

Board of Management Meeting of the Students, Staffing & Equalities Committee

MINUTE OF 3rd MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 AT 1500 HRS (SSEC3)

Present	
Alisdair Barron (AB) (Convener)	Audrey Sullivan (AS)
Paul Little (PL)	
In attendance	
Lisa Hardy (LH)	Gillian Plunkett (GP)
Megan McClellan (MMcC) (in absence of JT)	Leo Subido (LS)
Drew McGowan (DM)	
May Miller (MM)	Ann Butcher (Minute)
Apologies for absence	
David Cullen (DC)	Josh Taylor (JT)
Paul Hillard (PH)	

AB expressed his gratitude to all members, attending officers and other staff for their invaluable contributions to the Committee throughout the year.

Item SSEC3-1	Apologies for Absence	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Apologies were received from DC, PH and JT.	

Item SSEC3-2	Declarations of Interest	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no declarations of interest.	

Item SSEC3-3	Identification of Items to be Discussed Privately	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	None notified.	

Item SSEC3-4.1	Minute of the Students, Staffing & Equalities held on 17 May 2023	
Paper No: SSEC3-A	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Approval
Decision/Noted	The minute was approved.	

Item SSEC3-4.2	CitySA Impact Report 2022-23	
Paper No: SSEC3-B	Lead: L Subido	Action requested: Approval

**Discussion/
Matters Arising**

LS provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the CitySA Impact Report and review of the work undertaken by the Students' Association (SA) during 2022-23.

The SA has made significant progress in enhancing the Student Learning Experience by implementing monthly themed meetings within the Class Rep system. CitySA representatives have built strong relationships with College staff and actively represented students in various Board and Committee meetings, achieving a 100% attendance rate. They have also engaged in national representation through collaborations with organisations such as SQA, the Mental Health Foundation, Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board, the Regional Student Executive, and the National Union of Students.

The annual Student elections for the upcoming academic year have concluded successfully with a high voter turnout. The newly elected Presidential Team will undergo a scheduled handover in June.

The recent AGM was attended by a record number of students, with three significant motions submitted to join the White Ribbon Pledge, develop a Community Pantry, and enhance the SA space. The student parliament's work throughout the year was also acknowledged. Challenges pertaining to student parliament engagement; class rep surveys; SA staff turnover and low engagement at Riverside campus were identified and efforts are underway to address them effectively.

With the return to campus, face-to-face events were reintroduced, including successful events such as Freshers' and No Excuse for Abuse, as well as campaigns promoting free breakfast and trans and non-binary inclusion.

10 student-led clubs and societies have been established, with increased student participation across both College campuses. The Volunteer Hub has attracted over 220 student registrations, offering valuable opportunities for volunteering and profile building. The SA's focus centred around creating inclusive and engaging opportunities for students to learn about their communities, including initiatives promoting Black History Month and LGBTQ+ inclusion. Progress towards achieving Gold in the LGBT Charter review by December 2023 was noted.

The SA has continued to share information through various social media channels. Revenue diversification and successful grant applications have supported student-centred initiatives. A significant 4-year partnership with Native, collaborating with major nationwide brands on digital campaigns, is expected to boost revenue. The SA has also worked on enhancing the user experience of their website and recently launched the CitySA shop.

The Committee commended the SA for presenting a well-structured report and acknowledged the significant accomplishments achieved throughout the year. Members suggested that highlights on the various challenges should be placed at the end of the report.

Decision/Noted

Subject to slight amendment, the report was endorsed for approval by the Board.

Item 5.3 was taken at this time.

Item SSEC3-5.3	HR Metrics Report	
Paper No: SSEC3-G	Lead: K Lanagan (for J F Gribben)	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>KL provided an overview of the key HR performance indicators for the period 1 January 2023 – 30 April 2023.</p>	
	<p>Analysis of overtime and additional hours expenditure reveals a decrease in overall spending. The decrease in headcount and decline in new starts is primarily due to the deliberate focus on hiring only when essential to meet critical business requirements. The report shows an increase in employee turnover which is mainly attributed to staff leaving through Voluntary Severance and the reduction in agency costs, which ties into the strategy to reduce staffing costs and reliance on external staffing resources.</p>	
	<p>The level of employee absence rates highlights the need for proactive absence management and effective measures such as wellbeing and occupational health approaches will help mitigate absenteeism. Processes and interventions to help manage absences more effectively are being considered. It was acknowledged that this may increase over the coming months due to the consultation on, and potential outcome of, Compulsory Redundancies. The report also provided an overview of the College's wellbeing initiatives and activities.</p>	
	<p>The Committee noted that staff have expressed a positive reception towards hybrid working, while acknowledging that the overall benefits and implications to the College will be assessed.</p>	
	<p>Members heard that the decision to consult on Compulsory Redundancies has created a significant degree of tension and Trade Union (TU) activity, leading to increased pressure on the HR department. Two TU disputes and weekly consultation meetings have added to the workload, requiring extensive preparation and time commitment. This additional responsibility is on top of the already demanding day-to-day tasks. HR is on the front line, fielding numerous questions and concerns which can present considerable challenges. Despite these challenges, the commitment to effectively manage the process was acknowledged. Members were informed of the notification received from EIS-FELA on Action Short of Strike to be undertaken during late May/early June.</p>	
	<p>There followed a discussion about the exit interview process with specific reference to a toxic culture, bullying and harassment. Members queried whether the exit process provides an opportunity to examine the evidence provided by staff leaving the College and whether HR are able to offer genuine insights into why such issues are being raised. KL confirmed that HR play a crucial role in analysing any feedback and identifying patterns or common themes. It was noted that while some issues raised in exit interviews may be attributed to bullying, it is essential to consider other potential factors such as managers questioning staff performance. Members expressed an interest in exploring the development of a 360-degree appraisal system in order to gain a better understanding of how individual behaviour impacts colleagues and whether certain management techniques hinder team building.</p>	

AB updated the Committee on progress of the ongoing national pay negotiations with the trade unions, emphasising that the demand for an increase on the proposed increase in pay was unrealistic considering the current financial challenges faced by the College. PL highlighted that although the College had budgeted for a 5% increase, implementing such an increase may result in the need for additional compulsory redundancies.

Decision/Noted To note the HR metrics report.

KL left the meeting.

Item SSEC3-4.3 Students' Association Strategic Plan	
Paper No: SSEC3-C	Lead: M McClellan Action requested: Approval
Discussion	<p>MMcC informed the Committee that the SA Strategic Plan had been updated through a consultation process involving student focus groups. Whilst the Value and Mission Statement remained the same, the aim was to determine the areas in which students believed the association performed well, areas for improvement and new initiatives to pursue. The NUS Quality Students' Union Framework was utilised as a guiding document throughout the process.</p> <p>In addition, meetings were held with the Director of Finance and the College Secretary, and a presentation was also delivered at the Student Academic Experience Committee. Based on feedback received, certain themes from the previous plan were still considered relevant for further development with a primary focus on enhancing activities, events and representation systems. The Committee noted that a 5-year Strategic Plan had been agreed in order to provide sufficient time to realise the potential of the proposed ideas.</p> <p>MMcC informed that engagement with staff, particularly lecturers is crucial in the development of more effective systems. Their support and buy-in was essential and it was important that teaching staff promote the work of the SA in their classes. Efforts to increase buy-in are being made.</p> <p>AB expressed some concern regarding the feedback received from the recent HMI visit which revealed that students were unaware of the SA's work. The necessity to ensure that staff, students and other stakeholders are actively aware of and engaged with the SA has been recognised and actions are in place to reach out to students and colleagues especially at Riverside. Members noted that work is already underway to connect with small groups of students, creating niche representations in specific areas to ensure all student demographics are being represented.</p> <p>AB commended the Plan for its exceptional clarity and focus. He acknowledged the SA's maturity and sensible approach, and it was evident that the SA had a clear understanding of its objectives.</p>
Decision/Noted	To endorse the report for approval at the next meeting of the Board.

Item SSEC3-4.4 Student Partnership Agreement - Revised	
Paper No:	Lead: M McClellan Action requested: Approval

SSEC3-D	
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>MMcC provided an update on the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) which has undergone a review process involving students and the City Partnership Forum (CPF). The SPA aims to facilitate student and staff interaction to enhance quality, gather student ideas for improvements and establish collaborative projects.</p> <p>While the initial SPA was effective, there has been a decline in student engagement. Feedback from stakeholders has provided valuable insights and identified several lessons learned. Consequently, several key changes to the SPA were proposed.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the membership and effectiveness of the CPF's work. While acknowledging its value, it was recognised that it was currently not fulfilling its intended purpose. As a result, measures to make improvements were deemed necessary. It was agreed that a plan to ensure regular meetings throughout the year and implementation of a clear reporting structure to an appropriate Board Committee be established.</p>
Decision/Noted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To endorse the revised Student Partnership Agreement for approval at the full Board meeting. • To establish a plan for regular meetings and clear reporting of the CPF.

PL left the meeting, during the following discussion, at 16:45. The meeting was no longer quorate from that point. DM advised the Committee to continue with the meeting and defer any decision on the Strategic Risk Review to the Board at its next meeting on 14 June.

Item SSEC3-5.1	Student Experience Annual Report 2022-23	
Paper No: SSEC3-E	Lead: G Plunkett	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>GP provided a high-level overview of the student service priorities and developments during AY 2022-23.</p> <p>Applications for full-time courses have declined, primarily influenced by changing demographics and the impact of widening access policies implemented by universities. The College has acted to increase applications through additional open days and further development of the 'Get Ready for College' initiative. It was noted that this will be further impacted by the reduction in credits for 2023-24.</p> <p>Post Covid student funding has almost returned to pre-Covid levels with Hardship Fund levels maintained in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Satisfaction with admissions show that the overall experience of applicants remains high at 92% (an increase on last year), with navigation and finding information returning to pre-Covid levels. Whilst restrictions were still in place at the start of the year, online and telephone interviews still replaced some face-to-face interview activity however this is set to improve for 2023-24.</p> <p>GP reported that a small team of 7 Advisors cover a huge area and number of students across the College. A 61% increase in support interventions was recorded in comparison with the same period last year due to more students being back on campus. This support involved a system of triage to</p>	

ensure students receive the correct intervention as quickly as possible.

Student Mental Health and Well Being counselling support options have been retained with an increase in external referrals observed. The ongoing work around gender-based violence was specifically highlighted, including the collaborated development of workshops with the Emily Test charity. Members noted that the College is actively working towards obtaining the Emily Test Charter status. The challenges related to SFC funding in maintaining the required level of counselling services was highlighted. AB provided an update on discussions with ministers regarding funding for mental health counselling.

The invaluable work carried out by the Learning Support team in developing a new approach and interventions, including a restructure to establish closer collaboration with the Learning and Teaching Academy were highlighted. Additionally, it was noted that the Student Engagement team has maintained a strong partnership with CitySA and has successfully executed a wide range of opportunities and activities throughout the year.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the dedicated and compassionate Student Experience teams who consistently delivered a high level of service despite the many challenges faced.

Decision/Noted To note the report.

AB took the opportunity to commend GP for her dedication and hard work over the course of many years. Her exceptional abilities, valuable contributions and insights have significantly enhanced the opportunities available throughout the learner journey and the impact of her departure would be deeply felt by the College. He expressed heartfelt gratitude for her remarkable achievements, the inspiration she provided and the legacy she leaves behind. He extended his best wishes to her in her well-deserved retirement. GP thanked AB for his kind words and provided the Committee with an update of the new Student Services structure moving forward.

Item SSEC3-5.2 Careers Guidance Briefing	
Paper No: SSEC3-F	Lead: L Hardy Action requested: Discuss
Discussion/ Matters Arising	<p>LH provided the Committee with an update on Careers Guidance planning within the College.</p> <p>The Careers Team conducted an extensive investigation into various platforms that could facilitate the capture of employer engagement information. Unfortunately, the high costs associated make these impractical and an alternative accessible CityLife SharePoint site offering students valuable information on careers has now been implemented. The increasing number of page hits indicates that students are actively utilising this resource. LH further reported on the successful organisation of 2 on-campus careers events and a dedicated careers week.</p> <p>While the responsibility for work relating to employer engagement does not typically fall under the Student Experience directorate and as careers practitioner resources are limited, active consideration to implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to streamline efforts in building and managing contacts with employers is being investigated.</p>

LH further updated the Committee on the national review of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) and the recent meeting of the Career Review Change Leaders which included a discussion on the FE Partnership Agreement (FEPA) between Colleges and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). The invitation from the local SDS partner to participate in creating a cohesive careers guidance offer for students at City (based on the new FEPA) with the Department of Skills Development was noted.

The final report of the review was published in late February 2023 highlighting the commitment of Colleges to provide a universal entitlement to career services delivered in partnership with SDS. The report highlights several initiatives aimed at improving career support, including enhancement of existing services, aligning services with the new Career Development Models and further integration of work experiences in the curriculum.

Despite the challenge posed by limited resources, the College is exploring the establishment of a College-wide steering group, building on the progress already made in developing City Attributes. This group would play a crucial role in reviewing the new City Attributes and facilitating the creation of a comprehensive College Careers Strategy. Members acknowledged the excellent work already underway in developing a set of City Attributes and endorsed the recommendation to integrate developments on the careers agenda.

It was proposed that starting from next academic session, future updates regarding Careers Guidance matters should be transferred to the remit of the Learning and Teaching Committee. This was agreed.

Decision/Noted

- To note the update report.
- To support the establishment of a College-wide steering group.
- That future reporting on Careers Guidance transfer to the remit of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Item SSEC3-5.4

Strategic Risk Review

Paper No: SSEC3-H

Lead: D McGowan

Action requested: Note

Discussion/ Matters Arising

DM reported on the recommended score changes to Risk 9 *Failure to attract, engage, and retain suitable staff* (proposed change from 4 GREEN to 16 RED) and Risk 14 *Negative impact of industrial action* (proposed change from 12 AMBER to 16 RED). The reasons for the proposed increases were evidenced within the Risk MAPs, as updated by JFG. As the meeting was not quorate, the proposed increases were deferred for decision at the Board in June.

Decision/Noted

To defer decision on the proposed increased risk scores for Risks 9 and 14 to the Board.

Item SSEC3-6.1

ED&I Current Priorities: Update

Paper No: SSEC3-I

Lead: N Dar

Action requested: Note

Decision/Noted To note the update on ED&I current priorities.

Item SSEC3-7	Disclosability of Papers	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Agree
Decision/Noted	No changes were proposed.	

Item SSEC3-8	Any Other Notified Business	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested:
Decision/Noted	There was no other business raised.	

Item SSEC3-9	Date of Next Meeting	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	To be confirmed.	

The meeting closed at 1735 hours.

ANNEX TO THE MINUTE

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC3-4.2 17 05 23	CitySA Impact Report 2022-23: Endorsed for approval by full Board (subject to slight amendment).	MMcC/DM	14 06 23
SSEC3-4.3 17 05 23	SA Strategic Plan: Endorsed for approval by the full Board.	MMcC/DM	14 06 23
SSEC3-4.4 17 05 23	Student Partnership Agreement: Endorsed for approval by full Board. To establish a plan for regular meetings and clear reporting structure of the CPF.	MMcC/DM	14 06 23 Ongoing
SSEC3-5.2 17 05 23	Careers Guidance: Future reporting be transferred to the remit of the Learning and Teaching Committee	DM	ASAP
SSEC3-5.4 17 05 23	Strategic Risk Review: Endorsed increase in risk scores for Risks 9 and 14 for approval by the Board.	DM	14 06 23

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
SSEC2-4.1 01 02 23	Matters Arising – Careers Guidance Plan: provide a report at the next meeting.	GP	17 05 23 Complete
SSEC2-5.4 01 02 23	EDI Update: Submit PSED reports at the next Board meeting.	JFG	22 02 23 Complete
SSEC2-5.6 01 02 23	Strategic Risk Review: Review Risk 9 Risk Score for the next Committee meeting.	JFG	17 05 23 Complete
SSEC3-4.1 18 05 22	Matters Arising: Values and Behaviours Handbook is being developed and will be submitted to Board once finalised.	JFG	Ongoing
SSEC1-5.3 27 10 21	Staff HR Metrics Report: Arrange information meeting with PMO staff.	SL	Ongoing