

STANDARDS AND EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 14 March 2019

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present: | Sue Daley (Chair)
Rudy Berongoy | Karen Points
Nikos Savvas, CEO/Principal | Alan Maltpress |
| In Attendance: | Colin Shaw, VP Q&LE
Penny Fawcus, ED
Rachel Boast, M+E Director
Jules Bridges, Clerk | Rachel Kirk, AP HE
Simon Graham, I HR D
Andrew Adamson, ED | Gary Jefferson, ED
Debbie Tappin, ED
L Reynolds, HR Advisor |

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 Jim Gazzard. Non-attendance will be recorded for E Foster. In addition apologies for absence were received from the Vice Principal Employer Engagement, Laraine Moody and Executive Director, Debbie Coomes.

The Vice Principal Quality and the Student Experience will contact the student governor to establish why attendance has been so poor.

CShaw

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to amending on the last page under item 14, the time should state 4.00pm, not 4.00m.

JBridges

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.

Agenda items 11 and 12 preceded items 4 through to 10

4 Key Performance Indicators

Overall attendance had dropped by 1% (16-18) to 88% since the last report but since writing the report has gone back up by 1%.to 89%. Attendance for 19+ students has increased by 1% over the start of this term and is also at 89% (1% higher than the same point last year). Analysis of attendance by level identifies that there is still an issue for 16-18 students at Level 1, as attendance is only at 81%, which is a drop of 1%.

An attendance gap continues to exist between Maths and English sessions and vocational sessions; however, students are fully engaged in these sessions. Functional Skills exams have commenced and the results from the first round are expected shortly.

The Committee was pleased to learn that Health and Social Care exams are exceptional this year with 100% pass rate and only 1 failure at Level 2 who will resit. This is a significant achievement compared to poor achievement rates last year.

Assessment progress in the main are either on or ahead of target, with only Healthcare and Early Years, Science and Animal Care falling behind the target expected. The issues are known in each of these areas and students are being supported to catch up. The Committee noted that Assessment progress on Access to HE continues to do well. It was noted that Business,

Tourism and Events Diploma Level 1 attendance was particularly low and surprising. A number of absences for health reasons in a small cohort of 21 has created a drop in attendance.

Student retention remains strong for both 16-18 and 19+ at 96%, which is a 2% decline since the last report, but is in line with the same point last year.

Overall apprenticeship achievement is currently at 46% but if we have no further withdrawals or students who do not continue into next year, the achievement rate would be 70% (Current Leavers Ach%). Best case achievement is at 80% (although may be optimistic as a number of learners are identified and flagged at risk), but the team is predicting an overall minimum achievement rate of 75% (Planned Ach%), a 5% increase on last year's performance. This allows for 36 withdrawals (possibly a few more) between now and the end of the academic year (i.e. those known to be 'at risk').

5 Early Leavers and Withdrawals

The number of withdrawals for 16-18 year old students is 91 to date. For the 19+ students it is 16 and for Apprentices it is 31. These are increases of 29 (16-18s), 10 (19+) and 5 (Apprentices) since the last report. Some of these include students who did not return after Christmas. This is 10 more students this year than the same time last year for the 16-18 cohort but we had seen 3 fewer withdrawals with the 19+.

The main reasons for withdrawal for 16-18 year old students recently have been due to positive destinations because they have gained employment (32 students) or an apprenticeship (18 students), although some withdrawals (8) have been due to illness or they have transferred to a different learning aim (7 students) but we have retained them on courses here at College. Those who withdrew and were 19+ left due to gaining employment, financial reasons, altered family commitments or the course no longer related to their plans. It was noted that more analysis of those who withdraw for financial reasons or gain employment is to be made as it is thought in some instances the reason why a student withdraws is because they have gained employment in order to address the financial difficulty.

Currently, the reasons why apprentices have withdrawn is not comprehensively known, with most leavers having 'Other' as the given reason.

6 Courses at Risk

Currently there are 24 out of 140 courses 'at risk' across the College compared to 17 out of 140 at the time of the last report. Since the last report 3 courses have improved and are no longer considered high risk; Business Diploma Level 2, Construction and the Built Environment First Diploma Level 2; and Animal Management Advanced Technical Extended Diploma Level 3 Year 2.

The last report also identified a further 6 courses which were under close review and measures were put in place to reduce the risk of these becoming high risk. Four of those six courses have improved and have moved out of the medium zone although a further 9 courses have been moved into the medium zone for close monitoring.

There has been no significant movement with the Apprenticeship courses since the last report with 8 courses remaining 'at risk' due to Best Case achievement rates being below National Rate (NR). These are courses in Accounting and Finance, Conservatoire EAST both Music and Media, Computing and Engineering

Access to HE Social Science has become high risk due to a retention rate of 78% and Access to HE Science is high risk because attendance is low at 82% and retention is 89%. The Committee are to receive an update report at the next meeting to be held on April 2019.

CShaw

It was noted that there have been no further apprenticeship courses being identified as at risk since the last report. A number of courses in the following areas (detailed in the report) remain high risk as they are unable to achieve the National Achievement Rate: Health and Social Care, Engineering, Manufacturing Technologies, ICT Practitioners, Administration and Business Management.

7 Maths and English Update

The overall College attendance (16-19 provision) continues to be robust with a whole College summary of 78% attendance for English, 77% for Maths and 85% overall. 50% of all curriculum areas have 80% or better attendance on Maths and English.

Attendance on English is 78% and is 77% for Maths compared to 85% for these particular students on the main qualification. At the same point last year attendance was 63% for English; 64% for Maths.

The first of the planned 3 weeks of functional skills exams have taken place. A total of 340 student exams were booked and attendance was 74%. A total of 849 exams have now taken place to date.

The Director of Maths and English reported a whole host of initiatives and plans to improve attendance and overcome barriers and obstacles to learning. We have talked to students about behavioural attitudes, work ethics and how we can re-engage them into learning and these are having a positive albeit slow impact with those who have a history of struggling with these subjects.

Timetabling and planning for 2019/20 are complete and ready to 'go live' as soon as course codes can be built into Unit-E.

8 Apprenticeship Update

The 2018/19 planned achievers continue to come through and 324 apprentices have now achieved YTD (Year to Date) with a further 271 planned to achieve in the remainder of the year resulting in a Best Case QAR of 80% (3% higher than at the same point last year).

Currently we have achieved a QAR of 69% for the year and based on local intelligence and RAG ratings forecast achievement is predicted (as reported above) at a minimum of 75% (Planned Ach%).

At the end of February 2019 the in learning forecast number of students was around 1,540 learners on programme (internal) which is a slight increase (+40) on the same point last year.

82% of learners remain ahead of or on target (4% increase on the last report) although there have been 5 withdrawals in the same period with a learner changing career, a company who ended the employment due to lack of work, one learner dismissed for substance abuse and two that did not return from a break in learning (1 x maternity and 1 x long term sickness). It was noted that every effort is made to retain the learner and keep the employer engaged with the College. Alternative provision and further IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) is offered and only at the point of no return are withdrawals accepted and authorised for processing.

9 HE Withdrawals and Retention

The number of withdrawals to date is better than last year by 0.8% as 1.5% (9 students) have withdrawn compared to 2.3% (16 students) last year. Therefore the retention rate is at 98.5% against the target of 96%. It was noted that retention here at the UoS at WSC is better than those at the other College providers and the hub in Ipswich.

The majority of reasons for withdrawal are due to personal/financial/health reasons (7 students) and 2 withdrew because of wrong institution/choice/career reasons. It was noted that there is no emerging trend in why and from what courses students withdraw other than for unforeseen changes in personal circumstances.

10 NSS Results and Analysis

The four course areas on risk alert are Counselling, Engineering, Construction and Computing and meetings are held regularly to monitor progress against their improvement plans.

Activity since the last report includes promoting and informing students of the developments and changes made to the HE provision following the results of the NSS/ISS surveys. Student Focus Groups have been convened to provide 'quick fixes' to issues and grievances.

The new NSS came out in January 2019 and students invited to take part. The ISS has also just been released and it is hoped this delay from the NSS may work in our favour as there were disgruntled students earlier in the year who were aggrieved that the initial proposal to house the Abbeygate Sixth Form College students in Suffolk House with HE degree students was not welcomed. This was resolved immediately and alternative accommodation identified (The Gateway building) to house Abbeygate students. We are now not anticipating this dissatisfaction to impact the results of the survey as the issue was resolved so promptly.

11 Workforce Update

The Gender Pay Gap Report for the snapshot date of 31 March 2018 is still in progress and is to be prepared ready for the reporting deadline of 30 March 2019. The report is to be presented to the Corporation for consideration at the meeting to be held on 29 March 2019. Initial indications and calculations show that median rates are more favourable than the last report (snapshot of March 2017 data).

The report detailed a list of Health and Wellbeing events that have taken place year to date. These included dance-a-thons, estate planning and will writing, mindfulness sessions, pension talks, heart beat checks, NHS Health Checks and Cycle to work workshops.

SGraham

In this term events include a Nutrition and Hydration Challenge, Pension Talks, Get on your feet Britain day and an Energy Bill clinic and workshop.

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

12 ET Update

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

S Graham and L Reynolds left the meeting at 5.10pm

The Committee resumed agenda items 4 through to 10 next

13 Any other business

The Committee would like to send their best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to the HR Director who is currently absent for health reasons.

JBridges

The Committee expects to receive an update on progress against the 2018/19 Quality Improvement Plan at the next meeting to be held on 25 April 2019.

PFawcus

Our Animal Care offer is set to move from Newmarket Academy to main campus here. Student recruitment to these courses has increased as a consequence and the move seen absolutely as a positive.

The Clerk is to look at the frequency and spread of meetings across the academic year to ensure that all business is appropriately covered without the need to meet too frequently.

JBridges

Date of next meeting

Thursday 25 April 2019 at 4.30pm. Room TG1.16

The meeting closed at 6.15pm