

**Minute of meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee
held on 15 March 2023 via MS Teams**

Present:

Stuart Moir	Chair
Gary Husband	
Neil Hargraves	
Roddy Henry	Principal/Ex-officio

In attendance

Kirsty Adamson	Depute Principal
Ingrid Earp	Board Governance Advisor (Minutes)

Apologies

Annette Miller	Curriculum Manager
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Not Present

Holli Davison
Craig Ewing
Majella Sweeney

#	Agenda item
Part A – Opening Business	
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Chair)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and noted that it was Gary Husband's first L&T meeting. Gary will also be Vice Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>Apologies were received as noted above and the meeting was confirmed as quorate.</p> <p>There were no Declaration of Interests advised.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2022 (Paper 1)</p> <p>The minute of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2022 was approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p>
2a.	<p>Action and Decision Log (Paper 1a)</p> <p>All outstanding actions were noted as complete.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising out with the agenda for the meeting and the action log.</p>

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Part B – For Decision	
4.	<p>Key Performance Indicators on the Strategic Plan: Curriculum (Paper 3)</p> <p>The Principal reported that as the Strategic Plan progresses (it was only launched late 2022) it will be possible to hone in on specific KPIs. It was noted that the financial environment is also likely to change over the coming weeks following an SFC meeting on 10 March. Key points to note are that the retention numbers are currently very good and discussions are ongoing with the Open University (OU) regarding a possible credit transfer arrangement. Growing the curriculum offer will only be possible if more funding is available and a number of alternative sources of income are currently being investigated.</p> <p>It was commented on that the way some of the strategic objectives are currently written will make it difficult to have meaningful KPIs against them and that the information provided in this paper going forward needs to be useful and meaningful. The Principal agreed and returned to the comment with regard to honing the KPIs more once the Strategy has bedded in more. Some of the objectives are easier than others to quantify, and that quantitative targets are not always the best measure.</p> <p>Overall, the Committee were happy with the KPIs and accepted that some fine tuning will be required given they have only been in place a matter of months.</p>
Part C – For discussion	
5.	<p>Student Representative Council (SRC) Report (verbal)</p> <p>There were no students present at the meeting to provide an update on the SRC, it was thought they may have been in another conflicting meeting.</p> <p>The Committee Chair reported that he had recently met with both student Board Members, as well as other students. This had gone well, and the students had been excited about their learning and wider experiences at NAC. The Chair had also indicated that part of the remit of this Committee is to hear the student voice.</p> <p>The Depute Principal said the students had enjoyed meeting the Committee Chair and had also recently met with people from Scottish Government (SG) who visited the College. Members of SRC said, ‘This is a jewel in the Education system, we should be protecting it for many years to come,’ and ‘It’s the difference between succeeding and failing – we’ve got to champion this College.’</p>
6.	<p>Depute Principal’s Report (Paper 4)</p> <p>The Depute Principal noted that since the last meeting Annette Miller has joined the College as the Curriculum Manager. Sadly, Annette couldn’t be at the meeting but Kirsty welcomed her to the team and said that Annette had very much hit the ground running at the College.</p> <p>Additional funding which has been received recently include £29k from the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) to deliver Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLA), £51k from the Young Person’s Guarantee (YPG) – although this is substantially less than requested, £18k from Cycling Scotland and £28k from the Community (Adult) Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to work with Midlothian Women’s Aid. One of the bids submitted to the Shared Prosperity Fund, Prescribe Nature, was also successful.</p>

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	<p>The Gaelic short courses are not proving to be particularly popular with only five bookings on the beginners one, two on the second level and none on the highest level. The viability of these courses going forward should be assessed.</p> <p>The future direction of curriculum planning depends very much on the level of funding available. Discussions are ongoing re developing a student led curriculum. Neil Hargraves added that the L&T are very positive about these discussions and there is enthusiasm for further engagement across the team. The Depute Principal confirmed that L&T staff would be involved in discussions as any such move would very much be a collective Newbattle initiative. Gary Husband noted that he was very supportive of exploring this idea, as is the Principal who voiced a need for pragmatism while not stifling creativity.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to support further exploration of developing a student led curriculum and of the College being the accrediting body for any such courses.</p> <p>The Committee also endorsed the Depute Principal's report as a very positive one, on the whole, with lots of innovative initiatives now emerging.</p>
7.	<p>Recruitment, Retention, Progression and Attainment Report (Paper 5)</p> <p>The Depute Principal reported that applications were now being received through the new MIS system developed in conjunction with Borders College. There is a College Open Day on 27 March to which all Board Members are invited. Gary Husband offered his services for the Open Day.</p> <p>Action L&T03:C7 Depute Principal to get back to Gary Husband.</p> <p>The number of SWAP applications is lower than anticipated, however this appears to be the case across the sector.</p> <p>The retention rate is currently standing at 93% but it is expected to be about 87% by the end of the period. This is excellent against the sector average. The Principal said that this was down to a lot of hard work across the College teams and wanted to say well done to everyone involved.</p> <p>The Depute Principal noted that while contact with the University of Edinburgh is generally very good there is a need to build a network of contacts with other Universities in the area. The Committee Chair said that he would be keen to offer as much support as possible in working with students who were thinking about applying for University in the future.</p>
8.	<p>Quality Assurance Report (Paper 6)</p> <p>Meetings have been held with SQA and SQF with work being undertaken to get processes and systems up to date.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the focus being given to quality assurance and this informative paper on the matter.</p>
9.	<p>Enhancement Plan (Paper 7)</p> <p>The Committee noted the closure of the 2021/22 Enhancement Plan with the vast majority of the items being closed off. There was one item still open which was the gap between level 4 and levels 6 and 7 which needs to be filled however there is a significant cost involved in this. The plan to have in place robust quality assurance processes is progressing well with the appointment of the new Curriculum Manager.</p>

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	<p>The Enhancement Plan for 2023/24 was also discussed. The Depute Principal noted that this is a live document and is not a list of KPIs. They also drew the Committee's attention to a number of items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific L&T budget to be agreed. • The MIS system is still bedding in and further changes may be required. • Residence Assistants – there were no applicants for these posts when previously advertised. Another round of recruitment will be held as it is important that there is a staff presence in in the residences out with regular hours. • A number of student facing policies require significant updating. Draft policies will come to this Committee. • Access around the campus – for those with limited mobility it can be difficult to move around the campus due to the nature and age of some of the buildings. There are currently two students who are wheelchair users and they have offered to do an accessibility audit which would be very helpful. • Adult Achievement Awards (AAA) – requires investment if they are to continue with materials being outdated and the QA not where it should be. • Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLAs) – Gary Husband offered help and expertise in this area and a number of useful contacts. <p>The Committee Chair said it was reassuring to see the new Enhancement Plan and that there were solutions being identified for the majority of items.</p> <p>The whereabouts of the Enhancement Plan for 2022/23 was questioned with the Depute Principal telling the Committee that due to the change over between Depute Principals there had not been one for that specific year but all months over the three years have been covered.</p> <p>The Committee Chair commended all the work being done on this, and other areas of L&T business, and said that this document along with the others discussed today gave assurance to the Committee that there is progress being made and that things were moving in the right direction.</p> <p>Action L&T03:C09 Depute Director and Board Secretary to liaise to ensure the minutes of the Curriculum and Student Experience Committee come to this meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Risk Register (Paper 8)</p> <p>It was noted that the risk around recruitment targets is amber but the Committee Chair said that they felt the risks that should be there that are pertinent to the L&T Committee are there, and that the mitigations are appropriate with evidence of progress coming to the Committee and that there is no immediate concern.</p> <p>Gary Husband said that the appointments of the Principal, Depute Principal and Curriculum Manager have all reinforced the management of risk at the College and that he was much reassured that risk is being well managed, this was endorsed by the Chair of the Committee and welcomed by the Principal.</p>
11.	<p>Outcome Agreement (paper 9)</p> <p>The Outcome Agreement had been approved by Board in November 2022 for submission that December. It was well received by the Outcome Agreement Manager for the College. Two small changes were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a section on Confident and highly capable, work-ready graduates, on page 10; and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a new paragraph at the end of section 3 (on page 8) on staff development. <p>The amendments were endorsed and will be taken to Board for approval.</p>
Part D – For Information	
12.	<p>Student Partnership Agreement (Paper 10) This was presented to the Committee for information. The Chair of the Committee asked about the group overseeing implementation of the agreement. The Depute Principal replied that the SRC drive the priorities and the content of the agreement.</p>
13.	<p>Prospectus (Paper 11) This was also presented to the Committee for information. It was noted that this is much more student focused than the previous prospectus and the Committee felt this was heartening to see.</p> <p>Action L&T03:D13 Board Secretary to share the prospectus with the rest of Board.</p>
Part E – Closing business	
14.	<p>Any other business The Committee Chair reported on a meeting held recently regarding the development of an Alumni Association and a Friends of Newbattle group. It was noted that this is not strictly Board business but an update when required to Board via this group would be helpful.</p>
15.	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 2.00pm on Campus.</p>