

**GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
ACADEMIC BOARD
MINUTE**

**Minute of the meeting of the Academic Board held on
Friday 10 November 2023 at 1.30pm via MS Teams**

1. Sederunt

Robin Ashton (Chair);
Andy Allan (Director of Learning Innovation and Curriculum);
Tracy Leavy (Director of Community Engagement and Curriculum);
George McGuire (Senior Curriculum Manager, HCCLD);
James Davidson (Lecturer, BCI);
Gerry Harkins (Lecturer, ECS);
John Gallagher (Head of Quality);
Gary Sharp (Student Support Services Manager);
Jason Quinn (Director of Digital Services);
Emma Leslie (President, Student Association);
Sonique Noreiga (President, Student Association);
Alastair McGhee (Director of Business Development); and
Daniel Mitchell (Organisational Development Lead).

In Attendance

Debbie Friel (Senior Committee Coordinator) (purpose of the minute);
Ryan Gillen (Team Leader, Advice Guidance and Learner Support); and
John Clarke (Senior Curriculum Manager, BCI).

2. Apologies

Monica McKerlie (Head of Student Support Services);
Iain Cameron (Lecturer, ECS);
Katie McAnenay (Team Leader, Library Services);
Arlene Sweeney (Learner Engagement Officer);
Mae Smillie (Head of Student Information Services); and
Peter Brown (Director of Planning and Performance and Curriculum);

3. Academic Board Terms of Reference

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 13 members in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

5. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 1 September 2023

The minute of the meeting was accepted as an accurate record of the business conducted on 1 September 2023.

6. Matters arising from Minute of Previous Meetings held on 1 September 2023
Matters arising

Item 06 - Review of the Quality Handbook

R Ashton confirmed that this item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Academic Board

Item 07 – Summary of Learner Feedback - Refectory: Pricing Review

R Ashton advised that L Clark had been asked to organise a meeting with the caterers to explore meal deal offers for students. Student Presidents will be invited to attend the meeting for their input. G Sharp highlighted that L Breckenridge had agreed to promote the meal deals once agreed.

Item 07 - Summary of Learner Feedback

R Ashton confirmed that as requested by M McKerlie, a caveat to the counselling services was added to the paper prior to being presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

7. 2024-25 Curriculum Review and Plan

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement advised members that the paper reviewed the College's 2023-24 curriculum offer and identified curriculum development priorities for 2024-25. The analysis informed the portfolio of courses advertised by the College from January 2024 onwards. He referred to the Regional Skills Assessment which had been produced by Skills Development Scotland to provide College Regions with insights into forecast economic and employment patterns over the next ten years. He highlighted some of key components from the analysis.

R Ashton highlighted College application trends as listed within point 3 of the report and explained that the data indicated a fall in overall application levels from 2020-21. He went on to highlight the contributory factors. He drew members attention to the subject area application trends as noted in page 4 of the report. He noted that most subject areas saw a reduction in application levels in 2023-24, with biggest downturns in Art and Design, Business, Fashion, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Performing Arts and Photography. All of these subject areas are also provided by other Glasgow Region colleges and there is therefore greater competition for applicants in those areas.

R Ashton went on to explained that a key element of the College's new quality enhancement arrangements for 2023-24 was the implementation of a risk-based approach to quality improvement. As part of this, courses with a history of poor relative performance have undergone an 'At-Risk' review process. This process will consider the performance of the course and whether any further, more radical action has a likelihood of improving the performance of the course. At the end of these considerations, a decision to be made before December this academic year whether to continue to run these courses.

T Leavy and A Allan presented an overview of their respective faculty areas, which highlighted their focus on recruitment and class consolidation considerations.

R Ashton in the absence of P Brown provided the overview for ECS faculty.

He invited comments or questions.

R Gillen spoke of how important the articulation routes are and stressed the significant changes happening in these areas. He highlighted that it would be beneficial for his department to have presentations to enhance the departments knowledge when interacting with schools. R Ashton noted that there had been some discussion with this running up to applications opening. He highlighted that presentations would not only benefit student support/guidance areas but also for the Marketing department.

T Leavy advised that faculties would look to provide support with the schools and agreed that a subject specialist would be helpful, but also commented that it was just as important to reinforce the College's expectations and the students commitment.

J Clarke noted that SCMs/CM would be happy to attend as many of the events as possible and requested that R Gillen update faculties as to where and when these are taking place.

G Harkins enquired as to the opportunity of incorporating an additional step in between Level 4 and Level 5 transitions, as there seems to be a huge jump between these two levels. T Leavy noted that she would welcome further conversation and that It was definitely worthy of further consideration to support this progression.

R Ashton thanked members for their contributions. He added that the plan would now be with faculties to review development priorities.

8. Students Association Priorities Update

The Student Association Presidents spoke to the content of the report that sought to provide members with an overview of future priorities and plans.

Areas highlighted included:

- 212 Class Representatives have been recruited.
- working closely with SPARQS (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) to offer Class Reps introductory training.
- The Student Association have now fully recruited 12 volunteers to take up roles in the Student Executive Committee.
- Planet Earth, GKC recognised as one of the top performers in this year's Planet Earth Games.
- End block reviews will be sent out by class reps.
- Meet the Manager events taking place.
- Raising awareness of the flat packed meals.
- Poster Campaign; Black History.

T Leavy thanked both presidents for their work alongside the Colleges Active Campus Coordinator, Grant Sutherland. She highlighted that it was recognised that many clubs for students and staff have been organised and was progressing well. She further highlighted that it would be beneficial to have a budget for this area and asked if this could be considered.

R Ashton requested that G Sutherland to be invited to the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Board to provide an update on current activities.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

9. College Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Update

R Gillen noted that the purpose of this report was to provide members with an update on service provision and an overview of numbers of students accessing counselling and wellbeing supports available at GKC and an outline of new approaches to supporting learners with wellbeing and resilience skills introduced for session 2023-24.

He reported that the College counselling service has two qualified counsellors and a small team of trainee placement counsellors who support students with mild to moderate mental health conditions. In addition, he advised that the college employed one Wellbeing Officer. The Wellbeing Service also provided support to students through offering group sessions on a variety of topics including anxiety, financial wellbeing, resilience and has introduced a range of workshops this session to enhance service provision.

R Gillen noted a consistent annual rise in College referrals to internal mental health and wellbeing services since their introduction, as illustrated within the table on page one of the report. He emphasised that the Wellbeing and Counselling services would continue to develop external partnerships to help support students.

He invited question or comments.

T Leavy praised the efforts in this area and acknowledged the presence of exceptional levels of support.

R Ashton enquired whether the initial figures suggested that the service attendance was likely to be on par with the numbers from the previous year. R Gillen observed that it seemed the figures would slightly increase once again for this academic session, although there were less students.

J Davidson noted that the service was working well within the College. He highlighted that learners were very much aware of the services available and that students were accessing this service via self-referral. This, he suggested may contribute to the increased level of support.

Members discussed the possibilities of additional sessions being rolled out into some class groups that would benefit from direct sessions. Members acknowledged that faculties could pinpoint areas where extra support would be beneficial.

R Ashton thanked R Gillen for the comprehensive report. He further highlighted that the Mental Health and Wellbeing services significantly contributed to maintaining retention, resulting in positive outcomes evident across the College.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

10. Early Withdrawal Update Report

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement informed members that over recent years, early withdrawals have had a significant impact on the College's performance indicators, particularly for full-time programmes. During Covid, early withdrawal rates increased substantially and a number of measures have been introduced with the aim of improving early retention. This report provides an indication of the level of early retention this academic year to date.

He drew members attention to the chart within page one of the report. He explained that the chart compared historical actual Early Withdrawal rates against a current estimate of withdrawal in 2023-24 within a similar timeframe. This shows a further improvement in Early Withdrawal rates this academic year, particularly in terms of full-time Early Withdrawal levels.

R Ashton continued to provide an overview of the contributory factors as to the improvement of Early Withdrawals. He stated that the College would continue to prioritise actions to improve student success rates for 2023-24 and beyond, building on this strong start to the academic year.

J Quinn noted that it would be slightly more difficult this year to monitor the early withdrawal levels due the recent changes being made. However, he noted that the comparison was evident through the monthly withdrawal rates, indicating noticeable improvements compared to historical data.

G Harkins observed that his full-time course group was sitting at 100% attendance and the course was also oversubscribed. He did, however, note that the school programme exhibited slight differences, showing a decline in attendance.

Members discussed the factors contributing to the noticeable improvement in retention. It was highlighted that students' eagerness to be physically present on campus was a significant factor, largely attributed to the social benefits it offered. Furthermore, they pointed out that the waning threat of COVID had reduced students' apprehensions about lockdowns and remote learning.

T Leavy noticed that substantial efforts in recruitment, engagement in "keep warm" initiatives, and the cohesion of class groups before the course commencement were beneficial and contributed significantly to positive outcomes.

R Ashton shared the analytical data from Power BI and noted the significant improvements. He urged members to exercise caution regarding the figures and requested that J Quinn review them for accuracy.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the content of the report.

11. Education Scotland Thematic Visit

The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement spoke to the contents of the report. He noted that it was anticipated that most colleges would participate in at least one thematic review in 2023-24. He explained, at this time, the thematic review would focus on the Glasgow region and would include, City of Glasgow College, Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College and the review was expected to evaluate the **approaches to ensuring equity, attainment, and achievement for all learners**.

R Ashton thanked all who participated in the Thematic Visit. He explained that while no formal feedback had been received from Education Scotland, the College anticipated receiving a subsequent report along with a published regional report.

He highlighted that it was noted from the informal feedback that the College was making significant progress. Furthermore, he highlighted areas that could be enhanced, specifically directing attention towards improving our partial success rates. He also stressed the significance of providing online materials to learners to prevent them from falling behind with their studies.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the content of the report.

12. **Teaching Development Activity Update**

J Clarke spoke to the contents of his report and informed members that the Teaching Development Activity incorporated three strands, which included:

- Professional Development Forum (which D Mitchell was leading on) and
- Teaching Activity Groups and Teaching Development Leads (J Clark leading on)

J Clarke continued to explain that Teaching Development Leads would be given remission from their contact time to work with himself to develop projects. The Teaching Activity Groups are collaborative cross-college teams tasked with discussing various topics in a series of meetings. These discussions serve to inform and contribute to staff and teaching development initiatives.

He noted that subsequent to his email being sent out to all teaching staff, he had received six project proposals. While noting that these were already in progress, he advised that additional proposals would also be welcomed and considered.

T Leavy requested that J Clarke provide a list of those involved from her faculty.

13. **Block One Stop and Check**

Head of Quality Enhancement spoke to the content of the Block One Stop and Check report that sought to provide learner feedback.

J Gallagher informed member that the Stop and Check survey was conducted during weeks six and seven in Block One to give students the opportunity to feedback on their early experiences at college. He reported that the College had received a total of 2,400 responses, which represented an 27% increase on the last year's responses.

He advised that five of the questions remain unchanged from last year. Students were also given the opportunity to leave additional comments at the end of the survey. The results for individual programmes are made available to course teams and were discussed at the course team meetings during week eight of Block One.

Six hundred and thirty-nine comments were made as part of the survey. Four hundred and sixty-one of these were short positive responses, such as "Thanks for all your support" and "I am very pleased with my experience". Many of the responses were appreciative of the support received from both teaching and support staff. Almost all of the negative comments around support were concerned with financial matters.

J Gallagher invited questions or comments.

G Sharp acknowledged that the overall tone of the report was positive. However, he pointed out a significant change in the questions from the previous academic session. Specifically, he raised a concern regarding the question about students' satisfaction with Student Support Services. He observed a decrease in this area, down to 78% whereas responses for previously used broken down questions seemed more positive. Furthermore, he mentioned that the report specifically highlighted that the negative comments regarding support were primarily focused on financial matters. He highlighted

that these financial matters were beyond the scope of student support services' and therefore consequently affected the transparency of the figure. He suggested that it might be worth using a different term to 'Student Support Services' when delivering this question in order to highlight that it covers all student support areas/departments.

J Gallagher commented that there was 18% marked as unsure and would presume that this percentage of students had not accessed the student support service. Also, he noted that there were many comments in relation to finance and funding.

J Gallagher agreed that this question could be reviewed for future survey purposes. He further agreed to modify the report prior to its presentation to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

G Sharp further highlighted that upon reviewing student comments on Power BI, he encountered difficulty in filtering comments from the support-related areas. He noted that this limitation hampered the effectiveness of extracting the essential information in order to act on and make improvements.

R Ashton suggested that the College required to remain with the six questions, however recommended exploring the option of adding an additional comments box beneath each question. He also agreed that the question should perhaps be rephrased and agreed to have this reviewed.

Members of the Academic Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

The Vice Principal thanked members for their contributions and attendance.

Risk, Equality and Data Protection - Discussion

- 14. Impact on Students – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.**
Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.
- 15. Risk Management – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.**
Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.
- 16. Equality Management – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.**
Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.
- 17. Data Protection – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.**
Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.
- 18. Environmental and Sustainability – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda items.**
Members agreed that no issues had arisen as a consequence of the business conducted at the meeting.



19. **Closure**
The meeting closed at 3pm
20. **Date of Next Meeting**
2 February 2024 - MS Teams