

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE held in the Boardroom, 1 Inverness Campus on Tuesday 20 September 2016**

**PRESENT:** Jaci Douglas, Louise James, Helen Miller, Gavin Ross, Kate White, Kyrán McCutcheon  
**CHAIR:** Louise James  
**APOLOGIES:** Diane Rawlinson, Steve Walsh  
**ATTENDING:** Depute Principal  
Head of Curriculum  
Head of Student Services  
Head of Research and Postgraduate Development (items 1-4)  
College Secretary

*The Chair proposed that the order of the agenda be changed, by discussing agenda item 6 after item 3, to allow the Head of Research and Postgraduate Development to speak to her report and then depart. This was agreed.*

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 MAY 2016**

The Minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record, were **APPROVED** and signed.

**2. REVISED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING POLICY**

A report by the Head of Student Services explained that the revisions made to the additional support for learning policy would streamline the process from application through to support being put in place for an individual. The use of the Student Support database on SITs would also help to provide the College with a robust system of information management which was linked to INSIGHT monitoring and tracking and to the plans for care experienced young people. This joined up approach should enable the College to have a more holistic picture of the student and enable us to more fully support them.

The Chair enquired if the recent Supreme Court ruling about data sharing in relation to the named person's scheme would impact on this policy and the Head of Student Services indicated that she would look in to this matter.

The Chair thanked the Head of Student Services for an excellent piece of work and, subject to a final proof read of the policy, **RECOMMENDED** it to the Board of Management for approval.

**3. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN**

A report by the Head of Student Services explained that as a post-16 Further and Higher Education body, Inverness College UHI was defined as a Corporate Parent under the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. As such, the College had a responsibility to understand the lives of Scotland's looked after young people and care leavers and respond to their needs as any parent should.

As a corporate parent, the College had a duty to produce a Corporate Parenting Plan which detailed how the College would respond to its responsibilities and the measures which would be put in place to improve the outcomes of care experienced leavers. The plan built on the previous work which had been done to achieve the Buttle UK Quality mark for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Although good progress was being made, the College recognised that a lot of work still had to be done with care experienced leavers in order to make a positive impact on their chances of success. The plan would help focus attention and efforts to where they were needed at each stage of the student journey and would provide a structure to work to and audit against.

The Committee

1. discussed the very ambitious plan which had a target of 37% of care leavers achieving University entry by the 2021 target set by SFC,
2. noted that the action plan would be updated to show some further progress which had been made and
3. **RECOMMENDED** the Corporate Parenting Plan to the Board of Management for approval.

#### **4. RESEARCH STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

A report by the Head of Research & Post Graduate Development provided information on the progress and performance against strategic objectives in the IC Research Strategy covering the period 2015-16. The report covered the main areas of activity in the research centres, namely the Rivers and Lochs Institute (RLI), the Centre for Remote and Rural Studies (CRRS), the Scottish School of Forestry and the SEAM research group. It also highlighted the progress being made across a number of other areas including the increase in growth of the research postgraduate community in the College, the work being done with other partners in UHI to facilitate appropriate and effective engagement in research and scholarship and wherever possible, the promotion and development of research-teaching linkages to ensure enhancement of the learning and teaching environment for students at all levels of the curriculum.

The Head of Research and Postgraduate Development also highlighted some of the key activities for the current year, including embedding research in teaching across the College and maximising opportunities for REF outputs across staff delivering at Level 9 and above.

The Chair congratulated the Head of Research and Development on the excellent progress which had been made over the last year.

#### **5. STUDENT OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION RATES 2015/16**

A report by the Depute Principal provided a summary of high-level performance indicators relating to student outcomes and student satisfaction rates for the academic year 2015-16.

Successful outcomes had improved across all three levels and modes, FEFT, HEFT, HEPT although it was noted that the trend analysis of part-time HE outcomes was meaningless due to an error in the UHI student records system.

Full-time FE outcomes had improved in 6 areas and had fallen in 3 areas compared to 2014-15. Reports had been prepared which identified the reasons for the low PIs and outlined the measures that had already been put in place to prevent a recurrence.

Full-time HE outcomes had improved in 5 areas and had fallen in 4 areas compared to 2014-15 and the reasons for the fall in two of the four areas still needed further investigation.

Student satisfaction rates were still high overall although the FE and HE pre exit survey satisfaction results had fallen. From comments received, it was clear that difficulties in settling in to the new buildings had an adverse impact on some aspects of student experience. Other areas for improvement had also been highlighted, including organisation and management, student engagement and representation and career advice and guidance.

The college's NSS results improved by 8 points in 2015-16, a significant increase and the satisfaction rate was 80% or above in three areas – teaching on my course, academic support and personal development. Satisfaction was low for organisation and management, learning resources and the Student's Union/Association.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

#### **6. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2016-17**

A report by the Depute Principal provided an update of student recruitment for 2016-17.

Total FE credits, as at 12<sup>th</sup> September, was 20,692, with the total credit target being 29,689. In terms of progress towards target, FE recruitment was on track to make the overall credit target.

The HE target for 2016-17 was 1664.6 FTE. This was made up of a funded undergraduate (UG) target of 1622.9 FTE and a postgraduate taught (PGT) target of 41.7 FTE. Progress against HE FTE target would not be clear until the end of September.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

#### **7. STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

A joint Report by the Head of Student Services and Vice President (Education) provided an update on the progress made in the Student Partnership agreement as follows:-

- the appointment of 3 new ICSA Executive officers
- promotion of the role of class representatives and the plans put in place for their training
- the filling of volunteer positions
- development of various clubs and societies
- discussions with Highland Council on partnership working on social events
- development of a course handbook to enhance the student welcome
- a very successful Fresher's Fayre on 14<sup>th</sup> September



- plans for student representation on the College's Learning and Teaching working group.

The Vice President (Education) also updated the Committee on the possible merger with the Highlands and Islands Students Association (HISA) and the timescale of a referendum for ICOSA students.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

## 8. **EXTERNAL QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS**

A report by the Depute Principal provided information on the new quality framework for Scotland's colleges that was being implemented by SFC and Education Scotland, and of the Teaching Excellence Framework for universities.

SFC and Education Scotland had been working towards a new model for the external review of Scotland's colleges for two years. Outline information and guidance on the proposed new framework had been disseminated by SFC in September 2016 and academic year 2016-17 was intended as a 'year of development' to trail the new arrangements. Detailed guidance on the new arrangements and review model were expected by December 2016.

In July 2015 Jo Johnson, Minister for Universities and Science in the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (DoBIS), announced that there would be a new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for monitoring teaching quality in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to replace the QAA system of cyclical inspection. On 16 May 2016, the DoBIS published Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, a white paper on Higher Education. The white paper contained plans for the development of the TEF. The extent of involvement by Scottish institutions was now being considered.

The Committee **NOTED** the position

## 9. **KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 2016/17**

A report by the Depute Principal set out both the background to the approach taken over the last three years to establish annual key objectives and a new approach which, having agreed strategic themes, would inform and drive the agenda through the year.

The Committee **AGREED** the following strategic themes for 2016-17:

- The student experience
- Research and curriculum development
- Student numbers
- External quality drivers

## 10. **HIGHER MEDIA STUDIES**

The Depute Principal gave a verbal update on the results of the online higher media studies course. All students had been graded as "no award". The College has given explanations to higher education institutions in respect of two students whose acceptance could potentially have been affected by the award. The SQA had confirmed that they would provide a performance report on the scripts and offer staff development. An internal investigation was being

undertaken by the Head of Student Services and a report was expected shortly. The staff members involved were being provided with support. The number of pupils enrolled in the course this year was 19.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

*As the following items were included in the agenda for noting only, no discussion took place.*

**11. EXTERNAL VERIFICATION SUMMARY 2015/16**

A report by the Quality Manager provided an overview of the outcomes of external verification visits by awarding bodies during the academic year 2015-16. These visits provided assurance to awarding bodies that standards were maintained within the college for qualifications across a wide variety of subject area(s). The College had 36 visits from External Verifiers in 2015-16.

The External Verification visits during 2015-16 have been very successful, with all EV reports highlighting 'significant strengths', 'low risk' or 'successful visit'. No areas of risk had been identified by EV's.

A number of themes had been identified which would be the focus of future improvement activity.

**12. COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

Colleges were required to report quarterly complaints figures based on the reporting periods provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and a report by the Quality Manager provided an overview of recorded complaints during 1st July 2015 – 30th June 2016.

**13. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2015/16**

A report by the Depute Principal gave the outcomes of the latest National Student Survey (NSS). This was a national survey conducted annually by Ipsos MORI. It gathered opinions from final year undergraduate students at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and the results were published.

**14. RED BUTTON REPORT 2015/16**

A report by Depute Principal referred to the red button report which was an informal feedback and problem resolution mechanism used across the UHI partnership. Students were encouraged to submit questions, suggestions, issues of concern and positive feedback. Students were advised that they should raise any concerns with staff directly at their host AP in the first instance.

**15. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

- a. Equality and Diversity Committee – 2 June 2016
- b. Research Committee – 1 July 2016
- c. Student Support Committee - 1 June 2016
- d. Academic Management Group – 19 May 2016

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 8.30 a.m.

**Signed by the Chair:**

C Louise James

**Date:**

06 Dec 2016