

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE CORPORATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2018**



**695 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**695.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Membership**

**Membership:** Ricky Irons *(Up to Item 2.1.1c)*  
Tony Medhurst  
Jan Wing (Chair)  
Emma Woolley

**In Attendance:** Mike Carver  
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk)  
Angela McLean  
Wayne Wright

**Apologies:** Charlotte Simmonds  
Stephen Alexander  
Sam Pettican

Emma Wooley was welcomed to the meeting.

**695.2 Declarations of Interest**

None reported.

**695.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 February 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

**695.4 Matters Arising**

None to report with all matters covered on the agenda.

**696 IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT**

**696.1 Quality Monitoring & Improvement**

Reports were presented on year to date activity and progress in the implementation of quality improvement objectives for 2017/18, comprising:

**696.1a Performance Targets (Strategic Objectives) Update**

A report updating members on progress in the implementation of the strategic curriculum and quality performance objectives proposed for 2017/18.

There was consideration of performance against predictive indicators of achievement, which showed:

- A current retention rate for all learners of 94.37%, noting that whilst it represented a decline from the 96% reported in February, it was almost 2% higher than the figure reported at the same time in the previous year, 92.49%, and above national average.
- Notwithstanding the College target of 90% attendance across all curriculum areas, current overall attendance was 84% which whilst disappointing was an improvement of 2% on the same period in the previous year.
- Current data highlighting Achievement Rate predictions for 2017/18 of 85.93% overall, excluding English and Maths provision; and taken alongside predictions for sub-contractor provision, an Achievement Rate of 88.04%.

There was more detailed review of performance by members with consideration of:

- Retention rates by Directorate and Curriculum Area, welcoming confirmation of improved rates in those curriculum areas identified with low retention (and achievement) in 2016/17, Beauty, Business, Engineering and Construction. Reviewing other rates further Management were questioned about:
  - i. The reasons for better retention by sub-contractors. Highlighting to members the distinction between qualification types, members were advised that with the qualifications delivered by the majority of sub-contractors being much shorter in duration, the likelihood of retaining learners was increased.
  - ii. Those areas with retention below 90%, Access, Workwise and Construction seeking clarification of the particular factors affecting retention. The impact of behavioural issues was noted along with the removal of individual students, which had been reported upon previously.
- Attendance rates noting where attendance was reported to be below 80%, three curriculum areas all within the STEM Directorate and where reported to be best within discrete vocational programmes averaging at 88%, in contrast with the significantly lower rate of 70% in English and Maths programmes. There was questioning:
  - i. Specifically of the lower rate for English and Maths reporting this to be reflective of the mandatory nature of the programmes for students who have not achieved an equivalent of a grade 4 at GCSE.
  - ii. Of attendance in the context of Ofsted comments, acknowledging that strategies had led to an improvement in attendance during 2017/18 but emphasising that it remained too low. There was question of Management about the strategies for improving attendance, seeking and receiving assurance that planning was already taking place to revise the induction programme for all learners and ensure that English and Maths non-attendance is challenged and actioned from the beginning of the academic year.
- Achievement rates, noting the more cautious approach to predictions and report that those curriculum areas that performed poorly last year now were all predicted to improve. Reviewing rates further, there was more detailed question of the two areas predicted to underperform, observing:

- i. The impact on performance in Access of the small group size with higher than expected withdrawals adversely affecting achievement.
- ii. The impact on performance in Public Services of low assessment completion rates, noting report that as rates caught up, predictions were expected to increase.

Reflecting further on the individual predictive indicators of achievement there was question of Management of the potential for any individual indicator to have a negative impact on success. Noting the potential for overall achievement to have such an impact, assurance was provided of the continuing and concerted efforts to maximise pass rates welcoming focus down to and action at individual learner level.

After discussion, the update was noted.

### **696.1b Ofsted Inspection: Report Feedback**

The formal, published Ofsted report was presented accompanied by a presentation outlining quality Improvement actions in response to the report findings.

After summarising the report key findings, an overview of the Quality Improvement Plan was presented, with actions to address the areas identified for improvement corresponding with the respective Ofsted categories of Teaching, Learning and Achievement; Leadership and Management and Governance; Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare; and Outcomes.

Underpinned by a whole college approach to the promotion of improvement in teaching, learning and assessment and the underlying thread of high expectations and stretch and challenge, the focus of the Plan was summarised, advising members that objectives comprised:

- Focus on maximising achievement outcomes, learner progress and adding value
- The implementation of Achievement and Performance review meetings
- A Principal's Forum to picking up on issues raised in the Ofsted report, particularly with Level 3 learners with feedback to Directors with agreed actions
- An Attendance Strategy incorporating good practice and attendance linked to progression
- Work experience with improved reporting, strategy for earlier completion and its use to deepen learning
- An Induction working group to ensure the provision of an enhanced induction
- Improved data reporting to include learner progress against target grades
- Enhancing value added with one aspirational target
- The development of learner voice strategy
- Building on Essentials for Excellence by providing targeted CPD opportunities for areas requiring improvement, a series of master-classes and sustainable expert practitioners.

Reviewing the overall objectives, discussion included:

- The proposals for improved work experience to deepen learning. Requesting for further report during the next academic year to allow the committee to review the extent to which the changes were working and contributing the learner programmes of study, Management

agreed to reflect further on the most appropriate timing for presentation of such a report and to schedule accordingly.

- The plans for targeted CPD opportunities and master-classes, suggesting the inclusion of an Ofsted preparation master-class for governors to ensure a shared and common understanding of what to expect, particularly for those members not previously involved; and noting that all members were to be invited to take advantage of further curriculum links activities before the year-end.
- Reflecting further on the overall objective of the Plan in the context of the observations and recommendations from in the recent Internal Audit Review, requesting presentation of the overall Plan to allow for Corporation review, monitor and challenge of progress against the Plan.

*Ricky Irons left the meeting at this point.*

### **696.1c Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report**

The Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report was received updating members on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) performance based on evidence from formal observation(s) and learning walks, learner voice and desk-based reviews.

The report was summarised noting:

- A current overall effectiveness profile comprising 88% Creative and Enterprise; 94% Service Industries and 74% STEM. Reviewing the profile members questioned the data regarding those tutors with a Not Yet Effective (NYE) judgment noting these to comprise those on long term sickness absence or on probation or were HPL/Agency staff. Questioning the specific action being taken to ensure sustained progress, assurance was sought and provided that Advanced Practitioner support was in place to support performance improvement in the planning and delivery of teaching, learning and assessment.
- To date, approximately 270 learning walks had been conducted, covering various themes throughout the year providing opportunities for swift and timely intervention to improve performance
- Report of the observations undertaken during the Ofsted inspection showing 75% overall effectiveness of lessons:
  - i. Reviewing the breakdown of findings and noting alignment with the College profile.
  - ii. Confirming in response to questioning that of nineteen tutors assessed as NYE, seven observed a second time were deemed to be effective and citing other instances where tutors were observed more than once.

After discussion, the update was noted.

### **696.1d Enrolment: Update**

A report was received providing an overview of the current position for 16-18 enrolments, progression rates for 2016/17 and applications for the 2018/19 academic year.

The report was summarised with members noting that in respect of:

- 2017/18, enrolments for 16-18 learners remained below targets but that it was anticipated as further learners would be recruited from sub-contractors the College was likely to be close to the funding target for the academic year. Reporting confirmation that the funding allocation for 2018/19 would decline by four learners to 2137, the imperative was recognised for the College to meet the target to avoid a bigger reduction in 2019/20.
- Applications for 2018/19, current headline data showed very little difference in numbers compared to the previous year.

Reviewing the report, there was focus on the further analysis of the applications for 2018/19 figures, which it was noted masked the decline in 16-18 applications linked to the demographic fall in such learners.

Recognising the worrying situation presented with 16-18 learners forming the majority of the College full-time student cohort and its most stable funding stream, there was review of applications by curriculum areas focusing on those currently reporting a decline in numbers:

- Observing the risks posed by and the potential impact of small numbers and the need therefore to maximise student numbers
- Emphasising the critical need for effective marketing over the coming weeks

After noting that recruitment continued up until October with applications monitored throughout the summer, there was question of Management of the action being taken, noted to include social media campaigns targeting areas with low applications; and the development of new full-time programmes to attract learners and further opportunities to develop HE provision to further improve progression rates.

Following discussion, the report was noted.

## **697 Curriculum Development**

### **697.1 Curriculum Development Update**

Notwithstanding discussions that had taken place elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 696.1a refers) there was further consideration of the curriculum developments to progress the strategic objective to continue to revitalise the curriculum offer for 2018/19 to ensure it responded to local, LEP and national priorities

The report was summarised. Members noted in particular that the College would not be involved in piloting the T levels when the first three are introduced from September 2020. It was reported however that both the Principal and Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality had been invited to participate in DfE forums linked to the development of T levels although currently many discussions were confidential.

Whilst observing that the introduction of T levels was two years away, members noted the implications of delivery were potentially significant and therefore developments would remain the subject of regular report.

The update was noted.

## **698 Compliance Matters**

Reports were presented providing details of activity and action taken in respect of compliance matters, comprising:

### **698.1a Safeguarding Update**

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair advising members of the presentation of the draft Annual Report for Safeguarding and confirming that to ensure timely report on matters, the draft would be updated and submitted to the July meeting of the Corporation.

The report content was summarised:

- Welcoming confirmation following the recent Ofsted inspection that arrangements for Safeguarding were considered effective.
- Noting that in respect of year to date activity and performance:
  - i. There had been a 24% increase in safeguarding referrals in the year to date with emotional and psychological concerns accounting for 51% of safeguarding referrals, up from 34% last year; physical abuse representing the second highest referrals, albeit a decline of 6% compared with the previous year; and reports of sexual abuse increased by 2%. Reviewing the statistics with Management, confirmation was welcomed that 99% of all safeguarding referrals were responded to within 24 hours.
  - ii. The expertise, training and support provided and after reviewing activity, recommending for student governors to be included in safeguarding training for governors.
  - iii. Following up on the range of activities undertaken, the new child protection on-line management system CPOMS had been introduced to streamline the College recording system, reduce case management administration and improve consistency in recording year on year data with positive feedback to date received.

After consideration, the update was noted.

### **698.1b Policies**

Policies were presented, introduced in-line with statutory requirements or reviewed and updated in line with the latest guidance, comprising:

#### **698.1bi Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG)**

Representing a new policy and procedure, members were advised that it stemmed from the College Strategic Plan and aimed to deliver a shared vision of success for its students, employers and local community with advice and guidance services and delivery considered essential in achieving strategic priorities.

The purpose and scope of the policy was summarised and reviewed and following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- **APPROVE** the Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance Policy and Procedure.

### **698.1bii Admissions Policy**

Last reviewed in May 2017, the Admissions Policy was reviewed.

Noted to have been updated to reflect the Further Education Admissions procedures applicable to all applicants from within the European Union (EU) and a commitment to consider and process applications from individuals with fairness, without prejudice and in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, the Policy was reviewed.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- **APPROVE** the updated Admissions Policy.

### **699 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING**

#### **699.1 Any other business**

No other business was raised.

#### **699.2 Date of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 3 October 2018**

**Signed:**



**Date:** 3 October 2018

**Chair**