

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 3.00pm on 10 June 2015

Present:	S Daley (Chair) N Savvas	A Head	J Bloomfield
In Attendance:	T O'Sullivan HR Director R Carter, Chair	M Wagner, VP B&C S Steeds, HE Director	L Johnson, VP C&Q J Bridges, Clerk

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of this agenda.

Action

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from BUnwin. Non-attendance will be recorded for WBurrlock.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

4 Membership

All governors have been invited to reflect on their current Committee membership and consider whether they would like to change to an alternative Committee or to fill vacancies. Alan Maltpress has expressed interest to join the Standards and Excellence Committee although he could not make the meeting today. Members approved to appoint Alan Maltpress to the Committee membership and will put forward a recommendation to the Corporation at the 17 July 2015 meeting.

JBridges

The teaching staff governor election is currently underway. W Burrlock has chosen not to stand again. Subject to approving the appointment at the 17 July 2015 meeting of the Corporation the Teaching Staff Governor will replace the vacancy left by W Burrlock on the Committee with effect from the new academic year.

A recruitment process is to commence shortly to recruit two governors to replace the vacancy made by Jo Finn and to replace Alan Gordon-Stables when he retires at the end of the academic year. Members are asked to take up membership on at least one Committee so there is an expectation that one of those appointments will take the vacancy on the Standards and Excellence Committee.

It is proposed therefore that the Committee considers the appointment of a Vice Chair at the first available meeting after vacancies have been filled. In the interim J Bloomfield will act as Vice Chair.

(At the request of the Chair items 13 to 15 were taken at this point in the meeting – refer to pages 5 and 6).

5 Quality Improvement Plan 2014/15 Review

The Committee focused on the three areas where progress (as at May 2015) is behind target, these being; success on Maths and English, success on Automotive courses and achievement on Access to HE courses.

All student progress on Maths and English has been reviewed. There was 95% attendance at the GCSE English exam (which appears to be the standard rate in FE Colleges) with all no shows followed up. The College has offered and held revision sessions and functional skills practice tests and a functional skills achievement report has been developed which enables tutors to track the success of their students in their functional skill exam attempts.

There is confidence that success rates, apart from entry level, will at least be at national rate for Automotive courses. Low retention has impacted success and planned changes to the curriculum delivery next year are anticipated to improve the issues and enhance provision. A new Subject Leader has been appointed in Automotive to focus on improving achievement of learners.

The internal quality review of Access to HE Nursing has been completed. Outcomes for Learners and Leadership and Management were found to be unsatisfactory. An action plan to improve success was created but a desktop audit of this in May 2015 shows little improvement. Progress updating assessment plans, MarkBook and other actions identified on the plan had not been made at the rate anticipated/required. A review of Access to HE courses for September 2015 will take place with a view to consolidation.

Members noted that some areas for improvement are likely to be carried through to the 2015/16 Quality Improvement Plan and suggested that more realistic timescales are identified. Overall however the Committee was pleased that a high proportion of areas for improvement had achieved progress and/or had been completed.

6 Lesson Observations

The IRIS system purchased earlier in the year as a professional development tool for observations is now set up and the teacher education team trained to use it. As IRIS starts to be used, outstanding teachers will share their lessons from the on-line repository, in order that a catalogue of best practice examples can be developed. In response to a question raised by the student governor, the Vice Principal confirmed that footage of the outstanding lessons will remain in the on-line repository until such time as it may be replaced with other footage that is better and/or more relevant.

Members asked what themes the College needed to work on through lesson observations. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that stretch and challenging and planning will be key themes and these will inform the CPD plan for the next academic year. The impact of the CPD plan will then need to be measured.

The Committee asked how they could be assured that the profile of lesson observations is realistic. The Vice Principal confirmed that an HMI Associate is contracted each year to validate the process and profile. The findings form part of the final College Self-Assessment Report and any areas for improvement fall into the Quality Improvement Plan.

7 Key Performance Indicators

Attendance overall for 16-18 and 19+ has dropped from previous years. Further analysis reveals that the decline in attendance is due to the low attendance at Maths and English.

Retention is currently 3% better overall (92%) than the previous year but is predicted to drop but remain above national rate (90%). The improvement in

retention at all levels and age groups is considered to have been achieved as a result of closer monitoring of assessment progress through MarkBook tracking and concurrent wraparound support as a result of close monitoring by PSTs.

The Committee commented that best case success for work based learning looked strong and areas of issue related to only one or two areas such as Level 2 16-18 Manufacturing Technologies and levels 2 and 3 16-18 and level 2 19-23 Hospitality and Catering. There appear to be common withdrawal factors affecting these subject areas; industries where young people have short term contracts and move job frequently or where apprentices are taken on by family members in business and their employment doesn't work out. It was also noted that the report should be read with caution and particular attention paid to the number of leavers and continuing students when considering best case. A small cohort of students, six for example, with three withdrawals shows as 50% withdrawal and only 50% retention.

There has been significant improvement against assessment completion since the last report. There are still some areas of concern; Business Management and Applied and Social Science, but these are being closely monitored to ensure that MarkBook is compliant and up to date. It is the intention next year to focus reports on the timeliness of MarkBook completion rather than a measurement of completion progress. The NQF (National Qualifications Framework) is to incorporate an exam and therefore if resits are taken in some instances achievement would not be known until after the course has completed. Reports therefore will need to measure the proportion overdue and RAG rate rather than focus on the volume.

8 HE Attrition

Attrition has not moved much since the last report to the Committee. Teaching has finished but this does not necessarily mean that students will achieve and academic failure will negatively impact the attrition rate.

Students leave for a variety of reasons: financial hardship, transfer to other qualifications or other UCS provision which is why our recruitment has to be appropriate to ensure that the right student is on the right course.

The Committee noted that Business Management and Tourism studies had a higher number of withdrawals, high attrition rate and low MarkBook completion and questioned whether these in any way were connected. Analysis of reasons given by individuals for leaving concluded no consistent themes relating to recruitment or delivery. It is expected that the change of leadership, stability of a new curriculum team and delivery will make a positive impact in 2015/16. Members asked to receive a report providing the reasons why the 15 students in this area left their course; i.e. course related issue, problem with admissions, financial hardship, transfer in/out reasons etc. The report should identify any emerging theme or pattern and provide a solution to minimise withdrawal and improve attrition.

9 Access to HE Student Assessment and Progress

As previously reported the internal quality review and arising action plan of Access to Nursing shows little improvement. The programme does not conclude until the end of June and the CAVA assessment board is set for 10 July when results will be finalised. There continues to be a cohort with a January 2014/15 start continuing into 2015/16 but due to poor retention over the summer break the decision not to recruit groups in May has been made. Members asked if all January students had been retained. The Director of HE confirmed that they had

SSteeds

not. The Committee asked if this was a leadership and management issue and questioned what was being done about it. It appeared evident that the area has some good performers but that specific courses are bringing performance down. Members asked how the Director of HE intends to limit the damage for the completers in this year and made it clear that there is an expectation that an improvement plan will be identified through the Self-Assessment Report as an area for significant improvement. Members want to know how many starts are on each of the Access courses, the modes of each course, analysis of hotspots and identification of any contributing factors to unsatisfactory progress and/or withdrawal reasons.

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10 **IQR Summary Report**

Members commented that the report was useful and how important it is to drill down to find out what and if there are recurring themes, compliance issues, inconsistencies in approach and the support available to the students.

The report shows that as a consequence of the Internal Quality Review Travel and Tourism has made good progress with only one action left to progress. There has been significant scrutiny of progress within Public Services as a result of the IQR. This area should have been outstanding and there is concern that the delivery of this provision has become too complacent in approach.

Foundation Studies is making good progress against their plan supported by Lawrence Chapman of the Priory School and Automotive teaching and learning has improved to good, students are enjoying their experience; leadership and management now just needs to improve and reach compliance.

Actions arising from IQRs are being monitored through live action plans held on Folio. Each course has a quality improvement plan and a section – any IQR actions - has been added to this to document. Business Management, Maths and English may be the next areas for internal quality review but areas will be determined from the Self-Assessment Report.

11 **Withdrawals**

The Committee asked to see comparable data of previous years as it was difficult to determine whether withdrawal numbers were consistent or should be of concern. In itself the report did provide assurance that withdrawals are in management focus and as this is a live report is therefore subject to continual monitoring. Comparable student numbers, trend analysis and further categorised by protected characteristics would enhance the report further and would help the Committee to appreciate and understand where emerging risks and trends may be appearing. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will work toward achieving this in the new academic year.

LJohnson

12 **Complaints and Compliments**

The report provided a summary and analysis of the trends of complaints reported. The level of detail was also available via a link should members wish to drill down to the specifics. It appears that the College has improved reporting and recognising what complaints look like and that a process is following, complaints recorded, investigated and resolved. The Committee was interested to also receive a full list of compliments received to date.

(Items 13 to 15 of the agenda preceded items 5 to 12 to enable J Bloomfield to contribute to the discussion before leaving the meeting at 4.05pm)

13 Workforce Key Performance Indicators

The largest percentage of absences are short term for minor illnesses such as colds, migraines etc. The use of the Bradford Factor is showing positive absence management results and most areas are within acceptable levels. The trigger point for Bradford Factor is set at a score of 200. This automatically instigates a support meeting with the manager. The Committee was interested to learn that in some public sector organisations the trigger point is much lower (at 100) and can instigate an automatic first written warning for a score over that limit.

Short term absence is defined as any period under 20 days (four working weeks). Members asked that the reports provide analysis of the levels of short term absence in smaller categories i.e. 0 to 3 days, 3 to 10 days and 10+ days and analysis is by exception to highlight any areas of concern.

Reporting of staff turnover has improved and data now includes hourly paid staff. The turnover rate for the College is 9%. Turnover by month has remained consistent with a slight increase in the months of April and May 2015. A summary of the reasons why staff leave the College is provided in the report and there were no issues or concerns raised. Members asked how competitive the College is compared with other employers in the area and wondered whether staff left and stayed in the area and/or went to competitors. The HR Director confirmed that some leave to develop their careers while others decide that teaching is not the career for them. Currently the College is the net importer of employees from other Colleges. It is difficult to compete with industry in vocational areas; in particular engineering and electrical installation for example.

TO'Sullivan

14 Workforce Update

An outline of the HR Strategy was shared with the Committee in the report. Members suggested adding something around 'growing your own' and a workforce development plan that has clear links between this strategy and the College' strategic plan.

TO'Sullivan

The HR team has been reorganised and now comprises the HR Director, three business partners plus some administrative support.

Since the last meeting the College continues to make changes as a result of the issues raised in the staff survey of 2014. Communication sessions have been held with the College Management Team for them to relay the work achieved and initiatives to improve with their teams. Morale is high, progress has been made and changes have been embraced. There has been more consultation with staff in response to the survey to ensure that it is not received as just a paper exercise and released back to staff to interpret. Another survey is planned for September 2015. Members suggested that this is released with a prelude of 'you said, we did' from the previous survey in order to get the most engagement with staff in the next round. Staff need to respond and managers to take responsibility to encourage as much participation as possible. The Committee agreed that the College should use a 'net promoter' approach; would you recommend the College to your friends and family? ; would you recommend the College as an employer to your friends and family? ; extremely likely, likely, probably not, no etc. J Bloomfield offered to share ideas with the HR Director and work on a strategy to improve the response rate.

JBloomfield
TO'Sullivan

Staff recruitment is going well and an appointment has been made to a post that has proven difficult to recruit to over a substantial number of months. The overseas market is still of interest and the College has identified a number of agencies, translators and websites that can help to source the right candidates.

15 Workforce Risk Management

As a result of appointing staff to the specialist teaching posts that had proven difficult to fill risk R050 has reduced to a score of 16 from 33. Members agreed to adjust the level to the lower score of 16 but suggested either rephrasing this risk or adding a new one along the lines of 'ability of the College to recruit a workforce fit for the future'. Control measures should include skills audit, ageing workforce plan, succession planning, strategic development plan linked to curriculum and College Strategic Plan. The Committee tasked the senior management team to consider the appropriate way to adjust the register.

SMT

J Bloomfield left the meeting at 4.05pm.

16 Any other business

R Carter, A Head, S Gerber and J Bridges will be visiting MidKent College on 18 June 2015 to observe their Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee meeting. MidKent intends to send two or three governors to visit and observe the next Standards and Excellence Committee meeting on 6 July 2015.

Date of next meeting

Monday 6 July 2015 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 5.50pm