

PRESENT: Stephan John (Chair)
Kene Ibezi
Craig O'Donnell
Ryan Raghoo (Student Governor) – until end of item 5
Gordon Smith
Frances Wadsworth

ALSO ATTENDING: Ann Monaghan (Assistant Principal, Curriculum Development and Quality: APCDQ)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive: DCE)
Jane Stroud (Clerk to the Governors)

APOLOGIES Clare Mackie, Anita McGowan, Matt Sims,
Ryan Raghoo for early departure

PRESENTATION – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SAR): CURRENT POSITION

The meeting was preceded by a presentation which reviewed the Quality Improvement journey and learner outcomes over the last three years. Self-Assessment grades were all predicted to be grade 2 for the 2013/14 SAR. Learner outcomes, in support of these grades, were continuing on an upward trajectory. However, while in-year assessments of Functional Skills showed great improvements, foundation maths and English remained one of the biggest challenges. The steps being taken to improve TLA were highlighted. The initial feedback from the OFSTED support and challenge visit that very day acknowledged significant progress since the first visit in March 2013, and advised on areas that College managers and staff should continue to focus on. The grades to be awarded by OFSTED when they came in to re-inspect the College would depend on what they observed at the time of their visit.

The DCE and APCQ presented the predicted outcomes for 2013/2014 by learning aim type and explained that predicted outcomes had significantly improved in terms of accuracy over the last two years. Members asked why officers expected the predictions by curriculum managers to be even more accurate than previously. Officers stated that this was because:

1. Previous predictions had been based on predictions by the course team and tested by senior managers who were only able to check attendance and punctuality. This year the introduction of My Progress Tracker had centralised assessment plans and assessment records which could now be reviewed by senior managers. The "Mark Book" showed how many assessments had been completed, grades, and assessments outstanding.
2. My Progress Tracker had a traffic light system to show progress against predicted outcomes, including a 'blue' traffic light for high grades. There had been a change of culture in that students were now being stretched to their potential, and variances between prediction and performance were followed up.
3. Both attendance and retention were 6% above where they had been this time last year. The co-relation between attendance and performance was emphasised and was becoming accepted by staff and students.

4. Officers acknowledged the point made by members that attendance has a tendency to taper off as the year progresses. In the past many students had done just enough to achieve their qualifications. Various strategies, including the need to hand in weekly homework for 'A' levels, were encouraging students to continue to attend and to achieve their potential. Students were also being prepared for the next level in a way that had not always been the case in the past.

The Chair noted how student-centred the progress story was.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair welcomed Ryan Raghoo, student governor, to his first LQC meeting.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2013

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

3.1 Matters Arising

Item 11/12: Student Engagement Strategy / HE Student Charter

There had been no amendments to the Student Engagement Strategy or HE Student Charter, and hence no need for Chair's Action.

Item 4: Self-Assessment Report 2012/13

An updated version of the Self-Assessment Report had been presented to the Governing Body meeting in December, with some minor sections still to be completed. The final version of the Self-Assessment Report had been approved, with two very minor amendments, by the Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body. The version presented to the Chair of Governors for approval was attached.

Item 8: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2013/14

The QIP had been approved by the Governing Body as a work in progress at the December meeting.

4 QIP UP DATE AND REVIEW OF TARGETS

The report was **RECEIVED**. It provided an update on progress.

There were three questions from members, listed below with the responses from officers:

1. Were there any areas of concern? English, maths and Functional Skills were still an area of significance given their importance for students.
2. Had the Head of TLA been appointed? Maureen Gilmartin had been appointed, and the accuracy of her judgements endorsed by the OFSTED inspector in the current week.
3. What more could be done to improve the quality of English, maths and Functional Skills? Level 1 was above the average for London students, although this should be higher. Level 2 was the particular problem area. There was an issue with ownership. The APCDQ had gone to all lessons on learning walks, and was working with individual staff. There was a visible

focus on Functional Skills exams around the building. Two practitioners were leading on maths and English and had raised the profile with staff. All staff had had to reach level 2 attainments in English and maths, and were being encouraged to develop to level 3 to improve their skills. The Chair commented that improvement had to be sustainable and continuous.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY: QUALIFICATIONS AND SUCCESS RATE REPORT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The report, by the Skills Funding Agency, showed performance against a three year trend and compared the College with a provider group. It considered whether there were trends in the performance of specific groups of learners which differed significantly from the trends in performance of the College's student population and whether there was significant and sustained underperformance by one or more group of students. At present there were no consistent trends. The College's priority was to raise the performance, progress and progression of all students. One area of concern that had not been picked up by the report was the significant difference between learners with learning disabilities who took up offers of support and those who did not. The College was trying to ensure that all learners with learning support needs had appropriate programmes of study.

Members asked how much managers were expected to understand about where the differences came from and what they could do to improve them. The DCE said that if there was a clear and widening gap over 2 or 3 years then this would be investigated and actions identified to reduce the gaps. The APCDQ stated that teachers were encouraged to meet the individual learning needs of all learners, including high grades for high achievers, and that any gaps should be met.

Members asked if the report matched student feedback. The DCE said that the only feedback had been from the Business Division students' feedback meeting. Level 3 students said that they had expected an 'easy ride', but had found local management far from lax, and had found the experience valuable.

6. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT (TLA) REPORT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The report summarised developments in TLA for the College's FE provision, and included an update on the Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL) process. The College had greater knowledge now than previously about the differences in grade profile between sessions observed at different levels. The APCDQ emphasised the College priorities of stretch and challenge, and development of English, maths and Functional Skills. The development of Equality and Diversity had improved. There had been a very successful staff learning day on 28 February, with a differentiated programme for each member of staff.

The teaching qualifications available to staff were included in the report as had been requested at the previous LQC meeting.

In answer to a question it was confirmed that all OTLs had been completed except for observations of 12 to 15 fairly new staff which would be completed within the next few weeks. There had been 171 graded observations so far. OFSTED were likely to observe about 60 lessons (max).

At members' instigation there was a discussion about what the implications would be of not grading individual sessions, as these did not always include a review of individual students work. The APCDQ emphasised that the focus of the grading was on the learning process not on the teaching. During 'folder week' student records had

been inspected but not graded. There was an improving picture, and the findings of the Learning Walks were used to inform further QI.

7 ANNUAL CURRICULUM & BUSINESS PLANNING 2014/15

The report was **RECEIVED**. It explained the key issues of curriculum planning for 2014/15 and the changes the College proposed to make to the curriculum offered to the local community. Planning was undertaken in the light of local market information, student and course performance, government funding and contract requirements. The DCE pointed out that there were financial issues affecting the ability to plan: there was a lack of funding information available from both the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA). It was planned to further develop the Study Programme for 16 – 18s, to include GCSEs not just Functional Skills in English and maths. This year over 2000 16 – 18s had benefited from meeting with employers and from other activities in Progression Week, and 350 had mock interviews with external employers, demonstrating the impact of the Employability Hub.

Members asked how the College managed the number of hours needed for 16 – 18 year olds, including enrichment, in order to draw down full-time funding, alongside the shorter programmes funded for 19+. The DCE stated that the College did not differentiate between the different age groups. Programmes had to be staffed up to 670 hours to justify the top level of funding for 16 – 18s, even when they included 19+ students. This was an issue for the whole sector.

8 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Admissions and Progressions Policy

The DCE apologised for the late availability of the policy, due to late return from the College's solicitors. The new policy was clearer, included fitness to study procedures, an appeal procedure against an admissions rejection, and encompassed HE as well as FE. The Dean of the UCC had confirmed that it was fit for purpose for HE and was compatible with University of Sussex policies. He drew attention to section 7.2. which confirmed that students identified with Additional Learning Support needs would be required to use the support offered as part of the learning contract.

The Chair asked about the impact of student loans. The DCE noted that the disparity between eligibility to study and eligibility to receive a student loan was of concern.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Policy.

9 RISK MAP

The report was **RECEIVED**. There had been no changes since the last meeting.

10 GOVERNANCE

Craig O'Donnell reported that he had been to four Level 3 lessons on a learning walk. The students had all been very engaged but he had observed some differences in quality between the lessons. English and maths had not been explicit enough as objectives for one lesson.

Stephan John, the Chair had been to an AoC Governors Seminar on TLA. It had confirmed the merits of many of the College's strategies. He would present a summary to the Governing Body meeting later in March.

Gordon Smith had accompanied Maureen Gilmartin on a learning walk for A level subjects. He had seen good engagement and what appeared to be good attendance as rooms were full. He had concerns over whether the English learning objective introduced had been sufficiently contextualised, and was of a high enough level to stretch students.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MATTERS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The APCDQ would update the SAR presentation for Governors for the next meeting.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 4 June 2014, 6pm

The meeting then ended at 7.45pm