

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 9 March 2015

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

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 M Symonds (Chair) and J Finn (Vice Chair). In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, W Burrlock nominated S Daley to chair the meeting. **Proposed** by N Savvas and **seconded** by A Head.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014

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 2014/15 Quality Improvement Plan Update

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis. The report shows a decline in progress against a small number of the areas for improvement identified in the QIP. Although 84% are ahead of or on target, 16% (4 areas) are behind target. These areas for improvement relate to success on Maths and English, success on Automotive courses, achievement on Access to HE courses and Work Related Experience.

Success on Maths and English

Moving the success on of Maths and English is slow. The principal reason is the difficulty to encourage students to attend the lessons and this is evident through analysis of attendance KPIs. Students who are not attending or engaging in class are progressed down the disciplinary route in order to encourage better participation. Teaching staff in this area have all been observed. Outstanding Maths and English teachers are supporting those with lower observation grades plus there is now a centralised programme and opportunities for teaching staff to receive support from local school teaching staff and upskill in Maths by taking part in the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths (NCETM) programme.

Success on Automotive Courses

Attendance for Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 courses is a concern. Groups have had interventions, support and an Internal Quality Review will be completed this week to identify issues that may exist around leadership and management of these courses. Bournville College, Birmingham has been identified as a College with excellent practice in Motor Vehicle and the team will invite themselves for a visit to see what outstanding looks like and to learn how they can improve. This area is expected to produce signs of improvement particularly in attendance and retention for the next report to the Committee.

Achievement on Access to HE Courses

The findings from a recent review of Access to HE exposed that success, attendance and achievement rates of students are unsatisfactory. The Director of HE, S Steeds, is creating an action plan to improve success. Retention is currently 74% against a National Rate of 80% and the decision has been made not to recruit May starts as students who start on the Diploma tend not to re-engage with the course after the summer holiday.

The action plan will take account of the need to set these programmes up as short and fat, not long and thin. Progress will be tracked through MarkBook as currently students have no visibility of their progress. This can cause lack of motivation which leads to poor attendance, low retention and poor success rates. The Committee asked to receive a report at the next meeting to confirm that positive progress on Access to HE courses is being made.

SSteeds

Work Related Experience

The College is implementing the process for the collection of information and evidence regarding students' work related experience. The evidence will demonstrate students' learning and development in the transferable skills pertaining to work experience. At the time of submitting the R04 ILR return this exposed an insufficient level of hours and also evidence. The College is continuing to collect the evidence in order to claim the full funding allocation and it is proposed that in future work experience is recorded on ProMonitor within the ILP in order to track and monitor students' work related experience in the future.

The Committee approved the review of the QIP by a show of hands.

5 Key Performance Indicators

The report draws out the issues pertaining to attendance, retention, achievement and assessment completion.

Attendance

Attendance of CBL 16-18s is currently 87% and 19+ at 86%. There is no benchmark for attendance in the sector but the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality confirmed that the College should be aiming to achieve a target of 90% or more. Members commented that there is clearly a need to make classes interesting and exciting in order to promote and achieve better attendance.

Retention

Retention currently looks very positive though the College is anticipating that by the year end this could decline by as much as 4%. This would keep retention rates of 16-18 and 19+ just above national average. The retention issues are concentrated in a small number of areas and a small number of students.

Achievement (WBL)

WBL achievement will be finalised in the summer months. Table 3.5 of the report looks at whether the best case success will improve on the previous year and is categorised by exception and by SSA. WBL frameworks for levels 2 and 3 are the areas where there is some concern. Specifically SSA 7.4, Hospitality and Catering which has declining recruitment against a backdrop of an industry where young people tend to have short term contracts and move jobs frequently, resulting in unfinished frameworks. Functional Skills will now be front-loaded in the framework and the Vice Principal, Business and Community will be shadowing an assessor to investigate the offer and provision in order to make informed decisions about how the programme could be structured differently in order to improve retention.

N Savvas left the meeting at 5.00pm

Assessment Completion

Assessment completion in Healthcare and Early years has improved since the time of writing the report and is now 35% complete (green status). Automotive has improved slightly by a couple of percent and the Director of Technology, responsible for the School of Computing, has been tasked to provide a clear action plan to improve assessment completion for students. There has been long term staff absence and difficulties recruiting to vacancies in this school but there appears to every confidence that the team will get back on track. It was noted that the School of Computing has always been a high performing area of the College. The Committee requested updates on this matter.

LJohnson

6 HE Attrition

The report shows the number of students enrolled and the full time equivalent (FTE) by department for the last here years and the current cohort. The Director of HE confirmed that the attrition FTE percentage is now 5.4% (4.14% at the time of the written report). Members noted the gradual decline in student numbers and the two departments at this time which register as of particular concern; Business Management and Tourism Studies and Performance Arts.

Specifically the Music Production programme has lost a part time learner and three full time students from the year two of the FdA. The Committee questioned whether students were leaving because of issues regarding the provision of resources, hardware and servicing. The Vice Principal, Business and Community confirmed that this is not the case. The issues with the equipment are now resolved and it has been repaired, replaced and is now under contract with a specialist contractor. In addition the department has specialist support from hourly paid workers and the College's Technical Support team for all software and hardware needs.

7 Early Leavers Report

All students who enrol onto a course but either do not attend at all following enrolment or leave within the first six weeks are considered early leavers. A number of changes have been made to capture the reasons why students fail to attend in September or leave within six weeks and as a result of a more robust recording system this has significantly reduced the need to contact higher numbers of students as in previous year for this information.

The report shows that the majority of students (37%) do not attend or leave the College to return to school. Students secure a place at the College in case their GCSE results are less than expected and use the College as a safety net. Other destinations of early leavers include full time employment (24%) and much lower percentages for part time employment (2%), NEET (6%), gap year (1%) and higher education (1%). It was noted that the College could not establish a destination of 29% of those contacted. The Committee asked that the report includes the figures as a percentage of the total student numbers so that comparisons can be made with previous years to establish if the number of early leavers is up or down on previous years.

BUwin

8 At Risk Courses 2014/15

The report provided the Committee with an update on the CBL courses currently 'at risk'. All courses have been reviewed as part of a comprehensive review of KPIs. Where one or more KPI indicates concern (i.e. does not have a green status indicator) this flags the course at risk. The report identifies 80 courses currently at risk.

In the same manner students at risk are also measured and monitored through the ILP and the degree of risk is RAGB rated. Red indicates high level of risk, amber equals some degree of risk, green means that they are on target and blue means that there are no issues at all.

Members commented that the range of information reports now received by governors gave them a high level of confidence they could monitor performance effectively.

9 Lesson Observations

This year the College has introduced a Grade 1 exchange. All staff who receive a grade 1 judgement on initial external observation are offered the opportunity to either be observed the following year or have the judgement stand for two years on condition that they agree to carry out peer observations. This may include supporting a member of staff to improve from a grade 3 or 4 judgement or to develop good practice in a particular area. The next report to the Committee will include details of the Grade 1 exchange and peer observations.

The final observation teaching profile of good or better currently stands at 89%. Four teaching staff received a grade 4, inadequate. All are receiving support and will be re-observed before Easter. The details of each case are detailed in the report. In order to better align the College's Professional Development plan with the requirements of teaching staff, analysis is now being undertaken of the strengths and weaknesses of key themes arising from observations.

10 FdSc Computing and Network Course Analysis Report

The Committee had requested and received the UCS risk alert audit report for the FdSc Computing and Network course. It was noted that the report from UCS is not particularly helpful for planning because of its lack of detail, but members received assurance from the Vice Principal, Business and Community that staff responsible for the delivery of the course know the students and know the issues. It would be preferable to align the processes of UCS with those of the College and it is hoped that work with the Centre Academic Committee can improve to enable more stringent processes that are aligned to FE standards. It was noted that the College is bound by the reports that UCS requires.

A review of the HE Support Tutor post will be undertaken in the summer months and an evaluation of the impact this role has with student retention, attendance and achievement will be measured.

11 Workforce Key Performance Indicators

Absence reporting has been improved and now includes all workers. Data now counts actual people rather than just FTEs that in the past also excluded hourly paid workers.

Minor illnesses (less than 20 days) accounted for 93.6% of absences in January and February 2015. Long term absences (in excess of 20 days) account for 6.4% of absences (7 individuals) which is unusually higher than normal.

Absences are reported monthly to the Senior Management Team and are monitored by School and Department. The absence target is currently 3.8%. The Committee agreed that the College should reduce this to 3.5% with a stretch target of 3%.

Staff Turnover reporting has also been improved and now reports on the actual numbers of employees rather than on FTEs. At the last meeting the Committee

expressed some concern that the turnover rate was increasing but it is evident that because of the way previous reports were compiled calculations were based on only a proportion of the entire workforce thus distorting the accuracy and integrity of KPI data. Turnover for the year to date therefore has more than halved the figure reported in November to the Committee to 7.14% from 14.8%.

Members asked to receive a list of the reasons why staff resign in future reports. The Head of HR confirmed that there were no particular trends concerning the 35 resignations reported in the period. Resignations were for a variety of reasons including career development opportunities, moving out of area etc. The Committee also asked if the data could be split to show turnover by full time, part time and hourly paid staff as this may expose trends in reasons why perhaps more hourly paid staff leave the College than FT employees. The Head of HR will produce this analysis in future reports.

TO'Sullivan

12 Workforce Update

The report provided an update on the improvements made by the College to address the issues raised in the staff surveys of 2013 and 2014. Members queried whether smaller 'survey monkey' type surveys could be themed in some way against the improvements identified to establish if progress is or has been made. The staff governor commented that staff perspective is that no communication concerning the survey has happened since September 2014 and it is important that the key issues and progress made is communicated and disseminated to staff.

13 Workforce Risk Management

The risk register has been filtered to identify the workforce related risks for the College. There are five risks, two medium (amber status) and three low (yellow status) risks. The Committee agreed that the risk rating of R050 should be increased to a total score of 33 (red status) in recognition that recruitment to specialist posts (electrical, computing, engineering, maths etc.) has been difficult and despite the control measures and actions required these are as yet not yielding the desired effect and managing the level of risk.

JBridges

It was further agreed that risks R054 and R055 will be merged together to create a risk around the underperformance/competency of staff leading to inability to deliver and meet the needs of students. The Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality will undertake this review.

LJohnson

14 Committee Meeting Times

The Committee agreed for the Clerk to convene meetings for the 2015/16 academic year on a Tuesday at 4.00pm.

15 Any other business

It was noted that the Committee did not receive the February complaints and compliments report as suggested in the matters arising paper. The Clerk will add this as an agenda item to the next meeting of the Committee.

JBridges

Date of next meeting

It was noted that all business items had been covered at this meeting and therefore the meeting of 24 March 2015 at 4.00pm would be cancelled.

JBridges

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday 12 May at 4.00pm although the Clerk is looking to change the date of this meeting to early June 2015 to improve governor attendance. The Clerk will confirm electronically of any change of date.

JBridges

The meeting closed at 6.25pm