

# Academic Affairs Committee

## Minutes

**Meeting reference:** Academic Affairs 2020-21/02

**Date and time:** Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 2.30pm

**Location:** Online

**Members present:** Margaret Cook, Principal  
Andrew Comrie, Board Member  
Sheena Devlin, Board Member  
Ann Irvine, Board Member  
Patrick O'Donnell, Staff Board Member  
Cameron Murray, HISA Perth VP Education & Engagement  
Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal (Academic) (from Item 7.4)  
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)  
Catherine Etri, Associate Principal (Curriculum)  
Deborah Lalley, Head of Student Experience  
David Gourley, Head of Learning & Teaching Enhancement  
Martin Price, Chair of Scholarship & Research Committee  
Robert Boyd, Teaching Staff Member on the Committee

**In attendance:** Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board of Management

**Observing:** Andrew Brawley, HMI Inspector, Education Scotland

**Apologies:** Alex Wilson, Student Board Member

**Chair:** **Margaret Cook**

**Minute Taker:** Ian McCartney

**Quorum:** 7

Summary of Current Action Items			
Ref	Action	Responsibility	Time Line
7.2	<b>Student Recruitment</b> Updated data relating to student recruitment to be circulated Committee members	Head of Student Experience	ASAP
6.2	<b>Student Surveys – National Student Survey</b> Areas of review would be circulated to Committee.	Associate Principal	Next meeting
8.1	<b>Risk Register</b> Scores to be reviewed in relation to Risk Items 2 & 8.	SMT/Clerk	December Board

Summary of Historic Action Items			
Ref	Action	Responsibility	Time Line
	<b>Matter Arising from 19 February 2020</b> <u>Ref 6.2 - Student Surveys: Induction Early Experience Survey 2019-20</u> Head of Student Experience to look into whether Q10 can be reviewed.	Head of Student Experience	When available from UHI (ongoing process)
	<b>Matter Arising from 06 May 2020</b> <u>Ref 8.2 – Balance Scorecard</u> Sector benchmark rates and internal tolerance levels to be added	Clerk	Within ongoing review of Balanced Scorecard

### Minutes:

Item		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted presence of Andrew Brawley from Education Scotland as Observer. Apologies were noted.	
2.	<b>Additions to the Agenda</b>  There were no additions to the agenda.	
3.	<b>Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item</b>  There were no declarations of a conflict of interest.	
4.	<b>Minutes of Meeting held on 02 September 2020</b>  The minutes were approved as an accurate record.	
5.	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>	
	<u><b>Matters Arising from 02 September 2020</b></u>  <u>Ref 6.2 - Student Surveys – National Student Survey</u> <b>Action 1:</b> Additional Perth-focused analysis to be made available.  <b>Action Update:</b> On Agenda under Item 7.3  <b>Action 2:</b> Areas of review would be circulated to Committee.  <b>Action Update:</b> On Agenda under Item 7.3  <u>Ref 8.1 - Risk Register</u> <b>Action:</b> Amendments to be made to Risk Items 8 & 10  <b>Action Update:</b> Completed and updated at October Board meeting.  <u>Ref 9.1 - Addressing Racism</u> <b>Action:</b> SLWG brief to be circulated to Committee members  <b>Action Update:</b> Completed.	<div>Complete</div> <div>Complete</div> <div>Complete</div> <div>Complete</div>

	<p><b><u>Matters Arising from 19 February 2020</u></b></p> <p><u>Ref 6.2 - Student Surveys: Induction Early Experience Survey 2019-20</u>  <b>Action:</b> Head of Student Experience to look into whether Q10 can be reviewed.</p> <p><b>Action Update:</b> Same questions used across UHI Partnership therefore has to be reviewed at UHI level. Process under way, updates when available.</p> <p><u>Ref 9.1 - Safeguarding Policy</u>  <b>Action:</b> Reviewed Policy be circulated to Committee members to allow Chair's Action to be progressed.</p> <p><b>Action Update:</b> Contextualised and published on website</p> <p><b><u>Matters Arising from 06 May 2020</u></b></p> <p><u>Ref 8.2 – Balanced Scorecard</u>  <b>Action:</b> Sector benchmark rates and internal tolerance levels to be added</p> <p><b>Action Update:</b> Project &amp; Planning Officer currently reviewing as part of ongoing review of wider Balanced Scorecard.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Student Experience</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>HISA Perth Update</b></p> <p>HISA Perth VP Education &amp; Engagement introduced Paper 2 and highlighted the main points for Committee, in particular plans for online delivery of Class Rep Training and the promotion of the Early Experience Survey. VP Education &amp; Engagement also noted that the first Student Rep Council of the year had been held that morning, with over 40 students in attendance.</p> <p>Board Member commended the work of HISA Perth in supporting students with regard to VLE matters, and enquired whether there had been any additional need identified. VP Education &amp; Engagement noted that a feedback proforma was being prepared for distribution to Class Reps.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<p><b>Student Completion &amp; Progress - update</b></p> <p>Head of Student Experience provided a verbal update on student</p>	

	<p>completion and progression, noting that recent analysis indicated that attainment and progression levels looked healthy, however a total of 32 students had not been able to fully complete their courses due to practical impacts around COVID. These students have been given the option to continue during their extended period of completion, and are on track to complete outstanding work very soon.</p> <p>Head of Student Experience advised that Scottish Funding Council have allowed KPIs around achievement to be submitted late.</p> <p>Head of Student Experience noted that analysis of key and protected groups were ongoing and will identify any areas of issue falling out of College interventions.</p>	
<b>7.2</b>	<p><b>Student Recruitment - update</b></p> <p>Head of Student Experience provided a verbal update on student recruitment for 2020/21, noting that HE targets had been passed ahead of schedule and that FE levels remained robust, although there may be an issue arising from COVID with respect to certain trades not employing Modern Apprentices which will impact on funding targets.</p> <p>Whilst SFC had indicated that there will be no funding clawback in such circumstances, Principal noted potential impact on future years' funding resulting from these circumstances, including in relation to top-slicing.</p> <p>At the request of a Board Member, Head of Student Experience agreed to circulate data relating to student recruitment to Committee members</p>	Head of Student Experience
<b>7.3</b>	<p><b>National Student Survey 2020 – Perth College Overview</b></p> <p>Associate Principal presented Paper 4, which provided more detailed Perth-centric analysis of the recent National Student Survey report for 2019/20.</p> <p>Associate Principal noted that, while 50 HE courses were available to study at Perth, only 11 of these courses ran with more than 10 students, and of these only 6 met the response threshold for NSS reporting.</p> <p>Associate Principal reported that overall scores had shown improvement, however there were 3 areas for concern noted in the report, and work has started in these areas to address issues.</p> <p>Associate Principal noted in particular that the online learning environment had scored poorly, which raised some issues to be looked</p>	

	<p>into, and that learning resources appeared to be an issue in some areas but not across the board.</p> <p>In response to a Board Member's query regarding poor performance in one specific area, Associate Principal advised that not all teaching is necessarily delivered by Perth College staff as this can be shared with Partner Colleges, however the Dean and Subject Network Leader are looking into the matter.</p>	
<b>7.4</b>	<p><b>Digital Poverty</b></p> <p>Associate Principal summarised Paper 4, which provided details on the College's response to challenges presented by Digital Poverty highlighted during COVID.</p> <p>Associate Principal noted that 758 students had responded to the initial survey. To date, 766 laptop or equivalent devices had been procured, plus 30 devices providing wi-fi access. Associate Principal advised Committee that a bid by the College to Connecting Scotland for 311 devices had just been announced as being successful.</p> <p>Board Member congratulated team on sourcing and distributing so many devices to students.</p> <p>Head of Learning &amp; Teaching Enhancement advised that drop-in sessions had been organised around digital skills to ensure students were able to get online and access learning materials.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Risk, Compliance &amp; Performance</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<p><b>Risk Register – Academic Affairs</b></p> <p>Clerk presented Paper 5 for review by Committee, noting the request by the Board of Management for SMT and Clerk to look in particular at whether those scores recorded as red were accurate.</p> <p>Board Member suggested that the residual score for Risk 2 be reduced in view of SFC decision around funding clawback for 2020/21 due to COVID reducing risk levels. Committee noted that Risk Scores were viewed over a 3-year period, however it was <b>AGREED</b> to review within these contexts.</p> <p>Board Member suggested that the residual score for Risk 8 may also be reduced due to the known timescale related to REF. Committee noted that it would be helpful to have some figures on the effect on funding levels as part of this review, and <b>AGREED</b> that the risk score should be reviewed once more info can be ascertained.</p>	<p>SMT/Clerk</p> <p>SMT/Clerk</p>

<b>8.2</b>	<b>Balanced Scorecard update</b>  Clerk presented Paper 5, noting the upward trend of the single reportable item to this Committee.  Clerk updated Committee on review of Balanced Scorecard following the October meeting of the Board of Management.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Policies &amp; Procedures</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Addressing Racism - update</b>  Board Member provided a brief update on the Addressing Racism project, noting that the matter had been discussed at EDIT Committee, however there had been some delays in getting the Short Life Working Group up and running, therefore the original timescale of having a proposal to take to the December Board of Management meeting would not be met and the focus was on providing this to the March Board instead.  Chair assured Committee of the importance of the project, however it had not been possible to devote the resources the project deserves. An update would be provided to the next meeting.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Committee Minutes (for noting)</b>  Committee noted the minutes of Scholarship & Research Committee held on 21 October 2020.  Chair thanked Chair of Scholarship & Research Committee years of input into this Committee as well as Scholarship & Research Committee, plus a wider contribution to the College.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Date of Next meeting</b>  Wednesday 03 February 2021 @ 2:30pm	
<b>12</b>	<b>Review of Meeting</b>  The Committee agreed the meeting had covered its Terms of Reference.	

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### **Status of Minutes – Open ☒**

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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 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 2018?      **Yes** ☐      **No** ☒