Engagement Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: Engagement 2019-20/01
Date and time: Thursday 29 August 2019 at 5.30pm
Location: Room 019

Members present: Margaret Cook, Principal
John Dare, Board Member (Staff)
Sharon Hammell, Board Member
Lynn Oswald, Board Member
Amy Studders, President HISA Perth
Michaela Asisten, VP Education & Engagement HISA Perth

In attendance: Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal (Academic)
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board of Management

Apologies: Debbie Hutchison, Board Member
David Littlejohn, Board Member
Catherine Etri, Associate Principal
Katy Harrington, Head of HR & Organisational Development

Chair: **Sharon Hammell**
Minute Taker: Ian McCartney
Quorum: 3

Summary of Action Items			
Ref	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Time Line**
6.1	**HISA Perth Plan of Work** Plan to be recirculated once additional details around targets, etc had been added	HISA Perth	Next Committee meeting
6.2	**Student Partnership Agreement** Progress to be reported at next meeting	HISA Perth	Next Committee meeting
10.1	**Promoting a Positive Learning Environment** Clerk to liaise with the College's Quality Manager to provide clarity of role definition under Section 7.1 of policy	Clerk	Next Committee meeting
10.2	**Student Code of Conduct** Clerk to discuss issue over wording with the College's Quality Manager with a view to providing HISA with the clearest advice on taking the matter forward.	Clerk	Next Committee meeting
12	**EDIT – Disability Confidence Scheme** Clerk to the Board to explore lapse of Scheme and respond to Committee.	Clerk	Next Committee meeting

University of the Highlands and Islands Perth College

Minutes:

Item	Action

1.   Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced new representatives from HISA Perth to the Committee. Apologies were noted.

2.   Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

3.   Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item

There were no declarations of a conflict of interest.

4.   Minutes of Meeting held on 28 November 2018

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

5.   Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Presentation on the Future of HISA

Action 1: Results of the Student Survey would be reviewed at next meeting of Committee

Action Update: On Agenda under Item 7.

Action 2: Student Engagement Framework to be further discussed at a future meeting

Action Update: Ongoing - deferred to future meeting of Committee

6   Student Engagement

*6.1   HISA Perth Update

President HISA Perth presented an update paper, summarising the range of work carried out by the HISA Perth team over the summer.

Responding to a question from a Board Member, President HISA Perth acknowledged that, while HISA Perth was still adjusting to its new location, it is expected that the move to the Webster building will prove positive in terms of visibility, and this has already been evidenced by exposure to many more students over the summer recess.

Furthermore, in order to maximise knowledge of the new location amongst students, HISA Perth has purchased two large branded flags for display outside the building, and conversations are ongoing regarding increased signage.

President HISA also presented a draft Priority Plan for the year ahead, highlighting a range of events geared to increase engagement and promote support, the focus of work for the individual officers, and the continual plans for items such as Class Reps and Elections.

Following a question from a Board Member, President HISA Perth outlined some key timescales, noting that many of the events are calendar-specific, so other events would fall around these.

Chair welcomed the Priority Plan, noting that it formed a good framework for the year ahead, and requested recirculation of the Plan once additional details around targets, etc had been added.

HISA Perth

*6.2   Student Partnership Agreement 2019/20

President HISA Perth provided an update position on the 2019/20 Student Partnership Agreement, noting that a Paper had been submitted to Student Engagement Group for discussion in June 2019 proposing 3 main themes of Learning Resources, Student Wellbeing and Communication.

Principal clarified that Agreement needs to be discussed at College level, and that it would be preferred to sign the Agreement off earlier than on previous occasions in order to be meaningful.

HISA Perth

Progress to be reported at next meeting.

*6.3   Student Mental Health Agreement 2019/20

President HISA Perth presented an update on the 2019/20 Student Mental Health Agreement, noting that it is proposed to retain certain elements of the 2018/19 Agreement, including the categories used, but to update the content within these headings.

Following a question from a Board Member regarding likely impacts of the project, President HISA Perth noted that the focus was on organising events outside the learning environment, promoting a broad range of non-academic activities, and working with other service providers in order to create a less stressful College environment for students. Committee agreed that, in order to measure impact form the project, it would be useful to capture outcomes and experiences from students.

7   Performance Monitoring

7.1   Balanced Scorecard

Principal introduced the updated format of the Balanced Scorecard, describing the concept to new members of the committee, and advising that, while the presentation had changed to provide specific detail for different audiences, the measures being used had been retained due to their link with the Strategic Plan.

In discussing the Balanced Scorecard, Committee expressed satisfaction with the new format, noting that it was easier to read and provided useful detail-within-detail. In response to a query from a Committee Member regarding how to best reflect performance not quite on target but very close, Clerk to the Board noted that future iterations of the Scorecard would include Tolerances which demonstrate how close performance is to Targets, but these had not yet been finalised for inclusion at this stage.

Principal noted that the Balanced Scorecard would continue to be monitored and developed as the full meetings cycle unfolds.

7.2   National Student Survey 2018-19: Key Outcomes

Depute Principal (Academic) summarised the key outcomes from the most recent National Student Survey (NSS), noting that, whilst the College's overall satisfaction rating had fallen from 88% to 85%, this was still above the national average.

Depute Principal (Academic) also highlighted some other good performances against main comparator benchmarks, and noted that staff should be commended on the survey results. Depute Principal (Academic) further noted that any area performing at a rating of below 80% undertakes an Action Plan linked to a curriculum review.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the low rating for Question 26 relating to effectiveness of student representation, President HISA Perth noted that NSS is still surveying students who pre-dated the formation of HISA, which may have been a factor. President HISA Perth also reiterated the plan to provide a wider range of non-social events and study workshops, which would help support 4th Year students.

Principal noted that NSS was deemed more important than other surveys due to its use in the formation of league tables, and therefore has a higher impact, particularly on RUK students (ie those UK students who are non-Scottish domiciled prior to commencing studies).

7.3   Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey 2018-19: Key Outcomes

Depute Principal (Academic) introduced the most recent Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey (SSES), noting that the response rate of 46% was well below target, possibly due to this being the first year of the SSES being conducted online.

Depute Principal (Academic) further noted that the SSES utilised a weighted average in its figures, some questions mirrored those in the NSS, and curriculum areas all scored satisfaction rates in excess of 90%.

> *President HISA Perth and VP Education & Engagement HISA Perth left the meeting at this point.*

7.4   Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

Depute Principal (Academic) presented the final survey for discussion, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, reporting that the overall College satisfaction rate (against a national average of 80%), albeit with a response rate of 31%.

Depute Principal noted that there is a need to drill down to investigate some issues further, and Principal further noted that due consideration should be given to the potential impact of the low threshold for reporting of responses (minimum 4 responses from course for validity versus a minimum 10 responses in NSS).

8   External Engagement

Vice Principal (External) summarised the External Engagement paper, which focused primarily on activities over the summer period, and noted in particular the success of a refreshed approach to summer marketing, and in particular Open Events, in attracting new students; the excellent outcomes from our international partnership in China; and the success in negotiations with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to increase the candidate fee levels, which will benefit Colleges across the sector.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding resource implications of entering Phase 2 of the UHI International Student Recruitment project, Vice Principal (External) confirmed that the College had agreed to be involved in 2 of the 6 identified work streams, and would assess time and other commitments before further involvement. Furthermore, Principal noted a desire to protect investment made by the College over the years in this area.

Committee thanked Vice Principal (External) for leading the work on CITB fees. Vice Principal (External) noted that other sectors may well benefit from a similar negotiation process, and that Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council have recognised benefits of approach.

Vice Principal (External) noted that College had been asked to lead on hospitality skills element of Tay Cities Deal, which presents an excellent opportunity for development, although this is unlikely to be a major income generator.

A brief discussion followed regarding the improvements to various parts of the College Estate following the release of brought-forward funds, in particular the nursery and the Academy of Sport & Wellbeing.

9   Staff Engagement

In the absence of Head of HR and Operational Development, Depute Principal (Academic) summarised the HR update, noting in particular the overall reduction in sick days across all areas of the College, with significant reductions across management and support staff.

10

Policy Development

10.1

Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

Committee noted at this Policy, part of the Single Policy Environment, had been approved by CMT.

Board Member sought clarification on Section 7.1 – Roles & Responsibilities with specific regard to Engagement Committee and whether the oversight nature of Committee's role should be better defined.

Committee **approved** the Policy.

In addition, Committee **agreed** that Clerk would liaise with the College's Quality Manager to provide clarity of role definition under Section 7.1   Clerk

10.2

Student Code of Conduct

Prior to considering the Policy, Clerk to the Board of summarised an issue raised by President HISA Perth regarding the vetoing of the Student Code of Conduct at Moray College UHI due to the use of a phrase in the Gender Based Violence section of the Code.

Clerk noted that HISA did not have standing policy in opposition to the Code, nor had HISA been able to consult its members on the issue, hence HISA were comfortable with passing the Code as it stands, albeit with the understanding that, following consultation, they may wish to lobby UHI regarding future iterations of the Code.

Following a brief discussion, Committee agreed that Clerk would discuss issue over wording with the College's Quality Manager with a view to providing HISA with the clearest advice on taking the matter forward.

Clerk

Committee **formally noted** the Student Code of Conduct.

11

Board Development

Clerk to the Board introduced a draft timetable for the Board Development Plan 2019-20 and summarised the planned sessions.

12

Committee Minutes

The minutes for the following meetings were noted:

- EDIT, 20 June 2019

Chair queried whether the Disability Confidence Scheme (Item 15.d) had lapsed. Clerk to the Board to explore and respond to Committee.

Clerk

13   Date of Next meeting

07 November 2019 at 5.30pm

14   Review of Meeting

The Committee agreed the meeting had covered its Terms of Reference.

Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A). Certain exemptions apply: financial information relating to procurement items still under tender, legal advice from College lawyers, items related to national security.

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 ☑

An **open** item is one over which there would be no issues for the College in releasing the information to the public in response to a freedom of information request.

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 1998. 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 ☑**