Glasgow Kelvin College

Item 05
For Approval

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

MINUTE

Minute of the meeting held on Wednesday, 08 March 2023 at 5pm
Via MS Teams

1. Sederunt:
Dr. Marion Allison (Chair);
Dr. Elaine Clafferty (Vice Chair);
Derek Smeall (Principal);
Heather McNeil;
Ian Patrick;
Colm Breathnach;
Dermot Grenham; (attendance from 6pm);
Emma Leslie; (Student Association President) and
Noma Dube; (Student Association President).

In Attendance:
Robin Ashton; (Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality Enhancement);
Linda Ellison; (Secretary to the Board of Management);
John Gallagher; (Head of Quality);
Monica McKerlie: Head of Student Support Services:
Liz Breckenridge; (Marketing and Commercial Manager); and
Debbie Friel; Senior Committee Coordinator (for recording purposes).

2. Apologies
Michael O'Donnell

3. Terms of Reference

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with nine members in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest
a) Interest
b) Connection (not minuted)

No declarations of interest were received.

5. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 23 November 2023

Members accepted the minute as an accurate record of the business conducted at the meeting held on 23 November 2023.

D Smeall, followed by H McNeil proposed the minute.

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6a. Matters arising from the Minute of Previous Meeting held on 23 November 2023

Members noted that there were no matters arising from the previous minute of 23 November 2023.

6b. Learning and Teaching Action Log as at September 2022

Members noted that there were two live actions on the log.

7. 2022-23 Credit Activity Update

The Vice Principal informed members that the report sought to provide an update on Credit delivery for the current academic year. He spoke of the Core target achievement and drew members attention to table one on page one of the report and indicated that the data showed a potential shortfall of 2.6% on the Core Credit target, which had resulted from early withdrawal levels this session. He advised that members should note that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) have introduced a 2% leeway for 2022-23, where there will be no claw back on funds should the College achieve at least 98% of its Core Credit target. He added that the College was therefore initiating actions for additional curriculum to bridge at least the 0.6% gap. He continued to provide an update as to the Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) target and noted a significant shortfall, elaborating on the reasons for this.

He invited questions or comments.

I Patrick asked if FA students continued to receive travel expenses and R Ashton informed members that there was a limit of £1,000 per student for travel expenses, and that this amount was insufficient as students travelled to and from the College via taxi.

The Chair queried if students could use their young person's free bus travel card. R Ashton responded that the College was in discussions with the local authorities to move to a single day model which would open the door for students to independently use bus travel for the full day. He noted that he was hopeful that this would come into effective from academic session 2024-25.

The Principal agreed with R Ashton's comments and said that that local authorities simply could not afford to pay the travel expenses gap and the only solution going forward would be for full day release to be agreed on. He continued to say that the College was very keen to support the growth of FAs and also its Senior Phase. He added that the College awaited a response from the local authorities on the outcome of travel.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

8. Further Analysis of Early Withdrawal Rates

The Head of Quality reminded members that there had been reports of high early withdrawal rates, particularly among students enrolled in Full-Time Further Education programmes, which had a significant impact on overall student success rates. He further advised that the College had recently taken additional measures to better understand the reasons for these withdrawals and to implement strategies to reduce there frequency during the remainder of this session.

He drew members attention to the table on page one of the report and provided an update on the early withdrawal profile and analysis.

J. Gallagher explained that the College had conducted two exercises to investigate higher than average early withdrawal levels. He provided a detailed overview of the exercises undertaken, that included a telephone survey of withdrawn students, Class Tutor feedback, actions to improve retention, and further withdrawal trends. J Gallagher highlighted that the combined graphs showed a spike in withdrawals in September 2022. However, he added that the rate of withdrawal had decreased and there may be fewer withdrawals this year, especially in FE and HE.

The Chair thanked J Gallagher for his detailed overview and invited comment or questions.

C Breathnach stated that it was helpful to see concrete evidence of the realistic crisis caused by high levels of mental health issues among students. Whilst acknowledging the positive measures the College was taking, he expressed concern that a cutback in counselling service provision would be a real problem for the College.

H McNeil commented the report provided a lot of content and interesting information. She queried the statistics stated from the graph on page two of the report which stipulated that there was an “11% from Academic Issues”. She asked if J Gallagher could elaborate on the reasons for this. J Gallagher responded that academic issues related to the student felt that they were on the wrong course or on the wrong level. He emphasised that not all would have withdrawn and some would have simply moved down a level.

The Principal drew attention to the charts listed on page five of the report and said it was relevant for members to note that the data showed a significant reduction in withdrawals in November, December and January from both Further Education and Higher Education. He continued to say that the College’s priority was to optimise success rates.

Dr. E Clafferty thanked the Principal. She asked J Gallagher to clarify the meaning of the category noted as “estranged”. J Gallagher advised that this category was considered by SFC as extreme circumstances, and for student who discontinued for reasons out with the College’s control.

The Principal also emphasised that estrangement applies to students under the age of 25 whose parents had the legal responsibility to fund their child's education up to that age. He commented that there was a surprisingly high number of student who were not supported who fell into this category.

Dr. E Clafferty continued to comment that the College was continuing to do remarkable work to investigate thoroughly on what the common themes are with the withdrawals. Additionally, she noted that 63% was an impressive percentage return on the telephone survey results. She commended the team for the work undertaken and commented that the College would perhaps see the impact from their efforts pay off in the longer term.

R Ashton advised members that the College had already commenced recruitment for next year's academic session. He noted that by utilising the evidence gathered within the report the College could take early action to build resilience with the new students, foster relationships within the group and their course tutor. Additionally, the College would look to process student bursary applications earlier to eliminate potential financial burdens.

I Patrick acknowledged the importance of engaging with students before the start of their course, but also recognised the concerns raised about those starting late. Nevertheless, he believed that the College's mission of Transforming Lives through Education required them to continue offering these opportunities, even if it meant an increased risk of late-start students dropping out.

The Chair thanked J Gallagher for his in-depth report and for his team in gathering the statistics to inform the committee with valuable insights into the survey data.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

9. 2023-24 Curriculum Plan

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality informed members that following sector discussions, next year's credit target may be lower than this year's to enable an increase to within a flat cash funding settlement. R Ashton advised that the report contained two key elements, he spoke to the contents of the report in-depth.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for the informative report and invited comment or questions.

H McNeil commented that she was impressed to see that the College had a fluid approach and is innovative with its developments. However, she sought reassurance that the changes being made to support students with Additional Support Needs (ASN) would not hinder or negatively affect their provision in any way. R Ashton explained that significant discussions had taken place with the ASN department and the students. He further mentioned that the number of affected students would be relatively small, and management was collaborating with them to ensure a smooth transition.

C Breathnach raised a question about the section of the report that referred to external funding for the Hub. He enquired about the source of funding and whether it is secure for the future. R Ashton explained that the Hub was heavily subsidised by external funds and that core funding was insufficient to support this area. He continued to elaborate on what funding the College had secured and explained that the Hub would be financially sustainable for the next three-year period.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for the informative report and said that the extent of the partnership work was very positive, showing the agility of the College. Following a question from the Chair, R Ashton confirmed that all curriculum movements would undertake an equalities impact assessment.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

D Grenham joined the meeting at this point.

10. College Leaver Destinations 2020-21

The Head of Quality informed members that in February and March 2022, the College conducted a survey of college leavers' destinations, in line with the Scottish Funding Council's national survey. The survey aimed to identify the next destination of successful full-time college leavers who had completed a course during session 2020-21, with results taken six months after the end of session. He added that with 1,700 successful full-time leavers in June 2021, the College had achieved an 83.23% return rate, ratified by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and included in their sector report.

J Gallagher provided a comprehensive account of the data analysis as outlined in the report. He further observed that it was noteworthy that a significant proportion of the College's students pursued Higher Education, with a relatively lower proportion opting for direct employment.

He invited comment or questions.

M McKerlie joined the meeting at this point.

Dr E Clafferty queried if the College provided career advice on employability skills to its students. The Head of Student Support Services explained that the College had a service level agreement with its local Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Team who would take referrals from the College for careers guidance. Additionally, the College Student Support Services conducts employability skills workshop with students.

Dr E Clafferty further queried the “No Where Like Kelvin” marketing campaign, and asked if this would encourage students to continue with their studies at the College. J Gallagher responded that he was very optimistic that this would have a positive outcome.

H McNeil commented that the report was a positive one and that it was reassuring to know that one third of our students continued to study at Glasgow Kelvin.

The Principal drew members to the transitional data outlined in the graph on page three of the report. He remarked that it demonstrated a noteworthy contribution to the government's policy of facilitating access to university for disadvantaged students.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

11. Thriving Leaver Report and College Mental Health & Wellbeing Service

The Head of Student Support Services, spoke to the content of the Thriving Learners Report, which is considered one of the largest and most significant studies of student mental health in the UK. M McKerlie added that the report provided valuable insights into the mental health and wellbeing of Scottish college students. She continued to provide members with a detailed overview of the report.

R Ashton advised members to exercise caution when interpreting the data analysis, as the study relied on self-selecting participants. Moreover, M McKerlie drew attention to a report by the NUS which correlated similar findings and figures.

M McKerlie continued to provide an update as to the College Counselling Provision

and explained that the College Counselling and Wellbeing service is funded directly from SFC, this funding is due to cease in July 2023 and the College awaits updates from the Scottish Government and the SFC regarding provision.

R Ashton advised members that securing funding was a priority for the College to continue with the service.

M McKerlie invited comment or questions.

C Breathnach thanked M McKerlie for her comprehensive report which provided a significant insight into the situation with the funding and the Counselling provision within the College. He explained that if this provision were to be reduced and the College did not receive the same funding in the future, it would have an adverse impact on its students, and it would pose a crisis. He asked if there is anything more that the Board of Management could do, perhaps raise the issue by lobbying the Government in their support of this provision and its funding.

D Grenham noted that the increase in mental health issues among students appeared to have a stronger association with the use of social media. He enquired whether the College could consider incorporating an induction program to assist students in developing a healthier relationship with social media. M McKerlie responded that the College does already offer a workshop that centres around social media. Additionally, they are also exploring ways to enhance student resilience and considering its inclusion in the induction program.

The Principal acknowledged that this is one of the most significant challenges facing the College in the coming months. He informed members that Jon Vincent, the Principal at Clyde College, has been proactive in addressing this issue, and Colleges Scotland have been assertive in raising it with the Minister. He emphasised that the College highly values this provision and cannot allow it to be discontinued due to funding constraints.

The Chair thanked M McKerlie for her paper and members for their contributions.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

12. Impact of New Artificial Intelligence Tools on Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have the potential to positively impact education by personalising the learning experience, making it more accessible for students with disabilities, and automating time-consuming tasks. However, AI tools may negatively impact the authenticity of student work, particularly in open-book assessments, which raises concerns about assessment validity. The College is taking steps to manage this risk, including raising awareness among staff about ChatGPT's capacity through professional development sessions.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for his insightful paper and noted it was good to see that the College was forward thinking.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

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13. Student Association Priorities Update

E Leslie, the Student President highlighted that this report sought to update members on the recent progress and future plans of the Student Association (SA).

E Leslie updated members as to the various campaigns and events taking place and continued to elaborate on LGBTQ+, History Month and on Mental Health. Furthermore, she highlighted that their main focus during February was Valentine's Day and this provided an opportunity to encourage students to have a positive mindset and focus on self-love.

During her presentation, N Dube outlined the priorities and next steps and provided updates on awareness-raising efforts in several areas, including Eating Disorders, International Women's Day, and Red Nose Day. She also highlighted on the importance of fundraising and on plans to support students facing exceptional circumstances and address the current cost of living crisis by establishing a food bank.

R Ashton thanked both presidents for their insightful report and invited comment or questions.

Dr E Clafferty commented on the priorities and next steps and wondered if there was plans to help students improve on sleep. She advised that there was a free App supported by NHS Scotland called "Sleepio". E Leslie thanked E Clafferty for the information and noted she would look into the App further.

C Breathnach thanked the Presidents, in particular for the work undertaken to support Ukrainian Students effected by the ongoing war.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

14. Admissions Update

The Vice Principal of Curriculum advised that the report sought to inform members on recruitment for the 2023-24 academic year. He continued to updated members on current position of received applications and on offers extended.

R Ashton highlighted that the number of applications received at this time of year was down 29% on 2022/23 and down 32% on 2021-22. He advised that the College was currently investigating potential internal and external factors which may have influenced this downward trend. He explained that on a positive note, live offers had increased by 37.5% compared to previous years.

He continued to say that due to the changes made to the College's admission approach and the continuous improvement in our application process have led to significant improvements.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for his report and invited comments or questions.

H McNeil queried the impact on the figures, when removing the second-year returners cohort from the equation, she asked, how it would affect the previously mentioned figures. In response, R Ashton stated that applications have decreased

by 15-20% when compared on a like-for-like basis. Additionally, he noted that other colleges are experiencing similar difficulties, and universities are lowering their entry requirements, further contributing to the overall decrease in applications.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

15. Education Scotland Progress Visit

The Vice Principal of Curriculum informed members that Education Scotland would conduct a Progress Visit at the College in early May 2023. He added that the inspection would focus on Recruitment, Retention, Attainment and Progression.

I Patrick noted that he was surprised that the College would have to undergo a further visit considering the last inspection was positive.

R Ashton said the visit is mainly due to the College PI position. He went onto explain that the visit will generate one of three outcomes:

i) move forward next year to a lighter version visit;
ii) they could agree that a further progress visit would continue in the following year; or
iii) decide to return within a two/three month period.

R Ashton further advised that the visit would generate an official report which would be made available to the College.

I Patrick queried if it was likely they would attend the Board of Management meeting in June 2023. R Ashton responded that he would expect that they would attend.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

D Grenham left the meeting at 17:00hrs

16. Young Person's Guarantee

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality highlighted that the report sought to summarise on the arrangements for the Young Person's Guarantee funds. Funding was intended to provide support for young people aged 16-24 who were facing the greatest barriers to progression in tertiary education or progression into a positive post school destination.

R Ashton drew members attention to the funding allocation table on page one of the report, which detailed the amount allocated to Glasgow colleges. He then proceeded to provide a comprehensive overview of the projects planned for the fund allocation for Glasgow Kelvin College.

The Chair thanked R Ashton for his report.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

17. Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF)

The Marketing and Commercial Manager highlighted that the report sought to inform members on the nature of the College's Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) and how that curriculum delivery and engagement supported the College's strategic objections. L Breckenridge highlighted key points from the report, which members were asked to note.

i) The launch of the FWDF for 2022/23 was significantly delayed, the fund usually released in August, however, this was not announced until 17th January 2023; and
ii) A significant budget cut across the national FWDF programme. For Glasgow Kelvin this she highlighted equates to around 45% reduction in the Levy Fund allocation and 26.5% reduction for the SME Fund allocation. The total FWDF fund amount for the College is £322,939.

The Chair invited questions or comment.

H McNeil remarked that the employer-focused approach appeared to be tailored to each employer, which is a unique practice not adopted by other colleges. She further commented that this was very valuable for the College in terms of generating income.

Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and its appendix.

At 7pm, the Secretary to the Board asked the members if they were willing to extend the time limit in accordance with the Standing Orders and proceed with the remaining items on the agenda. Members agreed.

18. GTCS Consultation Outcome on Provisional Registration

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality informed members that the report sought to update members on the outcome of a consultation undertaken by the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) on a proposal to create a provisional conditional category or registration for college lecturers who have not yet achieved an appropriate teaching qualification. He drew members attention to Appendix 1 of the report, letter which confirms that the GTCS council have agreed to the proposed provisional registration category which will now allow all college lecturers to be registered with GTCS.

The Chair invited question or comment.

I Patrick noted an observation that there was a five-year period remaining for teaching staff to attain full registration. He further enquired about the financial implications that this transition may have on the College and queried how many teaching staff this effected. R Ashton highlighted that there were approximately 70 members of teaching staff who did not have TQFE and on average the College had put through 10 to 11 staff per year.

The Principal clarified that whilst schools were required by law to follow teaching standards set by the GTCS, this is not the case for Colleges. He continued to say that the first steps in the College approach was encouragement and reinforcement.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for his comprehensive report.

The Chair noted that the following reports were provided for members information only.

19. Tackling Persistent Inequalities Together Report
20. SFC College Student Satisfaction Survey Guidance 2022-23
21. SFC College Leaver Destination Guidance 2021-22

22. Impact on Students – Key Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.

Members agreed that no Impact on Students had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

23. Risk Management – Risk Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.

Members agreed that no new risk management issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

24. Equality Management – Equality Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items

Members agreed that no new equality management issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

25. Data Protection – Data Protection Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items

Members agreed that no new data protection issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.

26. Closure

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

27. Date of Next Meeting
10 May 2023