

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 21 February 2012

Membership: * Riccardo Abela
 * Chris Christofides (Chair)
 * Colin Hindmarch
 * Mike Thorne (by telephone)

**denotes present*

In attendance: S Young, Deputy Principal
 N Spenceley, Deputy Principal
 D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
 R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation
 C Hendricks, Havering Sixth Form College
 R Hawkins, Havering Sixth Form College

375 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

376 Declarations of Interest

Mike Thorne declared an interest in item 382.

377 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2011 were approved as a correct record.

378 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

379 Comparative Data on FE / Tertiary College Performance

The Standards Committee received the report of the Principal on FE / Tertiary College performance.

Based on long course provision for 223 general further education and tertiary colleges in 2009/10, from data recently released, Harlow College is the number 1 ranked FE / Tertiary college in the country. Based on the College's 2010/11 results and if all other colleges' results remained the same, Harlow College will be number 1 again but by a significant margin. It is not yet clear when the 2010/11 tables will be available.

The Principal stressed that whilst this is good news for the College, there are still further improvements to be made. Professor Thorne asked how Governors could drive standards up further and the Principal confirmed that the next benchmarking step would be to add in all sixth form colleges for

comparison and then to add in all providers, including private schools. The Principal drew Governors' attention to the Train to Gain figures, included in the 2009/10 results, that are based on timely completion and that are the College's weakest area of provision. The Committee noted that this scheme is currently coming to an end. Governors considered "points per entry", and noted that the College is in 4th place when compared to all college and sixth form college performance. The College strategy is to reduce its failure rate down from 5.9% to 3%.

The Principal reinforced the College's view that achieving good high grades at A-level/level 3 was the best educational outcome for our students, rather than focusing on "total number of points per student". A question was raised about whether this disadvantaged our students as other providers could say that their learners gain a higher number of total points per learner. The Principal confirmed, however, that for purposes of entering higher education the concentration on achieving high grades, ie "points per entry", are more important. This was confirmed by Professor Thorne.

The Committee thanked the Principal for the report and congratulated the College on their success.

380 Framework for Excellence Learner Views Survey, 2010/11

The Standards Committee received and considered the report of Nick Spenceley, Deputy Principal.

The survey was completed by approximately 25% of students and shows that the College is continuing to improve overall, however it has slipped back in two measures. Comparison with national results shows the College just below the median. The results broadly match the internal survey results and staff observations. They also echo the College's vision of learner success rather than satisfaction. In higher education it is recognised that student satisfaction is more important than success, however this is no suggestion of this being replicated in further education.

It was highlighted that the new Ofsted proposals from September 2012 are likely to state that they require teaching and learning to be outstanding in order to get an overall outstanding grade. Those schools and colleges that are graded by Ofsted as satisfactory or outstanding but without a grade one for teaching and learning can expect to be re-inspected.

381 Harlow College Dashboard

The Committee received and considered the report of Nick Spenceley, Deputy Principal concerning the Harlow College Dashboard. This highlights a number of key indicators at individual team level and enables easy identification and close scrutiny of areas causing concerns, so early action can be taken. The meeting discussed a number of issues arising from the data and noted teams that needed to make improvements.

The Committee thanked Nick for his report.

382 Annual Monitoring Report on the Delivery of Higher Education, 2010/11

The Committee received and considered the report of Nick Spenceley, Deputy Principal.

The report was discussed in general. It was recognised that the strength of the relationship between the College and ARU is based on the top level support the collaboration receives.

It is recognised that whilst very good work is taking place, the College wants improved delivery and better outcomes. There is a particular focus on HE within the College and as a result the College is looking to appoint a deputy head of academy for higher education.

383 APEX Partnership

The Committee received the report of Sue Young, Deputy Principal which detailed the processes the College undertakes to manage existing and new partners. The major risks to the College are failure to achieve success rates, reputation and the potential for academic fraud, the safeguarding of learners and ensuring equality and diversity.

The Committee thanked Sue Young for her report and agreed that it should be the model for an annual report to future meetings.

384 Complaints and Compliments 2011/12

The Committee received the latest analysis of complaints and compliments, presented by Sue Young, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that the number of complaints has reduced as many issues are dealt with at team or academy level. The compliments recorded are those from external sources only.

The Committee agreed that it would be more beneficial to receive the detailed report annually in the summer term, which can then be taken to the Corporation meeting in July.

385 Any other business

There were no items of any other business.

The Chair thanked colleagues from Havering Sixth Form College for attending the meeting and for the interest they had shown. Havering Sixth Form College thanked the Committee for allowing them to attend and thanked College for its hospitality

386 Dates of future meetings

Summer Term 2012: Tuesday 12 June 2012 8.30am