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

**12.30 13 May 2024 in person at NCL Motherwell and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Winning (Chair), Elizabeth Arogbofa, Fraser Hainey, Amy McLoughlan (Student President, NCL), Stella McManus, Christopher Moore (from item 9.6), Angela Pignatelli, Barbara Philliben, Ronnie Smith

**Apologies**: Lindsay Henderson, John O’Hara, Tarryn Robertson (SLC Academic Staff Representative), Joanne Rosie, Kayleigh Wither (Student President SLC)

**In attendance:** Ann Baxter, Jane Crowe, Chris Jack, Jennifer Lowe, Nicola Mulholland, Barry Skea, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. **Chair’s welcome**

David Winning (DW) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Apologies:** as noted above.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minute of the CSAO meeting 19 February 2024**

The Minutes were agreed subject to the amendment of the list of attendees.

**5. Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) update**

Ann Baxter (AB) reported that there was no change since her last report to the Committee at its meeting in February 2024. Colleges are still awaiting written guidance from SFC.

**6. Themes and Project Showcases**

**6.1** **Graduate Apprenticeships:** Stella McManus (SMcM) advised that following the discussion at the last meeting of the CSAO, SMcM met with Christopher Moore (CM) and AB to take forward the region’s approach to providing Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs). NCL and SLC both have particular interest in the areas of health and dental care and are currently exploring the most appropriate frameworks and funding which may be available to support this. In the meantime, SLC sees GAs as an opportunity to upskill staff and will develop an appropriate programme.

**6.2 Projects showcases: Presentation on Learner Innovation by Chris Jack, Learning Innovation Manager at NCL**.

CJ said that his team draw on a range of skills encompassing expertise in teaching and learning, and IT. One of the objectives of this initiative is to create bite sized self-directed online courses accessible on a wide range of devices. These packages have been well-received by the students. The courses can be tailored specifically for NCL or can be more generic to suit particular requirements. Material which has been created in-house for NCL includes packages on cybersecurity and on data protection both of which are included in the Staff Development Academy programme for 24/25.

CJ’s team is also working in the college with AI to pilot an innovative approach to lesson planning, and the identification of AI generated content in student submissions.

NCL has a laptop locker system whereby 65 laptops are available to students on a short term loan; in addition, 200 laptops are available for students for up to 12 months, and there are 200 new laptops in the college libraries. The libraries have also been kitted out with 4 big screens which provide information to the students. A new library website is under construction and a course on copyright is in development.

DW commented on how much had been achieved in the 7/8 months of the project and asked what feedback had been received. CJ said that the feedback was very positive around the self-contained courses and on the accessibility to the new laptops in the libraries.

Barbara Philliben (BP) asked if the team had encountered any barriers or difficulties and if so how had they tackled it. CJ said that their approach was to encourage people to try to use the new programmes gradually and not to be afraid of it especially in areas such as the AI pilot (Teachermatic).

DW asked CJ to come back to update the CSAO on further developments. CJ welcomed this invitation.

***Action: CJ to return to a future meeting of the CSAO to update on further developments in the Learner Innovation project.***

**6.3 Discussion of further themes from 2024 activity report**

Jennifer Lowe (JL) reported on the current projects underpinning NCL’s drive to improve retention, all of which are described in more detail at note 9.1:

* Being Financially Fit
* Getting to Know You
* Be Well to do Well

JL said that a lot of hard work is being undertaken by staff and awareness of students’ mental health and wellbeing is key. Leadership in the Learning and Teaching Group is making major improvements in learning and teaching. JL will provide further information at the next meeting of the CSAO. Work is also underway on personalising learning and teaching using QR codes. Further information to follow at the next committee. JL also advised that a 2 week induction for students has been developed under the Getting to Know You initiative.

***Action: JL to update on improvements being led by the Learning and Teaching Group***

On 12 June at the NCL Coatbridge Campus there will be an innovation learning and teaching showcase.

DW commented on the impressive work being undertaken by the college for the wellbeing of the students.

**7. Student Association Reports**

**7.1 SLCSA**

In Kayleigh Wither’s absenceAngela Pignatelli (AP) spoke to the SLCSA Report and highlighted:

* **Student engagement:** SLC celebrated Care Day, Love Your Planet, LGBT History Month, Purple Friday. As part of SLC’s Climate Action activity students took part in a litter picking event and also went on a visit to a windfarm.
* **SA elections:** SA elections for AY 2024/25 are fully underway. The elections have been promoted through the student newsletter, social media, emails to all Curriculum Areas, and various Teams Channels, including the Class Reps channel. Voting will take place between 1 and 15 May; the results will be announced on 17 May.
* **Student poverty:** The SA is committed to tackling student poverty and continues to ensure students are fully supported during the current cost of living crisis by providing free soup and sandwich, as well as a healthy breakfast. Student uptake of this has continued to be very positive with over 3,000 servings to date.

In addition, the SA continues to operate a food larder directly from the SA office where students can take what they need at any time. This is stocked with non-perishable foods, hygiene products, sanitary products, and stationery.

The SA would like to express sincere thanks to the SLC Trust for further funding of this initiative. This will allow the SA to provide crucial support to students for the remainder of this year and into the next academic year. The SA is also taking further steps to bolster the larder stock by contacting local companies and supermarkets to ask if they can make donations to the food larder for the students.

* **Care day:** Care Day took place on 16 February and is the world’s biggest celebration of people with care experience.  The College celebrated Care Day by hosting a free hot chocolate and cookie event, arranged student reviews of SLC’s Corporate Parenting Plan and one of the teaching staff created an article providing an overview of the day and highlighting the college’s responsibilities as Corporate Parents.  The College also created a Care Day 2024 SLC Pledge for staff to sign to show their support.
* **International Women’s Day:** The theme for this year was ‘Inspire Inclusion’. The Painting and Decorating Department kindly made a beautiful selfie frame. The SA went around campus getting photos of students and staff to celebrate this day.
* **Mental health: positive solutions for students:** Mental Health Awareness Week runs from 13-19 May and is hosted by the charity, Mental Health Foundation. The SA hopes to create and hand out selfcare kits to our students during the week. The idea for these selfcare packs came directly from a student. The SA believes this is an amazing idea and a good opportunity to make better connections with our students.

During this event the SA will also promote yoga and mindfulness classes, as well as available support in the College.

The theme for Mental Health Awareness Week is ‘Movement: Moving more for our mental health.’ The SA hopes the weekly wellbeing walks will continue throughout the remainder of the academic year.

DW thanked AP and congratulated the SA on the amount of good work they are undertaking on behalf of the SLC students.

**7.2 NCLSA**

Amy McLoughlan (AMcL) spoke to the NCLSA report:

* **To support students to improve their wellbeing** and remain on their programme of study, NCL has invested in three Wellbeing Academies (WAs) situated in each of the main campus sites. The Academies are a pioneering initiative designed to prioritise wellbeing at the core of the student experience. The WAs aim to provide holistic support services and programmes that cater to the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing needs of students which in turn will enhance student retention, academic performance, and overall satisfaction, aligning with NCL's Getting to Know You and Be Financially Fit campaigns and NCL’s Recruitment and Retention Strategy.​
* ​ **Safety on campus**: After concerns were raised regarding unsafe pedestrian crossings at the Motherwell Campus, enhanced safety measures have been introduced providing students and members of the local communities with safer routes for walking or biking into neighbouring areas.​
* **Student Appreciation Week 27-31 May**: Throughout the week, various Award Ceremonies will take place to celebrate all the hard work, dedication, and achievements of our students.

​Awards include:

* Excellence in schools award
* Learner of the year award
* Against All Odds award
* Skills competitor award

DW thanked AMcL for her presentation and the work of the NCLSA on behalf of the students.

**7.3 NCLSA constitution**

AB advised the CSAO that Students’ Association constitution was scheduled for review. This is being undertaken alongside the SA and NUS.

**8.** **SLC Business:**

**8.1 SLC Curriculum and Credit update**

AP spoke to her paper:

* the College has successfully recruited healthy numbers of students across August and January start entry points to meet, and surpass, its credit target of 43,600 credits. The College will meet its upper 2% tolerance threshold credit target set by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC);
* the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has released the indicative funding allocations for 2023-24 which show similar levels of funding for 2024-2025 as the current year, as expected;
* Action Short of Strike and Industrial Action continues to be a challenge in the sector. Fewer than 900 results have been entered into the SLC system in the last month. The total outstanding is 24,637 results affecting roughly 3,500 students.  In terms of impact, there is potentially significant disruption to students in relation to smooth transition to their progression pathways. Whether this is university or employment the impact of not being credited with the qualification achieved in a timely manner may cause delays and missed opportunities for transitions to the next stage in their careers. This is affecting SLC’s CITB contract and is a serious challenge for SLC. However, the college is working hard to ensure that the students are able to progress with their studies by providing letters of comfort. Universities and employers are being understanding. EIS-FELA have given notice of 9 more strike days which will cause significant disruption.
* Education Scotland conducted the Care Thematic Review in February with highly positive verbal findings being shared with the College until the formal report is published in Spring/Summer 2024;
* work has taken place by curriculum teams, the alternative funding team and MIS to create an infrastructure to support a new suit of commercial activity through full cost recovery course offering in order to diversify income streams;
* retention has decreased in FE FT and HE FT with curriculum teams working hard to support students to complete their qualifications.
* For the Lanarkshire Region, the credit level of 160,890 remains the same as academic year 2023-24. The split in credits being retained at 117,288 credits to New College Lanarkshire and 43,601 credits to South College Lanarkshire. At the time of writing, the college has not yet met with the Lanarkshire RSB to confirm the split of credits for academic session 2024 to 2025. Both NCL and SLC are experiencing areas of over demand such as ESOL and construction. Supported by their respective Principals, the colleges jointly approached SFC to make them aware of this situation, however SFC has advised that no more credit is available.
* There is considerable concern about the lack of information available on the new quality framework; the focus seems to be on process and not on the impact on addressing the needs of key groups such as 16 – 19 year olds, community learning, apprenticeships or employer engagement.

**8.2** **SLC performance indicators**

AP spoke to her paper.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) National Performance Indicators (PIs) have not been published for 2022-23. The expected date of publication is 29 May 2024.

Attainment rates for FE full time and part time have significantly improved while attainment rates for HE full time and part time have declined. SLC has put in place action plans to address:

* Attainment rates for HE PT;
* Partial Success rates for HE FT and HE PT;
* Withdrawal rates for HE PT.

**9. NCL business:**

**9.1 Improving NCL’s retention**

**9.1.1 Being Financially Fit**

Jane Crowe, Head of Department, spoke to her paper and explained the background to the development of this initiative. Financial instability is linked to poor mental health causing stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and poor academic performance. NCL acknowledges that financial challenges are a key reason for student withdrawal. To mitigate against this, NCL introduced a flexible approach to learning, offering an adaptive curriculum to support students with work demands and family responsibilities. Whilst this was well received, it was recognised that students also require knowledge, skills, and support to take control of their finances and improve their overall financial well-being.

The initiative aims to promote financial literacy amongst NCL students to empower them with knowledge and skills to make informed financial decisions and improve overall financial well-being.

**9.1.2** **Getting to Know You**

Jennifer Lowe spoke to Lindsay Henderson’s paper (LH is Admissions and Key Support Manager)

NCL aims to improve its understanding of the needs of both current and prospective students by examining their behaviours and interactions through this initiative. This approach allows NCL to gain insights into students’ motivations and mindsets. By employing customer profiling techniques, NCL can make more informed decisions to support its diverse student body.

This campaign is framed around four broad themes:

1. Gathering and integrating student data

2. Engaging new students

3. Understanding students’ social dynamics

4. Understanding students within an academic setting

NCL is working on enhancing its application process, and move to a tailored 2 week induction. Its aim is the early identification of learning/personal needs and to address these appropriately.

**9.1.3 Be Well to Do Well**

Barry Skea, Dean for Learning and Teaching reported that this is the third initiative which sits within the Wellbeing Academies (WAs). The Academies are designed to prioritise wellbeing at the core of the student experience and aim to provide support services and programmes that cater to the physical, emotional and social wellbeing needs of the students. The WAs are located on each of the main campuses.

**NCL’s Wellbeing Academies** aim to:

* Challenge the stigma associated with mental health;
* Enhance communication with students relating to the wellbeing services available to them at NCL offering easy and on-going access to comprehensive wellbeing support throughout their academic journey;
* Expand partnerships with-mental health organisations, healthcare providers, schools, colleges and universities, employers, community and technology partners and policy makers;
* Work closely with NCL’s Foundation to support fundraising opportunities;
* Enhance student resilience, mental health, and overall wellbeing to support academic and personal success;
* Contribute to improved student retention and success rates by addressing wellbeing as a fundamental aspect of the student experience;
* Support and deliver key student-centred campaigns that includes, “Getting to Know You,” “Be Financially Fit” and “Be Well to Do Well”.

DW and Ronnie Smith (RS) both acknowledged this was a huge amount of work and effort on the part of the staff. RS remarked that this would create cultural change in the college over the long term. DW commented on the positive impact on the students.

BP asked if this holistic approach to support the students was all overseen and pulled together by a single committee. JL responded that it was one committee’s responsibility.

**9.2 College Leaver Destinations 2021-22**

AB spoke to her paper and said that the paper had initially been written for the previous CSAO meeting but had to be withdrawn as SFC advised the information required updating. Section 2.3 of report noted that qualifier destination confirmation rate for New College Lanarkshire decreased from 86.7% to 82.9% in 2021-22 and is below the national average. Since 2021-22 NCL has undertaken a great deal of work to address this decrease. The college has been proactive and an action plan has been put in place.

**9.3 Credit and Curriculum update**

AB spoke to her paper and highlighted:

**Section 2** – At the time report was written, NCL has met the allocated SFC credit target, however additional activity has been planned, but will not exceed the 2% upper limit.

National KPI data will be published by SFC on 29 May and will be shared with CSAO committee at the next meeting.

**Section 3.4 –** Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) in session 23/24 - were 4 students - value £800 and 22/23 value were 17 students for the £3,170.

**9.4 NCL Committee and self-evaluation update:**

**Student, Education, Learning and Teaching Committee (SELT)**

Nicola Mulholland (NM), Dean for Academic Partnerships spoke to paper 9.4 and advised that the formal launch of the Undergraduate Schoolwas scheduled for 10 June at the Motherwell Campus. In collaboration with the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), NCL will offer six new degree programmes adding to the existing degree portfolio.  The new degree programmes will commence in the Autumn 2024 and will provide clear articulation and progression paths for NCL students to continue their studies to degree level while studying at New College Lanarkshire.

The six new degrees are:

* BSc Collaborative Health and Social Care – Year 2 entry;
* BA Social Sciences – Year 3 entry;
* BA Business Enterprise and Marketing – Year 3 entry;
* BSc Digital Development – Year 3 entry;
* BSc Dental Nursing – Year 1 entry;
* BEng Cyber Security – Year 2 entry.

Recruitment for the new degrees is progressing very well with 120 of the 145 places already confirmed. UWS has recently increased the number of places offered to NCL students to 200. NCL is continuing to campaign and recruit to meet this new target. NCL is taking this opportunity to invite key strategic partners to become involved in the new degrees so that they can become advocates for these programmes.

NCL is also piloting a level 10 qualification in scriptwriting.

**Academic Standards, Planning & Monitoring Committee (ASPM)**

JL said spoke to the other sections of paper 9.4: the ASPM group are noting requests from academic teams to write SCQF units and have them validated by NCL. This is in response to units not being available via awarding bodies. Examples of this include, Be Resilient at SCQF Levels 5 and 7 and Be Financially Fit at SCQF Level 6.

**Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework Audit (SCQF)**

A credit rating review was carried out by SCQF in March. The audit was rated satisfactory. NCL has completed an action plan to improve practice.

**Education Scotland Thematic Review of Care**

  The review of Health and Social Care and Early Education and Childcare was carried out by Education Scotland in March 2024. Verbal feedback at the end of the visit was overall positive and findings will be included in a college wide report presented to the Scottish Government.

**Spotlight on Curriculum**

  All Academic departments have engaged in Spotlight on Curriculum focusing on: achieving credit target; maintaining high levels of retention; local and national policy and key strategic drivers; articulation pathways; flexibility in the curriculum to accommodate student’s needs; curriculum supporting the growth of degree provision; stakeholder engagement and placement opportunities.  This has resulted in departmental action plans for improvement.

**Awards**

NCL has been nominated in 5 categories at this year’s Herald awards:

* Outstanding Contribution from a College Student;
* Outstanding Business Engagement in Colleges;
* Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community;
* Partnership Award;
* Marketing/PR Campaign of the Year;

The Awards will be held on 28th May 2024

**9.5 Developing the Young Workforce/School College Partnership**

NM spoke to her paper and commented on the growth in the delivery of HNC qualifications: 2 out of the 3 HNC programmes have direct entry into the second year of a degree at NCL – Cybersecurity, and Collaborative Health and Social Care.

Although the number of early and further withdrawals are low there are plans underway to look at monitoring pupils more closely and also to develop an improved enrolment process, improved and quicker access to IT for pupils and lecturers and improved staff induction packs and processes.

NCL attend a variety of school career events across the academic year; in 2023/24 this included 43 school career events across four local authorities: East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Stirling. This was supported by over 38 staff members from academic departments, Professional and Work-based Learning, the Brand team and Student Engagement team. Anecdotally, staff have reported that this has led directly to an increase in applications and next year this will be tracked more closely by adding a field to application process.

NCL has hosted:

* a Foundation Apprenticeship open night for activity across both North and South Lanarkshire, which was attended by over 60 pupils, parents and carers
* two community of practice events for practitioners across North Lanarkshire. Key target areas have been Music and Performing Arts, and Film and TV.

The purpose of these events is to link the college’s lecturers with secondary school colleagues to share practice, but also to explore further collaborative opportunities.

NCL has attended events hosted by partner agencies targeted at school pupils including the UCAS event at UWS in October 2023 and an event hosted by the Developing the Young Workforce regional group for East Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire.

**9.6 Complaints**

JL spoke to her paper and advised that there were 19 formal complaints received in Quarter 3 of 2023/2024. Most were satisfactorily responded to within the College Complaints Procedures required by the Scottish Public-Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) timeframes, with some being granted extensions for a variety of reasons.

**9.7 Staff Development**

JL advised that NCL has refreshed Its Staff Development Strategy to reflect a focus upon digital advances and staff qualification enhancement.

**10.** **Approval of Publication of Committee Papers:**

1. Agenda for the CSAO 13 May 2024
2. Minutes of the meeting 19 February 2024
3. NCL Students’ Association Report
4. SLC Students’ Association Report
5. SLC Curriculum and Quality update
6. SLC Performance Indicators update
7. NCL Be Financially Fit
8. NCL Getting to Know You
9. NCL Be Well to do Well
10. NCL Credit and Curriculum update
11. NCL Committee and Self -evaluation update
12. Developing the Young Workforce
13. Complaints Report
14. Staff Development Strategy

**11.** **AOB**: There was no other business

**12. Date of Next Meeting: The scheduled date for the next meeting is Monday 2 September 2024 at the Coatbridge Campus**