

**DRAFT MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 08 June 2021**

- PRESENT:** Kelly Mackenzie, Chris O'Neil, Tina Stones, Robyn Kennedy, Ruth McFadyen, Arvinder Kainth, Russell Edwards
- CHAIR:** Tina Stones
- APOLOGIES:** Samantha Cribb
- ATTENDING:** Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality  
Assistant Principal – Academic & Research  
Access and Progression Manager  
Student Association Coordinator  
Information Systems Manager  
Director of Remote and Sustainable Communities  
Board Secretary

The Chair welcomed the Student Association Coordinator, the Access and Progression Manager, the Information Systems Manager and the Director of Remote and Sustainable Communities to the meeting.

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 16 March 2021 were **AGREED**, and **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

**2. POLICY FOR APPROVAL – UHI TERTIARY LEARNER SUPPORT POLICY**

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality provided the Committee with a background to the policy advising that this was a common partnership policy which had been subject to minor updates.

The Committee suggested that section 3.5 of the policy could be further developed to include the alternative assessment arrangements which are in place as a result of Covid-19.

**Action:** The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality will discuss the development of section 3.5 with the Wellbeing and Learning Support Manager, the HISA president and the Board Member Teaching Staff Representative.

*The Director of Remote and Sustainable Communities joined the meeting.*

**Decision:** The policy was approved and will now be taken to the Board of Management for final approval. Any development of section 3.5 will be subject to further scrutiny by the scrutiny panel and EMT.

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

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality provided the Committee with context to the jointly prepared report which focuses on our forward planning. The Committee was advised that the Covid-19 response group is now being led by the Administration Operations Manager with support from the Health and Safety Manager. A lengthy discussion around the return to campus took place with the Committee noting the intention to have every student on campus at least one day per week with student's being offered a blend of face-to-face and remote learning. With regards staff, the Committee noted that hybrid working guidance had been produced and circulated.

The Committee enquired as to whether an analysis of grades had taken place and was advised that anecdotal feedback had been received and that this will continue to be monitored at a programme level. The Committee noted that we will be monitoring the consistency of all remote teaching to ensure quality and a standardised approach by all.

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

The Committee enquired whether any analysis of the reasons why students have withdrawn from their studies has been carried out. The Committee noted that we have focused on the reduction of early withdrawal for a number of years and the

impact which the Access and Progression Team have had on reducing early withdrawals was highlighted. The Committee noted that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the number of withdrawals this year. The Committee discussed the complex reasons for early withdrawal, the support measures which the Access and Progression Team has put in place for students and noted that this will continue to be monitored.

The Committee welcomed the data within this report but enquired whether past year's data could be circulated to enable the members to look at any trends. The Committee noted that sector level data has yet to be released by the SFC.

**Action:** The Information System Manager agreed to provide current and past data by curriculum area which will be circulated to all Committee members by the Board Secretary.

#### **5. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2020/21 & 2021/22**

The Information Systems Manager spoke to her report and advised that we have not met our FE credits for this year but highlighted that we will be able to claim for any deferred credits next year. With regards HE the Committee noted that we have exceeded our target. The Committee was advised that recruitment for the new Academic Year is around 3 weeks behind schedule due to the impact of the cyber incident.

#### **6. CURRICULUM PLAN 2021-22**

The Information Systems Manager spoke to her report highlighting that the information within this report is linked to the previous report in respect of the FE credits target. The Committee was also provided with an update with regards the curriculum plan for 2021/22. Discussions around additional space available to carry out assessments and capacity levels within the Campus took place.

#### **7. STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality provided the Committee with an update to the enhancement themes that the partnership had focused on this year. The Committee noted that HISA had a joint and key role in all communications which have been sent out to students over the past year.

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality and the HISA President spoke to their joint report highlighting to the Committee the relevant information with regards student life, tools for learning and student voice.

The Committee held a lengthy discussion with regards digital poverty and were advised of sources of funding available.

#### **8. HISA END OF YEAR UPDATE**

The HISA President extended her thanks to staff for their work on behalf of students over the past year and provided the end of year update to the Committee.

The Committee again voiced their thanks to the HISA Education Representative Vivienne Mackie, who left the Board and this Committee earlier this year, for all the work she had contributed and welcomed the addition of Bonnie Crawford to the role in the next Academic Year.

#### **9. HISA ELECTIONS REPORT 2021**

The Student Association Coordinator provided the Committee with an update in respect of the HISA elections which were held in March 2021 highlighting the challenges involved due to Covid-19, the cyber incident and the EIS strike action. The Committee noted the impact of not being able to speak with students on a face-to-face basis however the Committee acknowledged that the numbers of votes received were comparable to the other partner Colleges and the sector.

The Committee gave their thanks to the Student Association Coordinator for this comprehensive report.

#### **10. UPDATE ON EQUALITIES MAINSTREAMING**

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience & Quality advised that this report had also been discussed at the recent HR Committee. The Committee noted that our annual report on equalities has been delayed due to both Covid-19 and the cyber incident. As a result we have uploaded a holding statement onto our website and our deadline for submission has been extended to 18 June 2021.

## **11. STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS**

The Committee noted that Liz Cook, Quality Manager has taken on a role within Executive Office. The Committee was advised that a recruitment process for a new Quality Manager is underway. The Committee noted that this student survey was undertaken during the EIS strike action which may have an impact on the satisfaction expressed by students.

**Action:** The Committee noted that we will receive a fuller report on the outcome of the student satisfaction survey at our September 2021 meeting.

## **12. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION REPORT**

The Assistant Principal – Academic & Research spoke to her report highlighting the research KPI's which are currently applied. The Committee noted that research income this year has increased in comparison with last year and that we have exceeded our targets with regards staff submitted to the REF.

The Director of Remote and Sustainable Communities gave a presentation to the Committee which provided the Committee with an update on what each area was focussing and progressing on. The Committee thanked her for this update.

**Action:** A member of staff from the River and Loch Institute will be invited to attend the September 2021 meeting to provide a presentation to the Committee.

## **13. ANNUAL COMMITTEE EVALUATION**

The Board Secretary took the Committee through the annual committee evaluation noting their responses. Any actions from this exercise will be brought to the September 2021 meeting for discussion.

## **14. AOCB**

The Staff Representative for Teaching highlighted to the Committee that a UHI Online Learning and Teaching Symposium is taking place on 17 June 2021. Information on the keynote speaker, themes and how to register for this event was provided.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 4.30 P.M.**

**Signed by the Chair:** *Tina Stones*

**Date:** 28.09.21