

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 13 March 2014

Membership:	Riccardo Abela * Chris Christofides (Chair) * Nishall Garala * Karen Spencer * Mike Thorne
<i>*denotes present</i> In attendance	D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation P Marsh, Vice Principal L Turner, Vice Principal C Berkins, Director of Quality W Allanson, Executive Director – Business Development (agenda items 475 - 479) R Jones, Head of Academy (agenda item 480 only) N Price, Head of Academy (agenda item 480 only) A Armitage, Head of Academy (agenda item 480 only) L Wedgbury-Glew, Head of Academy (agenda item 480 only) P Dady, Director of HE (agenda item 481 only)

#### **475 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Riccardo Abele and Mike Stokes.

#### **476 Declarations of Interest**

Mike Thorne declared an interest in agenda item 481 – Internal Monitoring Report on the Delivery of HE 2012/13.

#### **477 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013 were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

#### **478 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

##### **478.1 Beacon Award (minutes 467.3 and 462 refer)**

The College was successful in winning a second Beacon Award for Innovation in FE and this was announced at the AoC Conference on 19 November 2013.

The College is hosting an Innovations Conference on 2 April 2014 to which

all Beacon Award winners have been invited. Governors will also receive an invitation.

**478.2 Essex County Council (minutes 467.1, 453.1, 443.1, 431 and 419.1 refer)**

M Thorne informed the Committee that Essex County Council has a new leader – David Finch – and suggested that he is invited to visit the College.

A date is being arranged for Tim Coulson, Essex County Council's Director of Education and Learning, to visit the College.

**478.3 Student Outcomes 2012/13 (minute 468 refers)**

The Principal reported that changes to the programme of study will make a difference to the College's success rates. Students are now encouraged to undertake a full programme of study and the College's long course success rate for 2012/13 is predicted to be 91%. This will be discussed in more detail at the next Standards Committee meeting on 10 June 2014.

**478.4 Recruitment of Students 2012/13 (minute 472 refers)**

The Principal explained the funding methodology and that the College's funding agreement for next year will be based on the College's recruitment of 2,603 full time learners for this year.

**479 Apprenticeship Improvement Plan**

The Standards Committee received and considered the report on the Apprenticeship Improvement Plan, presented by The Principal, Chris Berkins and Will Allanson.

The College has a three year declining trend in apprenticeship success rates. Ofsted chose to investigate five good or outstanding colleges in the region who also experienced a downward trend.

The College was visited in January by HMI Derek Baughan to discuss the College's apprenticeship rates in more detail and a follow-up visit is planned for April. This visit will look to see if the College's action plan is having an impact and to risk rate the College to determine whether the College's next full inspection needs to be brought forward. The initial feedback for the first visit is that the apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was very robust and that there was nothing missing from it.

A detailed discussion was held around the Apprenticeship Improvement Plan and governors noted the following:

- That the APEX Partnership is seen as an independent entity to the College;
- Internal teams are integrating the apprenticeship QIP into their team QIPs. Senior managers are ensuring teams are embedding actions detailed within the QIPs;
- Each apprentice and their progress is discussed in detail by senior managers and are risk rated. Full assessment plans are in place for learners to get them back on track where necessary;
- Updated predicted success rates were circulated and the College is currently

- predicting a 73% timely success rate at year end. Whilst the actual current success rate is relatively low, most apprentices achieve at the end of the year;
- The partners were discussed and the Writtle College contract is coming to an end next month;
  - Essex County Council is the biggest partner and electrical and construction are the biggest apprenticeship teams within the College;
  - A review is being undertaken on who and how the College sub-contracts with. Future contracts will have a clearer focus on quality as this is an area which needs to be improved. Where there are concerns with quality, new starts are being stopped. The College's quality systems need to be adopted by partners;
  - The category "External Apprentices" includes DB Training learners and there is currently a plan for each learner with the aim of them completing their framework;
  - The College is looking to implement an e-portfolio system which will enhance the visibility and progress of learners and transform how partners operate, which will ensure more timely and accurate monitoring information;
  - There are currently 405 apprentices enrolled and they are split 64% College and 36% partners;
  - The QIP is a working document and a second review will be undertaken prior to the follow up visit in April.;
  - A dashboard for apprenticeships is being introduced;
  - The national average success rate for apprenticeships has dropped from 79% to 73%.

The Standards Committee noted the paper.

#### **480 Harlow College Performance and Dashboard**

The Standards Committee received and considered the Harlow College dashboard.

Four Heads of Academies of teams where performance was a concern either because of the self-assessment grade and/or dashboard performance were invited to attend the meeting. These teams were Electrical and Plumbing, Childcare, Health and Social Care and Construction.

Each Head of Academy presented the key issues, key actions taken to date and expected impact and outcomes.

Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions and noted that the issues faced by the teams were broadly similar.

The Principal provided the Committee with an update on the College staffing structure. The Committee agreed that it was useful to have staff coming in to present to the Committee where there are areas of concern over a sustained period of time and agreed that this is part of the governors' role of holding the College to account.

The Standards Committee noted the dashboard.

#### **481 Internal Monitoring Report on the Delivery of HE 2012/13**

The Standards Committee received and considered the report of Paul Marsh, Vice-Principal and Paula Dady, Director of HE, on the Annual Monitoring Report on the Delivery of HE 2012/13.

Governors' noted the following:

- Monitoring visits took place over the course of the year in addition to the written report;
- Bio-science and engineering results are areas in need of improvement, although the current first year results have improved radically;
- The National Student Survey (NSS) results are being worked on and UCH has moved from a rating of poor to average;
- A NSS Action Plan is being worked on;
- A major area of concern highlighted in the NSS is the library facilities on campus;
- Two new validations – Multi-Media Journalism and a top-up year for Bio-Sciences - have been approved and will be delivered from September 2014 onwards;
- UCH is working hard to improve the performance of the first year Sports Journalism students;
- UCH has received confirmation that they are compliant with moderation processes and has obtained good feedback on marking across all teams;
- The HE dashboard was discussed and governors' noted that dashboard is an accurate reflection of what is current situation is;
- There has been positive feedback on the broadcasting facilities and the new materials testing lab.

The Standards Committee noted the paper.

#### **482 Complaints Analysis and Compliments to January 2014**

The Standards Committee received and considered the report of Paul Marsh, Vice Principal on the complaints analysis and compliments to January 2014.

14 formal compliments have been received and these were listed at the back of the report.

The Committee noted that the complaints contained within the report are those which have gone through the College's formal complaint procedures and the complaints procedures were explained.

To date, there have been 21 complaints received in 2013/14, 18 of which were responded to within the 15 day timescale and 3 of which were outside of this.

14 of the complaints were upheld in full or in part and were about the following teams: childcare; electrical; external apprenticeships; plumbing; journalism; media and performing arts.

Four complaints were concerning staff attitude or conduct, four relating to teaching, learning and assessment and three further teaching and learning complaints.

The Committee noted that no complaints have resulted in a refund of fees and no complaints regarding equality and diversity issues were upheld. There were also no complaints regarding assessment and verification.

The Standards Committee noted the paper.

#### **483 Any Other Business**

Nishall Garala has won a regional award for leading in a community and is one of three regional winners who has been shortlisted for a national award. The winner will be announced at a ceremony in London on 27 March 2014.

#### **484 Dates of Future Meetings**

Summer Term	Tuesday 10 June 2014	08.30am
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