Minute of Meeting of 19 July 2016

The meeting commenced at 1425 hours.

PRESENT - D Anderson, J Gall, J Harper, R McGregor, D Russell, A Simpson (Chair), R Wallen
IN ATTENDANCE - K Milroy, N Cowie, J Davidson, E Hart, P May, P Kesson
OBSERVER - J Thorne

Ms Simpson chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr Duthie.

Ms Simpson welcomed Mr Gall to his first meeting of the Committee and welcomed Ms Thorne in her capacity as observer.

1. Apologies for Absence
   Apologies were received from A Bell, S Cormack, D Duthie, C Inglis, S Masson, and K Wetherall.

2. Minute of previous Meeting
   The Minute of Meeting held on 17 May 2016 was approved.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting
   The Committee noted a report providing updated information on matters arising from the meeting held on 17 May 2016.

   Mr Wallen noted that matters relating to the Regional Skills Strategy had still not progressed further.

4. Report by the Principal
   The Committee noted a report providing information on: audit; site of the former Balgownie Centre; Estates Development Strategy; Engineering Technologies, Fraserburgh Campus; College Energy Efficiency Pathfinder; and Support Services.

5. Matters for Decision
   5.1 Fees for Full-time Students from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland
      The Committee considered a paper providing information about fee rates for full-time students from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

      Members were informed that the matter had been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting earlier in the day and that the Committee had noted the changed position with regard to fees and had adopted the fee rates presented in paragraph 3.3 of the paper.

      The Committee noted the decision made by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
5.2 **Suggested Business of the Committee for 2016-17**

The Committee considered a paper proposing matters for consideration by the Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee at its six scheduled meetings in AY2016-17.

Members queried the criteria used to enable them to monitor the effectiveness of various strategies and were advised that information would be provided from relevant audits and key College committees, in addition to key performance indicator reports.

It was noted that, in order to keep them to the fore, items relating to industry links, business development and internationalisation would be included as appropriate. It was also noted that briefings on key topics would be scheduled as part of some future meetings of the Committee.

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference of the Committee should be reviewed by the Governance Steering Group with input from relevant members of the SMT in the first instance. Members also requested that the Terms of Reference for the Board’s other Committees be reviewed.

6. **Matters for Discussion**

6.1 **Apprenticeship Levy**

The Committee considered a paper providing information on the proposed Apprenticeship Levy.

Information was provided on the background to the levy; Colleges Scotland’s Short Life Working Group (SLWG); progress on Colleges Scotland’s SLWG; and the Apprenticeship Levy for AGCC and local employers.

Mr Milroy commented that the College was best placed to engage with employers regarding the Levy. Members agreed that it was important to highlight that the implementation of the Levy should focus on a national strategy with local delivery. The importance of quality and the implementation being industry-led was also noted.

It was agreed that Mr Cowie would feed back the Committee’s discussions to the next meeting of the SLWG. Mr Cowie was asked to prepare a response to the Scottish Government’s Apprenticeship Levy Consultation on behalf of the Board and circulate it to Committee Members prior to submission.

6.2 **Full-time Student Applications 2016-17**

The Committee noted a paper providing information on the level of full-time student applications for AY2016-17.

Information was provided on application levels against offers made, and planned enrolments for the three Schools; a comparison of total applications received for 2015-16 and 2016-17; and an activity planning comparison.

The Committee commented that it was pleasing to note the high level of applications for AY2016-17.
6.3 University Progression and Articulation Links
The Committee considered a paper providing information on the current status of the College’s partnerships with Universities.

Information was provided on the impact on students of the College’s Articulation Agreements; Links with Robert Gordon University; and Links with the University of Aberdeen.

In response to a question, Mr Wallen confirmed that the College is involved in the joint delivery of the two new programmes with UHI rather than the awarding of these courses. It was noted that UHI would be responsible for the quality assurance aspect of the agreement. The Committee welcomed these additions to the programme on offer to NESCol students.

Mr Davidson was thanked for his comprehensive paper.

6.4 School/College Links Activity
The Committee noted a paper providing information on the current status of School/College links activity.

Mr Anderson left the meeting at this time.

6.5 Association Audit Outcome
The Committee considered a paper providing information on the audit of the College’s Students’ Association for the 2014-15 tax year.

Ms Hart assured Members that all issues identified in the audit report have been addressed and will not recur.

Members noted the information contained in the paper and noted that the auditors have advised that there is still likely to be a qualification on the accounts for 2015-16 as a legacy of the issues raised in the 2014-15 audit.

6.6 Students’ Association Review and Budget
The Committee considered issues relating to the College’s Students’ Association.

Members noted the report on the review of the Association which was produced by NUS Scotland.

Following some discussion, Ms Hart was requested to liaise with Ms Collie, Chair of Trustee Board, to establish a working group to explore the issues highlighted in Appendix 2 of the paper. It was suggested that the working group should include a Member of the College’s Board in addition to Members of the Students’ Association Trustee Board, and the Students’ Association. Ms Simpson said she would be pleased to represent the Board of Management on the working group.

Members agreed that it would also be useful for the working group to consider Students’ Association models and approaches adopted by other colleges.

Mr Milroy left the meeting at this time.

6.7 Report from the Students’ Association
The Committee noted a report prepared by the two Regional Presidents of the Students’ Association.
7. Papers for Information

7.1 Student Activity 2015-16
The Committee noted a paper providing information on the current status of student activity for AY2015-16.

Members noted that consideration was being given to ‘spanning’ excess activity towards the 2016-17 target which would have the effect of reducing costs of delivery next year.

7.2 Key Quality Performance Indicators
The Committee noted a paper providing information on key performance indicators relating to the quality function.

Information was provided on lesson observation; external verifications visits; student engagement; complaints; and compliments and thanks.

7.3 Student Support Funds
The Committee noted a report providing information on amounts allocated for various support funds and comparative spend of AY2015-16 and AY2014-15.

Information was provided on bursary funds – general rules; discretionary and childcare funds; Educational Maintenance Programme; disbursement of funds in AY2015-16; SFC allocation in 2015-16; and AY2016-17.

8. Summation of Business and date and time 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 13 September 2016.

Reserved Item of Business
9. Matter for Discussion
   9.1 Outreach Centres

The meeting concluded at 1540 hours.