**GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**

**LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE**

**LEARNER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

***Report by the Learner Engagement Team***

1. **Introduction**

This report seeks to provide members of the Learning and Teaching Committee with a summary of Student Association and Learner Engagement activities from the beginning of academic year 2014/15. A programme of events was created at the beginning of the year in order to structure learner engagement activity within the classroom by lecturers, college wide by the Learner Engagement Team and activity through the Students Association. This timetable of events is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

1. **Student Association Activity**

At the end of academic year 2013/14, three full time Student Association Officers were elected to represent all learners in Glasgow Kelvin College. Unfortunately one officer has since resigned due to ill health. The two remaining officers have been working throughout the summer in order to create a strategy for the association, and also to organise events and activities for learners at the beginning of the new academic year.

One such event was the Fresher’s Week, in which the association arranged for a variety of organisations/companies to come with information, with some offering the opportunity for learners to work/volunteer with them. The event proved a success with learners, and it also gave the opportunity for the Student Association Officers to discuss with learners their roles and responsibilities within the college and promote upcoming events and opportunities within the Student Association.

The Student Association have also supported the sports department in creating and investing in clubs and activities that learners can participate in such as: skiing, football, wall climbing, kayaking and many more.

Throughout the year the Students’ Association will be attending events and conferences organised by Sparqs and NUS, in order to better support and inform learners of upcoming campaigns and issues they may face.

The Students Association, have to date, organised five class rep meetings in which class representatives can receive information on what is happening college wide and regionally. Learners also have the opportunity at these meetings to share achievements or any issues they may be facing. They also inform the reps of how they and fellow classmates can get involved with the association throughout the year, and how the association can support them in arranging activities and events.

1. **Peer Mentors**

The peer mentors are a group of returning learners, from a variety of courses throughout the college and were recruited, with the help of the Heads of Faculty, at the end of academic year 2013/14 to help support new learners coming to college. At the moment we have 17 peer mentors who have helped through the enrolment and induction period, with the opportunity of participating in future projects.

The mentors attended a training session held by the Director of Curriculum and the Learner Engagement Team, at the beginning of August, in order to help them understand their role within the college. At this training it was also explained to them that if they completed 20 hours of voluntary work within the college, it could lead to a volunteering qualification.

During the enrolment week the peer mentors were trained on the use of the machine which produces student cards. Whilst some peer mentors took the responsibility to produce the cards the others directed learners to the rooms in which enrolments were taking place, gave them information on the college and explained what college life had been like for them the previous year.

During this time the peer mentors had the chance to work alongside staff members, which both found very useful. The peer mentors also helped put together student packs which were to be distributed to all learners during the induction week.

During the induction week, peers mentors had another opportunity to engage with learners whilst handing out the student packs made up the previous week. With over 3000 packs given out this week alone, the contact between peer mentors and learners lead to a positive start for new learners.

Young Scot have a pilot project, with Glasgow Kelvin College being one of only 6 colleges in Scotland participating. Training will be carried out by a staff member from Young Scot which will show the mentors how to sign learners up to My World of Work, and Young Scot Cards, which will enable learners to get discounts from certain retailers and also provide them with valid identification.

1. **Class Representatives**

This year, representatives have been recruited with the help and support of teaching staff. An email was sent to all teaching staff at the beginning of September, for them to encourage learners to nominate at least one learner in their class who would represent them at Student Association meetings, course team meetings and other focus groups that would be happening within the college. At present, 310 class representatives have been elected throughout all faculties in a variety of courses.

Two types of training have been made available to class reps this year, one is training carried out by Student Participation in Quality Scotland (Sparqs) the other is facilitated by the faculty of Trade Union Education and Workplace Learning. The Sparqs training focuses on the quality of learning within the college, the session last two hours and learners are given a certificate which states they have completed it. The Trade Union course last for two days and gives the learners valuable skills in order for them to carry out their role effectively. Some of the skills they will be learning are problem solving, creating/reading agendas and minutes of meetings, and representation of their peers.

So far 45 reps have been trained through Sparqs and 13, with the potential of 100 more reps trained through the Trade Union training. Although only 21% of reps have been trained to date, the Director of Curriculum and Learner Engagement Team will arrange a series of catch up training sessions, using materials from both training courses with any remaining untrained reps.

A key activity for all class reps will be leading class discussions on learning and teaching approaches each teaching block, and then discussing this learner feedback at course team meetings. Learner Engagement staff will work with both learners and staff to support this process and to ensure that the College responds appropriately to issues raised.

Utilising class reps ensures correlation between issues coming from Student Association meetings, Learner Engagement discussions/surveys and programme team meetings. This gives the college sufficient evidence with which to address these issues.

1. **Stop and Check Activity**

The stop and check activity was created to provide feedback from all learners and was completed at week five in the first block. Teaching staff were able to address any concerns in regard to learning and teaching and to pass on any issues regarding college services to the relevant department. The format was asking learner four questions, with space for additional comments and/or improvements to college services. The four questions, the number of learners who completed the survey and the percentages of the answers are shown in the table below.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Respondents** | **1. Do you feel that you are on the right course?** | | | **2. Do you understand what you will have to do on the course?** | | | **3. Do you know how to get support?** | | | **4. Does the atmosphere in class help you to learn?** | | |
| Yes | Not Sure | No | Yes | Not Sure | No | Yes | Not Sure | No | Yes | Not Sure | No |
| 1862 | 96% | 3% | 1% | 96% | 3% | 1% | 88% | 10% | 2% | 91% | 7% | 2% |

Teaching staff and learners found the stop and check activity useful, with almost all learners satisfied with their course and understanding the work required of them throughout the year. Attached as appendix 2 is a full report from this activity.

1. **Future Activities**

Throughout the year the Learner Engagement Team will work with the Quality Manager to implement other methods of engagement in order to enhance the quality of the learner experience. One way will be through facilitated discussion with learners in the classroom environment where they feel comfortable and able to raise concerns confidently.

Evaluation through surveys is another way in which we will capture information from learners. Surveys sent out electronically and in paper format will enable a true reflection of learner numbers within the college, but also give the opportunity of anonymous feedback.

Throughout the year the Learner Engagement Team will identify and implement opportunities for learners for voluntary work in external organisations, work placements and other opportunities which may be relevant to them.

Elections for a part time paid role and other voluntary roles within the Students’ Association are currently ongoing, with potential candidates currently preparing for the campaigning period. Results are due to be announced the week commencing Monday 17th November.

Programme team meetings will take place before the end of block one. Information regarding learning and teaching will be addressed by the course tutor and concerns regarding college services will be passed to the relevant department, with some lecturers contacting the Learner Engagement Officers for advice or support.

Learner engagement will expand throughout the year with new processes continually being developed. Working in conjunction with the Students’ Association and with support from teaching staff, learner engagement will continue to evolve in Glasgow Kelvin College.

1. **Recommendations**

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

**8. Further information**

Members can obtain additional information in respect of this report from Arlene Sweeney or Ryan Jenkins, Learner Engagement Officers, or from Robin Ashton, Director of Curriculum.