

**Notes of the discussions which took place in the Boardroom, Derby Road site on Monday 7 April 2014 at 5.00 pm**

**GOVERNORS** Cllr Kate Allsop, Chair  
**PRESENT:** John Holford  
Beverley Nita

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation  
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching & Learning  
Elaine Martin, Director: Quality & Performance  
Brian Malyan, Head of Engineering & Transport Skills  
Paul Rana, Head of Student Support  
Eleanor Taylor, Head of HE & International  
Sacha McCarthy, Director: Employer Engagement

At the beginning of the meeting the Chair indicated that unfortunately the Committee was inquorate and, therefore, was not in a position to proceed as a formally constituted meeting. It was agreed that any items for approval and decision on the agenda would be deferred to the next meeting and that matters presented for information only would simply be discussed.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair reminded those present to declare any interests that they may have on any items to be discussed. There were no interests declared.

**2. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dame Asha Khemka, Diana Meale, Marie Oakton and Rob Martlew.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014**

It was agreed that consideration of this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

**4. ACTIONS OUTSTANDING AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

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	<b>ACTION by whom</b>	<b>DATE by when</b>
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Date:

5. **DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Deputy Principal introduced her written report and drew members' attention to a number of items:

1) A level changes

- Changes to A levels were introduced in September 2013 that ended January exams for both AS (Year 1), and A2 (Year 2) students. AS students now sit all external exams in May/June rather than taking some of these in January. This has, therefore, increased the number of exams that students take as part of the summer exam series. It has also removed the opportunity of a second attempt for students who would re-sit exams in the summer previously taken in January.
- A2 students who wish to re-sit any units that they took as part of their AS year, now have to wait until May/June of their second year to re-sit prior to the A2 exams.
- In order to prepare students for the changes, a number of strategies were introduced prior to the start of the 2013/14 academic year:
  - a) Full explanation of the exam changes as part of the initial advice and guidance process prior to offering a place on the course.
  - b) Internal exams were held for AS and A2 students over a week in February 2014 to provide a realistic exam opportunity under full exam conditions under external exam invigilators. There was 99% attendance for the exams, indicating that the students took this opportunity seriously.
  - c) Training has been provided for staff on exam marking, providing feedback to students including exam techniques and strategies.
  - d) Generic exam technique issues were identified following the exam marking and tutorials are planned on improving exam performance, eg answering as instructed, decoding questions, time management, etc.
  - e) Poorly performing students were referred to the Achievement Coaches for personal support.
- Changes to A levels planned for September 2015 will end the current system of AS and A2 as separate qualifications and reintroduce A levels with all exams at the end of the two year course. It is also planned for existing AS levels to be retained as stand alone courses, but results will not count towards full A levels. It is, therefore, unlikely that centres will offer AS qualifications.
- Strategies relating to the change for September 2015 include:
  - a) Emphasis on initial advice and guidance for students and parents regarding the commitment necessary over two years of study, including greater emphasis on clear planning for progression following A levels.
  - b) Revisions to schemes of work and lesson plans to reflect the need to develop higher level skills of analysis and evaluation over the two year period.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- c) Planning appropriate wider learning, including career and progression activities to keep students engaged and support retention.
- d) Internal exams for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students under exam conditions to ensure that students are exam ready with follow up procedures in class and tutorials as students will not have external exams until the end of Year 2.

In general discussion it was acknowledged that the build up over exams is quite an issue to address and provides challenges both for students and staff. It was explained that mock exams were undertaken in February rather than January to enable students to get back into the swing of learning and not deter them from returning after the Christmas break. All agreed that 99% attendance at the mock exams shows real student engagement and is very encouraging. Governors were given assurance that the A level team are well prepared for the proposed changes.

## 2) External Mini Inspection/Observations

As previously advised, the College has brought in external advice to provide an overview or mini inspection on College areas. All but three areas to date have been reviewed. The external observers have been asked to provide inspection feedback in a supportive manner and this seems to have been well received. Brian Malyan, the Head of Engineering and Transport Skills confirmed that the process had been very helpful for staff and, indeed, staff had all experienced an increase in morale as the observation process seemed to be an accreditation of good performance.

In addition to this, within the Schools of Learning, the Heads of School and Curriculum Managers make observations during the academic year. In order to validate their grading they have each undertaken joint observations with the inspectors. To date, all inspectors have agreed with the suggested grade from the internal observer, which gives real assurance to the College regarding the accuracy of internal observations. The Learning Consultants, who observe sessions with partner providers, have also been involved with the validation process.

## 3) Ofsted - Evaluating Teaching and Learning

Members were advised that in February 2014 Ofsted published a document 'How do Ofsted inspectors evaluate teaching in the further education and skills sector?' The document summary clarifies the approach to making judgements on teaching, learning and assessment in further education and skills inspections. It is made clear in the document that inspectors do not judge a teacher and especially not a lesson overall, by evaluating the performance of the teacher in a lesson or part of a lesson. Inspectors grade the impact of teaching, learning and assessment activities on learners' development of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, Ofsted do award a grade overall for teaching, learning and assessment after observing a learning session where there is

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

sufficient evidence to do so. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the document has been circulated widely within College.

On a point of clarity, it was confirmed that sessions will be graded on an individual basis. This is approximately a 30/40 minute period. Teachers are not graded, but instead it is the learning that is assessed within the sessions. It was confirmed that the College does re-observe any teachers whose session is graded as 3 or 4 to see if the grade was a 'blip' or a general representation of performance. Governors were advised that a graded session is only part of the assessment process as in fact the session is only one hour out of a maximum 800 hours per year that a full time teacher will teach.

It was confirmed that following A level mock exams, feedback is provided on a generic as well as one to one sessions with each student to identify particular areas for improvement. In general discussion, it was acknowledged that the A level changes are going against national trends to date, and the likely impact is a move towards three A levels being the norm. The Deputy Principal raised the point that there is the potential of an impact upon success rates, although this is likely to be a similar pattern in all other FE institutions.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

## 6. QUALITY REPORT

Elaine Martin introduced this comprehensive report and guided Governors through a number of matters to be specifically considered:

- Page 28 – Governors were advised that there is no change in relation to the presentation of this page, but that additional information has been provided which gives context and comparisons. It was noted that in-year performance data based on retention for all long classroom based learning is +1% compared with the same time in the prior year.
- Page 28 table 3 - shows the results of the on-programme survey. Members were advised that this is a fairly usual result and provides an opportunity to drill down with students and get to the bottom of any issues to address with the expectation that improvements are seen prior to the exit survey.
- Page 28 table 4 – this provides a summary of external verifier reports. It was confirmed that there are no blocked programmes. Ten actions are required following visits, it was confirmed that this is not a concern as the requirements in each are quite small and easily rectified.
- Page 28 table 5 – the results of the observations are provided as at 19 March, so in fact the position has moved on. At that time 74% of teaching was observed as good or better. To respond to this CPD and development observations have been put in place.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- Page 29 – this page should answer a number of the queries raised in relation to Apprenticeship retention at the last meeting. It was noted that Apprenticeship retention is not recorded in the same way as classroom based learning and that a national based template is utilised.
- In relation to the red RAG rated items on page 29 and 30, all are to do with the same issue of timeliness. Governors were given assurance that the team are fully aware of the problem and actions needed to address under performance are dealt with in the QIP. It was noted that for Apprentices, the timeliness results can go up or down in-year and therefore the report is only a snapshot of a given point in time.
- Page 31 – learner surveys are still a work in progress. It was noted that partners, to date, have tended to do their own surveys, which unfortunately has led to a lack of standardised information and an inability to present a College wide picture. Plans are in place to change and address this.
- Page 31 table 11 – this report now gives prior year comparison. At the next meeting the team will be able to include the national average position too.
- Page 32 – this page now provides a separate VWS report.
- Page 33 – details student volumes, it was acknowledged that they are relatively small for this area.
- Page 34 – this information attempts to give parity with classroom-based learning. All acknowledged that observations showing only 56% of teaching good or better, was a cause for concern. It was confirmed that the team were working with partners to improve, and this was in the context of a changing landscape.
- Page 34 – E&D position is positive.
- Page 35 – this dashboard provides information by College curriculum area and enables the team to develop a building profile. The information provided relates to funded qualifications only and enables Governors to take an overview and health check of each area.
- Page 14 – retention is a key issue at this point of the year and is something that Ofsted are particularly interested in. Potential for ‘all enrolments’ (being all income streams) including partners in relation to classroom-based learning is positive, with five categories showing a 1% improvement, when compared with the same point in the prior year. Retention for classroom based learning SFA/EFA funding qualifications, learner responsive provision, excluding partners for 16-18 long courses with 4183 net starts, is 1% higher than as at the same point in the prior year and all short provision with 5081 net starts is also 1% higher.
- The 19+ functional skills success is an action area within the College QIP and a maximum increase in success of 9% to 81% is feasible based on last year’s actual rate of achievement. The overall functional skills predicted success is 86%, a potential 3% increase from 2012/13.
- There are 313 withdrawals compared with 232 at the same point last year, this is 81 more withdrawals in 2013/14. There were, however,

Elaine  
Martin

July 2014

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- 354 more net starts in 2013/14 than in 2012/13.
- The pattern of reasons for withdrawal is similar to those in 2012/13, but an increase in the number of withdrawals in the 'other reasons/dropped out' category, which doubled from 44 to 88 in 2013/14.
  - Lesson observation – external moderation has been undertaken through the use of associate Ofsted inspectors and the College Observation Team. In total over 200 observations have been completed to date and are still ongoing. The profile is 76% graded good or better. It was confirmed that the grading process internally is very similar to external observers, so as previously indicated gives some reassurance.
  - There is a high level of activity in all areas of the QIP to deliver improvement.
  - Page 17 – this gives an update on the QIP processes and identifies issues standing out as of concern at this time in the year. Issues are broken down by Schools of Learning, and detail given regarding all areas with retention at a rate of less than 93%. It was confirmed that this information needs to be cross-referenced with the data table that gives the size of each area of provision so that Governors can get a better understanding of materiality.
  - Page 18 – this provides a detailed breakdown of lesson observations. It was confirmed that Ofsted are interested in a number of linked factors and not just observations, these include Learner Surveys, CPD, Learning Walks, etc.
  - Page 24 – this gives a summary of partner activity and observations. It was confirmed that the number of observations taken at this point in the year compares equally with the prior year and that a lot of partner observations are done over the summer.
  - Page 41 onwards gives a detailed update of activity in relation to the QIP. The orange text donates changes from the January report and a further update will be provided at the July meeting.

Elaine  
Martin

July 2014

Governors all thanked Elaine Martin for her full report and all acknowledged that a vast amount of work had gone into the detail and the presentation.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

## 7. HE UPDATE

Eleanor Taylor introduced this item and confirmed that the team were trying to pull together a HE dashboard similar to the information presented in the prior report. She confirmed that this was currently a work in progress, but that the aspiration is to present information in a similar format to enable consistency.

Members` attention was drawn to the written report, and a number of updates were provided:

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- Demand – applications for September 2014 now stand at 263. This is +11% on the same point in the prior year. However, there are differences in relation to course area choice. The East Midlands (based upon UCAS reports) has one of the lowest application rates in 2014, with an overall increase of only 2%.
- Offer – the College also now has approval to offer a HND in Health & Social Care.
- Current numbers – the table at page 55 shows the breakdown of students by mode of study and School of Learning. The relatively low numbers of part time students reflects national trends and there are very different patterns within different Schools of Learning.
- National student survey 2013/14 – a lot of work has been done by staff to improve the response rate, which currently stands at 75%, the hope is to get to 80% by the end of the survey window.
- Section 6 onwards reflects discussions at the HE Academic Standards Committee.
- Generally, retention is down by 3% on the prior year, but there is a favourable comparison with long level 4 courses.
- In terms of the split between part time and full time studying, it was acknowledged that this was very much influenced by the course offer, for example BPCE which is Business Management, sees a lot of students who are in work and therefore come to College on a part time basis. This is a similar position to PCGE and DTLLS, where there is a requirement to be in service before completion of the course.

It was confirmed that the College has seen a shift from part time to full time learning, although this is not in every area, eg, Engineering is based heavily upon day release students and, therefore, has a large part time profile.

In general discussion it was acknowledged that retention challenges are faced by both full time and part time students, influencing factors are different for each cohort.

Members were advised that the QAA HE Review will take place on 8 June 2015. It was agreed that at the next meeting there would be a short presentation explaining the methodology changes.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

Eleanor  
Taylor

July 2014

## 8. LEARNER VOICE STRATEGY

Paul Rana introduced this item and drew a number of matters to members' attention:

- The participation rate for the national learner survey was up by 69.4% from the 2011/12 rate (this is 8% who completed the survey in 2011/12 and 8.3% in 2012/13).
- The overall College score for the national learner survey was down to 8.4 in 2012/13 compared to 8.6 in 2011/12 (the maximum score

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:

being 10). It was explained that the new build and the disruption may have led to this decline.

- Learner Voice activity in the College has continued to diversify and expand.
- In comparison with other 157 Group colleges, the College's overall score of 8.4 compares quite favourably. It is on par with Blackpool & Fylde College and Chichester, who are both rated as outstanding in recent Ofsted inspections. Only two colleges from the 157 Group currently rated as outstanding are above the College average score of 8.4, six others are on the same overall score or below.
- Learners are now represented on the Safeguarding Steering Group and will be represented on the Healthy College Steering Group from the next meeting in May. Learners will help, for example, by reviewing materials developed for e-safety and financial safety tutorials.
- Specialist user groups for vulnerable learners have continued this year. For the LGBT Group, work has been undertaken for learners to keep in touch and support each other in a way they feel most comfortable with and can retain anonymity.
- Clubs and Societies were launched in January 2014, currently include a Book Club, Chess Club, Chocolate Society, 5-a-side football, Gardening Society, Ladies football, mixed basketball, Tea Society and volunteering/enterprise/fundraising society.
- Also now established are some debate sessions, with the intention of widening potential participation in these areas.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

## 9. **SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Deputy Principal introduced her written report and drew specific items out for information:

- The Safeguarding Steering Group met in March 2014. The key focus for the Group continues to be to ensure that all legislative requirements are in place and the safeguarding procedure continues to develop and be embedded throughout College delivered provision, VWS and partner provision.
- Potentially at risk vulnerable students – work with this group of students has continued and there are currently 301 students on programme within the identified groups. The students continue to receive a level of support appropriate to their individual needs. The level of support may increase or decrease during the term, depending upon their situation at the time. The lowest retention rate in relation to this Group is individuals who have cautions, reprimands or warnings. This is similar to the position in the prior year and is something that the College is working on as a concern.
- There is a significant increase in the number of young carers who have been identified. The College now holds the Young Carers Quality Standards Award and this has been promoted with external

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:



agencies. It is reasonable to assume that this has had an impact on the size of the young carers` cohort.

- Safeguarding Development Plan 2013/14 – as part of the discussion on progress for the plan a further area for development was identified as part of the e-safety stream. A focus on financial safety is being developed together with resource materials to ensure that students are aware of online threats to their financial situation.

Progress against each aspect of the development plan is provided for Governors and annotated in the document at appendix a.

In relation to the data tables at page 66, College provision shows a quite similar position to the prior year. The number of partner incidents has increased. However, review shows that there are different issues with different partners, and there are no themes causing concern. It was felt that as there are more mature students with partners, it is likely that there are less incidents.

In general discussion members were advised that the Local Authority issues warnings to staff regarding scams that are known. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal would liaise with Kate Allsop outside the meeting to try and link in to Local Authority notifications. In addition to this it was agreed that discussions with the College IT Team could take place to see if they could help to support and improve this initiative.

DP

April 2014

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### 10. DESTINATIONS REPORT – ACTUAL

Elaine Martin introduced this item and confirmed that being able to accurately record actual destinations is becoming an increasingly important national issue, a number of points were brought specifically to members` attention:

- Student progression from West Nottinghamshire College with a trend around 95% is very strong, with overall positive outcomes (where known) for students within scope of the survey.
- The highest proportion of students (43.3%) progressed on to another course at West Nottinghamshire College, which is a decline of 7.9% from 2011/12. However, 84 more students have progressed into higher education, both at the College and elsewhere.
- The number of students progressing to full time and part time employment has increased by 81 from 2011/12.
- 76 more students have gained employment or enhanced career prospects, this is the highest level over the past three years.
- Analysis of actual positive outcomes for each School of Learning at page 80, table 4 shows that all Schools of Learning have healthy progression. The data shows very similar comparisons between 16-18 and 19+, male and female and white British and other ethnicity destinations. However, worthy of note, 4% more females (219

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Date:

females compared to 134 males) go on to higher education elsewhere. More males go into full time employment (173 compared to 117 females), which is a 5% difference.

- Systems are being developed and implemented currently to more accurately capture student destinations for the leavers during 2013/14. This is in response to greater national and local interest in establishing an understanding of what students move on to do after leaving College, including whether or not their destinations are course related. This new process is also designed to bring independence from the role of the tutor and to formally follow up after a reasonable period of time after the student has left.
- The College is piloting the structure of the survey processed through telephone follow-ups for learners who left in 2012/13. 200 full time students will be contacted from a representative learner profile. This survey will take place between April and June 2014 and will enable the College to gather a deeper understanding of learner destinations and their contribution to the local and wider economy and will enable the College to extrapolate and draw conclusions. It was confirmed that an outcomes report on this pilot process will be provided at the July meeting.
- In relation to full time students, as a matter of good practice, intended destinations will continue to be collected by tutors as students prepare to leave the College and recorded in ProMonitor. This triggers discussion about a student's next steps and signposting to appropriate exit guidance should this be required.
- The proposed new process for 2013/14 will be triggered four months after a student leaves College and allowing time to maximise data collection and analysis, reports will be generated in the March in the year after the student has left the College. This will become the operational and reporting cycle in future years and will enable year on year comparisons to be made.
- Employer responsive provision – destinations data is starting to be collected for Apprentices and workplace learners, this information is being captured at point of exit from their qualification using existing modified College systems by both electronic and paper base. The College has not historically formally engaged in such activity. The data will enable the College to determine whether leavers remain in employment and if their career and economic status has improved. This is a development process and is intended to integrate with other systems that the College currently operates to create a holistic view of destinations, including employer as well as Learner views.
- Higher education applicants by gender – in total there were 446 applications made for 2013/14 UCAS entry. Of those, 61.9% were made by females, and 38.1% by males.
- HE applicants not placed or withdrew their application – in total 29.4% of applicants were not placed or withdrew their application. 30.4% of female applicants were not placed and 27.7% of male applicants.
- Top 10 most popular subject areas were noted at table 7.3.

Elaine  
Martin

July 2014

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:

- Top 10 universities where students were placed were noted at table 7.4. The top 10 universities accounted for 217 of the 315 student places. This is 68.9% of all students placed. The top five universities are all geographically relatively local to the College with the most popular choices being within the caring professions of Social Work or Nursing.
- Russell Group placements – in total 16.5% of total applicants placed were placed in Russell Group Universities. 12 of the 24 of the Russell Group Universities had at least one student placed. The University of Nottingham had the highest number (31) of applicants placed of all Russell Group Universities.
- In summary, Governors were advised that supporting students in progression to their positive outcomes is something that the College does very well and is a key strength in supporting student outcomes. Overall 95% of students progressed to a positive outcome in 2012/13.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

**11. AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was Thursday 3 July 2014 at 5.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 6.20 pm.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date: