

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 10.00am on 25 November 2014

Present:	M Symonds (Chair) J Finn (Vice Chair)	J Bloomfield N Savvas	A Head
In Attendance:	R Carter, Chair A Maltpress M Wagner, VP B&C S Steeds, HE Director	S Gerber D Wildridge L Johnson VP C&Q J Bridges, Clerk	A Gordon-Stables S Daley (Observer) T O’Sullivan HR Head

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 of Committee members were received from W Burrlock. Other apologies for absence were received from S Clarke, K Golding and B Unwin, Quality Co-ordinator.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2014

The minutes of the meeting and the record of amendments to the Self-Assessment Report were agreed as a correct record. **Proposed** by A Head and **seconded** by J Finn.

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

The Committee welcomed S Daley as an observer to the meeting. Membership of this Committee, under its Terms of Reference, is able to include up to two members who are not members of the Corporation. Co-opted membership is subject to annual review rather than an appointment to serve a four year term of office. The Chair of the Corporation provided background and profile information about S Daley to members. The Committee agreed that its membership would be complemented with increased educational specialisms and proposed that this co-option will bolster the skills mix within its existing membership. A recommendation to appoint S Daley will be put to the Corporation for approval at the 12 December 2014 meeting. **Proposed** by J Finn and **seconded** by A Head.

5 College Self-Assessment Report 2013/14 and Quality Improvement Plan 2014/15

The amendments suggested by members at the meeting held in October 2014 have been incorporated into the document and the Self-Assessment Report has been independently proofread for consistency of approach and to ensure that it is grammatically correct.

Members made further comment to the document and asked for the following amendments to be made:

- Page 10 Insert the word ‘an’ to the final sentence to read ‘an Associate HMI’.
- Page 10 We state that ‘we have worked with 1,700 businesses...’ but on page 18 (second bulleted point at the top of the document) we state that we have worked ‘with over 1,600 employers and businesses...’ Amend either page 10 or 18 with the correct figure.

LJohnson
LJohnson

Page 11 We must be consistent with the strategic plan when using the College Mission and College Vision statements. The College Mission should read 'Delivery of outstanding education that inspires individual excellence and serves our society'. The College Vision should read 'Putting our learners and their success at the heart of everything we do'.

LJohnson
Action

Page 71 Criteria 19 – members asked that the wording used in the Action Point box be changed to read 'Sharpen the strategic focus of Governors' meetings, reduce membership (adding specialist co-opted members as necessary) with fewer meetings. Maximise detailed scrutiny through the use of Committee, Sub-Groups and Task and Finish groups'.

LJohnson

Members asked to receive a copy of the three pages once amended so that these can be replaced in their version of the Self-Assessment Report rather than providing a complete reprinted copy of the whole report.

JBridges

The Committee agreed the Grade Profile of the Self-Assessment Report; Overall Effectiveness – Good, Outcomes for Learners – Good, Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Good and Leadership and Management – Outstanding. The Committee Chair commented that the report 'feels confident' and that the College should be proud of the achievements and progress towards the ultimate goal of Outstanding. Subject to the amendments recorded above the Committee will put forward the recommendation to the Corporation at the 12 December 2014 meeting to approve the Self-Assessment Report.

MSymonds

6 **Internal Quality Reviews**

The College has introduced as part of the quality cycle, an Internal Quality Review (IQR) process. The aim of IQR is to investigate teaching, learning and assessment practice within a specific area for the purpose of improving the student experience, enhancing learner outcomes and ensuring a high quality learning experience for all. Whilst IQR is a quality monitoring process it also provides a valuable tool to support quality improvement by objectively identifying areas of underperformance and stimulating actions to overcome these as well as highlighting innovative and outstanding practice for wider dissemination.

7 **HE 2013/14 Performance Report**

The Committee recognised the record number of First Class Degrees awarded at UCS BSE in 2013/14. The award ceremony and record student achievement for the provision has been outstanding.

Members challenged the Vice Principal Business and Community and the Director of HE in attendance at the meeting concerning the apparent underperformance of the FdSc Computing and Networking course for the second year running. The course remains popular but achievement is below the RiME threshold of 78% at 73.08% and similarly last year reported an achievement level of 77.42%. This has led to an ongoing monitoring event and an improvement action plan being implemented. This risk event involved seven individuals and meetings are set with those students. Initial indications are that students are happy with the programme and those that achieve, achieve well but this does not explain the downward trend in achievement. The Vice Principal, Business and Community was tasked by the Committee to provide a detailed analysis of this course, including achievement projection for 2014/15 together with a responsive action plan. Members need to understand the damage and risk exposure of continuing this programme for students and UCS BSE.

MWagner

8	<u>NSS Survey Response Report</u>	<u>Action</u>
	<p>The survey took place between January and March 2014 and targeted the students who were in their final year of study (i.e. third year of a three programme, second year of a two year programme). The significant issues that led to the 8% drop in satisfaction with organisation and management (69% from 77% in 2013) can be attributed to two courses; Management and Early Years, where both suffered from disruptive staff changes leading to dissatisfaction and poor score. Risk alerts were raised for both programmes and actions taken which have made significant planned improvements for 2014/15 particularly concerning Assessments and Feedback to students.</p>	
	<p>Members asked that future reports include benchmark data for UCS BSE against UCS as a whole, UCS BSE against the other College UCS partners and against National Rates.</p>	<p>MWagner SSteads</p>
	<p>It was noted that students with a difficulty or disability have returned disappointing results. Members asked if there was any equality or diversity related issue that needs to be taken forward into the action plan for 2014/15. It is believed that the issues here have been resolved with the introduction of a personal support tutor for HE students and this will be checked and reported back to the Committee.</p>	<p>MWagner SSteads</p>
9	<u>Complaints and Compliments</u>	
	<p>It appears that the number of complaints has increased from the previous year but this is mainly due to a more transparent and efficient complaints process which captures complaints as they are made rather than managers taking responsibility to report them upwards.</p>	
	<p>Common complaint themes included Bursary applications, destination surveys and exam adjustments. The Bursary received 8 complaints and this resulted in a member of the Finance team being available in Student Welfare to support the bursary process and inform any queries with current information. It was identified that a number of students had informed the College of their destination when contacted which had not been recorded and flagged repeat contact with those learners. As a result the number of destinations gathered from students who withdrew in the first six weeks is being captured and recorded much earlier in the academic year. There were 3 complaints in relation to exam adjustments that had not been implemented for eligible students. As a result student exam adjustment requirements are now recorded on the exam entry form to ensure that they are made for that individual.</p>	
	<p>Members asked that future reports include the detail of the positive impact the complaint has had on college process or procedure. The impact could be categorised but should demonstrate the 'You Said, We Did' approach.</p>	<p>LJohnson</p>
10	<u>Workforce Key Performance Indicators</u>	
	<p>Members could see a slight increase in absence trend but recognised that the absence rate at the College was lower than average within Education and Nationally and comparable with absence for the Region. Absence management is a high priority for the College to ensure that students are not adversely impacted. Members asked to receive comparative data in future reports to show the shift between short and long term absence. The Health and Safety Governor Representative, A Gordon-Stables, commented that the Health and Safety Committee receives a termly stress management report that specifically focuses on the work related stress absence cases of staff and those absent due to non-work related stress.</p>	

Staff turnover has increased and this is seen as both encouraging and healthy. There has been an increase in turnover due to a larger number of starters and leavers compared to the previous year and a number of hourly paid staff, not counted in turnover calculations, have been converted to permanent or fixed term contracts thus contributing to a larger staff complement number in the year. The report detailed some of the reasons for staff leaving the College but members asked for future reports to specify the detail underneath the category of a 'variety of reasons'; i.e. retirement, back into industry, promotion, change of career, leaving the area etc.

11 Workforce Update

During the summer the College implemented developments to the organisation of the workforce, in particular to the curriculum areas, and all the changes have been designed to strengthen the service to our students. These changes have been made possible through increased turnover which has enabled the College to use the staffing budget in different ways. Faculties have been disbanded and three new Assistant Principal posts created to focus on Enterprise and Employability, Student and Learning Support and Learning Partnerships and Professional Development. Members queried the significance of using Assistant Principal titles. The Principal confirmed that externally to schools and other partners this provided familiarity of term within the sector and recognition that contacting the Assistant Principal provided perceived credibility and a level of authority to the post.

Members noted that the total number of staff in the management group table equalled 37 not 32 as reported.

The report included an update on the progress in relation to the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit of Performance Review and Absence Management carried out in the summer term last year. Members recognised an emerging theme concerning setting SMART targets in appraisals and asked how the department is/intends to monitor this. The Head of HR confirmed that the department takes collective responsibility to spot check appraisals and does not check every single record. The Clerk was asked to consider this as an area for Governors to spend more time exploring in Governors' First Hand week in April 2015.

A staff survey was released in September 2014, one year subsequent to the last survey to gather the views of staff and the distance travelled. Further work on the comments made by staff is to be completed but the College is introducing new initiatives to improve communication which again features as a common theme in the results. A weekly forum has been established for all managers to come together for a Communications meeting to celebrate the achievements of the week and the work coming up for the next. Staff Briefings have been reinvented to create weekly 'SoundBites' and a new Staff Support One Stop Shop Service commenced on 24 November 2014.

The improvements identified and examples of actions have been shared with staff and specific questions from the survey will be re-released next year to gauge the distance travelled and hopeful positive impact of the new communication initiatives. The management team was open to the Committee's suggestion of setting up a focus group or involving staff governors in some way to take this forward. The aim is to find a way to use the survey productively to see if strategies for improvement are working.

R Carter left the meeting at 11.55am

KPIs for HR related issues are reported to SMT at regular intervals throughout each month. Members suggested that those listed in the report are spread across the agendas for Committee meetings and must also include equality and diversity analysis.

Action

TO'Sullivan

D Wildridge left the meeting at 12.00pm

12 Framework for Pay

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

13 Committee Governance Self Evaluation Results

The Committee reviewed the results of the self-evaluations for the Curriculum and Quality and HR Committees for the 2013/14 academic year. The results from the Curriculum and Quality Committee exposed a training need to better understand their role and responsibilities as members. The HR Committee results identified a need to improve KPI reporting and given the discussion earlier at the meeting members felt comfortable that reports in this academic year are set to improve. The Clerk will report the actions arising from the results to the Appointments and Governance Committee and this will inform a governance improvement plan.

Action

JBridges

14 Any other business

The Student Governor put forward a number of questions he had picked out from the Self-Assessment Report. He said that he wasn't confident that all students knew or recognised that they have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will follow this up with Personal Support Tutors (PSTs) and Teaching staff. He also had specific questions concerning how Maths lessons had been timetabled for the School of Computing and how the IRIS software to support Lesson Observations will operate in the Classroom. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will answer and look into these questions with the student governor outside of the meeting.

LJohnson

LJohnson

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27 January 2015 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.