

Paper 1

**Minutes of meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee
held on 15 May 2024 on Campus**

Present

Stuart Moir	Chair
Jane Grant	Board Member
Simon Hoult	Board Member
Denise McNulty	Teaching Staff Board Member
Roddy Henry	Principal

In attendance

Kirsty Adamson	Depute Principal
Ingrid Earp	Board Secretary (Minutes)

Apologies

Lauren Smith	Student Board Member
James Kernaghan	Student Board Member

Part A – Opening Business	
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Chair)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and Jane Grant to her first L&T meeting after joining the Board. Apologies were received as noted above and the meeting was confirmed as quorate.</p> <p>There were no Declaration of Interests advised.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Simon Hoult will be the Committee Vice Chair going forward with the appointment of Gary Husband as Chair of the Board.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting (Paper 1) The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 February 2024 were approved.</p>
2a.	<p>Action and Decision Log (Paper 1a)</p> <p>Action L&T04:A2a Board Secretary to remind all Board Members at June Board re the importance of Safeguarding training.</p> <p>Action L&T04:A2a Depute Principal to pick this up with HMI, Ian Beach, when he visits the College on 11 June and extend an open invitation to the L&T meetings.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising There were no matters arising out with the agenda for the meeting and the action log.</p>
Part B – For Decision	
4.	<p>Safeguarding Policy Update (Paper 2) The Review of the Safeguarding Policy was a light touch one this year with extensive revisions made in the previous year.</p>

	<p>Questions were raised re the Director of Operations and Business Development's role – they are a member of the Safeguarding Team and not a member of L&T and it's important to have that separation. Another point made was the reference to the PREVENT policy and the suggestion that this policy has not been without criticism with reference to the right to critical speech and open thought. The Depute Director assured the Committee that any issues raised under this policy will be considered by a group of people in the College with the option to refer to an external advisor if thought necessary. The Principal also noted that the College has a duty of care and a duty to follow and adhere to the PREVENT policy.</p> <p>Decision L&T04:B3 The Committee had no further revisions to suggest and approved the Policy as is.</p>
<p>Part C – For discussion</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>SRC Report (Verbal) There were no students present to give a report.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Depute Principal's Report (Paper 3) The Depute Principal talked through her report noting that the results of the annual student satisfaction and engagement survey were included. There was a significant drop in satisfaction ratings this year for the HNC students. The Depute Principal has thoroughly investigated this and believes that this can be attributed to a number of factors such as some uncertainty at the start of the year with change in staffing, staff sickness absences and strike actions. The students involved also did not want to undertake a closed book exam. Staff who left the College were promptly replaced with no gap in teaching provision and cover was provided for other staff absences.</p> <p>The Committee were assured that all due attention had been paid to the results with the detailed explanation and discussion at the Committee providing further reassurance. If this trend should continue in future years it may be more of a matter for concern.</p> <p>82% of the College's students now declare having a disability which is having a significant impact across all aspects of learning and teaching.</p> <p>It is too early yet to report on attainment although the previous year had been very high so figures are unlikely to be as high this year. The Principal noted that the SWAP NC retention figures may be ones to look at as this is proving fairly challenging for some of the students and they might not be quite ready for this level of course. Preparation for Learning and Work has been successful so far this year with retention figures much higher and some of the students are applying to stay with the College on an access course.</p> <p>Provision of learning support across the College will be a point of focus now the indicative allocations are available. The aim at this present point in time is to move towards Student Wellbeing and Support staff who will be one point of contact for each area and who can work with the academic tutor of each student. It is clear that when pastoral support is provided attainment is much higher. The Committee expressed support for this development and the move towards a more holistic approach.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Curriculum Review (Paper 4) The Depute Principal summarised the paper noting that this will very much be an iterative and ongoing piece of work with seven recommendations being made at present.</p> <p>The Committee noted that this was an interesting and useful piece of work and understood that the education landscape is likely to be very unstable in the short to medium term at least.</p>

	<p>At present the College does not offer a course at level 5 and this is critical alongside flexibility with the offering. There are offerings at level 4 and then nothing to bridge the gap between that and the SWAP NC which can be a step too far for some students. Person centred learning will prove to be core to allow progression. At present these ideas and thoughts are evolving with success with the Shared Prosperity Fund enabling movement in the right direction. This will be part of the enhancement plan for next Academic Year and will also need to be a crucial part of financial planning.</p> <p>The Committee commended the report and recommended it for approval to the Board in June for final sign off. Thanks were extended to all staff involved.</p>
8.	<p>Risk Register (Paper 5)</p> <p>The Principal talked through the updated Risk Register. The financial stability score has been reduced given that the College is in a relatively good place financially compared to many others in the sector.</p> <p>The risk around student experience has been increased slightly with outcomes expected to be lower than the previous year which was particularly outstanding.</p> <p>Recruiting and retaining key staff is on a more even keel with a new Curriculum Manager recruited to start on 20 May. There have been issues around recruiting an Estates and Facilities Assistant and that will go out to advert for the third time shortly with some tweaks to the job title and job description. Some single point of failures have been noted, in particular the Finance Officer however the Senior Administrator has volunteered to be trained in some of this work to allow for cover to be provided.</p> <p>Regarding the organisational culture the pay dispute is still ongoing with little sign of movement and that continues to impact on everyone. The Principal said he felt that the majority of staff understood where the sector is at financially and that there is little optimism for additional funding from the Scottish Government. The job evaluation exercise for support staff has not yet reached resolution with the data now six years out of date.</p> <p>The Committee felt that the risks and issues are reflected fully in the Register with appropriate mitigations in place and being managed as effectively as possible.</p>
9.	<p>Review of Terms of Reference (Paper 6)</p> <p>As part of the Committee processes the Terms of Reference (ToR) should be reviewed and reflected on at the end of each AY. The ToR were significantly overhauled last year and the Committee generally agreed that they were still fit for purpose.</p> <p>The only matter raised was that quorum should be 50% of Members and the majority of these should be independent Members.</p> <p>Point 2.2 was now out of date with reference to EREP so wording for that point should be amended to ‘... over self-evaluation and enhancement plans ...’.</p> <p>Action L&T04:C9 Board Secretary to amend ToR and circulate before submitting to Board for approval.</p>
Part D – For Information	
10.	<p>Minutes of the Curriculum and Student Experience Committee (Paper 7)</p> <p>The agreed minutes were not yet available.</p>

	Action L&T04:D10 Board Secretary to circulate to Committee Members when approved.
Part E – Closing business	
11.	<p>Any other business The Principal noted that the draft Student Support Internal Audit had just been received. There are a number of issues with the report and the auditors engagement with the College and these will be raised directly with BDO, the College internal auditors.</p> <p>Action L&T04:E11 Principal to circulate draft report to Committee Members.</p>
12.	<p>Dates of next meeting The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 18th September 2024 at 3.30pm on Campus.</p>