

Academic Affairs Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: Session 2018/19, Meeting 2 of 3
Date and time: Wednesday 12 February 2019 at 2.30pm
Location: Room 19, Brahan

Members present:

Margaret Cook Principal and Chief Executive (Chair)	Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal (Academic)
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)	Catherine Etri, Associate Principal (Academic)
Andrew Comrie Board of Management	Harold Gillespie Board of Management
Professor Martin Price, Chair of Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Exchange Committee	David Gourley, Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement
Rob Boyd, Teaching Staff Member on the Committee	Prince Honeysett President HISA Perth
Tabitha McKechnie, VP Education and Engagement	Maureen Masson Secretary to the Board of Management

Apologies: Sheena Devlin, Board of Management
Declan Gaughan, Teaching Staff Member on the Board of Management
Deborah Lally, Head of Student Experience

Minute Taker: Maureen Masson
Quorum: 6, including the Chair or Vice-Chair

Summary of Action Items			
Ref	Action	Responsibility	Time Line
5	Actions Arising from Previous Minutes Meeting on 21 November 2018 10.1 Balanced Scorecard Update Follow up on queries relating to Balanced Scorecard Update	Depute Principal (Academic)	Next meeting
	Meeting on 12 February 2019 6.1 HISA Perth College Update	HISA President/ Associate Principal	Report back at next meeting

	Develop links with Education Scotland Assessors and seek additional feedback on exam board and module evaluation		
	6.2 Student Induction and Early Experience Survey Review the 're-fresher's' fayre at Inverness College and options for nurture marketing	Depute and Associate Principals working with HISA	For next year's freshers week
	6.3 Student Funding Update Investigate the feasibility of gathering data on student use of food banks	Student Services Manager	Report back at next meeting
	8.2 Workforce Planning Review how the +1 hour is now accounted for	Head of HR and OD	Next meeting
	9.2 Student Partnership Agreement - update on themes Widen the scope of the partnership themes to include other protected characteristics.	HISA President	For consideration of themes next Student Partnership Agreement
	11.1 Safeguarding and Academic Policies Both policies to go to the next Board meeting with a recommendation that the Safeguarding Policy is not approved and that the Academic Appeals Policy is approved subject to the correction of some typographical errors. Quality Team to work with Short life Working Group to finalise policies.	Secretary Quality Team	Next Meeting of the Board ASAP

Minutes

Item	Action
1 Welcome and Apologies The Principal welcomed members in particular Tabitha McKechnie and Rob Boyd who were attending their first meeting of the Committee. Apologies were noted, including from new Board Member, Sheena Devlin, who had also joined the Committee.	
2 Additions to the Agenda There was no additions to the agenda.	

3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest in any Agenda Item

There were no declarations of a conflict of interest.

4 Minutes of Meeting Held on 21 November 2018

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

5 Actions Arising from Previous Minutes

5 RSKE Terms of Reference

Action: Finalise the Scholarship and Research Committee Terms of Reference

Action Update: Complete

6 Presentation

Action: Consider a paper to identify the underlying research for the BA Food Nutrition and Textiles Education

Action Update: to be considered in due course

7 Revised Terms of Reference and Membership of the Committee

Action: Update the Terms of Reference and other small changes

Action Update: complete

10.1 Balanced Scorecard Update

Action: Report back on why there had been a drop in the number of staff presenting papers and report on work to address performance in the area of care experienced retention levels

Action Update: The Depute Principal (Academic) would report on these actions at the next meeting.

Action: Add a discussion on the ROA to the Board agenda

Action Update: complete – the Board discussed this item at its meeting on 12 December 2018

11 Policies

Action: The Learner Support and Intellectual Property Policies to be recommended for approval to the Board

Action Update: The Committee noted that the Board approved the Learner Support Policy but did not approve the Intellectual Property

Depute
Principal
(Academic)

Policy. The Principal would convey this outcome to UHI and a way forward would be established.

Principal

12 Plan of Work

Action: Update plan of work for the Committee to refer to the Scholarship and Research Committee and remove reference to commissioning research from the plan of work

Action Update: complete

6 Student Experience

6.1 HISA Perth College Update

The Committee noted the paper introduced by the HISA President. The President reported that the annual Regional Council had been a good event; a small number of class representatives had attended and it gave positive insight into student representation across the partnership. The future of HISA and the Partnership Agreement was discussed and the Committee noted that the UHI Dean of Students and HISA Regional President would attend the Engagement Committee in May to talk about the future of HISA.

In terms of the Feedback Groups, the Student President explained the approach to gathering feedback and the process for reporting it back via the Student Engagement Group. The Associate Principal would help HISA officers develop appropriate links with Education Scotland student assessors. It was further agreed that HISA would also seek feedback on exam boards and module evaluation.

HISA
President/
Associate
Principal

6.2 Early Student Experience Survey (ESES) 2018-19

The Depute Principal (Academic) introduced the paper, which summarised the outcomes from the ESES. The Committee noted the paper, in particular that the survey had been conducted online and that a participation rate of 64% had been achieved against a UHI target of 80%. The Committee was pleased to hear the overall student satisfaction outcome at 96.85%, which was marginally higher than last year.

Committee members discussed the outcomes and were reassured that the Sector Development Directors reviewed the results carefully and sought to learn lessons for the year ahead. The Committee queried why the outcomes from the questions about student funding were lower than others. Timing was thought to be an issue, particularly when students did not complete application forms correctly. The College was active in advertising the timescales and a new appointments process was introduced this year and students were encouraged to apply early.

The Committee discussed the differences in the HE/FE split in some outcomes. In terms of Fresher's Week, it was acknowledged that it may be more geared to FE rather than HE. The Committee noted that Inverness College runs a 're-fresher's fayre and that may be worth investigating. Options for improving the experience for Fresher's would be explored.

Depute
and
Associate
Principals
working
with HISA

6.3 Student Funding Update

The Committee noted the paper and that the funding landscape continued to change. The recommendations from the national review were due to go to the Scottish Parliament and that this may alter future funding levels and their distribution.

A query was asked about whether any data was collected on students' use of food banks, and it was agreed the feasibility of gathering this data would be explored.

Student
Services
Manager

7 Strategic Planning

7.1 Student Numbers Planning Update

The Committee discussed the update and trends that were emerging. For FE, the Committee noted a decline in FE full time recruitment across the curriculum whilst HE was static and showing growth in some areas. A number of reasons were identified for the decline in FE numbers and the Committee discussed the implications for partnership. The FE sector, at a national level, was also struggling to recruit to the national target.

The Curriculum Review would provide an opportunity to review/reform the curriculum to redefine the provision/offer to students and the marketing of that. Industry requirements and curriculum flexibility would also be important in the future.

The Committee discussed the approach to undertaking the Curriculum Review to ensure positive staff engagement; an inclusive approach was suggested with emphasis on curriculum reform, working in partnership with staff.

8 Curriculum

***8.1 Curriculum Review/Planning**

The Depute Principal reported that the Curriculum Review would be in the form a professional dialogue to look critically at areas of provision for HE and FE. Market research and data would inform decisions and the College's financial position would have to be considered. It was likely that the review may take place over a longer time period, into next year. The review would take account of data available such as student surveys and areas of strength, wider partnership provision and numbers and known challenges e.g. low numbers of students in engineering and professional accreditation.

8.2 Workforce Planning

The Committee noted the paper. In terms of remitted time for research capacity, the significant drop in number of hours recorded was related to changes in accounting the weekly +1 hour for research. A revised approach to building research capacity was being taken forward to consolidate areas of strength for future Research Excellence Framework exercises. The Committee agreed the aspirations/plans for building research capacity should be a project with identified timescales and deliverables. Further analysis on the reporting of the '+1' hour would be carried out to see how that is being used and measured.

Head of
HR and
OD

The Committee discussed Brightspace implementation that would replace Blackboard virtual learning environment. The Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement explained that all staff had an extra hour a week for training in Brightspace. The Committee noted that there would be no parallel run in its implementation, so it was critical that all staff were appropriately trained and had undertaken refinement of course material, where needed, in making the transition between systems.

8.3 Quality Review/Evaluation Process

The Depute Principal provided an update. The Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP) had identified actions relating to the quality review and enhancement process. It was expected that a different approach would be taken which would comprise three elements:

- Data driven analysis to review sector requirements, trends and targets;
- Input from sector Development Directors; and
- By exception in quality review meetings where there was cause for concern in courses.

This would take shape in the coming weeks.

9 Engagement

*9.1 Tay Cities Deal Update

The Principal reported on the latest development with regard to the Tay Cities deal. The Heads of Terms for the Scottish Aviation Academy were being revised, as the initial costings required updating. Discussions were ongoing with UHI and a paper would be prepared for the March Board meeting.

*9.2 Student Partnership Agreement – update on themes

The Student President provided an update on the 3 partnership themes. In terms of the theme on representation and improvement, it was agreed to widen the scope to include other protected

characteristics groups such as, LGBT, gender and faith. In addition, it was further agreed to consider widening future partnership themes to include the creative arts to reach a greater number of students

HISA
President

10 Performance Monitoring

***10.1 Student Retention and Attainment Report 2017-18 and SFC Benchmark Report on KPIs**

The Committee noted the paper. The Committee discussed the reason for the decline in some indicators. A number of actions to address areas of concern had been identified in the EREP. In addition, there would be further analysis of data and a “drilling down” to programme level to review anomalies /identify areas of poor performance and action plans would be put in place. Areas of strength would also be reviewed to learn lessons.

11 Policies and Procedures

11.1 Safeguarding Policy

The Committee discussed the Safeguarding Policy. Some members of the Committee found the policy to be diffuse and inconsistent e.g. in referencing legislation, some legislative aspects were referred to on multiple occasions and other legislation e.g. bullying and harassment did not appear to be referenced at all. The Committee was also keen to see how the policy would be implemented in practice and to ensure that all relevant training was provided and recorded. The Committee noted that a paper on Safeguarding would be considered by Audit Committee at its meeting on 19 February.

The Committee did not approve the policy in its current form but recommended it be ‘tidied up’ to fix typographical errors before final approval by the Board. A further draft would be prepared for the next meeting.

Quality
Team

11.2 Academic Appeals Policy

The Committee approved the Academic Appeals Policy and recommended its approval to the Board. It also recommended that an annual report should be received by Academic Affairs on appeals. Some further tidying of the policies was also recommended.

Secretary

12 Scholarship and Research

Minutes of the Scholarship and Research Committee on 21 January 2019

The Committee noted the minutes from the first meeting of the newly established Scholarship and Research Committee. The meeting had been positive with good contribution from members. The research agenda at the College was undergoing some change

and six members of staff were to be submitted to the REF. A new Mountain Studies research staff member had recently been employed on a part-time basis.

The Committee noted that the Research Strategy would be revised for re-consideration by Academic Affairs. SFC had funding available for innovation and this may be helpful for research transformation.

The UHI Research Conference was a great success with very positive feedback given.

13 13.1 Updated Plan of Work for the Committee 2018-19

Noted

14 Date and time of next meeting

8 May 2019 at 2.30pm

***15 Review of Meeting (to include check against ToR)**

Members agreed the meeting had covered its Terms of Reference.

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Notes taken to help record minutes are also subject to Freedom of Information requests, and should be destroyed as soon as minutes are approved.

Status of Minutes **Open** ☒ **Closed** ☐

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A **closed** item is one that contains information that could be withheld from release to the public because an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.

The College may also be asked for information contained in minutes about living individuals, under the terms of the General Data Protection Act 2018. It is important that fact, rather than opinion, is recorded.

Do the minutes contain items which may be contentious under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998?

Yes ☐ No ☒