ULSTER UNIVERSITY

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM

2 October 2019

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2019 at Magee Campus.

Present: Dr P Brogan, Mrs N Cameron, Ms E Connolly, Mr J Curran,

Ms J Kelly (for Mr L Curran), Mr J Marley, Mrs C Mulrone,

Mr M McCamley, Mrs R McEvoy, Mrs S McGrory, Mrs S McLaren, Mrs M O’Malley (for Mrs C Davison), Mr J Noble, Mrs M Paris,

Ms C Reid (Chair) Mrs M Sowney.

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne, Mr L Curran, Mrs C Davison, Mrs T Millar.

Mrs H Miller, Ms S McCall.

In Attendance: Mrs N Bartholomew (Min 19.49), Mr H Deighan, Mrs A Gaston,

Ms E Sandrey.

THANKS

The Chair thanked Mrs Paris for the excellent and dedicated work undertaken by her during her period as Chair of the Forum. Mrs Paris was instrumental in driving a number of enhancements to policy and practice in relation to collaborative activity.

MINUTES

19.43 The minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2019 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

19.44 Collaboration Courses Register (Min 19.31)

FPM’s confirmed they had updated the Collaborative Courses Register.

19.45 Adults Engaging in Higher Education (Min 19.32)

Mrs Mulrone advised members that the new brochure aimed at adult learners who may wish to engage with higher education will be available later this month. The brochure will list all approved programmes of study offered in partner institutions and provide advice and guidance. The College logo and brand could also be included.

AGREED: that HE Co-ordinators provide Mrs Mulrone with the contact details of the person in their institution with whom she should liaise with.

CHAIR’S COMMUNICATIONS

19.46 The Chair informed the Forum, that the new Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement (CAQE) process, which replaces the former annual course review, focuses on benchmarks as previously agreed at the Forum. Faculties have already analysed enrolments, attrition and success data after the first sit in June, and will consider resit date later this month.

Colleges will be asked to provide action plans for those programmes which fail to meet the agreed benchmarks. If the Faculty is not entirely satisfied with the action plan provided, senior members of staff from the College will be invited to the University to discuss the plan in more detail.

AGREED: that the Chair forward the agreed benchmarks to HE Co-ordinators.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

19.47 Members received paper CPF/19/12 an update of the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Forum.

DATES OF MEETINGS

19.48 Members received paper CPF/19/13 informing them of the dates and venues for meetings during the 2019/20 academic year.

It was noted that the annual Chairing of Boards of Examiners staff development event will be held on 7 May 2020 in Jordanstown.

ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

19.49 Mrs Bartholomew gave a presentation on the University’s requirement that assessment rubrics be provided as an appendage to the course document at evaluation and re-validation events.

The assessment marking criteria should be specific to the module assignment. This will provide greater transparency in how the marks are allocated across the rubric. The University is not being prescriptive on the format of the rubric which will be individual to the assessment.

AGREED: that Mrs Bartholomew provide HE Co-ordinators with supporting information on the development of assessment rubrics.

COVERSHEET TEMPLATES FOR COURSEWORK AND EXAMINATION ASSESSMENTS

19.50 Members considered paper CPF/19/14 a cover sheet for the preparation and presentation of coursework assignments and examination papers.

The cover sheets will provide consistency in the preparation and presentation of assessment.

AGREED: that the coursework and examination assessment cover sheet templates be adopted during this academic year.

19.51 REVIEW OF ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE POLICY

HE Co-ordinators confirmed that their institutions are still in the process of revising and updating their absence/attendance policy. They anticipate that the new policy will be approved by their governing body and be in place later this academic year.

AGREED: that HE Co-ordinators forward a copy of their absence/attendance policy to Mrs E Sandrey, Quality Enhancement.

ONLINE ADMISSIONS (OLA)

19.52 The Chair informed that a total of1,295 online admissions were received. 163 (13%) queries were identified mostly of a very minor nature. Course Directors were very quick to respond to the request to resolve the issues identified. Unsolicited applications were referred back to the College.

Colleges asked that consideration be given to opening the OLA process on the same day as ‘A’ level results come out so that students could register and upload their GCSE evidence on that day.

A new EBS system is being introduced across all Colleges this year which will allow students to upload and save their examination results electronically. HE Co-ordinators said they would investigate with the EBS Implementation Working Group if the information on their system could be shared with the University’s OLA system.

Currently the OLA system only asks for evidence of GCSE English and Maths or equivalent. The University will consider adding a third upload button to include evidence of the Level 3 qualification or APEL portfolio. HE Co-ordinators were reminded that all APEL applications must be approved by the FPM before the student is registered. FPM’s must be given at least one week to review and approve the APEL application.

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that no student should be accepted onto the programme after week 2.

Mrs McEvoy said it had been brought to her attention that some Colleges believed the University was poaching some of their students who had applied to University through the OLA process. She informed HE Co-ordinators that the OLA system is completely separate from the University’s admissions systems. Admission staff within the University are not aware of information contained within the OLA system, nor do they look at it when making offers.

With regard to the two week cooling off period, HE Co-ordinators were informed that this starts from the first day of class, not the date on which the student registers. It was noted that students in partner institutions start one week earlier than students at Ulster University.

AGREED: i) that the University give consideration to opening OLA from the date ‘A’ level results come out;

ii) that the University give consideration to providing a dropbox for level 3 qualifications;

iii) that the University give consideration to introducing an online enrolments process from next academic year.

ATTRITION ON ACCESS PROGRAMMES

19.53 At previous meetings of the Forum poor attrition on a number of Access programmes was considered. HE Co-ordinators had agreed to analysis attrition data on Access programmes within their institution and report back but, to-date, this exercise had not been completed.

It was noted that on some Access programmes attrition figures are very good and there may be areas of good practice which could be disseminated.

AGREED: that a Working Group be set up, chaired by Dr Brogan, with a representative from all partner institutions offering Access programmes.

APPLICATION OF THE NEW DEGREE ALGORITHM TO FOUNDATION DEGREES

19.54 At the last meeting of the Forum HE Co-ordinators agreed that after the Supplementary Board, Course Directors would model the overall cohort performance based on 30% at level 4 and 70% at level 5 and report back on the outcome of the modelling exercise.

HE Co-ordinators reported that there was no real difference in the outcome. For the vast majority of students the outcome remained the same with a few students better off and some with a few marks less.

It was accepted that the modelling exercise looked at historical data and did not take account of the fact that students may have performed better had they known that level 4 assessments contributed to the final award.

Mrs McGrory said that NWRC had also surveyed students and found that 76% of students felt that the new Fd algorithm would be a good idea.

AGREED: i) that NWRC share their survey questionnaire with other partners;

ii) that the results of the modelling exercise be forwarded to Quality Enhancement.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

19.55 Mrs Sowney informed members that the University is currently developing a new Fitness to Study Policy which will be shared with partner institutions when it is ready.

Members were informed that the University’s Ordinance on Fitness for Professional Practice has been amended as follows:

* Change in title from ‘Fitness for Professional Practice’ to ‘Fitness to Practise’ to align with the professional regulators’ current terminology.
* The use of the term ‘practice learning’ to replace ‘placement’.
* Amendments to the anonymous disclosure paragraph to encourage disclosure by complainants.
* Clarity on the steps for investigation including timelines, and referral to the regulatory procedures for the relevant profession.

It was noted that the University does not support mandatory disclosure of health issues.

Members discussed a number of issues concerning Access NI requirements including, in particular, whether the check is required as part of the admissions process or only when the student is about to go on placement.

There was concern that if a student is admitted onto the programme without he Access NI check being undertaken and then subsequently that student was unable to go on placement because of an adverse outcome from an Access NI check the partner institution could be held liable for allowing the student onto the course.

Mrs McEvoy said that the University has a standard statement and waiver which could be provided to applicants.

AGREED: i) that a Working Group, chaired by Mr J Marley, with representatives from partner institutions, be established to consider the issues surrounding Access NI;

ii) that the statement and waiver used by the University be circulated to partner institutions.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

19.56 Members considered paper CPF/19/15 a draft programme for the annual conference at CAFRE on 11 October 2019.

The title for the Conference this year is ‘Developing Quality in the New Era’. The keynote speaker this year is Mrs Caroline Turnbull from the Nations and Europe Team at the QAA.

STUDENTS CODED U1

19.57 Members considered paper CPF/19/16 looking at the issue of students coded U1 who apply to another College for a place on the same programme within a 12 month period.

Mrs Brogan informed that a small number of students on Counselling programmes had been coded U1 at one College and then applied to do a similar course at another College within a 12 month period. This is breaching University regulations.

Currently the University does not have mechanisms in place to pick this up.

The rationale behind the U1 code is to allow students to take a year out as they are not at that time ready to engage with that programme. However, it was noted that no pastoral support is provided to these students. Students coded U1 are permitted to apply to do the same programme on a part-time basis.

AGREED: that the Chair speak to the Head of the Academic Office regarding the currency of the U1 coded particularly in relation to collaborative activity.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

19.58 Members received paper CPF/19/17 the calendar of events for 2019/20.

Members noted the examination periods for semesters one and two and the last date for holding meetings of Boards of Examiners.

HE Co-ordinators were reminded of the need to provide the full profile of marks. All errors and omissions on the course results sheets should be rectified at the January progress boards.

CA3 submissions must be forwarded to the FPM at least 5 weeks before the deadline in the calendar.

SHAREPOINT ACCESS

19.59 Members were informed that the papers and minutes for the Forum, together with other important documents, are available on Sharepoint. Members must request authorisation to access Sharepoint.

AGREED: that all members of the Forum be invited to join Sharepoint.

MARKETING ACTIVITY

19.60 Members received paper CPF/19/18, a report on marketing activity.

Mr McCamley said that the Marketing and Communications Department continues to work on a range of initiatives to support college engagement activities.

Last year the University ran Applicant Events across several Saturdays and these proved to be a huge success and will be continued this year.

The University also launched a new initiative to help increase awareness and applications to Engineering and Computing courses. The ‘Visiting lecture Series’ aims to support the teaching of STEM-related subjects – whilst highlighting higher education progress and career pathways.

Requests for presentations to both 1st and 2nd year students are welcomed by the Student Recruitment Team. These are generally delivered at the beginning of semester 1 to promote progression to University and the key factors these students need to consider.

The Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment are running 3 Open Days on 14, 16 and 17 October for students on linked Foundation degrees.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE INFORMATION PAPERS

19.61 The Chair referred to a number of matters arising from the reports prepared by the HE Co-ordinators.

i) all publicity material, whether in hardcopy or online, must be approved by the FPM prior to publication;

ii) all marketing material must come from the named contact in the partner institutions. FPM’s should not deal directly with Course Directors;

iii) all international student applicants must be approved by the FPM prior to enrolment.

iv) the chair will address the issue raised by SWRC regarding clarification with regard to 2Y3S students progressing full-time to Year 2.

Duration: 2 hrs 35 mins

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2 October 2019

ACTION SHEET

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | MINUTE | ACTION | ACTION BY | DEADLINE |
| 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12 | 19.45  19.46  19.49  19.50  19.51  19.52  19.53  19.54  19.55  19.57  19.59  19.61 | that HE Co-ordinators provide  Mrs Mulrone with the contact details of the person in their institution with whom she should liaise with.  that the Chair forward the agreed benchmarks to HE Co-ordinators.  that Mrs Bartholomew provide HE Co-ordinators with supporting information on the development of assessment rubrics.  that the coursework and examination assessment cover sheet templates be adapted during this academic year.  That HE Co-ordinators forward a copy of their absence/attendance policy to Ms E Sandrey, Quality Enhancement.  i) that the University give consideration to opening OLA from the date ‘A’ level results come out;  ii) that the University give consideration to providing a dropbox for level 3 qualifications;  iii) that the University give consideration to introducing an online enrolments process from next academic year.  that a Working Group be set up chaired by Dr Brogan with a representative from all partner institutions offering Access programmes.  i) that NWRC share their survey questionnaire with other partners;  ii) that the results of the modelling exercise be forwarded to Quality Enhancement.  i) that a Working Group, chaired by Mr J Marley, with representatives from partner institutions, be established to consider the issues surrounding Access NI;  ii) that the statement and waiver used by the University be circulated to partner institutions.  that the Chair speak to the Head of the Academic Office regarding the currency of the U1 coded particularly in relation to collaborative activity.  that all members of the Forum be invited to join Sharepoint.  iv) the chair will address the issue raised by SWRC regarding clarification with regard to 2Y3S students progressing full-time to Year 2. | HE Co-ordinators  Ms C Reid  Mrs N Bartholomew  HE Co-ordinators  HE Co-ordinators  Ms C Reid/  Mrs Cameron  Dr P Brogan  Mrs S McGrory  HE Co-ordinators  Mr J Marley  Quality Enhancement  Ms C Reid  Quality Enhancement  Ms C Reid | 31 Oct 2019  31 Oct 2019  31 Oct 2019  On-going  On-going  31 Dec 2019  31 Dec 2019  31 Oct 2019  31 Dec 2019  31 Dec 2019  31 Dec 2019  31 Dec 2019  31 Oct 2019  31 Dec 2019 |