A

Curriculum & Quality Committee

Teams Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 18 February 2021

<u>Minutes</u>

ITEM	MINUTES
Present	Nuala Broderick (Chair) Virginia Grant David Johnson Dave Black Elaine Acaster Paul Cathrow
In Attendance	Heather Anderson (VP Curriculum and Student Services) Jayne Gracie (AP Quality and Development) Amy Brydon (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer) – to end item 07/21 Ann Letham (President, BCSA) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary) Sheila McColm (Minute Secretary)
01/21	**<u>Chair's Opening Remarks</u>** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a particular welcome to Paul Cathrow who was attending for the first time. The very strong theme of equality throughout the agenda was noted.
02/21	**<u>Apologies for Absence</u>** Apologies for absence were received from Angela Cox and Margaret Rose Livingstone (Education Scotland).
03/21	**<u>Minutes of Meeting held on 29 October 2020 (Paper A)</u>** The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 October 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.
04/21 45/20 56/20	**<u>Matters Arising</u>** The Curriculum Strategy has been changed to the Future Skills Strategy. A draft will be presented to the Committee in due course. **ACTION: HA** The link to accessibility legislation on the Glasgow University website was provided and a short-life working group within the College has taken this forward.
05/21	**<u>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest / Register of Members Interest</u>** D Johnson provided an update to the Register of Interest relating to a new 4-year post as external examiner at the University of Winchester.

	The record will be updated accordingly. **ACTION: SMc**

06/21	**<u>Borders College PSED Reports (Public Sector Equality Duty)</u>**
	
	The Equality Officer gave a presentation providing an overview of Public Sector Equality Duty and the equality outcomes developed to meet one or more of the three needs of the general equality duty.
	
	Four equality outcomes have been developed:
	
	1. We will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%.
	2. We will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce.
	3. Retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups will be close to the average of the student population.
	4. Staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment.
	
	The Chair thanked the Equality Officer for the presentation which she considered very helpful in setting the context for the Equality Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes and Action Plan.
	
	In response to questions from Committee members the following points were clarified:
	
	• The three public duties the College has a legal obligation to fulfil are:
	
	    1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	    2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
	    3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
	• There are excellent examples of how some of the equality issues have been addressed by the College. The best way to benchmark is through Mainstreaming Reports of other colleges.
	• Interaction with BCSA has been considerable when collating this evidence base. The Equality Officer's dual role as Students' Association Support Officer is a benefit.
	• Equalities training is mandatory for new staff members as part of induction and compliance modules and must be completed every three years thereafter. An online resource being developed by CDN will hopefully make this task less onerous.
	• Areas most at risk are 1) having the capacity to deliver during recovery and 2) responding to the issues created by the pandemic, particularly in relation to disability. Those areas identified as being most at risk will be targeted.
	
	Committee members thanked the Equalities Officer for the presentation.

06/21 & 07/21	**<u>Equality Mainstreaming Report (Paper B) and Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025 (Paper C)</u>** The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the two documents which provide a progress report towards previous outcomes and detail of the equality outcomes created for the future. Discussion under the standing Equalities and Inclusion agenda item will be encouraged at each meeting going forward. An annual report of progress towards meeting the equality outcomes will be produced for the Regional Board. KPIs will be included where possible in order to identify any trends and movements. Equality Impact Assessments are now carried out by a small team. The changes to the EIA tool has resulted in individuals taking more ownership. Many opportunities to embed equalities have been identified and added as actions within the Action Plan. Further to the above discussion the Committee agreed to recommend approval of both reports to the Regional Board. The Equalities Officer left the meeting at this point.
08/21	**<u>Update on 2019-20 KPIs and Completers in 2020-21 (Paper D)</u>** The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the paper which reported a proposed change to calculating KPIs for 2019-20 as suggested by SFC. The original guidance from SFC in October on which to base the KPIs was to remove COVID completers from 2019-20 and include their outcome in 2020-21. The College self-evaluation and Outcome Agreement were produced using this guidance. However, not all students decided to return in 2021 therefore no outcome was recorded for these individuals. SFC decided in December to change the way they were recorded. The Exec Team met with SFC at this time to express concern and highlight the implications of this change. SFC agreed to confirm the method to be used by end January but this confirmation has not yet been received and SFC want to publish results nationally in March. Tables were provided which showed the negative impact on KPIs due to the change in guidance. If 100% of the returning students had returned and completed successfully there would have been no impact. However not all students did return and some other students are repeating the entire year and will not have results by March. Other colleges will be in same position but have not come forward to discuss this with SFC. This paper has been prepared to raise awareness that the figures previously reported to the Board could be impacted. The figures will continue to change until the end of the academic year.

	The Board Chair thanked the VP Curriculum and Students Services for raising the issue, which she noted was sector wide, to the attention of the Committee.
09/21	**Annual Health Check Report and KPI Update (Paper E)** The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the overview of performance for 2020-2021. The report includes those students deferred from 2019-20 due to COVID, the majority of whom returned on a part-time code. 176 of those 220 students have now fully achieved their award, while 11 have partially achieved, 7 have withdrawn and 26 continue to progress, awaiting return to campus to achieve their award. The results of the 33 students that returned on a full-time code will not be known until June. National KPI figures for 2019-20 have not yet been published therefore no sector comparison is available. Retention figures have significantly improved from last year, with less students leaving due to mental health reasons. Courses for concern have been identified where withdrawal levels have been high. Child, Health and Social Care students were dissatisfied with the course being online. The Sport and Uniformed Services will be rested next year due to low success and recruitment numbers. The Committee noted the content of the report.
10/21	**Impact of 2nd Lockdown on 2020-21 Students (Paper F)** The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented a summary of the impact of the second lockdown on 2021-21 students. Risk levels from 1-5 have been identified for each course. Almost 50% of students will be able to complete fully online but around 48% require practical activity in March or April in order to complete. Due to social distancing, classes will be operating at reduced capacity when back on campus which will result in double delivery. Some delivery will also be required during the summer holiday period. The cost of additional lecturing hours and support is estimated at between £100k - £150k. Committee members appreciated the changing situation and requested updates on progress against this challenge. **ACTION: HA**
11/21	**Risk Register (Paper G)** The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the Strategic Risk Register. She advised that this version is being presented to all Board committees at present while awaiting approval of the new approach by the Regional Board on 4 March. The most recent risks are included in the register.

	Committee members agreed that the recent strategic risk sessions with the VP Finance and Corporate Services had been very useful.

The Committee noted the paper. No additional strategic risks were identified. |
| 12/21 | **Get that Degree Recommendations Report Update (Paper H)**

The VP Curriculum and Student Services presented the progress report on the recommendations of the Get that Degree project and highlighted the following points:

- The College continues to progress opportunities. Three HND programmes starting in August 2021 will lead to new degree opportunities.
- The HND Animal Care programme starting in August 2021 is attracting students from the Edinburgh region as well as the Borders. The progression route is the Rural Business Management degree with SRUC.
- Approvals are being carried out in-house. An audit trail of the various steps will be retained.
- Most HND programmes are commencing with an HNC and therefore less overwhelming when broken down into stages.
- Some opportunities are progressing more slowly than others, which is frustrating. The universities are not working at the same pace as the College.

Committee members recognised the challenges but considered these opportunities to be very promising and worth pursuing. |
| 13/21 | **Interim Outcome Agreement (Paper I)**

The AP Quality and Development presented the interim Outcome Agreement, which is a reflection of the previous year and sets out plans for the coming year to provide assurance to SFC on use of allocated funding.

A different approach has been taken this year, with the format changed from narrative to outcomes to demonstrate how requirements are being met.

The document has undergone considerable scrutiny and was discussed at SLT with Education Scotland present before being submitted to SFC at end January. Discussions will be ongoing between SFC and the College between now and May.

Committee members noted the links to evidence as engaging and immediate and considered the document both helpful and interesting.

The impact of COVID and the constrained circumstances in which students are attempting to achieve learning outcomes and prepare for the workplace was queried in relation to outcomes.

The AP Quality and Development advised that there have been some positive aspects and, for some students, online remote learning has created a different set of meta skills, which will be carried forward into the workplace. Students are learning different ways of communicating and collaboration. |

14/21	**Approach to Assessing Quality of Learning and Teaching (Paper J)**
	The AP Quality and Development presented detail of the approach being taken to assess the quality of online learning and teaching.
	The support mechanism for lecturers has been enhanced since moving to remote delivery, with involvement of CLMs and the Quality and Development Specialist, who also does classroom observations.
	Delivery is difficult when not all students are visible and feedback is not forthcoming. Staff require support, advice and guidance on breaking down lesson content into small manageable chunks and in responding to alternative assessment arrangements. When delivering remotely, less is sometimes better along with very clear instructions. The final few minutes of a lesson are important in successful remote delivery.
	Staff development has been identified for writing assessments and internal verification. SQA will issue guidance and quality assurance processes will be adapted to meet 2021 requirements.
	The review document has been trialled with staff volunteers and it works well for both classroom and remote delivery observations.
	Committee members queried the direction of the College in terms of a blended approach post lockdown and how good practice is being captured. The AP Quality and Development advised that the role of the Quality and Development Specialist involves sharing practice.
	The Committee noted the work being undertaken and will look forward to a report on progress.
15/21	**Quarterly Complaints and Compliments Report 2020-21 (Paper K)**
	The AP Quality and Development presented the Complaints and Compliments Report from the start of session 2020-21 to the current date.
	The number of compliments has increased from the same period last year. She highlighted the positive feedback from peers in other colleges on the delivery of Data Science and Data Citizenship from Borders College staff.
	The decrease in the number of complaints is attributed to remote learning. The number of student disciplines has also reduced.
	No Level 2 complaints have been received to date.
16/21	**Learning for Leading Update**
	The following verbal updates were provided from recent Learning for Leading meetings.
	Student Support E Acaster reported from her recent meeting with Student Support Services. She applauded the staggering amount of work they are doing which underpins

the curriculum and ensures student engagement. Referrals have doubled during COVID, with the main areas in terms of support being poverty, digital poverty and mental health. Around 20 individuals, both full and part time work in this department.

The VP Curriculum and Student Services advised of the emotional toll on the staff in this area and welcomed this positive feedback.

Borders College Students Association
V Grant reported from her second meeting with BCSA, which included three student officers. She applauded the work of BCSA, the volume of issues and initiatives they take forward and their connection with some of the students. The fact that the College has been able to create such a vital bridge between the Board and BCSA is commendable.

Quality Improvement/Digital Learning
N Broderick reported on her initial meeting with J Gracie. She was very impressed with the breadth and depth of work in this area and looks forward to meeting the other members of this small team.

Learning for Leading forms will be submitted for these visits.

ACTION: EA/VG/NB

17/21	**Equality and Diversity (standing item)** No further items were raised.
18/21	**Paper for Publication** Only papers G, J and K (front cover) will be published on the College website.
19/21	**Any Other Business** There was discussion around the distribution of meeting papers. The Board had previously agreed that papers would be circulated two weeks prior to meetings but this deadline was not being met. An executive summary for long papers was also requested. The Board Chair advised that this issue was also highlighted in the external Board Effectiveness Review. However, meeting the deadline is dependent on members of staff being able to produce the papers and have them checked in time. The quality of papers was also raised. The Board Secretary will undertake a project to address these issues. Feedback will be required from members around preferred presentation, i.e. text, tables, length of papers etc. A digital board room is also being considered as a repository of papers. Members will feedback their thoughts to the Board Secretary. **ACTION: All**

20/21	**Date of Next Meeting** The next meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee will be held at **4.30pm on Thursday 27 May 2021.**

Signed…………………………………… Signed……………………………………..
Chairman **Secretary**

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Curriculum & Quality Committee

Teams Meeting at 4.30pm on Thursday 18 February 2020

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Risk Status
45/21	Present draft Future Skills Strategy in due course	H Anderson	On agenda
05/21	The Register of Interest will be updated accordingly	S McColm	Complete
10/21	Committee members requested updates on progress against the impact of the 2nd lockdown	H Anderson	On agenda and reported at previous Board meetings
16/21	Submit Learning for Leading forms	E Acaster/ N Broderick/ V Grant	Complete
19/21	Feedback thoughts re papers to Board Secretary	All	