

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
OF CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION
CORPORATION WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013 AT
6.00PM, 422**

PRESENT: Stephan John (Chair)
Kene Ibezi
Clare Mackie
Anita McGowan
Matt Sims
Gordon Smith
Frances Wadsworth
Kate Ward

ALSO ATTENDING: Ann Monaghan (Director of Learner Performance & Quality: DLPQ)
Jason Pemberton-Billing (Dean UCC) to end of item 12
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive: DCE)
Jane Stroud (Clerk to the Governors)

APOLOGIES Craig O'Donnell

The meeting was preceded by a briefing for members on the QAA process from the Dean of the UCC Jason Pemberton-Billing and Helen Spruce, Associate Dean. The College is due to be inspected by the QAA in April 2014. A paper was tabled outlining the process and the timetable. The QAA process was almost identical to that for universities and Clare Mackie offered to advise on preparations.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair welcomed all present to his first meeting as Chair and declared that he would be taking all the HE items together at the start of the meeting. At the Chair's invitation all present introduced themselves.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Clare Mackie declared a partnership interest as the University of Sussex validates HE programmes.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2013

The minutes were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.

4.1 Matters Arising

Item 4: Anonymised teacher observations, **Item 5:** the Employability Strategy, destinations of students by curriculum area, and a report on Commercial Upskilling were all included with the papers for the meeting as requested.

Item TLA Termly Report

In response to a question from the Chair the DCE informed members that the percentage of permanent staff had risen from 78% to 83% (in terms of budgeted cost) with an especially high level in A'level and GCSE provision where there had

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been particular issues with sessional and agency staff. The October agency expenditure was 45% lower than for the previous year, but the College was still experiencing some recruitment problems especially with Electrical Installation, English and Maths.

Governors asked how the College could be confident about the quality of applicants and the teaching staff recruited. The DCE and the DLPQ highlighted the higher quality of teacher observations, use of the probation procedures, and the new requirement for staff to take English and Maths Initial Assessments. Where applicants were not of the right standard the College had chosen not to recruit. They were also looking at other ways to recruit, for instance graduates through the Institute of Education.

ACTION: The Chair requested an agenda item at the next meeting on the teaching qualifications available

7 HE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2012/13

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Dean of UCC summarised the report as follows:

The positives were:

1. Overall success rates of 75%
2. Internal progression in the School of Art – 10 to 15 students
3. Tier 4 license to sponsor international students regained
4. Student satisfaction in internal surveys very good at 88%
5. Positive external examiner feedback
6. 85% of lessons observed were good or better at first observation and 100% at second observation

Areas for improvement were:

1. Retention, with 78% retention from L4 to L5, and 86% from L5 to L6
2. Recruitment: Full Time recruitment was just on target with late admissions through clearing. There had been a 40% drop in Part Time recruitment from 2 years ago due to increases in fees
3. National Student Survey (NSS) results were not as strong as those for internal surveys
4. Internal progression was not as strong as it should be

Recruitment and retention issues were being addressed with:

1. An analysis of the reasons for withdrawal in 2012/13 and what the College could have done to retain these students, and more rigorous monitoring in-year
2. Earlier use of Advice and Welfare
3. New websites for the UCC and for the School of Art
4. Refreshing the titles of courses in Art and Design
5. Attractive bursaries
6. Working with the FE part of the College on internal progression
7. Working to understand the reasons behind the variable performance in the NSS. This would include a rehearsal of the survey next week.

Clare Mackie suggested that the raw data and the grading systems for the NSS be examined, and also student perceptions of the survey and the gradings. It might be necessary to highlight to students that '3', the midpoint in the grading meant 'unsatisfied', and that the survey covered support for the students over the entire three year period. In 2017 the NSS was to be replaced by a Student Engagement Survey.

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Governors asked about the sample size for the survey, and the main areas the College should focus on as a result of the NSS. The Dean responded that 200 students answered the survey, so that for some courses the sample was small. The NSS had given a low score for feedback on work submitted by students but external feedback was that this was very good. There was also a low score for response to student views. The College did respond, but not necessarily in the way they would like. There was a discussion about the other channels for feedback, including Principal's lunch and teaching and learning surveys which were all very positive.

Governors asked about direct approaches to schools for recruitment. This was an ongoing issue and governors suggested several possible strategies.

The Chair commented that the low progression figures would lead to statistical problems over three years, and queried what the College was doing to help students as they transfer to HE. The Dean replied that a Summer School had been introduced for the first time. Its success would be analysed at the end of the year but initial signs were good. There had also been a radical overhaul of the first semester, drawing on Student Support services. Late recruitment had meant that some students had not got their financial support in place at the beginning of term. Some re-takes had been allowed, but these did not draw down mainstream funding. It was agreed that as student loans covered up to 4 years it would be better for some students to be allowed to start again.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the report to the Governing Body.

11 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY / 12 HE STUDENT CHARTER

The reports were **RECEIVED**. The Dean explained that the College had chosen a light touch framework for both, and that both documents were out for consultation with students.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve both documents subject to any amendments arising out of the Student Consultation. It was agreed that Chair's Action would be used to approve these amendments.

4 SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2012/13

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE reported that the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Committee had met with him to go through the draft. More work was need on Safeguarding, Value Added, and equality and diversity. The College now had a data sharing compact with the local authority which would assist the collection of destinations data and identifying students who had been in receipt of free school meals. There was no longer a requirement to submit a Self-Assessment Report to the SFA but, as an inspection was expected after March this year, the College planned to do so..

The Principal pointed out the 'Key (emerging) strengths and areas for improvement' set out in section 2.3 of the document. The College was making good progress towards a grade '2' in Teaching and Learning, a critical goal for inspection. The direction of travel for Leadership and Management was a '2'. Learner Outcomes were likely to remain a '3' in spite of greatly improved success rates and particularly strong improvement in sector subject area 14.

The following points were made in response to questions from Governors:

1. OFSTED's judgement of Outcomes would be mainly based on prior year data. However the further the College progressed through the year before the

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inspection the more attention would be paid to in-year data.. Some Functional Skills results would be available by the expected date of the inspection and the College was confident of an improvement in them.

2. The strategy of 'right student on right course' was making progress. There were improved entry requirements, especially for level '3'. Students who wished to progress to the next level were set clear entry criteria. There was still a problem with new students who had lower functional literacy and maths skills than their GCSE results would suggest.

The Chair summarised that the report was very encouraging, and commended the college on improving the skills needed to self-assess year on year.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the Self-Assessment Report to the Governing Body subject to Chair's Action to approve any amendments to the areas outlined in the first paragraph above if these were to take place before the Governing Body meeting. It was noted that further amendments might be required even after the Governing Body meeting in which case it would be appropriate for the Governing Body to approve the Self-Assessment subject to final sign off by Chair's Action of the Chair of Governors.

10. Report on Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)

The report, including a report on Observation of Teaching and Learning with Observation Data was **RECEIVED**. The DLPQ reported on the Observations of Teaching and Learning. The key change was that this was being carried out by an exclusively internal team. They did not observe in their own areas, but this did allow for feedback to be contextualised and followed through. The grade profile to date (on page 90), based on first observations this term, was very encouraging with 72% grades '1' and '2' compared to 61% last year, and 59% the year before. Not all the first observations were yet on the system, but it was proposed that this year the KPI on observations be based on the first observation.

Governors asked for an assessment of the reasons for the lower grades this year. The DLPQ reported that there was concern about 3 members of staff. These staff had met with their line managers, the DLPQ and HR, and plans for improvement had been agreed. Others with low grades were brand new staff and subsequent feedback had shown improvement. She reassured governors that the numbers of staff who had to be supported was small enough for the available resource. However she cautioned that all observations were only a snapshot, and that a great deal of mentoring was taking place.

The Chair asked if there had been a change of culture and was given anecdotal evidence that staff were keen to be re-assessed promptly in order to achieve a higher grade. OFSTED had also noted a 'remarkable' engagement with TLA.

Members asked what would be considered a 'good' observation profile. The DLPQ stated that 85% grade '1' and '2' would be considered the lowest profile for an outstanding college. The percentage of 'outstanding' (grade '1') lessons observed in the College had not yet improved enough.

In answer to another question the DLPQ said that the Commercial Upskilling Programme had led to good contemporary links and employability skills being highlighted in observations.

The majority of observations took place in October but observations would continue with staff who had been graded 3 or 4. New staff would be observed on joining. Staff

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who were on probation were observed three times. Governors noted the important developmental aspect of the observations.

5 REPORT ON THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2012/13

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Report showed the outturn of the QIP for 2012/13. DCE stated that the themes and proposed actions had been validated by OFSTED. The themes had been correctly identified but not defined as closely as they could be. Thus there were a number of 'ambers' on the RAG rating for progress. More qualitative and quantitative work needed to be carried out and this would form part of the 2013/14 QIP. He agreed with governors that the 2013/14 represented consolidation.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the Report on the Quality Improvement Plan 2012/13 for sign off by the Governing Body

6 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2013/14

The Plan was **RECEIVED**. See also item 5 above. The DCE and the DLPQ reported that there were particular concerns with level '3'. On the one hand there was insufficient stretch and challenge in a few lessons observed. On the other hand it was important to exploit good practice at this level. Improvements needed to be more consistent and students needed to experience consistently constructive feedback. There were still issues about initial student assessment, but there was now a tool that enabled better monitoring of this. The issue now was with how staff and students used it.

They also reported:

1. Gaps in Equality and Diversity were continuing to close
2. English and Maths remained central – as enablers and barriers
3. Employability had been built into programmes
4. Staff performance was being managed
5. There is a need to offer short, bridging and summer courses to some applicants to enable them to start a programme at a higher level after further development of English and Maths skills.

In answer to a question the DLPQ clarified that a 'programme' consisted of a collection of learning aims, and that a 'course' was one learning aim. At lower levels students might take a package of smaller qualifications.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the QIP 2013/14 to the Governing Body, with Chair's Action to approve any updates added to the document before the QIP was presented to the Governing Body.

8 PARTNERSHIPS

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE reported that partnerships were much reduced. There had been no change to funding or success rates since the last report. He updated members that completion certificates for 24 of the 32 learners expected to complete at Marathon in 2013/14 had already been issued.

The report had already been reviewed by the F & R Committee who no longer felt the need for a regular report. It was **AGREED** that partnerships could be properly monitored if the report was subsumed into the Principal's report at Governing Body meetings in future.

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9 ANNUAL TARGETS

The report was **RECEIVED**. Since the previous meeting the overall long level success rate had been raised to 84% as the College had achieved 80.3% in 2012/13. 84% was expected to be above the national rate for this year. Short and very short targets had also been increased but these were not so important. There was no target for 14 – 16, as there were fewer than 40 students. Functional Skills had been increased to 75% with a focus on Level '2'. Apprenticeship completion awaited reconciliation. There was a new funding methodology for 16 – 18s that required changes to the database. This was currently an issue due to national unreliability of the ILR database. Resources were still being applied to improve the Attendance target which remained at 88%. It was proposed to change the basis of Teaching Observation targets: The target was to be 73% with 14% outstanding, but based on first observations with an additional target of no lessons to be graded as a '4' after re-inspection. The Employability target would use actual destinations confirmed by College enrolments of progressing students, UCAS confirmation of HEI acceptance and by a telephone survey, recently completed.

Members tested if the 84% overall long level success rate was realistic. Officers said that this was based on Level '3' 16 – 18 in particular. If students could repeat first year success in the second year, and AS Levels improved, then this should happen. But first year 19+ students had had particularly good success rates last year and room for significant improvement, particularly in ESOL, was limited in the short term

Governors asked if students clearly understood the structure of their programmes and the importance of English and Maths.

In response to questions officers stated:

1. Officers confirmed that the College's targets have to be sufficiently challenging and stretching in order to challenge, but to be achievable.
2. Functional Skills was an issue of national concern. OECD reported England and Wales were 22nd in a table of countries' language and Maths competencies. OFSTED also finds the strongest indicator that a student can succeed in life is possession of good written and oral language skills, closely followed by Maths.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Governing Body the Annual Targets for 2013/14

NTIs (Notices to Improve)

The report was **RECEIVED**. In response to a question on whether the NTIs involved restructuring officers stated that Visual and Performing Arts and A Levels had been split into two divisions at the beginning of 2012/2013. A new School of Art, and a new 'A' Levels and GCSE division had been created and new staff appointed. Following a review of Success Rates for 2012/13 some courses had been removed from NTIs, and some added because their performance was below target in 2012/13. Functional Skills and some HE courses had also been added. Progress against NTI plans for each course would be presented to the Committee at each meeting.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations for NTIs in 2013/14.

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13 POLICY REVIEWS

The report was **RECEIVED**. Some minor amendments were proposed to the Quality Improvement Strategy and to the Respect for All and Student Disciplinary Procedure. In addition to the written report further changes were proposed to paragraph 67 of Respect for All, on the Appeals Procedure. An additional clause was to be added stating that 'the student will be informed of the decision of the appeals panel within 5 working days of the appeal hearing', and consequently that students had 10 working days from the letter of expulsion (rather than from the Stage 4 hearing) in which to lodge their appeal.

In answer to a question about whether anyone looked at the Respect for All document, officers said that it was on the college website, students were made aware of it at induction, and students subject to disciplinary measures received a copy

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the amended policies.

14 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report was **RECEIVED**. Members noted the risks to be monitored by the LQC Committee, including Failure to Recruit and Retain. The Principal drew their attention to issues around data ownership. The DCE confirmed that changes to the funding methodology for 16 – 18s could lead to difficulties planning provision for mixed age groups.

The Plan would be approved by the Governing Body.

15 DATES FOR NEXT YEAR

The dates were noted.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MATTERS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Chair of Governors announced that he would be calling a strategic meeting with the Chairs of the committees and key officers to review agenda planning for the Governing Body and committees in order to streamline the business of governance.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The meeting then ended at 8.40pm.