Engagement Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: Engagement 2020-21/01
Date and time: Thursday 27 August 2020 at 5:00pm
Location: Online

Members present: Debbie Hutchison, Board Member (Chair)
Sheena Devlin, Board Member (until Item 9)
Andrew Comrie, Board Member
Katrina Hodgson, Board Member
Margaret Cook, Principal
John Dare, Staff Board Member
Alex Wilson, HISA Perth President
Cameron Murray, HISA Perth VP Education & Engagement

In attendance: Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal (Academic)
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)
Catherine Etri, Associate Principal (Curriculum)
Katy Lees, Head of HR & Organisational Development
Aimee Cuthbert, HISA Perth Students' Association Coordinator
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board of Management

Apologies: Miranda Landale, Co-opted Board Member

Chair: **Debbie Hutchison**
Minute Taker: Ian McCartney
Quorum: 3

Summary of Action Items			
Ref	Action	Responsibility	Time Line
6.1	**HISA Perth Update** HISA Perth President to report back on how impact of Class Rep Training would be measured	HISA Perth President	Next meeting
6.1	**HISA Perth Update** Committee to be be updated about final arrangements for the proposed Student Hardship Fund at the next meeting.	HISA Perth President	Next meeting
6.3	**Perth Partnership Project 2020/21** The full Partnership Project proposal will be tabled at the next Engagement Committee meeting.	HISA Perth President	Next meeting
6.3	**Perth Partnership Project 2020/21** Associate Principal to circulate IT & wi-fi survey report from Transitions Project once data analysed.	Associate Principal	Next meeting

7.3	**Risk Register – Engagement Committee**
	   a) Risk 1 – measure of local engagement to be reviewed, with a possible link to the Balanced Scorecard.
	   b) Risk 3 – progress on the Business Development Strategy to be added.
	   c) Risk 23 – Digital Poverty to be referenced. Clerk to action
	   d) Wider COVID risks linked to anticipated outbreaks in winter should be reflected.
		Clerk	Board meeting

8.1	**External Engagement Update** Student representation at transnational partner institutions to be discussed between the College and HISA.	Vice Principal/ HISA Perth President	Next meeting
10.1	**Board Development Activities 2020/21** Soundings to be sought from Chairs' Committee re preferred timings and location/delivery of the sessions.	Clerk	Chairs' Committee

Minutes:

Item		Action
1.	**Welcome and Apologies** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions made.	
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 29 August 2019** The minutes were approved as an accurate record.	
5.	**Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**	
	6.2 HISA Perth Plan of Work **Action:** Chair requested additional narrative in future reports **Action Update**: Draft Plan of Work tabled under Item 6.2	Complete
	9.2 Review of Risk Register **Action:** Current actions within Risk 3 to be replaced with actions from recently-approved International Strategy **Action Update:** Risk 3 updated and presented to July Board meeting	Complete
6	**Student Engagement**	
6.1	**HISA Perth Update** HISA Perth President introduced Paper 2 and highlighted the main points for Committee, in particular amended arrangements for Freshers Week under COVID restrictions, with no face-to-face activities planned; liaison with PATs for induction sessions; and plans for online delivery of Class Rep Training. Chair asked how HISA Perth would engage with those students not	

	able to access social events online. HISA Perth President noted that, although HISA's involvement with inductions may help with engagement, this was still a work in progress, and a Refreshers event is planned for January to help plug any engagement gaps. Staff Board Member enquired about monitoring engagement levels at online Class Rep Training sessions. HISA Perth President advised that there is a registration process for the sessions, and that HISA Perth are working with Quality and Student Engagement to ensure monitoring. Board Member asked about how the impact of training would be measured. HISA Perth President to report back to next meeting. Chair asked about how the Student Hardship Fund would work. HISA Perth President advised that additional funding would be distributed around areas linked to COVID under 4 options described in report. Feedback was also planned to be provided to donors via Development Fund. Board Member noted potential negative connotations of "hardship", plus potential confusion around other hardship funds available via College and SFC. Committee were advised that, as the Fund was not yet launched, there is time to review the title of the Fund. Committee will be updated about the Fund at the next meeting.	HISA Perth President HISA Perth President
6.2	**HISA Perth Draft Plan of Work** Committee received Paper 3, which was noted as being a draft with the full Plan of Work to be circulated to the Board as soon as possible. HISA Perth President noted that the Team Objectives were linked to manifesto pledges; and that the Operational Plan was an iteration of previous Plans, with standard events and activities. HISA Perth President further noted that the focus was on quality over quantity given current circumstances. Board Member thanked HISA Perth for the Plan, before asking about the role of performing arts within the Plan as a valuable support for mental health issues. HISA Perth President noted the "Lockdown Concert" series that had taken place over the summer, and promoting this sort of activity was being discussed with the team. Chair asked about the absence of Graduation events from the Plan. Principle advised that there had been an agreement made across the Partnership not to run Graduation events this year, but where possible each institution will look to organise local celebratory events, and it is planned to involve HISA Perth in these discussions.	

		Chair thanked HISA Perth for pulling the Plan of Work together and looked forward to updates being reviewed throughout the year ahead.	
*6.3		**Perth Partnership Project 2020/21**	
		HISA VP Education & Engagement presented Paper 4, which provides information on the results of the consultation with students re the focus of future work with the College, and will provide the basis for the 2020/21 Partnership Project. It was noted that the change in name was to differentiate from the regional Partnership Agreement.	
		Chair enquired as to the timescales of the Project to allow both parties to sign off. HISA Perth President noted that discussion was planned at the next Student Engagement Group meeting which would generate an action plan.	
		The full Partnership Project proposal will be tabled at the next Engagement Committee meeting.	HISA Perth President
		Board Member raised issue of IT theme within the paper, noting that digital poverty was a major concern. Whilst Committee noted that £5m of Scottish Government funding had been made available, this would translate as only 50 laptops for Perth College against an identified requirement significantly higher than this. Moreover, access to broadband was a more problematic issue that would require further lobbying.	
		Associate Principal noted that the Transitions Project had contacted 3,000 students in a survey re IT and wi-fi, with around 1,900 responses. Once data had been analysed, results will be circulated to Committee.	Associate Principal
7		**Performance Monitoring**	
7.1		**National Student Survey 2019-20: Key Outcomes**	
		Associate Principal presented Paper 5, noting that the timings of the survey had broadly coincided with COVID therefore responses were impacted (although response numbers were not significantly affected), and that the survey was conducted with final year HE students only. Associate Principal highlighted the key outcomes for Committee: • UHI below both Scottish and UK averages • UHI response rate 72% from 80% previous year • Q27 (overall satisfaction) down 2.3% from previous year	

	(although still within UHI's own benchmark) • Improvements were made in 12 of 27 question areas Associate Principal noted that additional Perth-focused analysis was being conducted and would be made available.	
7.2	**Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey** Associate Principal presented findings from the PTES (Paper 6), noting that the survey took place online during lockdown, and highlighting that main outcomes: • Satisfaction rates drops to 85% from 89% (still above Scottish average) • 13th in sector (from 57 institutions) • Small sample size skews results somewhat Associate Principal noted that further analysis is required particularly in those area where a drop-off in satisfaction occurred. Board Member enquired into whether anything was developed over lockdown with regards to peer support. Associate Principal advised that a number of online resources were developed within the pedagogical environment, but feedback has yet to be received from students in these areas.	
7.3	**Risk Register – Engagement Committee** Clerk presented Paper 7, requesting feedback to those Risk Areas under the auspices of Engagement Committee. Risk 1 - Staff Board Member enquired about composition of Board with specific reference to the discussion on BLM at the last Board meeting. Principal noted that this would hopefully be addressed as part of the SLWG initiative under Item 10.2, and would feed into Risk Register at a later date. Risk 1 – Board Member asked that the measure of local engagement be reviewed, with a possible link to the Balanced Scorecard. Clerk to update. Risk 3 – Chair asked whether dates need to be reviewed. Vice Principal noted that the new International Strategy had been added but progress on the Business Development Strategy will need to be inputted. Risk 3 – Board Member asked whether there were any international recruitment issues that may impact on Risk Score. Vice Principal noted that numbers were holding up so far and broadly in line with	Clerk Clerk

	targets, however College will know for sure within the next few weeks.	
	Risk 23 – Chair requested that Digital Poverty be reference. Clerk to action.	Clerk
	Board Member noted wider COVID risks linked to anticipated outbreaks in winter should be reflected.	Clerk
7.4	**Balanced Scorecard update** Clerk presented Paper 8, noting the proposed changes to the Balanced Scorecard based on Board feedback, which would be reported to the next Board meeting. Hear of HR & Organisational Development reported on progress on Measures 3, 11 and 12.	
8	**External Engagement**	
8.1	**External Engagement Update** Vice Principal introduced Paper 9, noting that the ability to engage with partner organisations had been affected by the continuing COVID-19 situation. Vice Principal advised that marketing activity had continued via online and digital channels with a result that FE recruitment has held up, although HE numbers have fared less well. ASW is scheduled to re-open on 31st August HISA Perth President enquired into student representation at transnational partner institutions. Vice Principal noted that there are likely to be local arrangements in place, however suggested that this matter is discussed between the College and HISA. Chair requested an update on progress and key dates regarding the Tay Cities Deal. Vice Principal noted that the Partnership Agreement was still to be signed due to delays at government level caused by COVID. Vice Principal advised that the tender for building works professional fees needs agreement from UHI. Board Member asked whether, in light of website route now being a major factor in student choice, any extra budget had been allocated to improve the website experience. Vice Principal advised that extra funds had not been allocated, however the Marketing department were looking at ways to stand out from the crowd.	Vice Principal/ HISA Perth President

9	**Staff Engagement**	
9.1	**HR Update**	
	Head of HR & Organisational Development presented Paper 10 for information, highlighting in particular those sections of the report relating to health assessment, sickness absence and mandatory training.	
	Chair asked whether Health & Safety courses were up to date with reference to COVID. Hear of HR&OD noted that the mandatory course was generic online training, however the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Adviser had run 15 COVID-specific Risk Assessment training courses for 130 staff since lockdown. Board Member enquired as to whether this training could be a business opportunity. Head of HR&OD noted that it could be, however capacity restrictions would need to be considered.	
10	**Board & Policy Development**	
10.1	**Board Development Activities 2020/21**	
	Clerk presented Paper 11, which proposed that the main focus of Board Development activities for 2020/21 be centred around work to produce a new Strategic Plan for presenting to the Board at the March or June Board meetings.	
	Committee agreed with the outline plan in principle, however suggested that soundings be sought from Chairs' Committee re preferred timings and location/delivery of the sessions.	Clerk
10.2	**Addressing Racism**	
	Board Member presented Item 10.2, noting that a brief for the proposed Short Life Working Group (SLWG) had been drafted, a discussion with Principal and HISA Perth President was still to take place before issuing.	
	Board Member briefed Committee on the processes and approximate timescales for the SLWG, with an Action Plan due to be presented to the December Board meeting. Membership and meeting dates of the SLWG was still tbc.	
	Head of HR&OD requested that proposals also be tabled at the next meeting of EDIT Committee on 17 September for their involvement, which was **AGREED.**	

11	Committee Minutes The minutes for the following meetings were received and noted: • EDIT, 18 June 2020; • Staff Engagement Group, 08 May 2020; • Student Engagement Group, 10 June 2020.	
12	**Date of Next meeting** Tuesday 3rd November 2020 @ 5:00pm	
13	**Review of Meeting** The Committee 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 ☑

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 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 ☑**