

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28 November 2017

Membership: Sotirios Adamopoulos
* Callum Alexander
Jon Bouffler
* Chris Christofides (Chair)
* Liz Laycock
* Myrtle Prodger
* Karen Spencer

**denotes present*

In attendance L Turner, Deputy Principal
B Jones, Assistant Principal
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

588 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from S Adamopoulos and J Bouffler.

589 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

590 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 04 July 2017 were agreed and approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to one typographical change under "Any Other Business".

591 Matters Arising from the Minutes

591.1 Staff Presentations – the i-book (minute 582 refers)

K Spencer informed the Committee that the College had been successful in gaining Apple Distinguished School status. The Committee thanked Kelly Edwards, Becky Jones and the teams involved for their hard work.

591.2 Dates of Future Meetings (minute 587 refers)

D Sheridan confirmed that the Committee's Terms of Reference had been updated to include the setting of higher education regulations within its delegated powers.

592 Self-Assessment Report for Harlow College 2016/17

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for Harlow College 2016/17, presented by Louise Turner, Deputy Principal.

The Deputy Principal confirmed that some amendments have been made to the SAR and that the data is now more stable, apart from the apprenticeship data which is still updating. She highlighted the sections which had been updated. Governors noted that there had been a small decline in the College's achievement rates however they remain above national averages. The section on outcomes for learners has been strengthened and what is happening within the College has been articulated.

Students are being enrolled on a one year programme where possible this year, enabling students to make more active and positive choices. There had been a number of students withdrawing after the first year and this is classed as a fail. C Christofides asked whether the students start a different course. Some leave for employment, some transfer and some change courses.

Changes to performance tables and the impact that GCSE English and maths has on them were explained.

Governors requested that staff training should be further highlighted in the QIP in line with what is reported in the SAR.

Destination data is now being captured and the 2016/17 destination data will be in the final version of the SAR which will be sent to Ofsted in January 2018. Governors requested that destination data for the last three years be included in the SAR.

There is an achievement gap for learners with the Free School Meals indicator across all areas and all levels; however the biggest gap is in ESOL. This will remain a key focus for the College and all of these learners are flagged on ProMonitor. Governors requested that the numbers of percentages of these students be included in the SAR.

Governors were informed that staff need to be able to articulate how they deliver teaching and learning and how this informs their pedagogy.

L Laycock requested that the rationale for grading adult learning programmes as outstanding be contextualised. C Christofides noted that the numbers of adult learners were rising and it was reported that the College has strong destinations for sustained employment which is above national averages.

C Christofides asked why provision for high needs learners is not outstanding. It was reported that whilst the Supported Studies team had been graded as outstanding, 50% of the College's high needs learners are on other programmes and the College believed overall the provision was good, not outstanding.

The Committee noted that the number of traineeships was low however it was acknowledged that this route was useful for some learners. It is difficult to predict whether the numbers will increase next year.

The Committee were informed that each team which had been graded as outstanding is to receive £500 to spend on their area.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Self-Assessment Report, subject to the changes requested above.

593 Quality Improvement Action Plan and Associated Targets for 2017/18

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIP) and associated targets for 2017/18, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

L Turner highlighted that SMART targets have been added into the QIP and that the information written in red indicates data targets. Governors requested that an additional box for review date by Corporation or the Standards and Curriculum Committee be added into each area for improvement.

A discussion was held around the QIP with a particular focus on English and maths. The targets have remained the same for 2017/18. The College is aiming for a 40% 4-9 pass rate for English and maths. Governors agreed that this was a good, inspirational target. There was a significant increase in English GCSE results in August 2017. There was a change to the syllabus and specification, with a move from controlled assessments to just examinations. C Christofides asked if there was a noticeable improvement in the male results. L Turner agreed to look into this. The staff are revitalised and refocused and the English and maths teams have been separated with experienced practitioners leading both teams.

There is a continuing challenge getting students to attend classes and sit the exams. Governors asked if there was a positive or negative effect on students if they do not do the GCSE English or maths resit in November. It was reported that it is better to take the maths resit as early as possible, however generally learners achieve a higher grade in English if they sit the exam closer to them being 18 years old. This year was the first time that the College had entered students in the GCSE English November resit therefore the impact of this is yet to be seen. The success rates of English and maths are measure on learners' end dates and reported when learners reach 18 and leave college.

It was noted that every exam entered costs the College in the region of £600.

Governors noted that targets for Stansted Airport College have been included in the Development Plan which has been produced and that all the associated targets will be detailed and reported on in the College KPIs.

Governors asked whether the College was comfortable with the priorities for software development across the College. It was reported that the College has agreed to keep a view on this at Executive level.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the key issues included in the Quality Improvement Plan.

594 T-Level Action Plan

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on the T-Level Action Plan, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

L Turner reported that technical education is a strong Government focus at present, as a result of the Sainsbury Review, and the report is to raise Governors' awareness of the introduction of T-Levels. It is envisaged that T-Level qualifications will lead to progression into higher level apprenticeships however transition between the academic

and technical route and vice-versa are being looked at.

Governors were informed that T-Levels will not be introduced for another four years and that the first teaching of T-Levels as part of the early adopter work will take place in Spring / Summer 2020. Consultation work is being undertaken and the College will respond accordingly. The Government is also consulting widely with larger employers.

The Committee noted that the report contains the DfE's action plan and asked whether the College needs its own action plan. Governors were informed that the College has submitted a bid for funding to build capacity for extended work placements which forms the College's action plan at present.

Governors asked whether mature students can study T-Levels and the College reported that at present this is not yet known. It was reported that the College needs a strategy to deal with students studying T-Levels who have previously been enrolled at the College and that there are still a number of uncertainties regarding the transition year which the Government is referring to.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on the T-Level Action Plan.

595 Maths and English Improvement Plans

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the report on maths and English improvement plans, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that most of this agenda item had already been covered under agenda item 593 above, Quality Improvement Action Plan and Associated Targets for 2017/18.

L Turner informed Governors that the report highlighted plans that were in place for this academic year and that both teams are now managed by experience A-Level teachers. There is now a stronger and clearer enrolment process for maths and English and it was confirmed that any student with a grade 3 or below is required to retake maths and English. It was noted that the funding the College receives for English and maths covers support for disadvantaged students and not English and maths support. The amount of funding is decreasing as the College and its student body are being classed as less disadvantaged.

Governors asked whether the College is allowing students with a grade 4 to take the resits. It was reported that whilst the College's priority is the students who have to resit, students with a grade 4 are being allowed to resit and are in-filling existing classes.

Students who are most likely to enter into an apprenticeship have all been entered into the November resits, with delivery of English and maths stopping after the resit. Those who not achieving a grade 4 or above will be transferred onto studying functional skills.

The Committee recognised the achievement of the English team and asked for their congratulations to be passed on.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on maths and English improvement plans.

596 Higher Education Quality Assurance

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received the report on higher education quality assurance, presented by B Jones, Assistant Principal.

Governors were reminded that the Annual Quality Assessment Assurance Statements need to be confirmed and signed by the Principal on behalf of the Corporation. The College needs to produce two annual monitoring reports – one for ARU and one for Pearson and a summary of the report was presented to the Committee.

A discussion was held around the summary report and Governors noted the following:

- The Module Evaluation Scores (MES) are good with an average of 7.9 for ARU provision against an ARU average of 5.1 however the College is aiming for a score of 8 or above.
- Semester One MES scores are always higher than Semester Two.
- The scores are improvement from last year's scores.
- Work needs to be undertaken on the Pearson response rate. The data is not robust due to the low number of students.
- The National Student Survey is undertaken by students in the final year of their degree or foundation degree only. There is a good response rate and the figures are improving.
- The College had a 100% NSS response rate for NC provision, with a 91% satisfaction rate.
- The good awards figures for both HNs and ARU provision were noted. There is a focus on Business where the figure is lower, due mainly to a change in the delivery team and recruiting learners late to the programme.
- The 65% target for ARU is an improving picture. There is extensive support from staff for students' final major project.
- Feedback was given on the process for submitting applications to ARU for mitigating circumstances. It was noted that with the College's HN provision, the College can set its own parameters for this as long as they fall within the Awarding Organisation's rules.
- The areas in red for overall results were highlighted, along with the identified issues within the areas, such as in Journalism there were issues with one module and that there is an on-going struggle to recruit high quality engineering staff.
- There is better tracking and monitoring on students now in place and teams are integrated into FE teams rather than being standalone.
- All remaining ARU students will complete their courses either this year or next year.

Governors noted the higher education development plan included in the report.

An updated yearly overview of quality assurance activities for higher education was tabled and Governors noted the contents.

After careful consideration of all the information presented to Governors, the Standards and Curriculum Committee agreed that suitable processes are in place for the College's higher education provision and that full assurance can be given by the Governing Body. The Standards and Curriculum Committee approved the Annual Quality Assessment Assurance Statements and agreed for K Spencer, as Accounting Officer, to sign the return on behalf of the Governing Body.

597 Policies for Approval

B Jones informed the Committee that existing policies had been looked at along with areas which need updating in line with Pearson and QAA requirements. Policies have been made more relevant to the College's HN provision.

597.1 Higher Education Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Higher Education Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy, presented by B Jones, Assistant Principal.

B Jones highlighted that this Policy now includes UCAS content as the College's HN provision is now listed on the UCAS website. From next year, all admissions will be made via UCAS. B Jones also highlighted that the Policy also covers part time provision.

The Standards and Curriculum approved the Higher Education Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy.

597.2 Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan, presented by B Jones, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that this is a new policy and that whilst there are limited research opportunities for higher education staff, this plan covers time allocated to staff for scholarly activity, which is a reportable measure for ARU and Pearson.

The Committee expressed some concern with how the Policy was worded.

The Standards and Curriculum agreed that the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan be revised by K Spencer, L Turner and B Jones and be presented for approval at the Corporation meeting on 7 December 2017.

597.3 Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, presented by B Jones, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that this is a new Policy. L Laycock asked if the Teaching Excellence Framework is being used in the Policy and Governors were informed that it was not at the moment.

The Standards and Curriculum approved the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

597.4 Higher Education Student Engagement Policy

The Standards and Curriculum received and considered the Higher Education Student Engagement Policy, presented by B Jones, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that this is a new Policy and that previously the College's processes had not been documented in such as a policy. L Laycock asked if there was a HE Board which a student representative could be invited to.

The Standards and Curriculum approved the Higher Education Student Engagement Policy, subject to a reporting framework being added to the Policy.

598 Complaints and Compliments 2016/17

The Standards and Curriculum Committee received and considered the Complaints and Compliments Report 2016/17, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors were reminded that the report is an annual report on the complaints and compliments which the College received during the last academic year and that the report contains three year trend data.

L Turner highlighted that a number of potential complaints are resolved before going through a formal process, however when this does occur, the College has a rigorous process in place and follows up on actions arising from the complaints.

It was noted that the number of complaints has decreased over the last three years, student satisfaction has increased and that often the complaints are generated by parents rather than students. It was also noted that historically the biggest source of complaint was the College's IT and associated infrastructure however this has been dealt with by the College investing a significant amount of funding into this.

The Standards and Curriculum Committee noted the report on Complaints and Compliments 2016/17.

599 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

The Committee noted that this was C Christofides' and M Prodger's last Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting and thanked them for all their support.

600 Dates of Future Meetings

Spring Term	Tuesday 13 March 2018	08.30am
Summer Term	Tuesday 26 June 2018	08.30am