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

**12.30 19 February 2024 in person at NCL Cumbernauld and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Winning (Chair), Amy McLoughlan (Student President, NCL), Stella McManus, Christopher Moore, Barbara Philliben, Angela Pignatelli (Vice Principal, SLC), Joanne Rosie, Ronnie Smith, Kayleigh Wither (Student President SLC)

**Apologies**: Fraser Heaney, Tarryn Robertson (SLC Academic Staff Representative), Elizabeth Arogbofa

**In attendance:** Ann Baxter, Ronnie Gilmour, Jennifer Lowe, Sandra McLoughlan, Nicola Mulholland, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. **Chair’s welcome**

David Winning (DW) opened the meeting and as there were several new attendees asked everyone to introduce themselves. DW asked contributors to be concise in making their reports given the length of the agenda.

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

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minute of the CSAO meeting 13 November 2023**

The Minutes were agreed.

**5. Note of the CSAO meeting 9 November 2023/Committee remit**

Diane McGill (DMcG, Board Secretary), advised that this paper had been circulated to members as an aide memoire in the discussion on the future activities of the Committee in support of the Principal and his senior team through developing the understanding of members of the workings of the College in regard to the curriculum and student affairs. The standing remit did not require any amendment to enable this wider approach of the Committee. The paper was noted.

**Regional business**

**6. Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA)**

**6.1 ROA implementation update**: Ann Baxter (AB) reported that Lanarkshire Outcome Agreement was signed off by the RSB on Monday, 11 December 2023 and published on 24 January 2024.

**6.2 NCL Credit and Curriculum Update:** AB spoke to her paper which was set out in a different format based on feedback from the CSAO and which she hoped met with approval of committee members.

Barbara Philliben (BP) thanked AB for the additional detail provided which she found very helpful.

AB reported that at the time of writing the report NCL had achieved 112,597 credits. A further 1000 credits have been achieved since the report was submitted, with the total now standing at 113,614. AB anticipates that NCL’s final credit total will be slightly above target [117,290], but will not exceed SFC’s 2% threshold [Lower – 114943 and Upper -119635].

NCL is continuing to explore other avenues for additional credits and is currently reviewing options such as micro-credentials to support SMEs.

**Sources of alternative funding:**

AB advised that NCL is one of the 6 partners in the Glasgow City Region of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) project: City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College, Glasgow Kelvin College, West College, South Lanarkshire College, and New College Lanarkshire. The six colleges have come together to form a network of innovation centres that will support employers to become more innovative through the adoption of new processes and products. This 12-month project commences on 31 March 2024 and is the first-time colleges have been specifically invited to participate in UKRI-funded initiatives. The pilot project aims to make businesses across the Glasgow City Region more productive through the development and deployment of digital capabilities. Its focus is centred on the five priority clusters identified for the City Region:

• Health and Life Sciences (Digitally Enabled Health)

• Energy and Net Zero

• Digital Creative Industries

• Advanced Manufacturing and Precision Engineering

• Digital and Enabling Technologies and Services

No update has been received to date re SDS funding for delivery commencing in April 2024.

Christopher Moore (CM) said he was delighted that both Lanarkshire colleges are involved in this project.

DW asked how full cost recovery would operate in this situation.

Angela Pignatelli (AP) said that the colleges are modelling how this can be done. Each of the areas has been submitted to senior management who are looking at how to package and send out to local businesses. The relevant Business Development Units are involved in this. The future budget for colleges is challenging and this is seen as a way forward. CM said that the theme for joint funding is sustainable development, renewables and the business environment.

**6.3 SLC Curriculum and Quality activity update**

Stella McManus (SMcM) reported that SLC’s credit position is healthy, now standing at 44,095, their target being 43,600. Recruitment is very positive, with more applications this year. SLC is undertaking a robust analysis of the data to enable further improvement of conversion rates in the future.

Planning is underway for Education Scotland visits: Thematic Review of Care next week and the Annual Engagement Visit at the end of March.

Curriculum Review: Eleven curriculum planning meetings took place in January to review and ensure the validity and viability of the 2024-25 curriculum offering in light of the recent SFC funding announcement which will result in a 4.7% cut to sector funding. SLC is exploring full cost recovery courses and external funding opportunities for alternative funding including involvement in the Innovate UK Further Education Innovation Fund as college lead on Sustainability.

**6.4 NCL Committee, Quality and Self-evaluation update**

Jennifer Lowe (JL) spoke to her paper.

**Learning and Teaching:** A Student, Education, Learning and Teaching Committee has been established which will actively promote NCL key priorities: recruitment, retention, attainment and progression.

**Meta Skills Development:** A meta skills working group has been established with a purpose of developing a meta skills strategy to support curriculum teams to incorporate meta skills into programmes trialling different ways of delivering and measuring these skills.

**Academic Standards, Planning & Monitoring:** The Academic Standards, Planning and Monitoring Group is noting requests from academic teams to write NCL SCQF units which are not available via awarding bodies. Examples of this include, Artificial Intelligence in Business, Level 6 Health Social Care and Meta Skills.

**Retention and Attainment Group** Development is underway to revise NCL’s Retention Strategy. The Strategy focuses on three main themes: promoting holistic well-being of students; interventions to mitigate against student withdrawals at college and programme level, and interventions which are data and evidence-based. Academic Heads of Department have been challenged where there are low performing programmes (ie their KPIs are below average or have below 50% success rates), this has resulted in the development of a Plan-Do-Study-Act project. In addition, NCL is looking at examples of best practice in the sector.

**Learning and Teaching Group:**  The Learning and Teaching Group is promoting contemporary evidenced based practice. A learning and Teaching Conference will take place in June to showcase the excellent work which is underway

**Quality update**: Following a visit to NCL of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) a mapping exercise was undertaken within the College between the UK Quality Code and SQA systems verification framework. NCL has contributed to the development of the new external review method.

**NCL’s Annual Engagement visit** by Education Scotland took place in December 2023. Verbal feedback at the end of the visit was overall positive and when the final report is received this will be tabled at CSAO.

**Thematic review of Care** has been planned for 4 and 5 March 2024. Review team will be comprised of HM Inspectors, Associate Assessors, and potentially Student Team Members.

DW congratulated NCL on the Annual Engagement report. CM confirmed that NCL will share the final report once it is published.

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

Nicola Mulholland (NM) spoke to her paper and advised that NCL works with 4 main Local Authorities: 1723 pupils in a range of activities involving a number of college departments. Details of the courses and enrolments are set out in her report.

NM said there has been a 50% increase in HNC enrolments this year with only 3 withdrawals to date. One student has progressed to the third year of a degree course as part of the pilot programme. NCL is very proud of his achievement.

WorldSkills: One of NCL’s current students, started on the HNC CADD Schools Pathway in August 2022. During his studies, he entered the Mechanical Engineering CAD World Skills UK competition and gained a place at the National Finals. He moved on to HND CADD in August 2023 and took part in National Finals where he placed 3rd.  He has now joined the WSUK International Squad for Mechanical Engineering CAD, and is training to earn a place in Team UK competing at the world finals in Lyon 2024.

DW asked if NCL’s connection with schools will grow. NM responded that next year a north Lanarkshire hub will be created around HNC Construction Management which so far has had a low take up. However, North Lanarkshire Council is establishing a built environment academy and NCL will feed into this.

NCL will pilot a cyber security degree next year

Ronnie Smith (RS) asked about the role of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). NM said that DYW works closely with schools and NCL tries to support rural communities in the senior phase. The recently announced cut to sector funding will not affect NCL’s involvement in this work at it is funded mainly through SDS.

**6.6 Complaints Report**

The Complaints Report as submitted was noted by the Committee.

**6.7 College Leaver destination report**

AB reported that NCL submitted its report to SFC as required. However, SFC has subsequently advised colleges that there has been an error in SFC’s preparation of the data for the College Leaver Destination publication for 2021-22, whereby around a number of student records were not included in the analysis. A corrected publication is being prepared and is expected to be published in due course.

**6.8 NCL Retention Strategy**

AB spoke to her report and said that NCL’s focus was on withdrawals as detailed in the paper circulated to the CSAO.

DW asked about the level of involvement of the Students’ Association in working with NCL to address the issues which cause students to withdraw from their courses. AB advised that a committee has been set up to run a series of mini projects involving NCLSA including wellbeing hubs. There will be a further update at the next meeting.

**7. Student Association Reports**

**SLCSA**: AP spoke to the SLCSA report and highlighted:

* **Student engagement:**  In December the Student’s Association President and Vice President hosted a drop-in event to raise awareness of the support available for those affected by gender-based violence.  This was part of the national 16 Days of Activism against GBV event which takes place each year.  The event had a great turnout and many students engaged in important conversations on the issues surrounding GBV. The SA also had an information stand at the event and gave away anti-spiking drink covers and bottle stoppers.  SLC is the first college in Scotland to be awarded the EmilyTest GBV Charter.
* The ongoing **cost of living crisis** is still greatly impacting the students and the Student Association is committed to helping them through this difficult and challenging time. Over the past year, with the financial support of the South Lanarkshire College Foundation, the SA has been delivering free healthy breakfasts and free soup and sandwich for students on selected days each week.
* The SA started a **food larder** for students during the last academic year and hopes to continue to provide this service this year.  Located within the Student Association Office students can come in anytime and take whatever they need, including food and toiletries. In the larder, the SA also provides free stationary such as notebooks and binders;
* **Hoodies:** The Student Association is committed to tackling student poverty. One way the SA tackles this is by continuing to sell SA branded hoodies to students.
* **The BRIT Challenge**: The British Inspiration Trust (BRIT) exists to support and improve the mental health, fitness, and wellbeing, of young adults, students, and staff, throughout the UK. The Challenge will take place between 24 January and 24 March 2024. SLCSA have produced a variety of activities and events to tie in with the BRIT Challenge.
* **LGBT History Month:** Purple Friday is on 23 February from 10am–1pm. The event is being organised by the SA and Student Services.  Companies confirmed so far are Women’s Aid, Terence Higgins Trust, and Breathing Space. The SA will have their own stall with rainbow gym bags, rainbow laces, Pride face paint and LGBT button badges.
* **Climate Change:** The SA is delighted that the College received funding of £1000 from Lanarkshire Climate Action Hub to support Climate Change Events and Activities.  On 14 February the Students’ Association is hosting a ‘Love Your Planet’ event to highlight climate change issues.  This is being organised by the SA with help from Student Officers, as well as the Climate Change Group which is open to all students.  At this event SLCSA will be giving out reusable water bottles and sustainable notebooks.

**NCLSA**: Amy McLoughlan (AMcL) spoke to the NCLSA report:

* NCL has 2 new student presidents: Amy McLoughlan based at Cumbernauld and Kenneth Tong based in Motherwell.
* The Learner Engagement (LE) team recognise that wellbeing in students is critical for attainment – NCL Student Wellbeing areas will offer a dedicated space on each of NCL’s main campus sites to provide comprehensive support for students' mental health and overall well-being. ​ The LE team is committed to regularly hosting diverse social events for students to promote a positive engaging student experience and foster a sense of community- the wellness will offer a space for this to happen.​ In addition, these areas will offer a clear link between learning and teaching for students on all levels of programmes of study supporting personal, academic, and professional development. ​
* **Thrift shop**: Recognising the importance of supporting students in need, especially during colder months, NCLSA is excited to launch the “Student Thrift Shop” - providing clothing to those who need it.​

The SA understands that financial constraints can make it difficult for students to access essential winter clothing, and that's where the Thrift Shop comes in. Inspired by ACS ethos around circular fashion, the Thrift Shop offers ‘used jackets’ for free, to ensure that every student has access to the warmth they need to thrive. Additionally, this initiative promotes sustainability by giving a second life to pre-loved clothing items, reducing waste, and promoting responsible consumption habits among students.​

Thank you to Smart Works Scotland and to Lady Haughey for kindly donating to our thrift shop.​

​

DW thanked both SAs for their very positive and interesting reports on such a wide range of activities and initiatives.

CM added his congratulations to both SAs on their activities and dedication. He was particularly pleased on NCLSA’s interaction with Lady Haughey. He said that the students had responded well to the thrift shop initiative giving them access without embarrassment.

**8. Themes and project showcases**

**8.1 Graduate Apprenticeships:** CM made a brief introduction to the theme of graduate apprenticeships (GAs) by saying that in the current funding situation facing colleges no potential source of funding could be ignored. Previously GAs had been restricted to universities, however this strategy had not been comfortable and was not successful. He saw this as an opportunity for colleges and universities to work together. Colleges have a better understanding of regional need and working with SLC will provide the best provision for Lanarkshire. There is a meeting on the issued of GAs with SDS later in the month. SMcM said that in a UK list of GA providers, it was difficult to find participating colleges. College involvement in the provision of GAs offered benefits to students and to staff who could add to their skillsets. This is a major opportunity for the Lanarkshire colleges to work together for the benefit of the region. CM added that it would also provide an opportunity to connect with big employers in the area. The CSAO will be updated at the next meeting.

DW commented that this was a very promising development. RS asked how the colleges would be marketing this to businesses, especially to SMEs. CM said that this was done mainly by local authorities and SDS but that he appreciated that more needed to be done. NCL’s Business Hub is a starter and needs to develop strong links with the Federation of Small Business (FSB) as well as becoming more accessible to business in general and be sensitive to their needs.

**8.2 Project showcase: presentation. *Postponed to the next meeting of the CSAO***

CM asked DW if he could use this opportunity to alert the CSAO to a matter of interest which had recently arisen. At an event he had recently been invited to attend CM had been made aware of the importance financial health plays in understanding the problems faced by students. Colleges currently address physical and mental health issues, however financial education should be added to enable students to face and cope with the pressures of the cost of living crisis and the limited funds to which they have access. He said that NCL would be investigating what the college could do in this area. He was keen to work with SLC to develop a project for Lanarkshire such as a money clinic as he felt there was an appetite for this. RS suggested that NCL should check with the Citizens Advice Bureau to see if any such provision currently exists.

BP said she would be keen to see a transcript of the event CM had attended. CM agreed to provide it and circulate to the Board if it was considered appropriate.

***Action: CM to provide transcript of the Manchester event***.

**8.3 Activity Calendar for themes 2024**

The CSAO found this very helpful and thanked Jennifer Lowe (JL) for providing it.

**General Committee Business**

**9. Approval of publication of Committee papers**

1. Agenda for the CSAO meeting 19 February 2024
2. Minutes of the CSAO meeting 13 November 2023/Committee remit
3. NCL Credit and Curriculum Update
4. SLC Curriculum and Quality activity update
5. NCL Committee and self-evaluation update
6. Developing the Young Workforce/School College Partnership
7. Complaints Report
8. NCL retention Strategy
9. NCL Students’ Association Report
10. SLC Students’ Association Report

**10. AOB**

**Good news stories:**

New College Lanarkshire in partnership with Skyrora, has launched a competition for young people in North Lanarkshire, providing students with the opportunity to showcase their technical and creative skills; understands that the contest will mark the 10th anniversary of the college by seeking young people’s ideas, creativity and commitment to sustainability, as pupils in S1 to S3 across North Lanarkshire will be asked to develop a solution to a climate-based problem in Lanarkshire, or create a piece of art that brings attention to a neglected aspect of the climate crisis. The competition has two categories, STEM and the arts, and that the winners will be awarded £500 and the opportunity to visit Skyrora’s premises.

WorldSkills UK EDI Heroes Awards were established in 2020 to honour individuals and organisations that promote and embed innovative practices, projects, and initiatives, making a positive impact on students, workplaces, and the wider skills system. Lisa Nicholson – Lecturer in CAD – has been short listed for 3 categories:

* Role Model – Sponsored by Education & Training Foundation
* Inclusive Skills Development – Sponsored by FEWeek
* Skills Competition Diversity Champion – Sponsored by Onefile

Outcome will be known on 7 March 2024

Holly Burke - 16-year-old Holly was triumphant in the mixed team curling competition in Korea, winning Gold. Next target is to compete in the full Olympics. Staff within the Hairdressing Team have managed to accommodate Holly's timetable to support learning and teaching.

Automotive student Ronan Smith has been shortlisted for the Institute of the Motor Industry’s student of the year award. Currently studying Motorcycle Mechanics, Ronan, also works at AMR motorcycles, was praised by the Judges for his dedication. The results will be announced at the IMI’s award ceremony is at the InterContinental Hotel, Park Lane, London, on 13 March 2024.

**Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the CSAO Committee is **Monday 13 May 2024** at 12.30. Venue to be advised.