

**Minutes of the
Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee
held on Tuesday 3 March 2015 at 8.00am
in Room 814 at the Matthew Boulton Campus**

Present:

Veronica Docherty (VD) (Chair)
Dagen Thompson (Staff Member) (DT)
Gala Albas (GA) (Student Member)
Andrew Cleaves (Principal and Chief Executive)

In Attendance:

Adrian Morris (Vice Principal Teaching and Learning) (AM)
Louise Jones (Executive Director quality and HR) (LJ)
Julie Nugent (Executive Director Commercial and College Affairs) (JN)
Mukesh Kumar (Vice Principal College and Partnerships) (MK)
Liam Nevin (Company Secretary) LN

Apologies:

Jenni Ord

Apologies for Absence

Jenni Ord.

Declarations of Interest

There were none save for those already recorded in the Register of Interests.

Item 1 - Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 9 December 2014

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

Matters Arising

The Action Log was noted

Item 2 – College Performance

MK gave a presentation to the Committee setting out the values, strengths and areas of focus of the College, and in respect of the latter also explaining the focus of the Executive and the impact to date of the work undertaken.

The Chair noted that 92% of staff had stated that they were committed to quality and questioned what would be done to address the other 8%. It was agreed that this was a cause for concern and would be addressed by the Executive as part of the analysis of the staff survey.

The Principal stated that the purpose of the presentation was to present an authentic assessment of the issues that needed to be addressed and the progress made in doing so. It complemented the updated SAR and was intended as an overview.

The Chair agreed that the presentation was a reasonable overview of progress, and noted the use of data to support the judgements.

GA stated that it was pleasing to note the intention to prioritise wi-fi for students as this was an important issue for them.

There being no further debate

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the presentation on College Performance be noted**

Item 3 – Higher Education Performance 2013/14

JN introduced the Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 and in acknowledging that the quality of HE provision had deteriorated, drew the committee's attention to the remedial actions that were detailed in the report. These included incorporation of HE performance within the College's quality cycle, the use of termly review boards to scrutinise performance and a programme of special measures for underperforming classes.

The committee were also advised that the College had changed the measurement of performance when compared to previous years. The measurement commonly used in Higher Education is of achievement from the final year of study. However, the Executive were now measuring consistently with the standard applied in the Further Education sector, namely by assessing how many learners had started the course and how many had achieved. Consequently, a high attrition rate was being demonstrated which would not have been captured by the previous performance assessment measures.

The Chair observed that some of the attrition identified might include students who had progressed to university or work. The Principal acknowledged this and the need to capture such successes.

AM noted that the College needed to consider foundation degrees and apprenticeship pathways that would encourage such students to remain at the College.

The Chairman questioned whether there would be a need to combine some courses given that the number of students in some cases questioned their sustainability. JN agreed that this would be a consideration but further work was necessary to identify the reasons for any reduction in student numbers on specific courses.

The Principal advised that it would be necessary to strategically review HE provision within the College commencing in the autumn of the 2015-16 academic year, but as an immediate response the actions identified in the report would be incorporated within the Quality Improvement Plan.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee approve the Annual Monitoring Report and endorse a programme of special measures for the twenty underperforming courses, to be led by the interim Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning and monitored closely by the Director of Quality.**
- **That progress with the Special Measures Programme is reported to the Committee following each HE Termly Review Board**
- **That the Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 be reported to the Corporation**

Item 4 – Capturing the Learner Voice

MK introduced this report and advised the committee of the activity taking place at course and faculty level to engage students. A key aim of the Learner Voice Strategy was to increase the quantitative data available in order to target improvements. He reminded the committee that the September 2014 induction survey had been reported to the Committee in December 2014 and an action plan was being developed. There were a number of surveys now underway and due for analysis between March and June 2015:

- The Big Teaching and Learning Survey (internal)
- FE Choices: Learner Satisfaction Survey (external)
- National Student Survey (external)
- FE Choices: Community Learning Survey (external)

The Chair noted that the surveys were all programmed for a similar period and queried why the internal survey was being undertaken in the same period as the three external surveys.

LJ advised that this was to allow students to respond to the Big Teaching and Learning survey and the FE Choices survey at the same time, and that it was important to remind students of the importance of this feedback in helping the College to satisfy student needs.

The Chair queried whether it would benefit the College to reconsider the timing of such surveys since by completing them in the second term, the College could only act on the results in the final term, by which point most of the course would be completed.

The Principal noted that the value of the results was to help inform the development of the subsequent year's provision. However, this needed to be made clear to students and he therefore suggested that the Committee consider at its next meeting a timetable of surveys for the following year setting out the dates for these to be reported to the Executive Board and the Committee.

The Chair concluded the debate by welcoming the action taken by the Executive in relation to learner voice representatives and teaching and learning coaches.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the report be noted**
- **That a detailed analysis of the surveys be presented to the Committee in accordance with the timescales set out in the report**
- **That the Committee consider, at its next meeting, a timetable of surveys for the 2015/16 academic year setting out the dates at which these would be reported to the Committee**

Item 5 – Progress Report on QIP and SAR

LJ introduced the mid-year update on the SAR which reviewed progress against outcomes for learners, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and effectiveness of leadership and management. There was progress in all three areas; but whilst quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and effectiveness of leadership and management were moving towards good, there was more work to do in respect of outcomes for learners.

In respect of the quality of teaching and learning the Executive were selecting high-risk teams and meeting with their directors fortnightly to scrutinise activity. Work was also continuing on lesson observations and more teaching and learning coaches had been identified.

The Principal noted that the approach of “high challenge and high support” was proving effective, and leadership and management was making strong progress towards “good.” There had been a full restructure of the leadership team, the Executive were leading the quality improvement process, data had been improved and there was a greater emphasis on performance management.

LJ then explained the structure and content of the QIP which was now showing clear linkages between the College and Faculty QIPs.

There were areas requiring particular focus;

- The targets for student achievements to ensure that they were realistic. These were being reviewed weekly
- Attendance at functional skills at 79% was higher than last year but remained a focus for improvement
- Progress reviews for apprentices

The Chairman advised the Committee that she had undertaken four learner walks and that these provided useful evidence to corroborate the data on Pro-Monitor.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the report be noted**

Item 6 – Complaints Update

LJ introduced the mid-year report and by way of comment on the relevant point on the Action Log advised the committee that she was looking to develop an on-line tool to enable students to raise issues and provide positive or negative feedback.

In relation to the report LJ summarised that there were still a high number of complaints from Business, Health, and Construction faculties, with the latter having the highest complaints to student ratio. In addition only approximately half of complaints were being dealt with within the prescribed deadline. However, there was now a more considered approach to responses with a focus on achieving constructive solutions to complaints.

The Principal stated that in future reporting information would show ratios of complaints to students by discipline and campus.

The Chairman endorsed the suggestion that an on-line reporting facility be developed. It was important that the College use this to identify compliments as well as complaints and the Executive might also consider the use of best practice feedback arrangements in the NHS.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the report be noted**

Item 7 – Teaching Learning and Assessment Plan

AM introduced this report and advised that the review had been driven by the objectives of improving performance at student and course level, and it followed a review of results, the external scrutiny of teaching and learning through Ofsted inspectors, engagement with staff and students, and external policy changes such as the common inspection framework.

The endorsement of the Committee was sought in respect of the plan, the measures and the timescales for review.

The Principal suggested that baseline measures be added to the document in order to assess progress and that a communications plan be developed in conjunction with the Teaching Learning and Assessment Plan.

It was agreed that the plan was of sufficient importance that it warranted consideration by the Corporation

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- **That the Committee endorse the plan and that it be referred to the Corporation for further consideration**
- **That the Plan be assessed using the identified data measures and an annual external review of teaching and learning**

- That the plan be reviewed in August 2016 and the findings be reported to the next meeting of the Committee following that review

Item 8 – Safeguarding Policy

LJ introduced this item and advised that the proposed updating of the policy particularly reflected the need for the College to define its approach to dealing with potential radicalisation. In addition to the policy update all managers would shortly be trained on radicalisation.

The Chair questioned whether all college sites had a nominated lead and LJ confirmed that whilst this was so it would be necessary to review the arrangements in the organisational design structure.

The Chair also noted that the Principal was not mentioned in the Policy and LJ undertook to review this and ensure that the role of the Principal was clear.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

- That the Committee recommend the new Safeguarding Policy to the Corporation.

Item 9 – Annual Work Programme

This item was introduced by the Company Secretary who advised that subject to the approval of the Committee the content of the programme would need to be updated to include matters resolved by the Committee at this meeting.

Accordingly it was

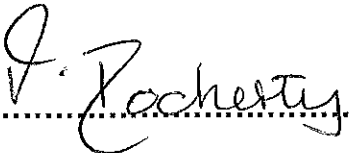
RESOLVED

- That the annual work programme be approved, subject to updating to reflect matters agreed by the Committee as identified in the minutes of other agenda items.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting – Tuesday 2 June 2015

Signed:..........(Chair)

Dated:.....*2nd June 2015*.....