**Minute: NCL Curriculum and Student Affairs and Outcomes Committee (CSAO)**

**12.30 15 May 2023 in person at Motherwell Campus and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Winning (Chair), Rahela Calin (SLCSA President), Dianne Dixon, Kellyann McGraith, Stella McManus, Christopher Moore, Barbara Philliben

**Apologies**: Tarryn Robertson (SLC Academic Staff Representative)

**In attendance:** Ann Baxter, Jennifer Lowe, Sandra McLoughlan, Barry Skea, Ronnie Smith, Chris Wilson, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

**Guests:** Ian Beach HMI and Barbara Nelson HMI for item 4.

1. **Chair’s welcome**

**2. Apologies:** as noted above

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Barbara Philliben advised that her son is taking a short course at NCL.

**4. Progress Visit by Education Scotland to NCL in December 2022**

David Winning (DW) invited Ian Beach (IB) and Barbara Nelson (BN) to present their report to the CSAO. A copy of the report had been circulated to members of the CSAO with the papers for the meeting.

IB said that the college had been receptive to the Progress Visit (PV) and welcomed the opportunity to have a dialogue. The PV themes were: recruitment, retention, attainment, and progression. After summarising the findings of the PV, IB said that they were confident that NCL has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to improve. As HMI Link Inspector, BN will monitor progress. However, he noted that further progress was required in a number of areas and that an update report will be needed on agreed areas for improvement. IB also said that a further visit by HMI would be required to review progress following an agreed period.

DW invited Christopher Moore (CM) to comment on the PV and report. CM thanked IB and BN for the visit and their feedback and said that it had given the college a sense of momentum on its direction. He said that the report had highlighted the need to strengthen leadership in some areas, following which NCL had identified the areas of Learning and Teaching for which Barry Skea (BS) was appointed Dean. The work-based learning market is changing so shifting the college’s emphasis to Learning and Teaching away from Work Based learning is appropriate at this time. BS has a national leadership role in WorldSkills and it seemed fitting for him to take this lead position. BS said he was excited to take on this new role through which he would stretch and challenge the students and provide them with an unbeatable student experience. BS added that he may rebrand the current Learning and Teaching Committee and use it as ambassadors for Learning and Teaching. He feels strongly that the students should be encouraged to believe in themselves and have high aspirations.

CM said that the senior team also recognises from the extensive data the college has now collected on student retention that there is a link to health and wellbeing, hence the appointment of Chris Wilson as Head of the Department of Sport and Wellbeing, two areas not previously linked. CW commented that these two areas are of major interest to him and believes that a holistic approach is key to improving mental health.

BN said that these are two good appointments and is excited to see how these areas develop in the new format. The perception of the progress the college is making is changing markedly from its previous approach and the focus on mental health is excellent.

IB acknowledged that Education Scotland can only use published data so that the recent progress made by the college is unlikely to be reflected in the PV report which took place in December 2022.

Jennifer Lowe (JL) commented on the value of sharing of highly effective practice across the sector and that the College Development Network (CDN) had been asked to address this. Further development is still awaited.

CM added that local authorities have said that the last year has been one of the most turbulent as regards employment in Lanarkshire. There have been a high level of employment opportunities. In trying to pinpoint the nature of withdrawals from college courses one possibility is that at a time of the cost of living crisis the attraction of employment and the opportunity to earn an income, outweighs the incentive to stay at college. This is difficult to reconcile when individuals and families are finding life a challenge.

BN commented that leaving college part way through a course to take up employment is not regarded by SFC or the Scottish Government as a positive outcome. Looking at and addressing curriculum design, methods of delivery and assessment, etc as a way to improve attendance is a valuable approach, alongside building aspiration in the classroom. The approach NCL is taking through changing the leadership in crucial areas and the development of middle managers is very positive. Education Scotland will look for incremental improvement around this. BN said that across Scotland in both HE and FE full time student numbers are dropping whereas part time numbers are more stable. This demonstrates the shift to the preference for flexibility in study patterns. JL said that NCL is reviewing the curriculum and developing an education strategy; students want flexibility and a revision of the quality processes. Major change is coming to both sectors.

As regards next steps CM said it was vital to invest in the curriculum, not curtail it. As part of this NCL will reshape its reception area at the Motherwell Campus into an Admissions Hub to provide easier access to college enrolment. If this is a success at Motherwell it will be expanded to other campuses.

IB ad BN thanked the CSAO for their time and interest.

IB, BN left the meeting.

DW invited further comment from NCL. Ann Baxter (AB) commented that there had been significant challenges at the start of the academic session and work had not progressed as expected, however the PV and subsequent report had taken place at a transitional stage. Lessons had been learned and since December NCL has taken significant steps forward. Actions JL has put in place will make a meaningful difference. AB added that the publication of KPIs is now expected at the end of May, not April as previously advised.

BS and CW left the meeting.

**5. Minute of the CSAO meeting on 20 February 2023**

The Minutes were agreed.

**6. Matters arising**

All such matters are included on the agenda for this meeting.

**Regional business**

**7. ROA**

**7.1 ROA Implementation Update**

Ann Baxter (AB) advised the CSAO:

On 5 May, NCL was advised that the Lanarkshire ROA has now been reviewed and signed off by the SFC Deputy Director. The signature form was returned to SFC on 12 May 2023.

A meeting to finalise the credit and funding split took place on 10 May 2023 at South Lanarkshire College.

SFC issued Outcome Agreement AY 2023-24 guidance on 11 May. By the end of October self-evaluation for AY 2022-23, case studies, OA and National measures tables submitted.

**7.2 KPIs**

NCL is making good progress against its credit targets.

The table below highlights early withdrawal (EW) and further withdrawal (FW) January starts for AY 22/23 and 21/22:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AY22/23** | **AY21/22** |
| **EW** | 8.4% | 15.1% |
| **FW** | 11.8% | 13.4% |
| **Credits** | 5641 | 3528 |

**7.3 SLC Curriculum Quality activity update:**

Stella McManus (SMcM) spoke to her paper and highlighted:

* The College is working hard to meet its credit target of 48,812 and is seeking to address the current gap of circa 700 credits. In a similar way to last year additional activity is being planned to meet the target, although the SFC has allowed for more flexibility with a 2% negative or positive tolerance being applied.
* The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has released the indicative funding allocations for 2023-24, which show a 10.6% credit reduction for the Lanarkshire region as well as 0.7% overall funding reduction in comparison to the 2022-23 academic year. This differs from the rest of the sector which has a 10% reduction and funding levels remain the same as the previous year.
* A vast amount of work has been undertaken by the curriculum and alternative funding teams with the highlights including additional courses being delivered in Lanark and Strathaven, meeting the Flexible Workforce Development target, delivering the Young Person’s Guarantee programmes to support students from the most deprived areas.
* Retention has dropped slightly to circa 89%, with curriculum teams working hard to support learners to complete their qualifications

**8. SFC Transition Plan and Assigned College Update**

RS reported that that there were no developments to report but that he was pressing SFC to take action.

Paul Hutchinson and SMcM have written to SFC also urging action. SMcM advised that she would forward SFC’s response to CM and RS. SMcM has had direct contact with Karen Watt and will update CM and RS outwith the CSAO.

**9. Student Association Reports**

**9.1 SLCSA**

Rahela Calin (RC) highlighted items in her report:

* The SLCSA was delighted to have been invited to participated in the appointment of the new Principal, Stella McManus, and are looking forward to working with her.
* LGBT History Month: Throughout the month of February, the SA and the College celebrated LGBT History Month. SLC is a community where everyone should feel they are treated with respect, fairness and understanding and hosting events such as this helps to create such an environment.
* Purple Friday – Friday 24 February Alongside this SLCSA took part in Purple Friday on Friday 24 February. On this day everyone was encouraged to wear something purple to show their support for LGBT+ equality.
* EmilyTest: The SA is delighted that the final submission of the EmilyTest GBV Charter took place on Monday 17 April. The College and SA have worked incredibly hard over the last couple of years to raise discussions surrounding gender-based violence and put in place strategies to help tackle this. The SA has been involved in multiple focus groups, along with students to ensure their voice is heard and to help shape the work that is taking place. The SA looks forward to receiving the update on their submission on 26 May.
* Focus on Student Poverty & the Cost-of-Living Crisis SLCSA continues to ensure our students are fully supported during the current cost of living crisis by providing free soup and sandwich, as well as a healthy breakfast. As detailed in the last SA Board Report, the SA expanded this provision and the uptake has increased even further. In March 2023 1,087 servings of free soup and sandwich and 2,309 servings of breakfast were provided. As always, the SA is grateful to Inspire for their support in helping us provide this much needed service to our students. The SA are also delighted to have been allocated a further £10,000 from the SLC Foundation, in addition to the previous £3,000 already provided. This will enable the SA to support students who are experiencing poverty by providing free soup and sandwich and free breakfast throughout the rest of the academic year. They have also generously provided these funds to help students at the start of AY 2023/24 and to ensure the incoming SA President and Vice President can continue to provide this support.
* SA Elections The promotion of the SA elections for AY 2023/24 is now fully underway. The elections have been promoted through the student newsletter, social media, emails to all Curriculum Areas, stalls in the Atrium, posters, and class visits. The results will be announced on 19 May.

RC said that this would be her last committee meeting as Student President and thanked the CSAO for their support.

On behalf of the CSAO DW thanked RC for her contribution to the CSAO over the last year and wished her well in her future career.

**9.2 NCL SA**: KMcG introduced the NCLSA report and highlighted:

* As the SA arrives at the deadline of the LGBT Charter, the SA is working closely with our EDI Advisor to help gather evidence to achieve the charter. February marks the beginning of LGBT History Month and the SA has been working with the brand team to showcase historical moment that marks a time in LGBT history.
* Student elections: The format of student representation is changing from have 3 student presidents, each having a defined area of responsibility as in the current year, to one full time sabbatical officer as President supported by 2 voluntary vice presidents.
* No Badge No Parking: This is a campaign led by Motherwell Supported Learning students and their support workers to raise awareness of the number of drivers who parked in disabled bays with no blue badge- increasingly students with disabilities have been unable to park on campus so they decided to patrol the Motherwell campus car park and speak to drivers and encourage them to park considerately and leave disabled spaces for people who need them
* The Happy Shop was launched by some Cumbernauld supported learning students’ projects, they have set up “the Happy shop” selling confectionary, greetings cards, travels mugs etc in the Atrium on Thursdays, they have also set up a Game zone where students can play games on Xbox and play stations with their friends during breaks or free time during the college day. The principal and vice principals attended the grand opening on 27th April.
* Congratulations to the NCL men’s football team on winning the league.
* Liam Nolan, a student at Cumbernauld Campus is a T20 athlete represented the college at the BUCS outdoor Athletic championships in Grangemouth on 22nd April and we want to congratulate him on his sporting achievements and throwing well when participating in the Hammer and Discus events.
* The SA welcomed visiting Canadian students to NCL
* Ongoing work includes:
  + Student Health Mental Agreement
  + Disability Sports Club
  + Ready to Help committees (cost of living crisis)
  + Food pantry and Swap Shop
  + Warm spaces
  + Lunch vouchers for students in need
  + Laptop library
  + YoungScot free travel campaign

DW thanked KMcG for her comprehensive report and for her contribution to the CSAO over the period of her Presidency of the NCLSA and said he hoped she would be able to attend her final meeting as President at the RSB Board on 12 June. CM added his personal thanks for KMcG for her support and her work with the students over the past 2 years. Her dedication, dependability and the energy she had brought to her role were commendable.

**10. Principals’ overviews**

**SLC:**

SMcM opened her update by thanking RC and KMcG for their contributions to students at both colleges. SMcM went on to highlight:

* The College had its Annual Engagement Visit in March 2023, which focused on progress made against the College’s enhancement priorities.
* The AEV was a very positive visit, with the inspection team thanking staff for their openness and honesty.
* HMIe reported that the College had made significant progress against the actions identified at the progress visit last February and stated that the College had in fact moved beyond these, in particular they could now see the results of the processes implemented.
* There were no main points of action identified.
* Areas for development were reflective of the College’s analysis of its position.

**NCL:**

CM congratulated SLC on its report from Education Scotland and said it was important for the colleges to learn from each other.

In his update CM commented:

* NCL recognised the importance of student progression and career planning and had initiated a pilot project with Smart Works Scotland a charity which gives unemployed women the clothes, coaching and confidence to secure employment and change their lives. The charity has opened centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow. NCL’s partnership with the charity was launched at a student event. The charity has not worked with a college before and is keen to do so. The charity is seeking to find an equivalent for men. In June 30 students will begin an intensive 3-month pilot programme. CM hopes that NCL will be able to confirm future working with Smart Works Scotland.
* CM advised that to highlight the importance of admissions the reception area at Motherwell will be re-purposed as an admissions hub.
* CM re-stated NCL’s emphasis on strengthening and developing the curriculum through the appointment of BS and CW.

DW commented on the importance of curriculum milestones towards a positive employment outcome and encouraged CM’s search for new models.

**NCL Business**

**11. NCL Committee and Activity update**

JL spoke to her paper and highlighted the action plan to address the issues raised by Education Scotland in the recent Progress Visit:

* Heads of Department (HoD) and Academic Leaders (ALs) have engaged in departmental Spotlight on Curriculum meetings where KPIs in AY 2022/2023 were discussed. This included:
* Weaknesses: planned activity, target setting, recruitment to target and early and further withdrawals;
* Curriculum planning for AY 2023/2024;
* Credit recovery;
* Retention
* **Interim Curriculum Delivery Planning for AY 2023/2024**

Interim curriculum delivery planning for AY 2023/2024 meetings involving the HoD, ALs and the Executive Board are concluded. Discussions have focused on target setting, North Lanarkshire’s Workforce for the Future Strategic Priorities to support the delivery of a vibrant, future focused curriculum.

* **Sharing Best Practice**

As recommended by Education Scotland visits have been made to a number of colleges to identify areas of best practice in relation to retention, recruitment, attainment, quality enhancement and to improve practice.

* **Unit Feedback**

A revised approach towards unit feedback is being developed. This will be student led and will support action planning for improvement and inform quality enhancement. Unit evaluation will take place following the delivery of each unit/module. The Assistant Registrar for Quality and Deans’ have agreed this is a positive way forward.

* **Spotlight on Quality**

HoD and ALs are engaging in a Spotlight on Quality session with the Assistant Principal for Education and Student Success, the Dean for Learning and Teaching and Assistant Registrar: Quality. Phase 1 is to ensure academic teams are compliant with quality assurance processes to support the scheduled SQA Systems Verification Audit in October 23, and Phase 2 will involve frank discussion and consultation around current quality enhancement (QE) practices.

* **Development of an Education Strategy**

NCLs Education Strategy is being developed in consultation with students across NCL, and academic and professional services staff.

* **Qualifications to Support Innovation in Learning and Teaching**

Development of a Level 6 NCL PDA in Learning and Teaching is underway to support new and early entry academic staff to engage with learners and participate in innovative learning and teaching methodologies.

Development of a SCQF Level 9 qualification is underway to support staff members who have achieved TQFE and need to refresh their learning and teaching skills.

* **Unit Writing**

A recurrent theme raised by staff at the Spotlight on Curriculum sessions was concerns that some units within frameworks were dated and not fit for purpose. NCL has experience of unit writing and gaining SCQF accreditation. This unit will support academic staff to engage in this process.

* **Action Planning for Student Recruitment**

NCL held two very successful in person open days in March to engage the community and raise awareness of the expansive curriculum offering. HoD and ALs are participating in meetings to share ideas and initiatives to support student engagement from point of application to enrolment.

* **Recruitment and Admissions Centre**

NCL will launch a recruitment and admissions centre at the Motherwell campus in May 2023. This one- stop-shop will be at the heart of Motherwell campus offering immediate attention and support from professional services staff to break down barriers’ students may have whilst studying at NCL.

* **New Social Space**

A café style social space is now in place within the Engineering block at the Motherwell campus. This was commissioned in response to requests from automotive, construction and engineering students that their breaks were shorted resulting from having to go to the main campus building at break times to purchase and consume food.

* **Staff Development Academy**

Staff across the college are engaged in a range of professional learning short courses e.g. Excel for Everyone and Nurturing Neurodiversity at NCL. Both programmes are being delivered in partnership with an academic department and there are approx. 100 staff enrolled on each.

Throughout 2022/2023, the SDA co-ordinated and delivered a “Support and Development Programme” for Academic Leaders. There is consulting with this staff group to co-create a 2023/2024 programme.

**Professional Development Discussions**

In response to staff feedback we launched the 2022/2023 Professional Development Discussions cycle early this year – in February. Across January and February all line managers were invited to attend a “Facilitating Brilliant PDDs” session with a focussing on ensuring that every PDD is a high quality, meaningful discussion.

* **Complaints Handling and Reporting**

There were 17 formal complaints received in Quarter 3 of 2022/2023. All were satisfactorily responded to within the College Complaints Procedures required by the Scottish Public-Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) timeframes. Lessons learned from these complaints have been discussed and actions agreed with the departments and professional services teams involved.

* **Academic Standards, Planning & Monitoring**

An Academic Standards, Planning & Monitoring meeting was held on 27th April, a further meeting scheduled for 11th May 2023.

* **Turing**

A total of 81 students and 12 staff will benefit from Turing opportunities in AY 22/23. Visits are planned for Spain, Italy, USA, Canada and France.

* **Degree Programmes**

The University Centre based at thee Cumbernauld campus was established in August 2022, opening with degrees in 3 curriculum areas: Computing, Business and Music.

**AY23/24:**

A new degree programme will be piloted in the University Centre next year in Filmmaking and Script Writing.

**Further Degree Developments for 2024:**

**Graduate Apprenticeship in Data Science** in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council and other organisations. Initial conversations have taken place with UWS with a view to launching this in August 2024.

**BA Integrated Health and Social Care**: approval is being sought from UWS to deliver this three-year degree programme from August 2024. **BA Social Science**: discussions are underway for a projected August 2024 start date.

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|  |

Ronnie Smith (RS) asked how NCL sought information on the economy when planning the future curriculum. JL said that NCL made extensive use of skills assessments, current partner employers, the Business Hub, etc, and are planning in the future to involve the Board in engaging with employers.

**General Committee Business**

**12. Committee self-evaluation**

Diane McGill (DMcG) drew members’ attention to the self-evaluation form for the CSAO Committee included in the papers for the meeting, and asked for members to complete the short survey and return it by the end of the week (19 May). This is part of the annual Board self-evaluation required under the Code of Good Governance.

***Action: Members to complete and return the Committee evaluation form.***

**13. Approval of publication of Committee papers**

1. Agenda for the CSAO meeting 15 May 2023
2. Minutes of the CSAO meeting 20 February 2023
3. NCL KPI update
4. *SLC Curriculum and Quality activity update – via the SLC website*
5. NCL Students’ Association Report
6. *SLC Students’ Association Report – via the SLC website*
7. NCL Activity Update

**14. AOB**

**College Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2022/23**

SFC - Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) is a national survey that provides a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland. Survey opened on 21 March 2023 and closed on 12 May 2023. Overall response rate was **54.2% - 3710 students completed it from a total of 6851**

SFC will publish a summary report of SSES data and provide colleges with full sector-level satisfaction and response data. Statement 1 from the SSES ‘Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience’ has been incorporated as an Outcome Agreement national measure for College Outcome Agreements. In session 2021/22 - 87.7% students were overall satisfied with their NCL college experience.

**Herald Education awards:**

Three NCL projects have been shortlisted in the annual celebration of the best of Scottish education**.**

New College Lanarkshire's links to business, community outreach and commitment to diversity will be recognised at the **8th Annual Herald Education** awards on 1 June:

In the **'Outstanding Business Engagement in Colleges'** category our Performing Arts department's innovative approach to building connections with business was shortlisted. The department uses its close links with dozens of industry partners to provide students with a unique pathway into showbusiness. By bringing casting agencies, theatres and broadcasters into the classroom we give the stars of tomorrow the skills to maximise their potential.

In the **'Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community'** our outreach to Ukrainian refugees was recognised. In the past 18 months more than 23,000 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Scotland, many of them in Lanarkshire. We have spearheaded an effort to engage this community, enhance their language skills and make them feel welcome. Colleagues from across the college have worked together and with external partners to dramatically increase our ESOL offering to give them the language skills to flourish in Scotland and personally engage with the Ukrainian community.

The Braw Wee Shop made the final of the **'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion'** Award. The shop is a complete retail experience created by young adults with learning disabilities. Students from our Supported Learning department make, stock and sell a range of bespoke, sustainable products and have raised thousands of pounds of charity in the process. The Braw Wee Shop shows the amazing things people with learning disabilities can achieve when they are given the chance.

**15. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the CSAO Committee is **Monday 4 September 2023** at 12.30 at Coatbridge Campus and via Zoom.