

## LEARNING & TEACHING AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

*Minute of Meeting of 20 January 2015*

The meeting commenced at 1430 hours.

**PRESENT:** A Bell, S Cormack, B Dunn, D Duthie (Chair), K Gravells, J Harper, C Inglis, D Rennie, A Simpson, R Wallen

**IN ATTENDANCE:** N Cowie, S Walker, P May, P Kesson

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from C Inglis, A Simpson, and S Smith.

### 2. Minute of previous Meeting

The Minute of Meeting held on 18 November 2014 was approved.

### 3. Matters arising from previous Meeting

There were no matters arising.

### 4. Principal's Report

The Committee noted a report by the Principal providing information on the Hair and Beauty Festival; Children in Need; Aspect Task – Initial Report on Engineering; Science events; UK World Skills Competition; Internet safety; Core Skills profiling; Creative Arts; and National No Smoking Day.

Mr Wallen provided additional information on a number of the items.

The Committee requested that its congratulations be passed to successful NESC students in the Hair and Beauty Festival and in the UK World Skills competition.

### 5. Matters for Decision

#### 5.1 Course Fee Policy

The Committee considered the College's proposed Course Fee Policy.

Members noted that the Policy had operated effectively since its adoption in January 2014. The amendment to reflect the change in responsibility for the Policy was noted.

Members considered two proposed additional changes, one to the wording of paragraph 9 in the Policy, and the second being the addition of a paragraph specifically relating to ESOL.

The Committee agreed to the changes subject to a minor change in the wording of the additional paragraph to include the word 'partners'.

### 6. Matters for Discussion

#### 6.1 Progress with Curriculum and Student Services Objectives

The Committee considered information on progress in meeting the priority outcomes set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement for 2014-17.

Information was provided on progress in meeting the priority outcomes for Curriculum and Student Services; Curriculum Planning; and External Audit Measuring Progress.

Members noted the improvement in student retention rates.

Mrs Walker provided additional information on work experience for students and said there was considerable scope for the College to obtain more funding for this area. Members were advised that the College would seek to include an aspect of work experience in all full-time courses in AY2015-16 and that discussions were being held to try to increase the number of employers in the region who may be willing to offer work experience opportunities. Mrs Walker noted that there was also a need for the College to record the number of students who are undertaking volunteering work.

The Committee noted the report.

## **6.2 Enrolment Data by Age and Gender 2014-15**

The Committee considered and noted a report providing information about the age and gender profiles of the student body.

## **6.3 Student Activity and Early Retention 2014-15**

The Committee considered and noted a report providing information on the current status of student activity and early student withdrawal rates for academic year 2014-15.

Mr Wallen informed Members that, at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held earlier in the day, it had been decided that this information will in future also be presented to that Committee.

Mr Cowie noted some possible reasons for students to withdraw. Mrs Walker informed Members that all students who want to leave their course early are now interviewed to record their reason for leaving and their planned destination. It was agreed that a report on the destination of early leavers, which will also identify specific client groups where possible, will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **6.4 Students' Association Report**

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

Mr Rennie and Ms Gravells provided additional information on the recent work of the Association.

Members were informed that the Vice President (North Area) had recently submitted his resignation and that the vacancy would be filled by a co-opted member of the Association's Executive.

# **7. Papers for Information**

## **7.1 Student Activity 2013-14**

The Committee noted a paper providing information on student activity for the academic year 2013-14.

Members noted that the SFC has informed the College that it is required to carry forward the 2013-14 shortfall of wSUMS to 2014-15 and deliver a further 833 wSUMS in addition to the agreement target of 179,057 wSUMS.

## **7.2 Key Quality Performance Indicators**

The Committee considered a report providing information on key performance indicators relating to the quality function.

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

Mr Rennie reported that there had been complaints from students about the length of time taken to process bursary applications this academic year. Mr Wallen informed Members of arrangements put in place to address the processing backlog, and added that the situation had been regrettable. Mr Wallen advised that a review of Student Funding processes was currently being undertaken to avoid such a situation next academic year.

Mr Rennie also reported that he had received complaints about the quality and prices of the food at Fraserburgh Campus, including a suspected food poisoning instance. Mr Wallen asked Mr Rennie to ensure that any such issues be reported to him immediately. Mr Wallen informed Members that arrangements were in hand to have a survey of catering carried out by an external contractor.

In noting the report the Committee requested that learning and teaching should be added to category CP2 in the reporting of compliments and thanks.

### **7.3 Student Support Funds**

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

Information was provided on the bursary funds; discretionary and childcare funds; childcare reserve; Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Programme; and disbursement of funds in AY2014-15.

Mr Cowie provided updated information on the numbers of applications received and processed.

Mr Wallen advised on current discussions being held relating to the redistribution of student funds across the college sector.

The Committee noted the information contained in the report.

### **7.4 e-Safety Guidance for Staff and Students**

The Committee noted a report providing information about the College's approach to communicating best practice approaches to e-Safety to staff and students.

Members noted the information leaflets which had been issued to all students and staff. Mr Wallen thanked Robert Gordon University (RGU) for sharing their materials with the College.

### **7.5 Needs Assessment Response Rates**

The Committee noted a report providing information on how the College manages needs assessment and the response rates associated with these arrangements.

Information was provided on the arrangements for needs assessments; service standards; and customer feedback.

### **7.6 Developing the Young Workforce**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Scottish Government which has been issued following the publication of the report of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

Mr Wallen and Mrs Walker noted discussions with the two local authorities on addressing the recommendations of the Commission.

**8. Summation of Business and date of next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17 March 2015.

Mr Duthie thanked Mr Rennie and Ms Gravells for their very positive contribution made at a recent event held at the College for MPs and MSPs.

The Committee noted its recognition of Mrs Kesson's 45 years of service to the College, which was marked by a presentation from the Board of Management earlier that day.

The meeting concluded at 1535 hours.