LEARNING & TEACHING AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of 17 March 2015

The meeting commenced at 1405 hours.

PRESENT – D Anderson, S Cormack, B Dunn, D Duthie (Chair), K Gravells, J Harper, D Rennie, A Simpson, R Wallen
IN ATTENDANCE – N Cowie, J Davidson, K Milroy, P Sherrington, S Walker, P May, P Kesson

As Mr Sherrington and Mrs Walker will be leaving the College in the near future, Mr Duthie, on behalf of the Committee, extended thanks to them for the valuable contributions they have made to the work of the Committee. It was noted that Mrs Walker and Mr Sherrington had been presented with gifts from the Board prior to the start of the meeting.

Mr Duthie welcomed Mr Anderson and Mr Davidson to their first meeting of the Committee.

1. Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from A Bell, C Inglis, and S Smith.

2. Minute of previous Meeting
The Minute of Meeting held on 20 January 2015 was approved, subject to the removal of Ms Simpson's name from the list of those present at the meeting.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting
There were no matters arising.

4. Report by the Principal
The Committee noted a report by the Principal providing information on Marketing Awards; Aberdeen Business Network Community; Entrepreneurship Event; Culture Network; visit of Forensic Science Expert; Fraserburgh Career Event; "Link up with Employers" event; Promoting STEM; the Children's University Scotland; and Hospitality, Sport and Horticulture.

Mr Wallen provided additional information on the recent CDN Marketing Awards and the promotion of STEM subjects.

The Committee expressed their congratulations to those involved in the achievement of Best College Prospectus at the recent CDN Marketing Awards.

5. Matters for Decision

5.1 Refund of Course Fees Policy
The Committee considered and approved the College's Refund of Course Fees Policy. In doing so the Committee noted that the Policy will become part of a single policy covering course fees, course fee refunds and remission of course fees which will be presented for approval at the Committee's meeting in July 2015.

5.2 Remission of Fees for Non Full-time Provision Policy
The Committee considered and approved the College's Remission of Fees for Non Full-time Provision Policy. In doing so the Committee noted that the Policy will become part of a single policy covering course fees, course fee refunds and

remission of course fees which will be presented for approval at the Committee's meeting in July 2015.

5.3 North East Scotland College Students' Association

The Committee considered and noted the information relating to the Students' Association.

Mr Milroy commented that he was pleased to see the establishment of a Board of Trustees and said he would be interested to see how this evolves.

Ms Simpson congratulated the Association on the significant amount of work being undertaken and asked if the Association had explored the possibility of a Board Member being asked to serve on their Board of Trustees. Mr Rennie agreed to discuss this matter with Trustees.

Mr Wallen acknowledged the support extended to the Association by the RGU Students' Association. Mr Rennie added that support had also been received from the University of Aberdeen Students' Association.

5.4 Students' Association Draft Budget 2015-16

The Committee considered the budget for the Students' Association (SA) for 2015-16.

Mr Rennie and Ms Gravells explained each of the three SA structures presented in the paper.

Mr Wallen confirmed that clarification has been received that the £78,000 of Scottish Funding Council (SFC) transformation funding will be retained. Mr Wallen also highlighted £16,000 of reserves from the former Aberdeen College Students' Association.

After some discussion Mr Wallen suggested that, given the transformation funds and reserves available to the Association it was not necessary to provide a grant to the Association for 2015-16. Mr Milroy and Mr Duthie endorsed Mr Wallen's comments.

Members agreed to adopt Mr Wallen's proposal as an interim decision to enable the Trustee Board to consider a sustainable budget position for the SA and to enable arrangements for the upcoming SA election to commence.

It was agreed that the position regarding the SA budget for 2015-16 would be reviewed at the May meeting of the Committee.

Mr Rennie was requested to give consideration to a number of issues raised by the Committee in terms of the SA structure and forecast expenditure and to produce a paper to inform discussions at the next meeting of the Committee.

6. Matters for Discussion

6.1 Report on the work of the Academic Board and its Sub-Committees

The Committee considered a report providing information on progress with the work of the Academic Board.

Information was provided on the Academic Board itself; a summary of the work of the Sub-Committees; The Learning and Teaching Development Committee; Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Steering Group; Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee; Curriculum Approval Panel; and the Inclusiveness and Guidance Committee.

In noting the paper the Committee also approved the proposed amendment to include IT in the Curriculum as part of the remit of the Learning and Teaching Development Committee.

Mr Duthie reported that he had attended the March meeting of the Academic Board and urged fellow Board Members to attend a meeting where possible.

6.2 Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and School/College Links

The Committee considered a paper providing information on the College's progress towards meeting the recommendations of The Commission on Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and providing an update on School/College partnerships with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Authorities.

Information was provided on the background and context to the partnerships; opportunities for the Region in Developing Scotland's Young Workforce; the 2015-16 Schools/College Programme; and innovation in School/College Links for 2015-16.

Members noted the importance of attracting school pupils and their parents to College Open Days as they provide an opportunity to highlight course options and to showcase College facilities.

The Committee noted the contents of the paper.

6.3 IT to Support the Curriculum in 2015-16

The Committee considered a paper providing information on key IT projects developed to support IT in the curriculum.

Information was provided on bring your own device (BYOD) phase 3; City Campus 2015 Development Project; improved Content Management System; e-portfolio solution; increased use of online assessment; and access to high speed broadband.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

6.4 Business & Community Development: Activity v Target for 2014-15

The Committee noted a paper providing an update of activity (as at 02 March) against target for Business & Community Development (BCD).

The Committee also noted a further update (as of 17 March) which was tabled at the meeting.

Mr Milroy left the meeting at this time.

6.5 Progress with Quality Objectives set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement

The Committee considered a paper providing information on progress with meeting the priority outcomes for the College as set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) for 2014-17.

Information was provided on the background and context; ROA Priority Outcomes and Outputs from a quality context; progress with meeting Priority Outcomes and Outputs from a quality perspective; and the SFC's Action-Learning Project.

The Committee noted information provided in the paper.

6.6 Students' Association

The Committee noted a report providing information on the work of the Students' Association.

Members noted the feedback from the Peer Led Class Reviews undertaken to date in 2014-15 and agreed that the Reviews are of great benefit to the College.

7. Papers for Information

7.1 Student Activity AY2014-15

The Committee considered a report providing information on the current status of student activity for AY2014-15.

Mr Wallen highlighted that the Schools and ASET are forecast to meet their activity targets, and that Extended Learning Support (ELS) is expected to exceed target. Members were advised that Mr Sherrington, Depute Principal, has indicated that he is confident that Business and Community Development will come close to its target and advised that opportunities for further activity in this area continue to be sought. However Mr Wallen cautioned that this remains an area of risk and the situation is being constantly monitored.

7.2 Student Performance Indicators

The Committee considered and noted a report providing information on high level, student-related withdrawal and student success data for AY2013-14.

7.3 Student Support Funds

The Committee considered a report providing information on amounts allocated for various support funds and comparative spend in AY2014-15 and AY2013-14.

Information was provided on Bursary Funds; Discretionary and Childcare Funds; Childcare Reserve; Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Programme; and disbursement of funds in AY2014-15.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

7.4 Report on Reasons for Students Leaving College Early

The Committee considered and noted a report providing information on the reasons for students leaving the College prior to completing 25% of their course.

Members noted that the category of medical reasons may include both physical and mental conditions that could be self or medically assigned.

8. Summation of Business and date of next Meeting

The Secretary gave a summation of the business conducted. The next meeting of the Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 19 May 2015 at 1400 hours.

The meeting concluded at 1600 hours.