

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 6 July 2015

Present:	S Daley (Chair) N Savvas	A Head	J Bloomfield
In Attendance:	T O'Sullivan HR Director B Unwin, Quality Manager S Cook, Principal MidKent J Bridges, Clerk	M Wagner, VP B&C S Steeds, HE Director M Fawcett, VP MidKent	L Johnson, VP C&Q A Whatley, AP LP & PD M Blanning, Gov MidKent

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

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. Non-attendance will be recorded for W Burrlock.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 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.

The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality is developing the withdrawals report to include comparable student numbers, trend analysis and will further categorise the report by protected characteristics. The HR Director is developing the staff survey and the risk register is to be reviewed by the Senior Management Team over the summer and will consider rephrasing risk number R050 or adding a new one along the lines of 'ability of the College to recruit a workforce fit for the future'.

LJohnson
TO'Sullivan
JBridges

4 Key Performance Indicators by Protected Characteristics

The Committee received a hand out to explain the SFA new method of measuring success now known as Classroom Learning Qualification Success Rates (CLQSR), Previously success rates measured the success of starts, by length (long, short or very short), by level and by age. CLQSR looks at the size of qualifications, groups such as diplomas called type A and smaller qualifications such as Functional Skills, called Type B. Minimum Standards Thresholds (MST) now apply to Achievement rather than success rates, formerly measured by MLP, Minimum Level of Performance.

The College's system ProAchieve is to be updated as national rates become available and these will be included in the next report to the Committee. Both types of reports, MLP and MST, are being prepared in the event that Ofsted may require both types of data sets. Both will also be included in the College's Self-Assessment Report for completeness and to show year-on-year trends.

Table 1.5 of the report shows that best case success percentage is below that of White British (93%) by more than 3% and investigation of those early leavers of Black/Mixed Black heritage has been undertaken. Investigation has revealed that 15 of these students had a red risk rating meaning that they were at risk of leaving the course for a range of reasons; mental health, low attendance or students who felt overwhelmed by study. Investigation does not suggest that their cultural background would impede their success and therefore support is needed for the individuals and not protected characteristic groups.

The Committee asked to receive the specifics of why the two students left their course. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that one of the students had been on a course and had transferred onto another programme. The details of the other student are to be confirmed and a brief report provided to the Committee on the red rated items to identify any patterns or themes that may be emerging.

LJohnson

The Chair of the Committee raised concern that Level 4 female best case success is 12% below males due to reduced retention. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that two female students had not been retained on the Diploma due to personal issues and a student taking on too much. As a consequence the team has reviewed the timetable and students now only study one module at a time.

Best case success rate is ahead of previous years except for males at entry level where success has declined as only three quarters of males are retained. Investigation reveals that this is most prevalent in two areas of provision with mainstream courses where students have found Maths and English too hard and need to be entered at lower levels.

Tables 1.7 and 1.8 of the report show a marked difference in retention this year due to the positive impact of bursary on retention and the wrap around support provided to students to retain them on course. Additional work is required on table 1.9 to look into the learning difficulty or disability students present and the early intervention that can be put in place to perhaps redirect learners onto the appropriate course or to support those better with multiple issues.

Apprentices with learning difficulties or disability remains a concern and there are significant differences between those with a learning difficulty, disability or health problem and those with none especially for immediate apprentices. Analysis shows 15 early leavers 14 of whom left in 2013/14, year one of their programme, with a planned end date of this year. Fundamentally the reasons why apprentices have left is because of functional skills where students have completed their NVQ but not achieved their functional skills and therefore not achieved their qualification. Engaging with the employer from the outset is key to ensure that they are aware of any concern with achievement of their apprenticeship at the earliest opportunity. Increased learning support is also important to ensure that apprentices receive the support they need to achieve functional skills. Actual success will be available in October after the final ILR submission.

Priorities in 2015/16 will be look at any mismatch where individuals have been screened lower for Maths and English than their vocational course and to establish if due to inappropriate screening this is the main reason why the student has not been retained. Support for those with multiple difficulties and how the College identifies their needs earlier in the application and enrolment process is also a priority area to investigate.

In future KPI reports members asked the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality to include the highlights as well as the lowlights.

LJohnson

5 **Destinations**

A report has been developed, available on StaffNet, to show a comparison between intended and actual destination for the last three years so course directors can drill down to the detail for individual students. This year destination outcomes on the ILR have changed and it will be a reporting requirement to record destinations of student in the ILR returns next year. New categories of data

collection have been included to ensure that the College is prepared for the reporting changes in the new academic year. The SFA intends to track student progression by National Insurance number to see if/when young people become economically active. There is an expectation that the SFA will track at least 80% of leavers but no explanation has been advised as yet as to how they intend to track the 20% unknowns.

The actual destination survey this year attempted to contact 1245 students. This was a significant increase on previous years and included students who completed 90 credit diplomas but had not progressed, 16-19 subcontractors' provision and significant part time courses.

The College received a good uptake on the survey with a response rate of 61%. The data has been gathered and completed with FE Choices and the employment rate. The data shows that many of the students have progressed internally from 90 day credit diplomas onto BTec programmes for example.

The data in table 2 is sourced from the Ofsted Data Dashboard and members noted that these are experimental measures and therefore it is intended that Ofsted inspectors will not hold Colleges to account against this measure.

The level of data underneath the top level report to the Committee is very detailed. Destinations can be extracted in a variety of ways; by age or SSA for example. Members suggested using the available data to analyse the areas/categories where students don't progress and look at the support provided to those who are not in their career choice, are awaiting a job or are not in employment. The analysis will report the issues found and provide the detail of the support/solution to be put in place. The information will also be used in Course Reviews and from there into the SAR.

BUnwin
LJohnson

6 Observations of Teaching and Learning

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

It was noted that despite Ofsted abolishing graded lesson observations under the new Common Inspection Framework (September 2015) there is no intention that the College will discontinue grading observations.

7 Institutional Student Survey (ISS)

The Institutional Student Survey (ISS) is the same survey as the NSS (National Student Survey) but this one is internal. It captures a different set of students to the NSS and the results are available much earlier. UCS Risk Alerts for the poor response rates of the part time students in Construction Management and Engineering have been raised and are being addressed through the RiME process.

The report provided the actions taken to redress issues and improve the response rate to the survey. In the revalidation of Combined Routes for 2015/16 distinctive Psychology and Sociology provision is being developed which will be more fitting with UCS BSE BA provision on Combined Routes and reduce the interaction with the delivery and Ipswich and logistical difficulties this continues to cause. A new HE common room is to be provided on the ground floor of Suffolk House that will be separate from any FE access of egress. HE students will be issued with distinctive lanyards for ID cards to improve identification of HE and Access students in designated library areas.

The HE Director was asked to explain how the team has improved the timeliness of assessment. The workloads of staff are a key factor in the year and a review of

how assessment coincides with the academic calendar has been completed. The Committee questioned if developmental feedback is being used and asked if the issue was that students don't recognise that they're receiving feedback. The HE Director confirmed that students tend to focus on summative assessment but formative assessment is also happening a lot. The Committee asked the HE Director to keep an eye on the position and to report back to the Committee about improvement.

SSteeds

8 Business Management and Tourism Withdrawal Reasons

At the request of the Committee the report provided a detailed analysis of the withdrawal reasons (poor attrition rate) for the Business Management and Tourism Studies department. In summary there have been no withdrawals due to dissatisfaction with the course. Critically at this point when offers are made to students they must not be accepted onto programmes that they are unlikely to achieve due to academic ability. Final results will not come through until after the next assessment board (early September 2015).

There is evidence of extensive contact and support being offered to students who have struggled for a number of reasons. The change in management has also been a positive move and there is confidence that as a consequence quality will improve going forward.

The Committee asked what changes have been made for the next cohort of students. Entry criteria will be a key focus combined with the appropriate advice and guidance particularly for the more vocational areas such as Salon Management and Hospitality and Event Management where it is anticipated we will recruit a viable cohort but not at the expense of lowering expectations for student academic ability.

9 Access to HE Analysis Report

The report provided a breakdown of performance on Access to HE courses and predicted success. Law will not be offered next year even though success looks to improve. Similarly Engineering will not be offered in 2015/16. Nursing is being monitored at Sudbury with the intention to offer a September start to be delivered with the current January group as a rolling programme with modular delivery. Support for students will be more accessible than before with telephone and drop in support facilities available.

10 External Verifier Summary

The report informed the Committee of the External Verifier and Awarding Organisation activity that has taken place to date this year. Occasionally qualifications are blocked for certification sometimes called a sanction. Currently the College has 3 courses with sanctions however all actions have been completed for the City and Guilds plumbing and CSkills Construction courses and external verifier visits are booked/to be booked. The block on the Pearson BTec Engineering Level 3 course is due to an administrative technicality, not quality and does not affect certification of the course until next year.

11 CPD Update

The Management Development programme is coming to an end with the final session planned in October 2015. In July 2015 there will be the launch of the improvement projects that will be undertaken by all College managers to put their learning into practice. They will use all the techniques, models and thinking introduced both through the programme and other training to bring about and evidence quantifiable improvements to the student experience in their areas of

operation. The Chair of the Committee will be invited to the management project presentations.

The newly appointed Assistant Principal, Quality Improvement, will oversee the CPD programme and its annual development. The plan will detail the ongoing training and education of staff and will be shared with the Committee once available. Planned training and PD Days are linked to the outcomes of lesson observation themes and include stretch and challenge, assessment and learning and progression and destination topics. In August course directors will receive training to provide them with the tools to effectively manage and support students on their programmes.

12 **Workforce Key Performance Indicators**

The average number of days lost due to absence remains stable. Higher absence rates are expected in the winter months, lessening to fewer in spring and summer terms and the absence trend of the College certainly suggests this is the case. The reasons for absence expose no particular trend other than minor illness continuing to be the largest percentage of the reasons for absence (colds, migraines etc).

There has been a considerable drop in the number of long term absences (19 down to 6). Of the 6 people currently absent long term, two staff have, or will soon, return to work.

At the request of the Committee table 6 of the report provides a breakdown of short term absences categorised between 0-3days, 3-10days and 10-19days. It is clear from the figures that the majority of short term absences are for less than 3 days and detailed analysis shows that most are for one day only.

The comparison of student facing and business support staff who have been absent indicates an upward trend in the number absent for the first nine months of the year. The number of student facing staff absent has dropped (153) and is likely to be less by the end of the year than the previous two (204 in 2013/14 and 217 2012/13) however the number of support staff absent has increased (178) and is already higher than the numbers reported in previous years (96 in 2013/14 and 92 2012/13). It was noted however that this year is the first year that the College has included hourly paid staff in absence calculations therefore the total workforce is counted rather than just the permanent and fixed term staff.

The actual number of staff absent during the first five months of 2015 is reducing each month and for April and May the percentage of time lost has dropped below the target of 3.5% at 3.3%. Recent reports state that absence rates in the Eastern Region are the third lowest in the country and the College's absence rates reflect this; overall days lost per employee plus percentage of time lost with the College is slightly higher than average for the region but is lower than all other benchmark comparators.

The statistics relating to equality and diversity by characteristic for the College's workforce were provided in the report. The majority of staff (59%) are employed in direct delivery and teaching support roles. Those staff are primarily in age groups of 31-60. Across the College 53% of staff are aged 41-60.

The gender profile is 35:65 male to female ratio. The majority of female staff are employed in direct delivery and teaching support groups but equally most of the male staff are employed in those groups too.

The Committee commented that while the report was interesting it did not necessarily identify if any inequality or discrimination existed by protected characteristic and asked to receive an annual report that analysed the data in this way. The data should be further analysed by senior and middle management as appropriate to expose potential issues such as gender balance and/or if our workforce reflects the communities that it serves in order that any imbalance or discrimination can be addressed.

13 Workforce Update

The HR Strategy presented to the Committee in June 2015 has been extended to include the suggestions made at the meeting.

Consideration is being given within the College as to the optimum time for the next staff survey. The number of questions will be reduced down to 10 from 30 and questions are rephrased as 'net promoters' to encourage greater participation. The Committee suggested offering incentives to staff to complete the survey such as entering participants into a prize draw or offering a free cup of coffee.

The Department for Work and Pensions has carried out its annual review of the College's approach to employing people with disabilities and the College has retained its disability symbol employer status for a further 12 months.

14 Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 22 October 2015 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.1.6

The meeting closed at 6.15pm