# **logo_colourBOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee**

Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 5.00pm **Room K-TO-625, Kingsway Campus** (MS Teams option available)

***Draft***

Minute of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 5.00pm in Room K-TO-624 Kingsway campus and via Microsoft Teams.

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| **PRESENT:** | Neil Lowden | Derek Smith |
|  | Laurie O’Donnell | Kelly McIntosh |
|  | Helen Honeyman | Adele Lawrence |
|  | Stephen Oakley  Margo Williamson | Kara Ramsay  Donna Fordyce |
|  | Sally Middleton | Simon Hewitt |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | Steve Taylor (Vice Principal / Secretary to the Board) |
|  | Julie Grace (Vice Principal Curriculum & Partnerships) |
|  | Jane Roscoe, Steph Toms & Lee Lappin (Directors of Curriculum & Partnerships) |
|  | Leann Crichton (Director of Student Experience) |
|  | Penny Muir (Board Administrator) |
|  | Michelle Hamiliton (Quality Manager) |
|  | Amy Monks (Students Association Team Leader) |
|  | Scott Anderson (External Independent Observer) |

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|  | **WELCOME**  Neil Lowden welcomed everyone to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting, including Scott Anderson as an Independent Observer for the Board. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  No apologies were received. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CONNECTION**  There were no declarations of interest or connection. |
|  | **MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** |
|  | The minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 April 2024 was approved as an accurate record. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  The matters arising are now closed. |
|  | **CURRICULUM REPORT – SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**  J Roscoe presented this report outlining the group's aim to foster collaboration within the college and to create a positive and inclusive environment. She emphasised the importance of a community approach, building on the "3 R’s" and introducing the D&A values-based charter as part of a college plan that aligned with the recently published national action plan.  Over the past year, various groups have worked to embed a respectful culture within the college, supporting students and ensuring that this culture is consistently upheld across the entire college community. This effort is grounded in the college's core values, which emphasise the importance of making students feel welcomed and supported. J Roscoe highlighted that the feedback from the approaches being developed in local schools have been aligned with the approaches adopted to try to create a consistent approach for young people.  J Roscoe also discussed the involvement of special interest groups in promoting positive behaviour and developing a strategic approach to these efforts. This includes initiatives such as trauma-informed groups and safe place groups. Ongoing support and advice for staff has been developed, including the introduction of a learning and teaching pack in August 2024 to help clarify what the college values mean for both staff and learners.  The effectiveness of these initiatives will be measured with the launch of the D&A charter and a shared mailbox for collecting feedback. Data will be gathered to assess what is working well and identify areas for improvement.  J Roscoe highlighted that The People Strategy Group discussed how these initiatives align with the college's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and safety, ensuring they are consistent with the college's overall vision. Short-life working groups and special interest groups have been established, led by staff, representing various needs and approaches to behaviour management.  A Monks reported on the activities of the positive behaviour community groups during an all-staff day workshop, where the D&A charter was introduced, and staff members from different departments, both academic and support, were brought together. Live sessions were held to emphasise the language and values of the charter, and feedback collected from these sessions indicated a desire for continued efforts and more training. Opportunities for cross-departmental reflection were also highlighted. A Monks further reflected on the "3 R’s," stressing the importance of actions and words, the visible impact they have, and the need for support and understanding of consequences.  M Hamilton reported that the Charter was devised and reflected upon as a college community, with active engagement through discussions and workshops. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, leading to the creation of a Charter designed to be implemented in daily routines. A support pack was introduced as a tool for group tutors and other staff to use during the first four weeks, after which, the Charter is expected to be deeply embedded within the student body, fostering a positive community, and demonstrating its effectiveness. The Charter is intended to be more than just a set of rules, aiming to create a memorable experience for students while ensuring staff engagement.  J Roscoe summarised the work being progressed and outlined the next steps, including the college's engagement in Respect Week. In addition, J Roscoe highlighted there will be further practical training on the positive behaviour management policy and process.  S Oakley praised the work as sector-leading place, highlighting how the Charter relates to broader initiatives and the development of student characteristics. He suggested exploring partnerships with primary and secondary schools to embed these values earlier in students' education.  J Roscoe responded that Dundee City Council (DCC) is already looking at this in Dundee schools and has started open conversations about aligning the wording of the Charter with what the college was doing and with the national actions published last week, noting that the college is engaging well in this effort.  M Williamson raised a question about the sustainability of these initiatives over the year. J Roscoe emphasised the importance of the college community's involvement in maintaining momentum, utilising a varied range of inputs and approaches, and evaluating progress over the coming weeks. She mentioned that this process would be integrated into the self-evaluation process, with feedback reviewed. M Williamson asked about the implications of signing the Charter and the consequences for those who do not. J Roscoe explained that the four-week support pack includes conversations with tutors, where students sign up as part of the process. She added that the college is reviewing its policies and processes to address situations where expectations are not met, indicating ongoing work on this matter.  S Oakley noted that group tutors are having these conversations, and the Charter is helping this to become more embedded within the classroom environment, emphasising that it is not about imposing power. K McIntosh noted some concern about students refusing to sign the Charter, and asked if staff are required to sign it as well. J Roscoe noted that this element would be looked at as the signing up element was not intended as a barrier or hurdle for engagement.  L O'Donnell expressed appreciation for the ongoing progress, highlighting the long-term goal of embedding the Charter in a way that students and staff actively engage with. He emphasised the importance of student ownership in the process.  N Lowden asked about the potential for mandatory CPD as part of the arrangements. J Roscoe responded that CPD is being reviewed, particularly in relation to staff induction and skills development. K McIntosh suggested utilising the NHS module for Trauma Informed Practice as this was of high quality and free. J Roscoe acknowledged this.  K Ramsay asked what would happen if group tutors did not use the materials or mention the Charter in their classes. J Roscoe responded that feedback from class representatives would be valuable, and that support could be offered as needed. S Taylor noted the importance of a quality process that follows up on these issues, particularly regarding feedback related to behaviour, and ensuring that the activities are engaged with.  N Lowden welcomed the presentation and the work being undertaken and asked that an update be provided at the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee meeting on the 12th of February 2025. This was agreed **J Roscoe to progress.** |
|  | **STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT**  K Ramsay provided an update, reporting that a full team of elected officers is in place for the year ahead, representing a 20% increase in participation. For the 2024/25 class representatives, the focus is on enhancing specific skills required for their roles, with a digital handbook being created for all representatives. The Thrive initiative is continuing, with new donations received from community champions at Asda Kirkton and Sainsbury's for stationary items for students.  Team development days were held over the summer, including activities such as team building, insight training, and safeguarding training. The Student Learning Experience models, designed by SPARQS and students over the past two years, are being utilised nationally by college and university student associations. These models serve as a tool to help elected officers and staff capture and record all aspects of the learner perspective.  K Ramsay highlighted that active inductions are being piloted with a more collaborative approach, offering interactive sessions.  S Hewitt enquired about the target number of class representatives for the year and the proportion of classes covered. K Ramsay responded that a high proportion of classes are covered, with options available to engage directly with classes.  N Lowden asked about the summer intake, to which K Ramsay responded positively, noting good interaction and the effectiveness of the intake as a stepping stone.  S Oakley highlighted that 82% of representatives have received training and asked if most departments have protected time for these activities, suggesting that it would be a good time to involve representatives in these sessions. N Lowden emphasised the importance of different ways to provide feedback, noting that the digital tools should continue to be utilised.  N Lowden thanked K Ramsay and A Lawrence for the report. |
|  | **2022/2023 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR COMPARISON**  J Grace reported on the significant savings achieved since the publication in May this year, noting a 2% reduction in costs, which corresponded with changes in student success rates, particularly in Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) partial success rates.  She highlighted that 108 courses did not meet the national average with analysis indicating that a significant number of these were senior phase learners and that some schools faced challenges with attendance post-COVID. To address these issues, the college has moved 10% of courses into a different category, consistently removed underperforming courses, and made staffing changes and changes to recruitment processes, although some students were recruited before these changes occurred. The college is now also more focused on promoting positive behaviour and rebuilding sustainability in this context.  Two key areas of focus were identified: the school-college partnership, particularly for students under eighteen, where collaboration needs to be revitalised, and the need to ensure that courses are valued, reinforcing their purpose and significance. J Grace also discussed the college's approach to continuing professional development (CPD), including additional support around curriculum planning and excellence in teaching. While data for 2023/24 attainment is not yet available, efforts are ongoing to rebuild the value in the college's offerings.  D Fordyce asked about reducing costs and whether there had been any analysis of the impact of staff departures on institutional knowledge. J Grace stated that this analysis had not been conducted but was open to exploring the issue further. She noted that there had been a reduction in areas with high staff turnover or absence and that this had also been influenced by industrial action.  S Taylor emphasised the importance of supporting staff through the CPD plan, particularly after the recent restructure, which has set the foundation for redevelopment. The focus is on resetting expectations and ensuring the skills and knowledge base that underpin the college's success.  L O'Donnell noted that universities have reduced entry requirements and enquired about the potential impact of these changes on student leaver cohorts. He also mentioned that the college's restructuring for savings was a year ahead of many other colleges and expressed interest in what this might look like in the following year.  S Oakley enquired about the impact of industrial action, COVID-19, and the savings plan, questioning whether the right decisions had been made. N Lowden asked the committee to note that the data indicated significant decline in some areas and that the questions being raised were fair and appropriate for the board in this situation.  K McIntosh pointed out some errors in the report text." She noted that some actions seemed disconnected from the measures being discussed and indicated that she was happy to share these observations and send them to J Grace. This was welcomed.  M Williamson highlighted that 36% of courses were not meeting expectations. J Grace responded that this was recognised, and that significant effort was being focused by teams to improve retention and to reduce levels of partial success.  N Lowden thanked J Grace for this report. |
|  | **SQA EXAMS ATTAINMENT/ NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ACTION PLAN**  J Grace reported that SQA attainment levels have returned to pre-pandemic standards, with no alternative grading or adjustments this year.  J Roscoe discussed the Higher Care course, which has been under review since its introduction in 2015. She questioned the purpose of the assessment, particularly regarding students who are not eligible for progression, and whether the assessment is necessary. A new framework has been agreed upon, swapping eligible students, and ensuring that progression is not impacted. An advanced certificate has been developed, which will include units mapped to HNC progression.  J Grace reflected that there were national concerns around levelling. J Grace noted that with previous concerns raised it took a year to have this removed.  S Toms reported that the Science team opted for an online format to seek to recruit more students, aiming to engage more learners. However, upon reflection, the impact was significant on attendance and engagement. The team is now returning to an on-campus experience, moving the campus to Gardyne, offering more evening classes, and seeking to foster a better sense of community. There will also be more robust interviews for applicants to ensure they understand the programme. S Toms highlighted that the team are referring more students to National 5 Biology and encouraging them to attend intensive provisions. A review of all national qualifications is underway, with L Crichton gathering data on demographics and engaging with teams to determine the next steps.  M Williamson noted the low numbers for both National and Higher courses and asked for an indication of starting numbers, dropout rates, and the number of students not taking exams. This would be made available. **J Grace agreed to progress this.**  The balance between offering opportunities for individuals interested in studying Highers, and the eventual success rates for these courses was discussed and L O’Donnell noted that the College was about opportunity as well as success and that consideration had to be given to providing second chances even if students struggled to pass some courses.  H Honeyman enquired whether the pass rate had decreased, noting that all results appeared to have declined. It was noted that they had, but that the data provided did include national comparisons.  S Middleton questioned whether students preferred online courses or specifically wanted Biology, noting that other online Biology courses are available. She suggested that broadening access to students might involve inviting them to different modules. She also mentioned that she is now the chair of the Widening Access Group for universities and offered to discuss good practice from other providers and share additional information if this would help. This offer was welcomed.  The report was welcomed with a follow up on actions agreed for the February 2025 meeting. **J Grace agreed to progress this.** |
|  | **SPRING 2024 LEARNER SATISFACTION SURVEY**  J Grace reported a positive response from students, noting that satisfaction levels remained high, despite the impact of strike and other action.  S Taylor provided an update on the survey, highlighting that a detailed dashboard is available to all staff, giving every academic team access to individual results, along with the comments that accompany them. These insights are part of the reflection process, and teams are currently analysing the data to identify areas for improvement.  S Middleton suggested that instead of using a work cloud, a breakdown of the themes would be more useful. S Taylor agreed to investigate this suggestion and report back, highlighting that the number of comments from the survey was vast and that staff time to undertake a sifting of this type was limited. **S Taylor agreed to progress this.** |
|  | **CURRICULUM & PARTNERSHIPS REPORT**  J Grace presented the paper for noting.  L Crichton reported that over 4,500 unconditional offers have been extended and the current enrolment is just short of 4,000, with some students still to attend (it was only day 3) and an expected total of around 4,250, which is on par with last year.  The team is engaged in continuous efforts to address students that did not take up their place by backfilling vacant spots. These activities are conducted daily to ensure that any vacancies created by student withdrawals are promptly filled. L Crichton stated this proactive approach will continue until the third week of the academic term. N Lowden enquired about the target, and it was confirmed that the target has been met, with some classes exceeding the target.  J Grace highlighted that Dundee & Angus College has entered a partnership with Kingspark School to broaden opportunities for young people with disabilities. As part of this collaboration, pupils from Kingspark attend the college once a week to gain experience in barista skills and customer service at the college's café located at the Kingsway campus.  S Middleton raised a concern regarding the aggressive recruitment approach some universities are taking towards college students this year. J Grace confirmed that universities are indeed more proactive in their recruitment efforts, specifically, local universities have moved from a selective approach to actively recruiting students. Concerns were noted that this was financially motivated and may not necessarily serve the best interests of the students.  The update was noted. |
|  | **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**  S Taylor stated that no changes have been proposed and it will be taken to the Audit & Risk Committee for further consideration.  S Oakley noted the on-going concern around financial sustainability, noting it as a major risk due to the likelihood of receiving flat cash and potential increases in costs.  L O’Donnell assured the committee that all necessary actions for sustainability are being taken, emphasising that these measures are not short-term solutions. |
|  | **LT&Q METRICS**  S Taylor reported the paper for noting and highlighted an increase in positive destinations. It was noted that this topic will return to the Committee once national comparative figures are available.  There has been an increase in the funding council student survey satisfaction levels, with results significantly above the national average.  S Taylor highlighted that the credit target for 2023/24 had been achieved, pending final audit confirmation.  N Lowden thanked S Taylor for the report. |

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| **Action Point Summary** |  |  |
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
| Update on work to support student behaviour management | J Roscoe | 12 Feb 2025 |
| Information on total student numbers and ‘day one’ performance to be shared for Nat 5 and Highers programmes | J Grace | 30 Sept 2024 |
| Update on activity to improve outcomes for Nat 5 and Higher programme learners. | J Grace | 12 Feb 2025 |