

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Zoom on Wednesday 25 November 2020, 11am**

Membership:                    \*Liz Laycock (Chair)  
                                      \*Sotirios Adamopoulos  
                                      \*Jon Bouffler  
                                      Rod Bristow  
                                      \*Lily Lin  
                                      \*Eva Scott  
\*denotes present               \*Karen Spencer

In attendance                 Becky Jones, Vice-Principal  
                                      Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal  
                                      Wendy Martin, Assistant Principal  
                                      Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal  
                                      Kirstie Craig, Head of Academy  
                                      Maria Staines, Head of Higher Education  
                                      Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from R Bristow due to work reasons.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 Membership of the Committee and Election of Chair**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee welcomed Lily Lin and Eva Scott to their first meeting and the revised membership of the Committee was noted.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee unanimously elected Lily Lin as Chair of the Committee however due to Lily Lin being in China for this meeting, this meeting was chaired by Liz Laycock.

### **4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 25 June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **5 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)**

#### **5.1 Grading and Assessment Update (minute 684 refers)**

Liz Laycock asked about the A-Level appeals. Becky Jones informed the Committee that seven formal appeals were submitted, none of which were upheld. The Government then changed the awarding of grades and used

centre-assessed grades therefore there was no need for the students to have appealed.

### **5.1 Student Ambassador Report (minute 686 refers)**

Liz Laycock asked about the access to licences for specific software when studying at home. Becky Jones reported that the 50:50 delivery model allows students to use the specific software when they are on campus. Karen Spencer reported that in order for this software to work off-site, students would need high specification IT equipment costing thousands of pounds. This point has now been closed off with the Student Ambassadors.

## **6 Harlow College Self-Assessment 2019/2020**

### **6.1 Self-Assessment Team Reviews**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the update on Self-Assessment Team Reviews, presented by member of the College's Executive.

Becky Jones thanked everyone who took part in the self-assessment team reviews which took a different format this year. The feedback from staff and Governors was that the format was successful and are keen to carry it forward in subsequent years. Becky Jones thanked Gayle Peachey for chairing each review and ensuring a standardised format to all review meetings.

#### **Early Years and Health and Social Care:**

Becky Jones provided the Committee with feedback from this team's self-assessment review which included:

- The team provided a comprehensive summary of the year.
- There has been good progress with flagging, punctuality and attendance which were all on track.
- The team achieved 90% for the teaching, learning and assessment differentiation target.
- Appraisals are all up-to-date and staff are working with their Power of 3s.
- Health and Social Care results have increased from 69% in 2018/2019 to 83% in 2019/2020.
- There has been a dip in Early Years results due to Level 1 and 2 cohort-specific challenges due to COVID-19 however Level 3 data is strong.
- The team is on an upward trajectory with data, progress and teaching, learning and assessment, including HE provision as well as FE provision.

Liz Laycock reported that the review was a positive meeting and it was encouraging to see the rigour of the team's approach.

#### **Media and Gaming:**

Laura Wedgbury-Glew provided the Committee with feedback from this team's self-assessment review which included:

- 42% of targets are rated as gold, which is above the College average of 38%.
- The Team gave a presentation which covered their strengths, including the Coding Club, Tim Cook's visit and how they are responding to feedback.
- The Team's Super Six career pathways were discussed.
- The Team has good links with employers and employability is a key focus.
- Level 2 is not performing as well and is a key feature in the Team's QIP.
- Learner Voice processes are being built on.
- The Team is looking to change its ILP with more of a focus on employability.
- The gender balance is now 50:50 across the Team. 10 out of 40 Gaming students are female, however there has been a dip in overall recruitment for Gaming.

### **Hospitality and Catering:**

Wendy Martin provided the Committee with feedback from this team's self-assessment review which included:

- The review was positive with lots of good feedback.
- The provision operates across Stansted Airport College and Harlow College.
- The overall achievement rate was 90%, 94% at Stansted Airport College and 87% at Harlow College. 2018/2019 achievement was 79%.
- There are a large number of SEN learners and the level of individualised support for each learner was notable, which makes a positive difference to the lives and personal well-being of these learners.
- Attendance was 95% and there is an attendance monitor who makes timely interventions with learners not attending.
- The Team is looking to expand its curriculum offer for Level 2 programmes at Stansted Airport College next year.
- Teaching and learning is outstanding which is evidenced through walk-throughs. There is a need to ensure that actions arising from walk-throughs are set.
- The Team is fully compliant with the Power of 3, with a 100% completion rate.
- The completion of appraisals needs to be improved however a pro-active plan has been put in place with all staff appraisals now scheduled.
- There have been issues with the set-up of Pro-Monitor however support was sought and this is now fully set-up and operational.
- The College's catering facilities generated £150k income in 2018/2019 and a target of double this was set for 2019/2020. The Team was on track to achieve this income target prior to the closure of the College in March 2020.

- The Team has responded well to COVID-19 restrictions, with pop-up facilities being installed at Harlow College and a hot food delivery service being provided at Stansted Airport College.

### **English and Maths:**

Karen Spencer provided the Committee with feedback from this team's self-assessment review which included:

- The review focused on actions being taken to improve the provision.
- Strengths include
  - The use of digital resources;
  - A good team ethic with constant planning for improvement;
  - Good progress made with changes in systems;
  - Excellent resources to support students.
- Areas to improve:
  - Attendance, although improvements have been made, with new strategies implemented to improve attendance such as working with the Work Placement Officers.
  - Functional Skills – some courses have Functional Skills end-loaded therefore it was difficult to assess whether students would pass when calculating centre-assessed grades. The new specification is also significantly harder.
- The Century software has made a difference to apprentices studying Functional Skills.
- There is a drop in attendance after November resits and there is a change in learners' motivation and mindset at this point. This is where the Team's consistency with its approach and communications is vital.
- There is a need to be consistent with teaching, learning and assessment, particularly with stretch and challenge.
- A mentoring support system is in place for new members of staff.

### **IT, System Developers and MIS**

Paul Whitehead provided the Committee with feedback from this team's self-assessment review which included:

- The actions IT took when lockdown was announced in March were highlighted, particularly around identifying laptops for staff to facilitate home-working.
- Work took place on the technical systems to ensure ease of access for staff offsite such as extending passwords.
- The speed of change and integrity of keeping the network secure was praised.
- IT have been continually supporting staff throughout lockdown.
- An IT strategy for using virtual desktops had been planned however the approach has been redesigned and the College has invested in new laptops for all staff which will reduce the number of devices used by staff.
- The College is in the process of migrating its services to the cloud.

- The College quickly adapted to online applications, enrolment, bursary applications and exam concessions.
- A number of processes were changed in a short period of time, some of which will continue post COVID.
- A new MIS Manager is in post.
- The remit of this review was too big and whilst it was a positive meeting, time was short.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the feedback from the team self-assessment reviews. Governors and the Executive reported that the new format was a good way to undertake the reviews and that it was good to include service areas as well as curriculum areas in the reviews.

## **6.2 Self-Assessment Report 2019/2020**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Self-Assessment Report 2019/2020, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Becky Jones reported that the report summarises the key strengths, areas to improve and key actions mapped against the Ofsted categories of judgement

The following strengths were highlighted:

- The College had robust processes in place for centre-assessed grading with grade changes being lower than the reported national averages.
- Improvements have been made to achievement, pass and retention rates for the fourth consecutive year and rates are above national averages.
- The College's digital focus put the College in a strong position when moving to online teaching at the start of lockdown.
- There is a focus on value added where academic value added had dipped slightly however this has now reversed.

The following areas to improve were highlighted, linked to the key actions required:

- Achievement and timely achievement of apprentices, which is now an area of big focus within the College, particularly linked to T-Levels. Retention and narrowing the gaps between different ethnic groups are also key areas of focus.
- The decline in Level 2 data across many teams, with work to address this having started.
- Functional Skills English and Maths across the whole College.

Governors were given the opportunity to discuss the Self-Assessment Report and ask questions.

Liz Laycock asked for reference to the Corporation be made in the section on safeguarding which was agreed by the Committee.

Liz Laycock asked how British Values could be listed as both a strength and an area to improve. Karen Spencer reported that the area to improve is specifically linked to apprentices as identified by Ofsted.

Liz Laycock highlighted that some of the key actions have not been written as actions and there is some inconsistency with wording across the bullet points. Becky Jones agreed to review the document and change the wording where appropriate before the final version is presented to the Corporation for approval at its meeting on 17 December 2020.

Governors commented how they liked the format of the Self-Assessment Report.

The data tables were highlighted and Liz Laycock highlighted that there appears to be a significant drop in learner numbers. Paul Whitehead confirmed that he would check the figures and Karen Spencer reported that the numbers are enrolments rather than actual students.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee was asked if the Self-Assessment Report had accurately captured the key actions and areas for the College to focus on which will form the basis of the College's Quality Improvement Plan and the Committee agreed that it had.

Karen Spencer reported that the actions that the College needs to take will be fully documented, tracked and monitored through the College's Quality Improvement Plan, with the Self-Assessment Report detailing the areas in which actions need to be taken.

Liz Laycock highlighted the areas of focus are Level 2, apprenticeships and data issues, all of which featured in the team self-assessment reviews and have been addressed in the Self-Assessment Report.

Karen Spencer highlighted that there is a need to assess how Level 2 learners are currently getting on and whether any adjustments need to be made and Becky Jones confirmed that this can be looked at in depth with the flagging systems in place.

Liz Laycock asked if the Standards and Curriculum Committee could confirm that the team self-assessment reviews and the Self-Assessment Report had rigour and the Committee confirmed that they both have. Jon Bouffler confirmed that the report is thorough and resonates well.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the draft Self-Assessment Report 2019/2020, subject to changes as discussed, and thanked Becky Jones and everyone involved with the team self-assessment reviews and the Self-Assessment Report.

## **7 Quality Improvement Action Plan 2020/2021**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that the key actions to be included in the Quality Improvement Action Plan 2020/2021 had been discussed and agreed as

part of the previous agenda item.

## **8 Maths and English**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Maths and English, presented by Kirstie Craig, Head of Academy.

Kirstie Craig reported that all delivery is currently taking place online. There has been a drop in the number of learners due to more having achieved a grade 4 or above through centre-assessed grades. The drop in numbers has facilitated smaller class sizes, with most being capped at 20.

A number of digital platforms are being explored to sit alongside and add value to the online learning.

A large amount of data is being gathered and robust tracking processes are in place. This is particularly relevant if centre-assessed grades are to be used for 2020 / 2021.

Level 1 Functional Skills areas with successful outcomes were highlighted. The College has a high number of ESOL and Step-Up Transition learners studying Functional Skills and an alternative provision has been introduced.

The College changed maths awarding body which was a positive change and English has subsequently changed from AQA to Educas. Learners have more options with Educas and exam papers focus on a broader range of skills.

All learners were given the option of whether to take the November resit or not. 53% of English learners and 58% of maths learners choose to do so.

Overall attendance continues to be a focus despite an increase in attendance being seen. Work Placement Officers are working to encourage attendance and support learners without a relationship with the English and Maths Team, with the English and Maths Team encouraging and supporting learners with whom they have a relationship.

Online learning and delivery gives the opportunity for more lessons to be dropped into to check the quality and all new staff are assigned a mentor from within the Team.

Paul Whitehead provided the Committee with information on the catch-up funding being made available by the Government. The funding is an allocation for 16 – 19 year olds who have not achieved a grade 4 or above in English and / or Maths. The funding will be used for small group work and Work Placement Officers are being supported to reengage learners with catch-up sessions. A statement with how the College is using this funding has been published on the College's website.

Liz Laycock highlighted it would be interesting to see the impact of this funding at the end of the academic year, Paul Whitehead reported that it needs to be recorded in the ILRs and the College will be able to analyse the data.

Karen Spencer highlighted the challenge the College faces with learners with a grade 3. Many of them might be closer to a grade 2 but due to centre-assessed grades, they have achieved a grade 3 and it is the College's responsibility to move them to a grade

4 which in reality could be a 2-grade difference. Some analysis of school performance has indicated that the schools that have been most generous with centre-assessed grades are the lowest attaining schools. The results for the next few years will therefore be an anomaly. Kirstie Craig reported that the College's diagnostics have indicated that many learners are working at a much lower level than their centre-assessed grades and are reporting difficulties.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on English and Maths and reported that the report is encouraging.

## **9 Apprenticeships**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on apprenticeships, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Paul Whitehead reported that recruitment of apprentices is low and that a number of apprentices have been furloughed.

Key delivery issues were highlighted and Governors were informed that the main focus will be on quality improvement, with key actions being embedded within the College's Quality Improvement Plan, as detailed in agenda items 6 and 7.

A senior group of managers has been formed who will oversee apprenticeships, produce regular reports and monitor and track key actions going forward.

Jon Bouffler asked if the College needed to make any changes to its sub-contracting arrangements and Paul Whitehead confirmed that the College does not sub-contract any of its provision.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on apprenticeships.

## **10 Higher Education**

### **10.1 Higher Education Update and Quality Assurance Report**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the Higher Education Update and Quality Assurance Report, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal, and Maria Staines, Head of Higher Education.

Becky Jones welcomed Maria Staines to the meeting and explained her role as Head of Higher Education to the Committee.

Becky Jones reported that 2019/2020 had been a successful year for outcomes and significant progress had been made with the action plan throughout the year. Governors were informed that the issue with engineering, particularly around higher apprenticeships, will be brought forward to this year's action plan.

Recruitment onto higher education courses continues to be a key focus across the College.

Jon Bouffler asked about the National Student Survey results and how they



compare to last year. Becky Jones reported that the College has a large number of students who are not eligible to undertake the survey as they originally sign up for a one-year HNC course, however if they registered on a two-year HND course they would be eligible.

Governors noted that the 2019/2020 action plan has been closed off and noted the new actions for 2020/2021.

Governors' attention was brought to the mapping exercise in relation to the Office for Students (OfS) ongoing conditions and how the College is meeting these.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the Higher Education Update and Quality Assurance Report.

## **10.2 HE Student Protection Plan**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the HE Student Protection Plan, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Committee was informed that the HE Student Protection Plan has been updated to include COVID and has been published on the College's website.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the HE Student Protection Plan.

## **10.3 OfS Reportable Events**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted that there has been one OfS reportable events since the Committee last met on 25 June 2020. This reportable event was the change in the Chair of the Corporation and was reported to the OfS as required.

## **11 T-Levels**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on T-Levels, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

The Committee was informed that a strategic group has been formed and is working through the actions outlined in the action plan provided to Governors in readiness for delivering T-Levels from September 2021. All actions have been colour-coded.

The College will be offering four pathways with six routes from September 2021 and recruitment will commence in January 2021.

The transition year was explained to the Committee which prepares students who are not yet ready to undertake a Level 3 qualification. A decision needs to be made as to whether a qualification will be attached to the transition year and each team is the process of working out their own approach and how the transition year will be different from the College's traditional offer. All pastoral and student arrangements for the

transition year are being firmed up. If the transition year is successful, the College will look at rolling it out across all Level 2 provision.

Karen Spencer reported that if students do not get a qualification at the end of the transition year, they will be on a three year programme and there is a risk that achievement and students could be lost therefore a qualification is required. Karen Spencer however highlighted that a decision could not be made about accrediting until the accountability framework is published.

Liz Laycock asked if the transition year is starting alongside T-Levels in September 2021 and it was confirmed that they would be.

Liz Laycock asked if extended work placements would be affected by COVID and Paul Whitehead confirmed that they would be.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on T-Levels and asked for further reports on progress to be presented to the Committee when appropriate.

## **12 Student and Parent Feedback**

### **12.1 Student and Parent Feedback and Surveys**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Student and Parent Feedback and Surveys, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal, Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal and Eva Scott, Student Governor.

Becky Jones provided the results of the student and parent survey in relation to COVID which provides an overview of the issues and actions the College has taken to address issues raised in the survey. The College will formally feedback to those who completed the survey.

Becky Jones, Laura Wedgbury-Glew and Eva Scott provided an update on the Student Ambassador and Student Governor meetings. The Committee was informed that these meetings have continued and that the areas in yellow in the table were items that had been carried forward as the College has not been able to address them due to COVID.

Governors' attention was brought to the current list of issues. Governors noted that issues 3 and 4 were legacy issues and were now completed.

Particular attention was brought to issues 5 – 8, presented by Eva Scott, as follows:

- Issue 5 - Students were finding it difficult to focus at home and were worried they could get behind.

Becky Jones reported that all learner mentors are undertaking welfare checks with all learners and this will form part of this check, identifying the reasons for the difficulties. Where possible, these learners will come onto campus to study.

- Issue 6 - Students reported an inconsistent approach to 1-2-1 tutorials.

Becky Jones reported that the College will ensure a consistent approach and the welfare checks will support this,

- Issue 7 - More interactive A-level online lessons with the use of breakout rooms.

The use of breakout rooms on MS Teams is being explored however the College needs to ensure the safety of these which it is currently investigating. The use of these rooms will be rolled out once the College is satisfied it is safe for them to be used.

Interactive lessons is a focus for the upcoming staff development day and the College is potentially looking to make changes for Trimester 2.

Liz Laycock highlighted that the Committee had previously discussed how the quality of online teaching is assured and that it is good that this issue has been raised and is being addressed by the College.

- Issue 8 - Inconsistent awareness of the learner student voice reps across tutorial groups.

There has been a drop in the number of Student Ambassadors and Learner Voice Reps, potentially due to COVID, therefore there is a new focus on this across the College.

The College is potentially looking to change the ambassador groups as potentially students do not know each other well enough in their learner mentor groups to elect an ambassador.

Liz Laycock highlighted that as a Corporation, Governors need to be assured that all views are being asked for and actioned appropriately and reported that the College is doing the best it can, given the current circumstances.

The Committee reported that the College is doing well with the provision it has put in place for this term along with the curriculum model being used and noted that parent feedback has been largely positive.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew reported that there have been 1,831 responses to date to the Autumn Term Internal Student Survey which went live on 10 November 2020.

Laura Wedgbury-Glew also reported that praise postcards are being sent home to deserving students.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Student and Parent Feedback and Surveys.

## **12.2 Complaints and Compliments 2019/20**

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on Complaints and Compliments 2019/2020, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

The Committee noted there had been 20 complaints during 2019/2020, which is the same as the previous year. 10 of the complaints were either upheld in full or partly upheld, spread across 9 teams in the College.

The Committee noted that 34 compliments were received during 2019/2020, which is double the number received in the previous year.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Complaints and Compliments 2019/2020.

### **13 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

### **14 Dates of Future Meetings**

Spring Term	Tuesday 16 March 2021	08.30am / 09.30am
Summer Term	Thursday 17 June 2021	08.30am / 09.30am