



## **Item 6.3 LB 19/06/2017**

# **New College Lanarkshire and New College Lanarkshire Students' Association**

## **Student Partnership Agreement**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this agreement is to outline the partnership between New College Lanarkshire and New College Lanarkshire Students' Association (NCLSA). Both parties want to build upon our existing strengths in working together to further enhance the student experience at the College by "encouraging and engaging learners in meaningful Learner Engagement activities which will ensure innovative, high quality and relevant learning experiences. In addition learner involvement in quality structures and processes will be promoted to improve the overall effectiveness of our organisation." (New College Lanarkshire Learner Engagement Strategy 2015 – 18)

This agreement details our agreed priorities for the academic year 2017 – 18 and our future priorities.

The development process of this agreement has included building upon the work undertaken by New College Lanarkshire and the Students' Association in the development of this Learner Engagement Strategy, Be Heard events, focus groups and feedback sessions with NCLSA representatives, students and staff.

This agreement should be read in conjunction with the Regional Outcome Agreement and other strategic documents, however students are not restricted by this agreement – students are actively encouraged to tell NCLSA and the College how they can make students' learning experience and time at College better in any way. This agreement has been established to maintain and encourage the developing bond between NCLSA and the College and to reinforce the College's commitment to learner engagement and the student voice.

## **The College Community**

New College Lanarkshire's Learner Engagement Strategy sets out our priorities, expectations and commitments for encouraging and engaging learners which are linked to the strategic themes of:

- Participation, partnership and empowerment
- Supporting our learners
- Communication and impact

## **What is Partnership and why do we have one?**

The terms 'partner' and 'partnership' are all-encompassing terms to indicate the collaborative working relationship between students and staff.

Partnership working is based on the values of:

- openness in all that we say and do
- trust and honesty in our working relationships
- sharing challenges and agreeing goals to overcome them
- celebration of success and support when things are not as successful as planned
- regular meetings during which we consider all points of view

Working in partnership will also enable the College and NCLSA to meet the strategic priorities of the Learner Engagement Strategy. These include:

- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement through formal learner participation and representation.
- Work in partnership with the Students' Association to promote its mission statement and to achieve its stated aims and objectives
- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement through the Learner Voice.
- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement in the learning and teaching context, enabling learners to engage in the enhancement of their own and others learning.
- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement through the structure and infrastructure of the College.
- Ensure staff opportunities for continuing professional development which supports the Learner Engagement strategy.
- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement in the wider context of the College.
- Support, develop and embed Learner Engagement through effective communication methods.
- Support, develop and embed approaches which effectively capture and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Learner Engagement.

The Partnership Agreement is comprised of two sections. Part A outlines how students can participate in NCLSA's and the College's structures to influence and make a change within the College.

Part B details the annual priorities that have been agreed between the Regional Board, College and NCLSA.

# Part A

## Student representation

New College Lanarkshire recognises the importance of students being involved in decisions at all levels of the College and making sure all students have the best experience possible. The College and NCLSA will work together to ensure:

- That students are represented by a students' association elected representative on college committees and Board of Management.
- That student representatives are able to access support, if they wish, to assist them with their work on these committees and are able to represent students' views and interests effectively.
- All full-time courses has a class representative and if possible a depute to make sure that students' views on their course, tutorials, or any other part of the College experience are listened to and acted upon by staff where necessary.
- All fulltime courses will have at least three Course Team Meetings a year which will include the class representatives as per the Course Review and Evaluation Procedure

## Students shaping life at the College

Student involvement in decision-making is key to creating the best possible student experience. At New College Lanarkshire there are lots of ways that students can help shape College life. These include:

- Standing for election as a member of the NCLSA Executive (paid full-time or voluntary roles within the Association).
- Participate in SAINTs programme (Student Association in-team support) within the College.
- Standing for election as a Class Representative.
- Speaking to their Lecturer, Curriculum and Quality Leader, or support service provider directly
- Giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in feedback surveys, Be Heard events, Stop and Review focus groups, and any other feedback processes that take place.
- Sharing their point of view with their course representative so that it can be considered during the course review and evaluation process.

## **Part B**

Progress on the New College Lanarkshire and New College Lanarkshire Students' Association Student Partnership Agreement will be provided to Lanarkshire Regional Board and Senior Management Team on a bi-annual basis.

In response to both student feedback and the desire to further progress existing initiatives the College and NCLSA agree, on behalf of the wider community, to work together on a number of topics as outlined below:

### **Student Health and Wellbeing**

The College and NCLSA agree to explore ways of developing and/or signposting to services that will enhance student health and well-being. This will be achieved by:

- Raising awareness of support services available within New College Lanarkshire
- Hosting events and inviting external organisations into the College that can support students with health issues.
- Undertake training that will enhance the skills to support students with health issues.

### **Gender Action Plan**

New College Lanarkshire and NCLSA recognises that there is gender imbalance in certain college subjects and programmes. This issue is not unique to the College, however ambitious action is required to address this. As a contributor to the Gender Action Plan, NCLSA have a commitment to:

- Participate in unconscious bias training.
- Attend relevant events organised by SFC, Equate, sparqs and NUS Scotland to inspire and empower women students in areas where they are under-represented.
- Actively engage with male students to obtain their views and participate in events to ensure they do not disengage with college life.
- Conduct single sex focus groups with students with the purpose of tackling gender underrepresentation.
- Conduct a roundtable discussion of students and staff where staff can hear first-hand from students studying subjects in which their gender is under-represented.
- Work in-partnership to increase awareness of the need to raise any concerns students have in relation to sexual harassment and the importance of having this logged so appropriate actions can be taken.

## **Improving Communication and Representation**

New College Lanarkshire and NCLSA recognises the importance of students being involved in decision making and evaluation of College life. In 2017/18, New College Lanarkshire and NCLSA will work together to:

- Select and ensure training for Institutional Associate Trainers, who will in turn support the Class Representatives.
- Organise student surveys, Be Heard events, and Stop and Review focus groups.
- Ensure students are consulted before changes to services or college projects that will impact on student social spaces and resources.

## **Overall**

Lanarkshire Regional Board, New College Lanarkshire and SA also agree to work together to investigate and address any issues arising from student feedback as required throughout the year. New College Lanarkshire will ensure that NCLSA has the support required to fulfil their role, and NCLSA agrees to fulfil this role, making the student voice heard.

**Martin McGuire**

**Zorena Shanks**

**Dr Linda McTavish CBE**

**Principal of New College Lanarkshire**

**NCLSA President**

**Chair of the Regional Board**