

**Board of Management**

**DRAFT MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 17 November 2020**

- PRESENT:** Sally Blyth, Kelly Mackenzie, Chris O'Neil, Tina Stones, Fiona Neilson, Robyn Kennedy, Sarah Burton, Samantha Cribb, Ruth McFadyen, Vivienne Mackie
- CHAIR:** Sarah Burton
- APOLOGIES:** Director of Research and Innovation
- ATTENDING:** Depute Principal, Academic Development  
Depute Principal, Planning and Student Experience  
Director of Curriculum  
Director of Student Experience  
Quality Manager  
Board Secretary
- OBSERVING:** Andrew Brawley, Education Scotland

The Chair of the Board of Management welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that she would Chair this meeting.

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 were **AGREED**, and **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

**2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

**SFC Equalities Reporting** – The Director of Student Experience advised that UHI have proposed that we have a single approach to equalities reporting within the partnership.

**Decision:** It was **AGREED** that this item can be removed from the list.

*Andrew Brawley joined the meeting at this point.*

### 3. **UPDATE REPORT ON IMPACT OF AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

The Depute Principal – Academic Development spoke to this joint report and advised the Committee that the key priority continues to be the creative use of extending and increasing capacity within rooms. The Committee was advised that following confirmation that we are now in Tier 1 discussions have begun with regards the consideration of resuming some offsite activities within the Forestry and Sport areas.

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience highlighted to the Committee the expected backlog which has been caused by Covid-19.

The Committee discussed the impact of Covid-19 on both staff and student's physical and mental wellbeing and noted that a Sub Committee of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group would be looking at the outcomes of the Early Student Experience Survey and the Staff Survey.

*Robyn Kennedy joined the meeting at this point.*

The Director of Student Experience advised the Committee that there is triage system in place for student's mental health and that we have seen an increase in high scoring critical cases but a reduction in low level cases. The Committee noted that the ability for students to access the new counsellor has assisted with this.

The Depute Principal – Academic Development advised that students have been supported by HISA with representatives ensuring a presence on campus which facilitates direct interaction with students.

*Ruth McFadyen left the meeting at this point.*

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised the Committee that the National College Network is meeting fortnightly to look at student engagement and retention and it is hoped that they will identify common solutions.

The Principal spoke to the risk register and advised the Committee that the register is due to be reviewed and will be updated to include the impact of Covid-19 and the implications this may have on our resources and finances.

The Chair gave thanks to all who contributed to this report.

#### **4. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2020/21**

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised that we have forecasted that we will not meet our credit target for FE activity however with regards HE activity we expect to exceed our target. The Committee was advised that our anecdotal evidence shows that HE students are continuing their studies with us for an additional year.

The Committee noted that with regard FE credits we should incur no financial penalty this year with the SFC aware of the expected shortfall in credits however we may face a reduction in subsequent years.

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised the Committee that the Regional Strategic Committee may adjust the model for part or all of FE across the partnership and that future consultations are expected in respect of both the RAM and the MicroRAM.

#### **5. HISA REPORT AND STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT UPDATE**

The Director of Student Experience advised the Committee that progress had been made around the Partnership Agreement with regards the enhancement themes for this Academic Year:

- Student Life
- Student Voice in Partnership
- Tools for Learning.

*Ruth McFadyen joined the meeting at this point.*

The following items were highlighted and discussed by the Committee:

- Students are complying well with Covid-19 guidance and face coverings are being worn by all on campus.
- School pupils are now attending the campus and we continue to liaise with the Highland Council regarding these pupils.
- There have been no reported issues within the halls of residence.
- Students have been provided with a digital ID card rather than a physical one.
- Clubs and societies are continuing and remain active.
- Around 50 laptops have been awarded by UHI through the Digital Poverty Fund and equipment for students due to start in January 2021 is being reviewed.
- The challenges that we have faced recruiting class reps.
- That the Loop Conference was well attended by students from the College and one of the themes discussed was mental health and wellbeing.
- That the student newsletter was published in October and a December publication is due to be circulated.

The Committee gave their thanks to HISA for all their work.

### **6. REPORT ON EARLY STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY**

The Quality Manager took the Committee through her high level report analysis of the responses to the Early Student Experience Survey highlighting in particular:

- That the response rate of 36.8% for this year is lower than in previous years; however the response rate is in line with the regional survey response rate.
- That the overall satisfaction rate had decreased by 12% from last year and was now at 83.23%.
- That there has been a shift with students advising that they were satisfied rather than very satisfied.
- When broken down by areas of school the response rate varies from 22.8% to 50% and overall satisfaction varies from 67% to 85%.

- That 1004 free text comments were received this year and they can be broken down as follows:
  - 671 – Brightspace related comments
  - 93 – service related comments
  - 47 – fresher's activities comments
  - 193 – Other comments.

The Quality Manager advised the Committee that the next steps to be taken involved:

- Further drilling down of responses to allow a cross college analysis and full report.
- Messages/outcomes from the analysis of responses to be feedback to students.
- An action plan highlighting and focusing on emerging themes from the responses.

### **7. SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Student Experience spoke to her report highlighting in particular to the Committee:

- That disclosures or concerns received for the year 2019-20 remained at the same level as the previous year.
- That we are continuing with a proactive approach to information being shared between ourselves and Police Scotland.
- All procedures and processes for external support work has been carried out including the tightening up of PVG information held on third sector agency staff.
- With regards drugs misuse we continue to have a high profile zero tolerance approach.
- That there has been an increase in violent and threatening behaviours on campus. All incidents are being formally recorded and categorised.
- That we are continuing to work closely with City Heart Living with regards student residences.

## Item 01

The Committee enquired whether the move to online learning would require additional steps to be taken with regards safeguarding and the threats posed by cyber security and online behaviour. The Director of Student Experience advised that teaching staff have a heightened awareness of this and HISA has produced a netiquette manual. The Committee also noted that access to platforms is secure and strictly controlled.

The Committee discussed the increased demands on administrative support and noted that as part of the Financial Recovery Plan that staff roles are being reviewed and where applicable staff are being moved accordingly.

*Vivienne MacKie left the meeting at this point.*

*Gill Berkeley left the meeting at this point*

### 8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – REPORT 2019/20

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised that this report gives a retrospective analysis and high level review of student recruitment and successful completion for 2019-20 highlighting in particular to the Committee:

- FE Credit activity has been negatively impacted by Covid-19 and has declined.
- HE FTE fell for the second year however activity for 2020-21 has increased.
- Student success rates for students on full time FE programmes has dropped by around 7 points in comparison to the previous year.
- However student success rates for full time HE remains high overall.
- Success rates on HN awards improved as did success rates for students on part time FE and HE programmes.

The Committee discussed the following:

- Decline of certain subject areas and the need for a curriculum review.
- The increase of Modern Apprenticeships
- Potential for growth in SVQ.
- Whether the data within this report could be used to see which courses cover our costs and which are less efficient.

**9. AUDIT REPORT – FES RETURN**

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised that apart from one low level recommendation this audit had been positive and our systems and procedures were found to promote the accurate collection and recording of data.

The Committee gave their thanks to all involved with the audit.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2021 AT 4.30 P.M.**

**Signed by the Chair:** \_Tina Stones\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** 15-03-21