ULSTER UNIVERSITY

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM

27 January 2021

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 online through Microsoft Teams.

Present:  Mr A Ballantyne, Mrs P Brogan, Ms B Burns, Mrs N Cameron,

Mrs E Connolly, Mrs C Davison, Mr S Ferguson, Mrs H Miller,

Mrs J Kelly, Mr J Marley, Mr M McCamley, Dr M McCann,

Mrs S McLaren, Mrs A McKenna, Mrs M Paris, Mrs C Reid (Chair),

Ms V Toland

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne, Mr L Curran, Mrs C Mulrone

In Attendance: Mr H Deighan, Mrs A Gaston, Ms E Sandrey.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Ms Violet Toland from North West Regional College to her

first meeting of the Forum.

Mrs A McKenna, HLA Hub Manager at Ulster University has been included in the

membership and the Chair welcomed her to the meeting.

MINUTES

21.01 The minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2020 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

21.02 Application of the new Degree Algorithm for Foundation Degrees (Min 20.21)

The Chair informed that due to the adjustments in delivery and assessment this year and the introduction of the Associate Bachelors (AB) as an exit award, it would not be appropriate to undertake the modelling exercise to see what impact the introduction of the new degree algorithm would have on marks.

This matter will be picked up again next academic year.

21.02 Chairing of Boards Training Event (20.24)

The Chair asked HE Co-ordinators to notify Quality Enhancement (QE) of potential Chairs and new Course Directors who wished to avail of the training on Chairing Boards of Examiners. A provisional date of 6 May 2021 has been set aside for this event if required.

It is not necessary for Chairs of Boards of Examiners to attend the training each

year. New Course Directors can attend, however, they are not allowed to Chair

Examination Boards. Examination Boards can only be chaired by Heads of

Department or above.

21.03 Recording of Teaching Sessions (20.25)

The Chair informed HE Co-ordinators that it is not a requirement that teaching sessions be recorded. This is something the University is looking into but nothing has been agreed.

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that a script of the session must be provided as well as the recording. Sessions must also be captioned. Captioning of recording happens automatically at Ulster University and members were advised to check if this facility is available within their institution.

CHAIR’S COMMUNICATIONS

21.04 St Patrick’s Day 2021

The Chair informed that this year the University will only close on 17 March 2021 for St Patrick’s Day.

21.05 Extenuating Circumstances

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that there will be no automatic first sit opportunity for students this academic year. Students must provide a completed EC1 form with supporting evidence. Self-certification will be accepted.

21.06 Completion of Course Result Sheets for Associate Bachelors (AB) Awards

The Chair informed that if the AB award is being made students should be coded

S2 on the course results sheets to signify an exit award. The course result sheet should also clearly show that the WBL module has not be taken.

21.07 Minutes of Staff/ Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) and Couse Committee

(CC) Meetings

The minutes of SSCC and CC meetings for semester 1 should be forwarded by the HE Co-ordinator to the relevant FPM as soon as possible.

21.08 NSS Questionnaire

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that this year the NSS questionnaire will include 6 COVID-19-related questions. Staff should remind students of the communications and processes put in place to support them during the pandemic.

21.09 QAA Guidance

The Chair informed that the QAA has just published guidance (18 January 2021) on safety net policies for placement or practice-based courses. The link to the guidance can be found on the QAA homepage.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

21.10 Members approved Paper CPF/21/01 detailing the Terms of Reference and

membership of the Forum subject to Mr A Ballantyne replacing Mrs T Moore at

NRC.

ONLINE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENTS FEEDBACK AND REVIEW

21.11 The Chair said that the OLA and OLE processes for 2020/21 admissions and

enrolments had worked extremely well, although there were a number of minor

issues identified which need to be addressed. Issues identified include:

* Some returning students are completing OLA again
* Completed application forms are not being submitted
* Incorrect or incomplete evidence being uploaded
* Students coded P3 last year were not able to add the module
* Some students are not selecting the correct programme code
* The terminology used by Ulster University and Colleges differs which leads to confusion

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that all APL applications must be signed off by them and approved by the FPM. After the closing date students cannot access OLA. Late enrolments will incur a fee and should be flagged to the relevant FPM.

The Chair informed that rather than providing Class Lists, as at present, 2/3 times a week during OLA the University is planning to digitise these and make them accessible via SharePoint. This will provide more timely and accurate admissions information.

HE Co-ordinators requested that, where possible, face to face training on OLA and OLE be provided. They also asked if a set of FAQs could be provided. It was acknowledged that at this stage it will not be possible to import data from the College EBS directly onto the University’s OLA and OLE systems.

The following start and end dates for OLA and OLE were provided:

* OLA opens on 23 August 2021 and closes on 24 September 2021
* OLE opens on 8 September 2021 and closes on 15 October 2021
* Finance deadline 27 October 2021

Agreed: i) that HE Co-ordinators provide QE with dates suitable for training and staff requiring training;

ii) that the University provide a set of FAQs.

DIGITISATION OF CRS AND MARKS UPLOAD

21.12 The Chair informed that the University is proposing to move from the manual

completion of Course Results Sheets (CRS) in Colleges and at the Exams office in the University to a digitalised system of recording and uploading marks. A pilot is underway in BMC this year where one programme will electronically record marks on the CRS and upload same unto the University’s system.

It is hoped that the electronic recording and transferring of marks will reduce the administrative burden on College and University staff while at the same time reducing human error. If the pilot is successful it is planned to roll out the digitisation of CRS across all partners next academic year.

In the future it may be possible to export data from the College EBS system directly onto Ulster’s systems.

REVIEW OF VIRTUAL REVALIDATION EVENT AND RESOURCES SITE

21.13 The Chair sough feedback from members on the recent evaluation/re-validation

staff development event and the resource site which accompanies it. The

recordings from the event will be made available as soon as possible. She said

that if there is sufficient demand from partners this could become an annual event for those course teams with evaluation/re-validation events coming up within 18 months.

HE Co-ordinators said they found the event to be extremely valuable and the feedback they received from course teams was very positive.

As there is not open access to the online resources, HE Co-ordinators were asked to provide details of any course teams with upcoming evaluation/re-validation events so that they can have access to the online materials.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

21.14 The Chair provided members with an update on WBL and the uptake of the AB

award.

A total of 9 CA3s were received from Colleges wishing to offer the AB as an exit award for those FD students unable to find suitable WBL opportunities. Colleges were commended for their hard work and effort in finding innovative and creative ways of securing opportunities for students to meet the learning outcomes for the WBL module.

The Chair reminded members that under University regulations transfers between modules (i.e., WBL and PBL) is permissible within the first 3 weeks of the semester of study only.  Therefore if, within this time period, a student on the PBL (AB exit) route acquires a WBL place they can then transfer from the PBL module to the WBL module and be considered for the FdSc award.

Any transfer would also be contingent on any College team ensuring that the "front-loaded" teaching aligned to the module they transfer to, is subsequently covered by the student.

HE Co-ordinators were also reminded that students have up to 28 weeks to complete their WBL and still be considered at the August Exam Board.

FITNESS TO PRACTICE

21.15 Mr Marley reminded members that Course Directors of programmes in partner institutions where Access NI clearance is required were asked to:

i) Confirm that the publicly available information on their website was accurate;

ii) Outline the process within their College for students who require Access NI clearance.

The responses showed that all partners have a process in place for students who

require Access NI clearance and that publicly available information was

available on their website. However, the Access NI clearance processes in place

and the publicly available information varied considerably between Colleges.

It had been agreed that a set of principles relating to Access NI be prepared

and forwarded to Colleges for consideration. However, with the Covid-19

pandemic this work has been put on hold. Mr Marley said that this work will be

picked up again next academic year.

ATTRITION ON ACCESS PROGRAMMES

21.16 Members considered paper CPF/21/02 on work untaken by the Attrition on Access Programmes Working Group.

Mrs Brogan said that the first meeting of the Working Group focused on three key areas:

1. Current Performance,

2. Insights into key drivers for attrition, success and progression,

3. Possible responses, interventions and planning

With regard to performance key attrition, success and progression figures for Access courses were discussed, noting that >50% of courses had attrition rates of between 26 and 49%, with 16% of courses having attrition >50%.

A number of key drivers were identified including cohort characteristics, strength of course teams, demographic changes within student cohorts, recruitment policy, accuracy of metrics, curriculum, Ulster identity, and follow up on leavers.

Although a follow-up meeting was envisaged to progress this review, the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed specific areas of work. Currently there are no plans for a meeting in relation to the work of the sub-group. This will be reviewed when conditions permit.

The revalidation of the Access programmes run by NRC, SWC, NWRC and SRC is due in November 2021 having been postponed in 2020 due to Covid-19. Work is ongoing in relation to this.

CONTINUOUS ASSURANCE OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (CAQE)

21.17 Members received paper CPF/21/03 on the outcomes from the 2019/20 CAQE.

Members noted that Faculties had reviewed the quantitative and qualitative data available and requested that Course Teams provide Action Plans for 37 programmes. When analysing the data Faculties took cognisance of the unprecedent arrangements for the delivery and assessment of semester 2 modules.

Colleges were asked to reflect upon the following:

* High levels of attrition in Years 1 and 2
* High level of non-returners
* Poor first-sit outcomes
* Poor Success 2 outcomes

Completed Action Plans were received for all 37 programmes. Faculties reviewed the Action Plans and no further action being required at this stage. FPMs will continue to monitor these programmes.

In the paper members were reminded of the need for Course Teams to respond to the External Examiner Report and share the report and response with students. Evidence of this must be provided in the minutes of SSCC meetings.

MARKETING

21.18 Members received paper CPF/21/04 on current marketing activity being

undertaken by the University.

In December the University ran three online webinars aimed at Access students across the 6 colleges covering courses run at each of our campuses. Although registration for each of the days were very healthy the numbers that attended on each day were not so good.

During December the University invited the Principals and Directors of Curriculum to meetings chaired by the Provosts. Topics covered included how the University has responded to COVID, support for our students, our new Belfast campus development and CPD opportunities through our Education team. Each college was invited to their own individual session to give them a chance not only to discuss specific issues but also give them the opportunity to share ideas and resources. Four out of the 6 colleges responded, and it is hoped to hold follow-up sessions in March.

Due to the ongoing pandemic the University will be holding Applicant Information

Days on Fri 12 and Saturday 13 February online. Content for the days is being worked on at present but all information on what will be covered can be found at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/applicant-day>.

Everyone who has made an application(s) will be invited to the online event. The

event will aim to provide students with detailed information on their course

options so they can made informed decisions about their CF/CI choices. There

will also be talks from the University’s student support team, accommodation,

virtual tours of our campuses and much more.

The University is engaging with schools and colleges to find out about their future events and their willingness to have us visit their school or college to deliver our Ulster presentation.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

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27 January 2021

ACTION SHEET

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | MINUTE | ACTION | ACTION BY | DEADLINE |
| 1 | 20.11 | i) that HE Co-ordinators provide QE with dates suitable for training and staff requiring training;  ii) that the University provide a set of FAQs | HE Co-ordinators  FPMs | 31/3/21  31/3/21 |