

MINUTES

Group :	QUALITY, STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	Date:	16/10/17
Location:	ROOM B.17, LONDON ROAD CAMPUS	Time:	5.45 p.m.
Membership:	Christine Davies (Chair), Andy Allen, Gordon Channon (ex-officio, Chair of the Board), Christina Gore, Steve Lewis, Nigel Merchant, James Staniforth (Principal/CEO) and Mike Willmot. Student Governors by invitation for Student Experience and Welfare Section – Jae Evans.		
IN ATTENDANCE:	Members of the Senior Leadership Team: Paul Morgan, Director of A Level Studies (DoALS); and Chris Pemberton, Group Vice-Principal, Quality and Curriculum Management (GVP – Q&CM) Clerk to the Board, Tracy Cottee		
APOLOGIES:	Catherine Armstrong, Group Vice Principal - Curriculum Support and Business Development (GVP – CS&BD) and Gordon Channon		

Prior to the meeting, C. Davies welcomed –

- the newly-appointed Academic Staff Governor (EB/WB campuses), Steve Lewis, to his first Committee meeting;
- the newly-appointed H.E. Student Governor, Jae Evans, to her first Committee meeting; and
- all Committee members to the first meeting of the year.

26/17. Election of Chair

Resolved: That Christine Davies be appointed Chair of the Committee for 2017 – 2018.

Chris Davies in the Chair.

27/17. Declarations of Interest

None.

28/17. Minutes – 8 May 2017

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 08 May 2017, were approved.

29/17. Matters Arising

None.

30/17. **Draft Work Plan 2017/18**

The Principal/CEO reported that the Draft Workplan was being worked on to ensure it reflected the College's Quality Cycle going forward.

Student Experience and Welfare

31/17. **Higher Education (Appendix No. 6)**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), setting out the latest Higher Education update.

The main points included –

- National Student Survey (NSS) Results for 2016/17 - 78% of students responded, up 8% on last year;
- Overall student satisfaction was 78.72%; 5.45% less than the sector as a whole;
- The HE Lead had been invited to sit on the NSS working group facilitated by HEFCE to represent Colleges nationally;
- Latest enrolments against targets;
- HE Induction event - Initial verbal feedback seemed positive and a questionnaire had been sent out for students to share their views on the event to inform next year's planning;
- HE Tutor Induction – update;
- HE Centre development – update;
- HE Enhancement Group – the Enhancement Plan had been updated and submitted to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to agree priorities for 2017/18;
- HE Tutor Forum – the first meeting of the academic year had taken place;
- Student Forums/Consultative – update;
- QAA Update – whilst a date had yet to be confirmed, the GVP – Q&CM and the HE Lead had met with the Clerk and the HE Lead Governor to discuss governance and likely evidence to be submitted. The HE Lead had also attended a recent HE Centre consultation with second year students;
- Mapping against the Quality Code had been completed and gaps to be addressed prior to the review visit have been identified.

The HE Lead Governor commended the focussed approach to the consultation group he had attended.

Resolved:

That the Higher Education Update be noted.

32/17. **Student Survey (Appendix No. 7)**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), setting out a summary of information relating to students' views, gathered by the Exit Survey conducted during May – June 2017 and which would contribute to the quality, annual planning and self-assessment cycles. Information had been gathered through Survey Monkey for English (EB) and Welsh Bridge (WB) campuses and using Moodle for students attending London Road (LR) Campus. As this was the first year of the Shrewsbury Colleges Group survey, no yearly comparison figures were available.

The Committee reviewed the overview of findings, the main points being -

- The highest satisfaction rate from EB/WB was around feeling safe at College with 97%;
- The highest satisfaction rate from LR was around encouragement to attend College regularly and on time with 98%;
- EB/WB had a higher satisfaction rate concerning course organisation;
- The question concerned making progress and finding the work challenging had a 95% satisfaction rating for all campuses;
- The lowest satisfaction at LR was “Lessons across my study programme have helped me develop my English skills” at 81%; and
- The lowest satisfaction at EB/WB was “I have regular discussions on my targets” at 49%.

In response to a query from the Staff Governor regarding the response from EB students about target-setting, the GVP - Q&CM explained that teachers were invited to discuss and go through the survey questions with students prior to completion, to ensure the questions were understood. The Staff Governor explained to other Committee members that target-setting was discussed in tutorials at this site and this could explain the lower outcome. The Principal/CEO explained that the College was implementing a system focussing on target-setting, tracking and monitoring that involved all teachers and students. The new process of formative assessment involving students in their own development, was a more positive approach and he anticipated that next year's survey outcomes would reflect this.

Whilst the Committee recognised the strong outcomes with respect to how safe students felt across all campuses, the Committee observed that the College should follow-up students who had not responded positively.

The GVP – Q&CM explained that an Action Plan would be drawn up to address issues arising from the survey outcomes. The College Induction SPOC had ‘gone live’ and would be moderated by Academic Leadership Team (ALT) on 16 October 2017. The Director of A Level Studies (DoALS) commented that this Survey would provide students with an opportunity to comment.

Resolved:

That the observations from the Shrewsbury Exit Survey, July 2017, as detailed in the report, be noted.

33/17. **Complaints & Compliments Report 2016 – 2017 (Appendix No. 8)**

The GVP – Q&CM submitted a report detailing complaints/compliments received during 2016 – 2017 (previously circulated).

The Committee reviewed the recommendations arising from the report, namely -

1. Student/parent concerns should be dealt with informally and immediately, ensuring that a lengthy process did not inhibit timely rectification of minor issues, with more serious concerns being addressed through the formal process
2. Curriculum Leaders/Programme Leaders should conduct closer monitoring of groups where issues existed to prevent escalation of dissatisfaction, particularly where there were staff sickness issues.

The GVP – Q&CM reported that the report’s recommendations had been emphasised to the teaching staff. The Principal/CEO confirmed that students were encouraged to come forward if there were any issues of concern and this had proved to be the case in the early part of the year, with an increase in enquiries direct to the Principal/CEO and the GVP; there was an emphasis on the College moving people to the right process. The College was moving away from a defensive position when receiving a complaint, to considering any complaint as feedback to improve the College’s service to students. The Committee supported this approach.

Resolved:

That the Compliments/Complaints Report be noted.

34/17. **Safeguarding Annual Report 2016 – 2017** (Appendix No. 9)

The Committee reviewed the Safeguarding Annual Report (previously circulated). The Report had been moderated by the Safeguarding Committee.

The Annual Report provided updates on –

- Safeguarding at the London Road site;
- Safeguarding at the English Bridge/Welsh Bridge campuses – safeguarding reporting had been collated into one format over the summer as part of the College's programme;
- Referral processes;
- Staffing changes - the College had a clearly defined Team working across the sites;
- Team training;
- Staff Training; and
- Prevent Policy.

The Safeguarding Lead Governor reported that she was meeting twice termly with Safeguarding Leads across the campuses. The Principal agreed to follow-up the Committee's concern for complete assurance that all employed staff and volunteers were subject to robust DBS and employment checks.

ACTION: Principal to follow-up

The College had self-assessed Safeguarding provision as 'Good'. The Committee, on reviewing the Annual Report, supported this self-assessment outcome.

Resolved:

That the Safeguarding Annual Report be recommended to Board.

Teaching & Learning

35/17. **2017 Results** (Confidential Appendix 10)

The Principal/CEO submitted a report (previously circulated) on the work that had taken place in the sixth form sector to provide a contextual understanding of certain aspects of the new linear A Levels and to provide a sharper understanding of the quality of the College's 2017 A Level results.

An additional Confidential Report was circulated, showing A level and BTEC performance across subject and ALPS rating 2016 and 2017, as a comparator. The Committee noted that –

- In his report to the Board on 25 September 2017 (Board Min. No. 50./17 refers), the Principal/CEO had reminded that the College was the only sixth form in the Country to enrol all students on two-year A levels;
- The College A Level achievement rate of 82.3% (meaning 82.3% of students who enrolled to a subject in September 2015, achieved an A Level in that subject in August 2017) was, therefore, hard to contextualise. However, the achievement rate compared favourably with the sector rate of 74.5% for students on two year linear courses in other sixth form colleges;
- Research completed by another sixth form principal on A level results.

The Committee agreed that it was therefore important in reaching judgements about A Level quality, to balance two-year achievement with raw data and value-added results. Moreover, the Committee also supported that there was to be a more focussed approach to quality throughout the College going forward.

The DoALS reported on academic subject area outcomes, providing a context for results. The Committee thanked him for delivering achievement rates that compared favourably with national sector rates, particularly when recovery plans had been put in place in some subject areas in the College. The Principal/CEO reported that much work had been done to support teachers delivering a single subject and a lot of progress had been made.

Regarding results in vocational programmes, the College had more to improve during 2016 -17, including value-added, overall achievement and English and maths outcomes. Whilst it had been a challenging year, vocational programmes 16 – 18 had secured an improvement of about +10%. The College had also achieved significantly above national averages for the sector in English and maths. Regarding value-added, the College had undertaken some learning partnership work with Newcastle under Lyme College to improve outcomes and had secured some good outcomes. The Committee welcomed these positive outcomes; however, it observed that there was still some work to do to raise performance.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

36/17. Course Quality & Self-Assessment 2017 – 2018 (Appendix No. 11)

The Principal/CEO presented a report (previously circulated), informing of the 2017-18 course quality and self-assessment process.

The Committee acknowledged that the area of course quality was central to the overall College focus on quality improvement. The quality cycle aimed to:

- ensure praise was given for performance;
- provide a defined framework that promoted accountability;
- empowered teachers and managers to own and drive quality improvement;
- enabled the identification and sharing of good practice; and
- set targets to inform in-year tracking and monitoring and interventions.

The Committee was advised of –

- the planned annual quality cycle management for courses to date;
- the tracking and monitoring of performance and progress activities that had taken place in College and planned for the forthcoming year;
- Special Measures/Recovery arrangements; and
- Self-Assessment Moderation activities, including the involvement of governors, culminating in the final validation of the overall College SAR by the Board in January 2018.

The Committee supported this approach, particularly the focus on implementing a system focussing on target-setting, tracking and monitoring that involved all teachers and students.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

37/17. Learning Walks (Appendix No. 12)

In the 2016-17 academic year, the Committee had discussed the introduction of a single system of Learning Walks across the Group and had asked the Principal/CEO to present a programme going forward. The Principal/CEO submitted a report (previously circulated) to –

1. inform of the place of Learning Walks within the College's quality improvement cycle in 2017-18; and
2. propose a means of ensuring governors were well informed about different parts of the College curriculum as part of governor development.

Having considered the report, the Committee agreed the proposals in the report Learning Walks in 2017-18 should

- focus on enabling governors to get a feel for a particular curriculum area;
- inform governors' understanding of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment of the College in a specific area; it would not be to judge teaching, learning and assessment;
- be structured to include a briefing from the Programme/Curriculum Leader, include visiting several different lessons for 10-15 minutes and conclude with a meeting with students from the curriculum area. The total time would be c.90 minutes;
- be organised at least each Term, with the areas agreed at the Search & Governance Committee reflecting the purpose of governor development;
- be organised by the Clerk in collaboration with the Programme Leader/Curriculum Leader or other manager depending on the area of interest. All governors would be invited, with the intention that three or four might attend on each occasion. Governors would report back through the Search & Governance Committee.

As the Search & Governance Committee had already met this Term, it was agreed that the first Learning Walk take place before Christmas in Engineering and Motor Vehicle, given the significant capital investment in this area in 2016-17. It was also suggested that an appropriate second area in the spring term would be Art and Design, academic and vocational, given the relocation of vocational Art to English Bridge, though this should be agreed by the Search & Governance Committee meeting in February 2018.

Resolved:

That the Learning Walk structure set out in the report be agreed.

38/17. Risk

There were no identified areas of risk arising from the meeting.

39/17. Date of Next Meeting – Monday, 15 January 2018 at 5.45 p.m. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 7.36 p.m.