BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
Wednesday 10 February 2021

Draft Confirmed by Chair

Minute of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 5.00pm via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:	M Williamson (Chair)	G Robertson
	B Carmichael	A McCusker
	S Mill	A Monks
	K Ditchburn	S Stirling
	C Meldrum	S Hewitt
	M Thomson	J Grace

IN ATTENDANCE: S Taylor (Vice Principal / Secretary to the Board)
J Carnegie (Vice Principal Corporate Services)
M Sanderson (Executive Secretary)
G Graham (Quality Manager)

1.   WELCOME

M Williamson welcomed Committee members and welcomed Kevin Ditchburn to his first committee meeting.

M Williamson noted the sad loss of Kevin Murphy (Director of Curriculum) who died last month. The Committee asked that their condolences be passed on to Julie McDonald and Kevin's family.

2.   APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted from H Honeyman.

3.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4.   MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 November 2020 was approved as an accurate record.

5.   MATTERS ARISING

The close out of matters arising from previous meetings was noted. An update on item 6 was included in VP Curriculum and attainment report.

6. **COVID 19 ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEARNING, TEACHING AND ENGAGEMENT OF LEARNERS**

S Hewitt provided a verbal update to the Committee on COVID 19 arrangements and guidance.

S Hewitt noted that he expected deferrals to increase due to the ongoing pandemic. He also noted the team were working on responses to the Economic Recovery and were exploring a wide range of course and new training options and opportunities.

J Grace provided an update on key issues around Learning and Teaching, highlighting that the focus internally was on what the College could plan and control, including preparations for the return to Campus. J Grace noted the Executive team had made the decision in January to move to full-time online learning and close campuses. The team were focusing on current students and what they could still achieve this year, even if a return to campus was not possible. Student's might be deferred to next Academic session; however, this would also have an impact on Academic Year 2021/22.

J Grace noted that 2021/22 recruitment had opened as normal and that this was felt to be an important and positive step in providing opportunities going forward.

S Taylor updated the Committee on the work being taken forward to support students during the new lockdown and noted extensive work from teams such as Student Services to move to remote services, rather than face to face meetings. It was noted that there were a small number of students for whom engagement and support was difficult, with currently 24 students identified that were struggling significantly to engage remotely. This was as a result of mental health issues, British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation needs, and other wellbeing needs that required additional support to be provided on campus. Student Services and teaching teams were working with these students and providing positive support. S Taylor noted the hardship fund is more flexible, and more students have been able to apply. Digital devices from campus were also still available (and had been supplemented) to give out to students.

J Carnegie noted that every department had been asked to update their risk assessments as required in the light of the new lockdown and updates to guidance. Numbers of positive cases were very low, although it was recognised that students may not record they are self-isolating due to not being on campus.

J Carnegie noted Caryn Gibson had been appointed as Economic Partnership Manager and started with the College last month. Caryn will be working with external partners as part of the economic recovery.

N Lowden asked how many laptops were bought using the fund and was the number short? S Taylor noted that 460 devices were purchases using the funds from the Government, with 419 issued to date. The original focus to distributing the devices, was to focus on students with the greatest need. These criteria had been relaxed slightly, to help students who are home-schooling children and might only have one device available in their household. J Carnegie noted there had also been c100 Wi-Fi devices made available to students to help with their studies.

N Lowden asked if students would have to undertake a COVID test before returning to campus and if this could maximise the number of students returning? S Hewitt noted that this had not been put forward as an option by the government and noted that the College needed to take a practical approach and look at the implications of a return to campus.

G Robertson asked if there was an option to extend term dates into holidays to get students through their courses. S Hewitt noted there were conversations ongoing with Scottish Government and unions to look at possible options around this.

M Williamson noted there was a concern around students who were vulnerable and not engaging. M Williamson asked if there were financial impacts for students who couldn't complete the practical element of their course. S Taylor noted the sector had raised this with the Scottish Government and there were additional costs with staff having more hours on campus and courses potentially running into holiday dates. S Taylor also noted that entitlement to bursaries would come to an end at the end of semester and funding needed to be available from the Government to support students beyond the normal end date if required. The team were looking at options to extend bursary entitlement rather than students having to reapply and completing the process again.

M Williamson asked what percentage of students were affected by this? J Grace noted that the team are looking at multiple approaches and working with SQA and other awarding bodies. J Grace noted the worst-case scenario would be around 1500 Senior Phase and 4000 other students not being able to complete their course if there were to be no return to campus this year.

A McCusker asked if the College had capacity for staff to deliver to students during holiday dates? S Hewitt confirmed the team are looking at several options around this, with staff expressing interest in helping in whichever way they can. This would, however, incur additional costs and there were a number of capacity and other issues to be considered.

M Williamson thanked the team for the comprehensive update and noted the extensive work being developed to support students and staff.

7. **CURRICULUM REPORT – COVID 19 WORK WITH SQA & AWARDING BODIES**

G Graham provided a detailed presentation to the Committee around work with SQA and other Awarding Bodies during COVID 19.

G Graham highlighted the impact of the cyber-attack on the College and students and noted that this had (paradoxically) resulted in the building of stronger relationships with awarding bodies, especially SQA that had helped during the COVID 19 pandemic.

G Graham noted that D&A had played a vital role with SQA in their response to COVID 19 in spring 2020. They worked together to create a solution to assessing student outcomes holistically, with SQA emphasising trust in quality assurance processes of the college sector. A decision tree approach was implemented, with extensive support from the Quality Team which provided a route map for students during the lockdown.

G Graham summarised the extensive work still being undertaken with SQA to support assessment adaption arrangements and a revised holistic approach to assessment because of the most recent lockdown.

S Mill asked if learners had been engaged with designing the process? G Graham noted that they had not as arrangements were highly technical in nature but noted that the D&A Students' Association had been involved in reviewing and re-writing the student FAQs and D&A communications for students around the arrangements.

8. **STUDENTS ASSOCIATION REPORT**

C Meldrum presented the [report](#) presentation to the Committee.

C Meldrum noted the lockdown lounge was still happening every second Saturday night to entertain students at the weekend and help students through isolation.

C Meldrum updated the committee on the DASA pay it forward fund. The project was now fully launched and the group had held their first meeting.

C Meldrum noted the various activities the team were organising with both staff and students. These included a step challenge to encourage exercise help with mental health, 'Cuppy and a Chat' sessions for students to come along and have a chat with each other, weekly quizzes, game shows etc.

C Meldrum and A Monks highlighted to the Committee that the team recently organised a 'virtual' Pizza with the Principals. This was a great way for students to get to know the Executive Team and the feedback from the event had been really positive. J Grace also meets with C Meldrum and A Monks every fortnight to catch up on feedback and any questions from students.

M Williamson noted the incredible hard work of the team and praised C Meldrum and A Monks for their continued hard work during the pandemic.

K Ditchburn asked if the team were providing feedback to the Executive Team from events. S Hewitt noted that C Meldrum and A Monks attend the 'Check-in' session twice a week, with the Executive, Senior Leadership Team and Unions. This was welcomed.

9. **LEARNER SATISFACTION SURVEY NOVEMBER 2020**

S Taylor summarised the paper presented and noted that the autumn survey had been reviewed and the questions adapted to the ongoing pandemic. It was noted that the survey generated over 3000 responses and overall results were very positive.

Key areas of feedback from the survey were discussed, and the recognition from students that the College was doing as well as it could in the circumstances was noted.

S Taylor noted that the overall results had been discussed with the senior leadership team and that each team had reviewed the results for their students and were using this to inform changes.

10. **2018/19 POST COURSE SUCCESS**

S Taylor summarised the report and noted that the destination data for 2018/19 students had been gathered just after the cyber-attack and just before the COVID 19 pandemic. It was noted that there had obviously been a very significant change in economic conditions since then, which made any assessment of the data difficult.

S Mill asked if there was any possibility of reaching out to the 15% of students who had not been able to be contacted to see what they were now doing? S Taylor noted it was difficult to maintain contact for some students as they changed address and contact details quite regularly. S Taylor noted the hard work and extensive efforts of the team who had contacted the 85% of students.

11. VP CURRICULUM & ATTAINMENT REPORT

J Grace summarised the report and noted the COVID 19 recovery work remained as the main focus. The team were continuing to review the curriculum and look at new opportunities. The new Pathway Apprenticeship courses had had positive feedback and had reasonable recruitment despite the new lockdown and requirement to deliver remotely.

J Grace noted that the College had been revalidated for GTCS and that the feedback from the revalidation panel had been very positive.

M Williamson noted a fantastic report and great work from the team in response to COVID 19.

12. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

S Taylor summarised the Risk Register and noted no changed in terms of the strategic register.

There were changes in the COVID Risk Register in relation to 3.1 Learning and Teaching.

S Taylor noted that there had been an increase in the likelihood post mitigation that students may not be able to complete their courses as a result of the COVID restrictions. It was noted that there was a strong potential for increased numbers of deferrals and also increased risk to levels of withdrawals.

M Williamson noted she is comfortable with the need for the increased risk. The Committee approved the changes to the COVID Risk Register.

A McCusker asked if there was a risk that 3.1 could move to red? S Taylor noted that any move to red would only happen if it was felt that there would be a major impact on outcomes and not appropriate deferral outcomes or other options. S Taylor noted that this would be kept under review.

13. LT&Q METRICS

S Taylor highlighted that these were for noting. There were no questions in respect of the metrics.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 5.00pm, Microsoft Teams**.**

Action Point Summary

Action	Responsibility	Date
No action points were noted.		