

Board of Management

DRAFT MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 22 September 2020

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

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 09 June 2020 were **AGREED**, and **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Committee and Chair Evaluations – this will be discussed within the agenda. It was **AGREED** that this item can be removed from the list.

3. INTERNAL AUDIT – TERMS OF REFERENCE

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The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised the Committee that the Covid-19 Quality and Assessment Terms of Reference for Internal Audit had been referred to this Committee by the Audit Committee for discussion and approval.

The Committee noted that Internal Audit are seeking assurances with regards some aspects which are out with our control. As a result of this amendments to the Terms of Reference have been suggested by the SMT.

The Committee noted the proposed changes suggested by the SMT and **AGREED** the updated terms of reference. Following this approval it was **AGREED** that the Board Secretary would circulate the Terms of Reference to the Audit Committee for their approval.

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

The Committee was advised that contingency plans are in place in case of tighter restrictions being implemented by the Scottish Government following this afternoon's briefing by the First Minister.

The Committee noted that messages to students will continue to be reinforced and that we will continue to operate within the current constraints with additional emphasis on students who require access to the building for practical based learning. The Committee noted that all Heads and Depute Heads being asked to prioritise what learning requires access to the building to allow the SMT to plan accordingly.

The Committee noted that with regards the school programme we cannot accommodate school groups due to the 2m rule which leaves holes in pupil timetables. The SMT is continuing to look at this and most students have now moved to online classes with only a small percentage of students having their class postponed. We are continuing to liaise with the Highland Council with regards this and are ensuring a consistent UHI response.

Ruth McFadyen joined the meeting at this point.

Further discussions took place around:

- Grades
- Positive changes to learning due to the change in style and delivery of classes along with confirmation of the support being offered to any students who may be finding remote learning difficult.
- The mental health and wellbeing of both staff and students and the impact further tighter constraints may have in the long term. The Committee noted that a Sub Committee of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee has been formed to look at how to develop strategies around this. Both the staff questionnaire and early student questionnaire are due to be circulated. The results of which will give a clear indication of how both staff and students are feeling.

The Committee gave their thanks for the report and **AGREED** that this would remain a standing item on the agenda.

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

The Director of Student Experience advised the Committee that this report focused on the progress made around the Partnership Agreement for 20/21 and how we have supported students at the start of this Academic Year.

Partnership Agreement

With regards the Partnership Agreement 3 themes have been identified:

1. Student Voice and Partnership
2. Student Life – with focus on online engagement, mental health, community, outdoor sports.
3. Tools for Learning – with an encompassing mental health online platform and inclusive delivery.

An action plan from these themes is being prioritised and progress has been made in the following areas:

- Return to Campus Guide – this is a live document which is kept up-to-date by HISA.

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- The introduction of a booking system for access to the campus to assist with controlling footfall within the campus.
- Halls of residence – we have been pro-active in ensuring that the message to students is consistent from both ourselves and City Heart. HISA have ensured their presence and the President of HISA will host a drop-in next week within the Halls.
- The creation of a netiquette guide along with UHI procurement of laptops for students and the opening of our Learning Resource Centre to allow students to use IT equipment. However it was noted that we cannot meet all the demands for equipment and that digital poverty remains an issue. Discussions around this highlighted:
 - The requirement to continue to seek further resources/funding from the Scottish Government.
 - The diversion of the use of Student Support Funds from the Discretionary Fund.
 - UHI Emergency Study Fund.
 - Remaining cognisant of those students who have a low income such as Care Experienced Leavers.
 - PDA and PAT will continue to ensure discussions are had with students and support is given to complete all applications for funding.
 - Directing students to organisations such as Connecting Scotland and the Libertie Project.
 - Supplying dongles where required.
 - Providing suitable software where devices aren't ours to ensure that students can use their own devices as needed.

The Committee commended the hard work HISA put into the Fresher's Fayre. It was reported that online events were advertised widely along with regional events and that any lack of engagement from students was a reflection of the current situation.

Student Voice

The challenges around student engagement were reiterated to the Committee with the HISA President highlighting the following:

- A video has been made which will be shown to all students via their PDA and PAT to ensure that HISA have a virtual introduction to all students.
- Work is continuing on a student newsletter which was established during the previous academic year.
- Bi-monthly meetings are continuing.
- The HISA President will arrange WebEx sessions and/or drop in events within the College to chat to students.
- HISA are looking at the possibility of using WhatsApp to communicate with students.
- The successful use of social media to reach students.

The Committee were cognisant of the challenging situation facing HISA and students at the moment.

The Committee discussed the follow issues with regards students and IT:

- Digital poverty
- Digital skills gap – support for students is available from Skillzone and 1-1 support is being offered where needed.
- Possibility of producing online training for students to learn how to use existing systems.

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

6. STUDENT OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION RATES

The Depute Principal - Planning and Student Experience advised that the processing of student satisfaction rates has been affected by Covid-19 restrictions. With regards pass rates for Higher and National 5 awards the Committee noted that these had risen by 23.3 and 19.2 points respectively. The Committee noted that student satisfaction rates remain high, with the Student Satisfaction and

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Engagement Survey (SSES) at 93% and the National Student Survey (NSS) at 83% satisfaction overall.

The Depute Principal - Planning and Student Experience advised that the Your Learning Experience Survey (YLES) ran for two weeks through April 2020 and had a response rate of 17%. The Committee were advised that overall satisfaction has decreased with those with a declared disability expressing less satisfaction.

The Committee were advised that with regards the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) there was a 14% response rate and the UHI overall satisfaction rate decreased to 85%.

The Committee commended the robust analysis of this data.

Lengthy discussions over the following took place:

- Other means of teaching.
- Use of tools which will be rolled out to students.
- Launch of the Early Student Experience Survey.
- Possibility of a press release regarding the NSS outcomes.

7. STUDENT ACTIVITY 2019/20 & STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2020/21

The Depute Principal - Planning and Student Experience took the Committee through his report and advised the Committee that we did not meet our credit target for 2019/20 due to Covid-19.

The Committee was advised that there was a concern with regards the lack of engagement with online enrolment however staff are continuing to assist students with this.

Discussions around the following issues took place:

- January 2021 starts, which the Committed noted have increased for HE.
- The increase in provision of social sciences through online learning.
- The inventive means of teaching which is being employed.
- How lessons learned and shared practice are being disseminated.

- Curriculum review.

8. CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT AND PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO SFC EQUALITIES REPORTING

The Director of Student Experience took the Committee through the dual report which looks at the Corporate Parenting Plan for the period 2020-23 along with an update on the regional approach to equalities reporting. The Committee noted that this is a draft report and an updated version will come to the next meeting for further discussion.

The Director of Student Experience advised the Committee of the progress which has been made over the last 3 years and the Committee noted that we are continuing to attract care experienced leavers in both FE and HE.

The Committee commended this report and the work already undertaken.

With regards equalities the Committee was advised that this issue has stalled within the partnership. The Committee was advised that the SFC have notified that colleges are not expected to produce an Access and Inclusion Strategy this calendar year due to Covid-19. However this area will continue to be scrutinised and an update will be available at the next meeting.

9. RESEARCH REPORT

The Director of Research gave an update with regards KPI and the Research Excellence Framework. The Committee noted that due to Covid-19 the 2021 REF submission deadline has been extended to 31st March 2021.

The Committee was advised that the number being submitted to the 2021 REF is 13.2 fte which equates to 16 people and 4 UoAs.

The Committee noted that budgets are continuing to be finalised but that there is an estimated spend of £400K.

The Director of Research highlighted the already secured income and ongoing projects to the Committee.

10. FEEDBACK ON LT&R COMMITTEE SELF EVALUATION

The Board Secretary took the Committee through the feedback received with regards the Committee Self Evaluation which was undertaken offline.

The Committee **AGREED** that if any individual training was required that this should be highlighted to the Board Secretary who will discuss all needs with the Chair of the Board of Management.

The Committee noted that a recruitment campaign for board members including a new Chair for the Committee will be carried out within October 2020.

11. COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Committee noted the contents of the report. The issue of how complaints were recorded was discussed with the Committee being advised that complaints are categorised in a number of ways and that files are kept on all complaints to ensure that they are feed into a number of departments and/or curriculum areas dependant on the complaint.

The Committee noted that the entirety of the complaint is captured along with the mitigating actions and lessons learned.

A discussion on how the Board of Management are aware of complaints took place with the committee noting that all significant complaints are highlighted to the relevant committee(s).

12. AOCB

The Committee gave it's thanks to Tom Speirs for all his input and expertise.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 4.30 P.M.

<i>Sarah Burton</i>	
Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	17.11.20

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