

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 28 February 2017

Present:	S Daley (Chair) J Winter	A Maltpress (Vice Chair) N Savvas, Principal	K Points
In Attendance:	K Golding, Chair T Locke, Head of HE J Bridges, Clerk	R Carter, Co-Chair C Shaw, VP S&LS	L Johnson, VP C&Q R Sadler, HR Director

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

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Gazzard and L Moody, Vice Principal Employer Engagement and R Kirk, Assistant Principal for HE. Non-attendance will be recorded for W O'Reilly.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017

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 resolved or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

A report is to be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee in April 2017 that identifies and highlights any ongoing concerns of the Automotive and Engineering courses and student progress (attendance, retention and achievement)

KPI Report Matters Arising

Managers now have more visibility on WBL student progress as staff are making better use of MarkBook thus enhancing reporting capabilities for the progress of these students.

The issues with Access to HE are being worked through and Course Directorships have been changed which has enabled staff to work differently, more proactively and for them to move away from habitual ineffective work regimes. This change in leadership and management is making a real positive impact.

Items 10 and 11 preceded items 4 to 9 of the meeting.

Overall Effectiveness

4 2016/17 Quality Improvement Plan Update

The Senior Management Team is looking at how the QIP can be rationalised to bring it and other reporting schemes into one place; risk management and the KPI schedule.

Not as much progress has been made progressing the improvement targets for apprenticeships and WBL but lots of work is going on behind the scenes so better progress should be reportable for the next meeting of the Committee to be held in April 2017.

Action

LJohnson

Functional Skills rules for apprentices, it appears, has been inconsistently applied, as with some of the frameworks students only needed to complete functional skills level 1 but from August 2016 all intermediate apprentices are to undertake level 2 as the framework now is much more exacting.

In summary the Chair commented that generally it can be seen that the 2016/17 QIP is being delivered with just a few improvement actions that remain behind target. The Chair of the Corporation asked that the QIP references the actions arising from the Ofsted Inspection of May 2016 so that these can be clearly identified and the distance travelled monitored, recorded and actioned.

LJohnson

Outcomes for Learners

5 Maths and English Update

The Committee agreed for a Governors' Briefing Q&A session to be held prior to the next meeting of the Committee facilitated by the Director of Maths and English, T Hewlett, about the qualification reforms and the impact for the College and the sector arising from the release of the guidance from the AoC Maths and English Conference held today.

LJohnson

The Chair thanked the Director of Maths and English, T Hewlett, for a comprehensive and interesting report. It provided a real flavour of what is happening on the ground. Shorter, top level reports are now requested by the Committee in the future.

Governors were pleased to learn that the Leadership of Maths and English mini conference held on 13 February 2017 at the College sponsored by the ETF (Education and Training Foundation) had been a successful event with over 45 delegates attending from 30 different organisations. The conference really exposed the good practice of the College compared to other College across the Country and the DfE is keen to discuss our practice to better understand the impact that Government policy has on FE institutions. The Principal stressed the importance that the College remains grounded and not complacent of about its efforts. We need to measure the impact of our practice for students. The Chair added that the framework is there, the input and effort of the College is clearly there so it is questionable what more we can do other than measure and monitor the outputs. In summary the College is ahead of the field, but we need to start looking at the outputs from this and keep on top of the predicted achievement and outcomes for learners.

The Chair encouraged members to look at the Maths and English Padlets referred to in the report. Hyperlinks to the resources are available here ([Maths Padlet](#)) and ([English Padlet](#)). The padlets are being used in all classes and in additional study sessions to provide revision materials in order to increase student confidence/competence, hopefully contributing to increased pass rates.

Members were also pleased to learn that the College will be partnering with MV-Nordic to develop their software product that will enable PDF documents to be read under class and exam conditions. Currently the software can only read word documents so this change in technology will help students going forward, will be easier to use in class and will better prepare students.

6 HE Attrition and NSS/ISS Update

The number of applications has slowly crept up to 281 since the time of writing the report, however the number of applicants is down on the same point last year by 68 but it is up on target (268). Applications in the sector are also generally down compared with the previous year. It was noted that there are some students

waiting in clearing and we are working with them to encourage them to progress their application.

Attrition and retention rates continue to improve as we get better at keeping and encouraging students on stay on track. The student support package that is offered is having a positive impact particularly for those with more specialist and complex needs.

The Committee was pleased to learn that the students of the UoS at WSC have carried the motion not to boycott the National Student Survey despite the Students' Union President at the UoS in Ipswich putting forward the motion for members to boycott it to show its disagreement with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Students at the UoS at WSC said that they wanted to complete the survey as their concerns and ideas for improvement had been listened to, recognised and significant progress and effort had been made by the College to redress the issues of students. To date 55% of students have completed the survey which is good and this is already better response rate than the numbers that have participated in the past.

An HE Champion has been employed by the UoS based at the College who is responsible for organising and leading all activity to engage with young people from identified wards. We need to appoint an administrator to support this post and we could recruit students to promote our HE offer to Schools. Initiatives to progress the project take a two strand approach – In-Reach and Out-Reach. In-Reach activity will include Coaching Activities, Subject specific workshops led by HE students, Taster Days, Level 3 students joining HE lectures and Visits to employer sites. Out-Reach activity will include visits to local learning centres, talks to schools and workshops. The activity is to be costed and a proposal sent to the UoS.

7 Early Leavers Report

There continues to be an overall improvement in the number of students withdrawing from the College compared with last year for both 16-18 and 19+. To date there have been a total of 89 16-18 students and 20 19+ who have withdrawn compared to 133 and 53 respectively for the same period last year.

Most of the withdrawals for the 16-18 age group have been due to gaining an apprenticeship (27%), gaining employment (17%) or transferring to another course (14%). For 19+ students there are no significant withdrawal reasons, although 4 students (20%) have withdrawn for personal reasons.

The purple category of 'extremely high risk' is working particularly well. We now have 16 students in this category and these are being actively worked on by the Specialist PST and the rest of the PST team. Since the PIP programme began towards the end of November 2016, 31 students have been supported by this process in total. 8 have been successfully re-engaged but unfortunately 7 have withdrawn (mainly due to mental health issues) and the remainder remain within support.

The February half term is the time of year usually when more students withdraw from their course. Interventions are in place to keep students on target and we're working with students now to keep them focussed and encouraged to stay the course as we approach the Easter break.

It was noted that a transfer is seen as a withdrawal due to the nature of the EFA funding rules. At the 6 week census point if a student has changed qualification then it's seen as a withdrawal but the College still gets the funding.

N Savvas and K Golding left the meeting at 5.30pm

8 **Courses At Risk**

The report shows all of the key metrics for every, single student, which is then summarised at course and then department level. The Committee's attention was drawn to the area of Automotive where attendance, assessment and retention levels are red/amber with 43% of students rated as Red risk. There are a considerable number of young people with mental health issues and while attendance has improved and retention is high, indicating that students want to stay, students are presenting high levels of behavioural and disruptive issues. The intention is to resell and repackage the course as a progression diploma, similar to the Access to Education offer where students are on a level 1 programme and by the end of the course they will have progressed onto level 2. The main feature of the course is about changing the mindset of young people and working with them to build upon their character strengths thus addressing and supporting their behavioural and social difficulties along the way and improving retention, attendance, success and achievement for these students.

Reporting at this level of scrutiny enables the College to monitor the progress of all of our students and apply the right levels of intervention and support. This approach reaches across all of our provision, including HE, where high levels of mental health issues are also present in our students. The Vice Principal Student and Learning Support reported that the Chair of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust had visited the College recently and is keen to support the College by providing specialist mental health resource to work with our students. He was surprised by the lack of support available to the College and our young people. We continue to work with our students and provide the right intervention and support needed for them to succeed to achieve the best possible outcomes for learners.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

9 **Lesson Observations and Internal Quality Reviews**

The headlines from the report is that we are doing more learning walks and making more frequent checks of the calibre of our teaching and learning. The report identifies what needs to be addressed and a summary of the proportion of learning walks and observations that have been done. The Committee asked if the judgements of learning walks are a 'good fit' with the KPI issues that we know, i.e. do the learning walks identify or corroborate with the KPI outcomes we see. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that they do, the learning walk of Engineering for example brings out exactly the issues already known from KPI reports and these metrics have been observed and found in the teaching.

The work of K Heathcote, Director of Quality and Professional Development was commended at the meeting as it is purported that her review and management of the learning walk system is seen by staff as a very supportive process and not a one fit suits all approach. The reports are collated, issues identified swiftly, impact addressed and actions taken forward with immediate feedback provided for staff to take on board and work with. This sentiment was echoed by Governor, A Maltpress, who had accompanied K Heathcote on a learning walk earlier today and Committee Chair, S Daley is due to accompany the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality tomorrow. A Maltpress expressed the learning walk as a great

experience, he saw great teaching, great students and great teaching and learning.

Items 10 and 11 preceded items 4 to 9 above.

Leadership and Management

10 Workforce Update

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

11 Workforce Risk Management

At the request of the Committee the scores of risks R050 and R053 have been reviewed in light of the discussion held at the meeting in November 2016 where it was recognised that there are hard to fill posts in areas such as Engineering, Plumbing, Electrical and Construction Crafts. The risk about the inability to recruit specialist staff had a residual score of 10 (yellow) and has been uplifted to a score of 18 (amber) and the risk about the culture of excellence being in decline has moved down from a score of 18 (amber) to a score of 12 (yellow). The Committee noted that the risk around Equal Pay Audits has increased to a score of 18 (amber) suggesting that the College is exposed to a higher level of risk. The Director of HR confirmed that this is not necessarily the case but the level of risk has been increased in recognition that the College needs to continue updating and analysing its gender pay gap reporting, the topic is now generally out there in the public domain and work will need to continue to prepare the College for compliance as we approach the April 2018 deadline. The risk level therefore is nothing more than a rough indication of where we are currently and the new software (Cintra), when installed, will significantly contribute to the College having a better understanding of whether there are gaps in gender pay once enhanced reporting becomes available. Until that time manual analysis continues.

R Sadler left the meeting at 5.45pm.

12 Any other business

The College has received a TES FE Award for the Best Teaching and Learning Initiative for its MARS project (Maths, Art, Religion and Science) developed and created by D Johnson, Director of Art and Design with his team. The project demonstrates how Maths underpins everything in our lives and this award and recognition is helping the College to grow its national profile which in turn will attract the right sort of attention and the right funding opportunities.

The College has also approached the ETF to run another mini conference on Teaching and Learning and intends to produce an electronic good practice guide with electronic resources to be published arising from the Maths and English mini conference held and hosted by the College (as reported above) earlier this month.

Get well wishes from the Committee were extended to the Assistant Principal for HE, R Kirk, who is currently absent recovering from an operation.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 18 April 2017 at 4.00pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 6.05pm