

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held in the Board Room, Derby Road site on Thursday 2nd October 2014 at 5pm

GOVERNORS Kate Allsop – Chair
PRESENT: Diana Meale
John Holford
Beverly Nita

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal Teaching & Learning
Elaine Martin, Director of Quality and Performance
Paul Rana, Head of Student Support
Amanda Jogela, Head of Lifestyle (staff observer)
Sacha McCarthy, Director Employer Engagement
Louise Knott, Director Communications and Marketing

14.13 APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Clerk introduced this item and reminded members that the Terms of Reference for each and every committee require the annual appointment of a Chair at the start of each academic year.

Kate Alsop was nominated as the Committee Chair. This nomination was seconded and approved.

AGREED: to appoint Kate Alsop as the Standards Committee Chair for 2014/15.

14.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

14.15 WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dame Asha Khemka and Rob Martlew. Amanda Jogela, the new staff observer was welcomed to her first meeting and round table introductions were made.

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14.16 NOTES OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE ON 7TH APRIL 2014

The notes were reviewed and agreed as a true and accurate reflection of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the content of the notes of the discussion meeting held on 7th April 2014.

14.17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23RD JANUARY 2014

Members reviewed the minutes and were satisfied that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting

AGREED: to approve the content of the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2014.

14.18 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The action progress table was noted. In relation to item 1 - the ALPs target grade, Elaine Martin confirmed that these would be reported at the January meeting as the data was not yet available.

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In relation to page 9 of the minutes the Deputy Principal confirmed that the College has linked with the Local Authority regarding notifications and this is now all in place.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.19 DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew a number of matters to members attention:

- Beacon Award – the college submission for the Edge Practical Teaching and Practical Learning category award has been shortlisted as it was last year. The submission is based on the gogglebox aspect of create TV where the students produce a live television programme on each Wednesday as part of their course. Assessors attended recently and the College doesn't believe that there was anything more that the students could have done to impress in relation to this initiative. The winners will be announced at the AOC conference in November 2014. It was agreed that Louise Knott would send Governors a link to the gogglebox production.
- World Skills UK National Skills Competition – two students have been selected to compete at this competition.
- Common Inspection Framework – the CIF and handbook have recently been updated and there are two key amendments and other very minor changes. The first key change is in relation to Safeguarding which will now have a graded statement as part of

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the effectiveness of leadership and management section of the report. The second change provides clarification on how OFSTED inspect Teaching, Learning and Assessment through assessing impact and not by grading individual teachers or sessions. OFSTED will shortly start consultation on a new framework which will be implemented in 2015, it is envisaged that this will be based on 4 or 5 grades potentially;

- a) Outcome for learners
- b) Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- c) Leadership and Management
- d) Personal development (focusing on employability in FE and skills)
- e) Quality of curriculum (focus on meeting local and national employer needs).

The latter two elements will be new to the framework.

- OFSTED lesson observation trial – OFSTED has announced a trial in Schools and Colleges to change their feedback to teachers. They propose to stop grading individual teachers but instead gather an overall picture to enable a judgement on Teaching, Learning and Assessment to be made.
- English and Maths – as part of the 16-19 study programmes which have been in place from September 2013, any student who has not attained grade A*-C in English and/or Maths must continue to study towards these as a goal. Currently colleges are able to enrol students to the most appropriate qualification as identified by initial and diagnostic assessments. Following these assessments, some students with a grade D have been enrolled to functional skills level 2 rather than to GCSE. As from September 2015, students who have a grade D GCSE will be required to retake the GCSE qualification regardless of diagnostic results. This will also become a requirement of funding.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.20 A-LEVEL AND GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

Elaine Martin introduced her report and drew some key headline data to members attention:

- The A2 pass rate shows a very slight 0.5% decline to 99.2%. Nationally the pass rate decreased by 0.1% to 98% from 2013, the College performed 1.2% better than the national pass rate. There are 19 subjects reported and 16 had 100% pass rate.
- The percentage of passes at higher grades (A*-B) at A2 declined by 2% to 31%. The proportion of A*-C grade passes declined by 5% to 69% compared with the previous year.
- The AS pass rate decreased slightly by 1% to 85%. The percentage of passes at A and B grades increased by 3% to 41% but a slight decline of 2% at A, B and C grades to 67%.

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- The overall success rate for A2 has increased by 2% to 97% in 2013/14 resulting from an 8% improvement in retention. The overall success rate for AS has declined by 2% to 78% in 13/14 resulting from a 2% decline in retention and a 1% decline in achievement.
- GCSE pass rate has declined marginally by 1% to 99%. There has however been an increase in entries from 213 in 12/13 to 405 in 13/14 (351 students). This significant change is due to an increase in the number of students aged 16-18 retaking GCSEs this year due to the Governments reforms which require those that do not achieve A*-C in English and Maths to continue to study these subjects.
- The percentage of passes achieved at A*-C grades remains the same as in 12/13 at 52%.
- GCSE success is improved by 8% to 82%.
- Key areas for continued improvement in 14/15 are:
 - a) Improvement in proportion of high grades (A*-B) and A*-C grades at A2 level.
 - b) Improvement in overall success rate at AS level.
 - c) Improvement in proportion of A-C at AS level.
 - d) Improvement in A*-C grades at GCSE level to at least 65% in all subjects.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.21 HE

Eleanor Taylor introduced her report and explained that there were a number of strands to be considered. The first of which is the HE Strategy presented for 2014/2017. She explained that the strategy has been developed to give it a broader remit and to include higher level skills. She confirmed that this was in line with College and local enterprise (D2N2) priorities.

Members reviewed the strategy presented and were happy to agree as drafted.

AGREED: to approve the HE Strategy for 2014/2017.

Members' attention was then drawn to an update from the HE Academic Standards Committee. It was acknowledged that the response rate from the National Student Survey needed to be improved as there is a correlation between the response rate and the level of 'satisfaction' reported. Eleanor Taylor confirmed that the College had done some work with students at the student conference recently arranged. In terms of unpicking the student survey responses, it has become clear that there are certain 'perception' issues particularly in relation to comments made regarding timetabling, room changes, staff turnover etc. She confirmed that the College does have an action plan in place to address all matters raised.

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The Committee discussed the reference made to staff turnover and questioned whether the pattern seen in 13/14 was normal or whether this was an exceptional year. It was explained that several colleagues had secured alternative jobs in the University sector and that whilst this was very positive for staff, students did view it as disruptive as the HE team is small. Eleanor Taylor confirmed that there is a need to have more formal succession planning in place but that the College does not view this as an area of concern.

Members' attention was drawn to the format of the data dashboard to be utilised at page 43, it was confirmed that this is in line with other College reporting.

Eleanor Taylor then went on to provide a presentation which summarised the QAA review update. Key items were brought to members attention:

- The QAA HE review is very different from OFSTED.
- A fixed date for review is already known, this is 8th June 2015.
- The review will be based upon the QAA Quality Code which is the framework for the process. Part A relates to Academic standards and includes 7 expectations, part B is academic quality 11 expectations (1 per chapter) and supporting indicators, part C information about HE provision 1 expectation.
- The QAA HE review will look at a number of key areas;
 - a) The maintenance of academic standards
 - b) The quality of students learning opportunities
 - c) Information about learning opportunities
 - d) The enhancement of students' learning opportunities
 - e) Theme (to be confirmed at preparatory meetings)
- The College will follow the exact same process as that which is in place for universities; this gives the ability for direct comparisons.
- QAA HE review judgements – in relation to academic standards this is a very black or white, we achieve or we don't. This shows that the College's provision meets UK expectations, or requires improvement to meet UK expectations, or does not meet UK expectations.
- The review then goes on to make other judgements (assuming the academic standards question has been answered positively). This has more of a grading structure with:
 - a) The College's provision is commended
 - b) The College's provision meets UK expectations
 - c) The College's provision requires improvement to meet UK expectations
 - d) The College's provision does not meet UK expectations.
- The review process includes a preparatory meeting on Thursday 12th February. The College already knows who the reviewers will be. The College is required to submit a self evaluation document and then there is a review visit on 8th June. At this

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visit there will be 3 reviewers, a facilitator and a lead student representative. It is believed that the review will last 3 days.

- The review in general is expected to be much more searching than IQER with structured expectations. There are no observations. There will be student representation and employer involvement. A key item that reviewers will be looking for is HE at all levels and whole College approach.

In general discussion, the Committee was advised that a number of Colleges have had some problems with Pearson and Ed Excel provision which is HNC and HNDs. To ensure that the College is fully compliant in this area, more periodic reviews are carried out. The Committee was advised that at this stage there is no expectation for Governors to be involved in the review process.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.22 TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATION (END OF YEAR REPORT)

Elaine Martin introduced this item and provided a general summary. She confirmed that a huge amount of activity and resource goes in to both on and off campus teaching and learning observations. This relates to the actual observations themselves and then the analysis of results. She confirmed that partner staff go through the same process as College staff and that in this way the College ensures that the same level of support and development is available, with all staff treated with parity.

A number of key items were noted:

- 1) Summary of on campus teaching, learning and assessment observations.
 - 338 developmental observations have been completed to date.
 - 304 graded observations (excluding re-observations) have been completed to date by the internal observation team. Grade profile is 82.8% good or better, 14.8% requires improvement (grade 3) and 2.3% is inadequate (grade 4).
 - 40 out of 52 staff have received a re-observation.
 - Grade profile following re-observation is 92.7% good or better, 5.5% requires improvement and 1.6% is inadequate.
 - The College also employed an external observation team of 8 to carry out 270 observations across all 7 Schools of Learning.
 - External observation team grade profile was 74% good or better, 21.4% requires improvement and 4.4% is inadequate.
 - Joint observations with the external observation team and College staff evidenced that the internal

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observation team has graded accurately. This process showed a very high degree of communality.

2) Summary of off campus teaching, learning and assessment observations.

- 240 partner provider staff were delivering to Vision West Nottinghamshire College students at the end of 2013/14. This number fluctuated throughout the academic year with taking on new partners and stopping work with others and was continuously reviewed throughout the year to ensure that observations were completed where required.
- Of the 204 observations completed during 13/14, the grade profile was 55.5% good or better, 33.8% requires improvement and 10.2% inadequate. The grade profile following re-observation was 60.7% good or better, 31.3% requires improvement and 7.8% inadequate.
- 90 staff have received a grade 3 or grade 4 during 2013/14. These staff will be subject to a re-observation. To date, 22 staff have received a re-observation, 15 staff have improved their grade profile and 7 have stayed the same (9 staff moved from a grade 3 to a grade 2. One member of staff moved from a grade 4 to a grade 2. Four staff moved from a grade 4 to a grade 3 and seven stayed the same). Six grade 3 and one grade 4. 32 staff who were subject to re-observation, have since left employment with partners and the remaining 36 will be re-observed at the earliest opportunity in 2014/15.
- Partners cancelled 82 (40%) of planned observations which does have an impact upon the College's ability to accurately assess and support partners.

In reviewing the detailed report members noted some key data.

- Page 49 – the table illustrates grade observations conducted by the external observation team by curriculum area.
- Page 50 – the tables illustrate the top 3 strengths and areas for improvement for observations conducted by internal and external observation teams.
- Page 50 – significant areas requiring improvement are; teaching and learning to support learners to develop the English, Mathematics and Functional Skills that they need to achieve their main learning goals and career aims and how well teaching and learning methods inspire and challenge all learners and enable them to extend their knowledge skills and understanding. Functional Skills success in

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College is good with 12/13 success being 82%, however the observation process clearly indicates that the use of Mathematics and English could be better developed within delivery sessions other than Functional Skills/GCSE delivery sessions.

- Page 53 – provides a summary of off campus observations. A risk based approach to the number of observations completed with each partner has been applied in 2013/14.
- Page 54 – the table provides a grade profile by partners.

In reviewing this table the Committee commented that approximately one third were new partners and they were concerned that a very high proportion of these were grade 4 observations. It was explained that the College does undertake due diligence but some partners have a very high staff turnover rate and as a consequence there is a limited ability for the College development team to make impact. The Committee were given assurance that the process of due diligence has been strengthened regarding the quality side of partners. The team are also training partners to do their own observations, the aspiration being that the more constant managers take on more responsibility for ensuring and maintaining quality. It was reiterated that the College takes a risk based approach to observation and each partner will be RAG rated.

The Committee was reminded that the observation process is only one part of the due diligence exercise and that other criteria are investigated before contracts are awarded. It was explained that the team undertake a triangulation exercise and look at success rates, student feedback, finances etc.

Governors discussed the variances between internal and external observation profiles and questioned how accurate are the internal gradings. The Committee questioned whether the College was being too generous. It was explained that there are a high number of joint observation sessions and these show a high degree of agreement and as a consequence the team are confident that the internal observation team know how to observe and grade.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.23 LEARNER VOICE STRATEGY 2014/15

Paul Rana introduced this item and confirmed that the strategy has had a 'rethink' for this year to make sure that it includes all provision including work placements and use of technology etc. Key items brought to members attention were:

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- Learner voice strategy update outlining key changes to ensure the strategy encompasses all provision and makes effective use of technology to enhance learner voice.
- Changes in implementation of Your Voice (much smaller groups around key themes) and the role of the SU in supporting e-safety.
- Highlighting of the NUS publication 'the challenge of learner voice' which focuses on possible solutions to the lack of engagement amongst key groups of learners in further education.

Governors all agreed that the strategy was accessible and were happy to approve the same.

AGREED: to approve the Learner Voice Strategy for 2014/15.

14.24 STUDENT DESTINATIONS – INTENDED

Elaine Martin introduced this item and confirmed that for the College and the sector in general accurate capture of destination information is critically important. Key items from the report:

- The College surveys intended destinations of full-time classroom based students at the end of their programme of study during the period between June and September of each subsequent academic year.
- Information on actual destinations is collected between October and January relating to students' actual destinations.
- Intended destinations data was collected on 2866 full time classroom based students.
- Supporting students to progression to positive outcomes is something the College does very well and is a key strength. Overall, 96% of students where destinations are known, progressed to a positive outcome in 2013/14.
- The highest proportion of students 52% progressed on to another course at the College (this is not unusual).
- There has been a significant increase in the number of learners intending to go into full time employment 455 compared to last year's figure of 176, being an increase of 160%.
- Progression to higher education studied at the College has increased by 22%.
- The data shows very similar comparisons between male and female destinations.
- The data shows very similar comparisons between non White British and White British destinations.
- The data shows very similar comparisons between those with disabilities and those without.
- Historically, the vast majority of students have achieved their intended destination with less than 2% variation between intended and actual.

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Members' attention was drawn to the analysis section at page 75. Assurance was given that the College team do very carefully review this information with trends assessed year on year. The Committee was advised that this data table does not include apprenticeships. To improve reporting, the Committee requested that a separate report regarding apprenticeship intended and actual destinations be presented at the next meeting. They also requested that the summary table provided includes details of those students who state that they intend to go on to apprenticeships (this may or may not be a subsection of full-time/part-time employment).

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The Committee was advised that the team also cross references withdrawal information, this has shown that there is an increase in students who are leaving College to go in to employment. This would correlate well with the stated intended destinations information.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.25 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that it is a brief paper at this particular point of the year as the focus is on the Safeguarding Development Plan. Key items noted:

- The Safeguarding Steering Group will meet termly during 14/15.
- Safeguarding is monitored at each meeting of the Standards Committee.
- Safeguarding Development Plan 14/15 – the development plan for 14/15 has been drafted in line with the review of the 13/14 plan and the progress made against the plan and the areas the College has identified for further development. It has also been informed by the recently published DFE document Keeping Children Safe in Education and updates to the Common Inspection Framework, as OFSTED will provide a separate grade for safeguarding during inspections. The College aims to not merely be compliant with safeguarding requirements but to aim for best practice in this critical area of work.
- The development plan has been framed around some key themes:
 - a) Safe recruitment (staff and learners)
 - b) Training and development
 - c) Safe environment
 - d) Promotion
 - e) E-safety
 - f) Partners
 - g) Management of safeguarding
 - h) Governance and reporting

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- A comparison of the number of reported incidents over the two periods does not show significant differences. No areas of concern are highlighted by the comparison. All incidents have been dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Members reviewed the Development Plan which was included at appendix A.

AGREED: to note the content of the report and the Safeguarding Development Plan for 2014/15.

14.26 PARTNER PROVISION – QUALITY ASSURANCE UPDATE

Sacha McCarthy introduced this item and drew members' attention to the executive summary report at page 91. In terms of the 2013/14 success rates she was able to provide a further update:

- Apprenticeships is 77% overall and 58% timely
- NVQ in the workplace is 98% overall and 85% timely
- ALR is 98%.

This means that by comparison overall there is a +5% increase for apprentices, a +2% increase for timely a +10% increase for NVQ and a +6% increase for timely.

Members were advised that due to the high volume of learners due to achieve in the 13/14 contract year, there is a risk that the close down paperwork may not be received prior to the closure of the 13/14 final ILR. Whilst any received after this will still impact positively on success rates, it will mean that they will not impact on the 13/14 overall success rate but will be carried forward to the 14/15 success rate. She confirmed that deadlines for submission have been set with all the delivery teams and partners and these are being pushed forward. This also includes staff coming in to College on Sunday to process the paperwork.

The Committee was advised that the SFA ILR audit undertaken last week went well. The plan is to process as much paperwork as possible regarding the 13/14 year over the weekend and then the ILR will be closed next week ready for auditors to re-sample on 10th October. The simple fact of the matter is that the College just needs to process the data available and this is a priority.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

14.27 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME 2014/15

Louise Knott introduced this item and confirmed that the iteration presented today is mainly a contextual update. To support this

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overarching strategy, the business plan explains how the aims and objectives will be achieved. She confirmed that the format of the scheme was fairly standard for this type of document with some of the sections prescribed under the requirements of the act.

Page 101 sets out the four key strands:

- a) Communication and engagement
- b) Positively promoted protected characteristics
- c) Ensure equality and diversity is promoted and celebrated within the College department network and subsidiary companies
- d) Address gaps in achievement.

In relation to the achievement gaps, members were advised that a data report would be presented to the January meeting.

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AGREED: to note the update provided and approve the Equality and Diversity Scheme for 2014/15

14.28 **GOVERNANCE ITEMS**

1) Self-Assessment for 2013/14

The Committee took this opportunity to review the prior academic year and acknowledged that not all meetings had been able to proceed as quorate. The Clerk indicated that she had undertaken an assessment of the percentage required for quorum and was of the view that this was higher than that prescribed in the Instrument and Articles and also higher than other committees. She recommended that to bring it in to line with other Committees, the Terms of Reference be amended at section 2.1 so that it reads that the quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be 40% of actual membership rather than '4'. This then gives greater flexibility if the Committee carries any vacancies at any particular point in time.

The Committee agreed that this was a sensible suggestion.

AGREED to recommend that the Corporation approve amended Terms of Reference.

2) Terms of Reference

The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference and save for the item discussed previously regarding quorum, they remained fit for purpose.

3) Membership 2014/15

The Committee was of the view that the skills set and membership of the Committee remains good. It was noted that one of the new student Governors to be appointed will be invited to sit on this Committee.

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4) Work plan 2014/15

The Committee reviewed the work plan and were entirely satisfied that it sets out the main body of agenda items to be included during the year. It was acknowledged by all that this is a framework document and that other items will be added as required throughout the year.

AGREED: to approve the work plan presented for 2014/15

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There were no items of additional business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was Thursday 11th December 2014 at 5.00pm.

Meeting closed at 6.35pm.

Signed : _____Chair

Date: