metrics Report: Arrange information meeting with PMO staff.	SL	ASAP
SSEC1-5.5 27 10 21	Strategic Risk Review: provide analysis on Staff Reasons for Leaving.	JFG	ASAP
SSEC1-6.2 27 10 21	Careers Guidance Plan: Consider further development of employer engagement process.	CC/GP/ Deans	Ongoing

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC3-4.1 19 05 21	HR Q&A Session: Arrange suitable date/time.	PC/JFG	Complete
SSEC3-5.1 19 05 21	Student Experience Annual Review 2020-21: Submit to next meeting of the Board.	PC	16 06 21 Complete
SSEC4-10	SE Annual Review 2018-19: Consider student brief and reference documents.	GP	Ongoing Complete
SSEC4-13	Staff HR Metrics Report: Consider update of College Values and Behaviours.	JFG	Ongoing