



Minutes of the Meeting of the Quality & Performance Committee of the Corporation

25th May 2011

Held in the Boardroom in South Building

Present: Mrs Sandra Smith (Chair)
Mr Mohammed Adnan
Ms Debbie Davies
Ms Kollette Super
Mr Paul Taylor (Principal)

In Attendance: Mr David Beckett, Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs Christina Fowers, Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum
Mrs Gill Manthorpe, Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development
Mrs Carrie Smith, Vice-Principal Commercial Development

Q21/11 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

Q22/11 Membership

Ms Debbie Davies was welcomed to her first meeting of the Committee.

Q23/11 Disclosure of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Q24/11 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of 16th February 2011 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

Q25/11 College Retention & Attendance 2010/11

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report informing members that current in-year retention was 95% compared with 94% at the same time in the previous year. Multi-year retention was currently 93% compared with 92% at the same time the previous year. The target for the current year was 90% and all Faculties were above or at target except for Creative Studies (86%).

Overall attendance was at target 89%. Attendance was above target in the Faculty of Technology (90%). The Faculties of Business and Skills & Commercial Development were at target and the Faculty of Creative & Media was below target at 88%.

Attendance and retention (amongst other data) were monitored on a weekly basis by the wider management team at the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) meetings. Issues were discussed by the group and good practice was shared at a relatively detailed level. In addition the Quality Review System would consider poor performance and improvement action plans for individual courses would be drawn up.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q26/11 College Improvement Plan 2010/11

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report to which was attached the updated College Improvement Plan. Once again a similar approach to the previous year had been adopted, building on identified strengths and addressing areas for improvement. Generally, good progress had been made on the actions identified.

In future the report would be summarised and presented to the Committee in a more engaging style.

During discussion, members considered the format and content of the document for future reporting. In response to a question, the Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum indicated that the College was on track and making a lot of progress in building on strengths. Examples were given.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q27/11 Feedback from Termly Meeting of Students' Union Executive and Senior Management Executive

The Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development informed members that there had been no meeting between the Students' Union Executive and the Senior Management Executive in the current term due to the students' examination commitments. However, meetings between Senior Managers and Students' Union Executive members had taken place on specific issues as noted in the next item.

The Committee resolved to note the position.

Q28/11 Termly Report of the Students' Union

The Student Governor presented the Summer Term Report 2011 of the Students' Union. This summarised the items discussed at the last meeting with the Senior Management Executive and gave information on the NUS Conference 2011, catering, NUS Connect, the Equality & Diversity Committee, Safeguarding Group, interview with Media students, meeting with the Vice-Principal Finance regarding student fees, the Easter event, student welcome packs and end of term party.

Notification was also given of the election of Amberrose Ghatara as the second Student Governor. Thanks were expressed to Chrystal Hill for her hard work during her year as the previous Student Governor.

The Committee noted that five members of the Students' Union Executive would be continuing at the College in 2011/12 and felt that this was good for continuity.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q29/11 2010/11 Mid-Course Learner Satisfaction Survey

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report of the Quality Manager informing members that a total of 2,875 learners from 244 courses had completed the 2010/11 Mid-Course Learner Satisfaction Survey (292 more respondents than in 2009/10).

The College continued to receive high positive responses for its four key quality statements: 'I am satisfied with my course' scored 93%; 'I would recommend my course to a friend' scored 90%; 'I would recommend the College to a friend' scored 93% and 'I'm enjoying College' scored 91%. Responses to 42 of the 50 benchmarked questions in the survey scored above the national average. The vast majority of comments received from learners were very positive.

The most significant adverse comments related to the fact that learners had to pay for printing their assignments and other research materials. Other adverse comments related to the lack of a smoking shelter resulting in learners congregating outside the College entrances; lack of recreational facilities; poor quality/variety of food which was too expensive; lack of a cash machine; lack of drinking water fountains; and insufficient access to computers in the LRCs.

Heads of Faculty, Programme Area Managers and relevant Department Managers had added actions to their SAR Quality Improvement Plans in order to address weaker areas that were 4% or more below the national average.

In discussing the report, members probed the targets the College wanted to achieve in the various areas and noted that there had been differing responses from the North and South Buildings. The paper was regarded as generally positive.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q30/11

Classroom Observations Feedback 2010/11

The Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development presented a report focusing on the progress made to date on the graded observations carried out by peer observers as part of the curriculum area COLTs (Classroom Observation and Learner Talkback). It also outlined how this data and other information regarding Teaching & Learning had been used by the Teaching & Learning Department to carry out a review of performance on a range of courses.

The College grade profile at this point was Grade 1, 19.5%; Grade 2, 66.6%; Grade 3, 11.3%; Grade 4, 2.4%; 'Good and better', 86.1%.

The graded observations would continue until June 2011 and it was anticipated that the College would be able to meet the target for the numbers of observations carried out. The observation grade profile was expected to be close to the target for 'Good and better' grades.

The performance analysis data would be used to identify specific teachers who needed to be moved onto individual action plans in order to improve their skills as teachers. As part of these action plans graded observations would be carried out. Where improvements were not made, staff would be moved on to the appropriate point of the Capability Procedure.

Q31/11 Sustainability in the Curriculum

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report of the Director of Estates providing members with an update on the work that had been undertaken to introduce the topic of sustainable development into the curriculum.

In summary, although there had been some slow development in some areas, the way in which sustainable development was being integrated within the curriculum was to be commended. There was much enthusiasm amongst staff and student groups and individuals were embracing the initiative.

Members discussed the report and agreed it was an important growing area in which progress should be monitored.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q32/11 Equality & Diversity Report (Students)

The Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development presented a report giving members information based on the Equality & Diversity data for students who were enrolled at the College in 2010/11. It formed part of the commitment made to keep Governors informed of Equality & Diversity issues on an annual basis.

As a member of the Equality & Diversity Committee, the Chair linked relevant issues to quality matters.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q33/11 Visit to West Herts College

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report on a recent visit by the Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum, the Quality Manager, the Teaching & Learning Manager and the Head of Faculty of Creative Arts to West Herts College.

In 2008 a visit had been made to West Herts College to benchmark City College's quality processes and systems and to consider how changes could be made to the quality framework to secure significant improvements in Teaching & Learning and success rates. In 2008 West Herts had improved from an 'Inadequate' College to self-assessing as 'Good' in two years. In March 2010 the College had been graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

The report set out the findings of the visit including reference to new build, tutoring, computer studies, Teaching & Learning, quality processes and systems. Ways forward based on the outcomes of the visit were set out.

During discussion, members examined the decision-making process at West Herts College and felt it would be useful for similar visits to

take place to other Colleges to make further comparisons. Particular reference was made to the benefit of breakout spaces in helping to populate a building.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

Q34/11 Complaints/Compliments/Comments

The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum presented a report of the Customer Liaison Co-ordinator detailing complaints, compliments and comments received since the last meeting of the Committee in February 2011 to the end of April 2011.

There had been 15 complaints and one compliment received in this period. A total of 71 complaints and five compliments had been received up to the end of April 2011. This was higher than the similar period in the previous year where a total of 53 complaints and two compliments had been recorded.

The average time to send an acknowledgement to a complaint/compliment was two days which was within the target of three working days. The average time to close out complaints was currently six working days which was within the target of ten working days as published in the College Charter.

Members discussed the report, enquiring whether there was a pattern with regard to the increase in complaints. The Vice-Principal Quality & Curriculum indicated that there was nothing specific in this regard. Members also probed the nature of certain complaints and the way in which they were made.

The Principal informed members that it was the wish of management to relate process improvements to the work of the Committee rather than just reporting on performance.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) That it would continue to monitor the level of complaints.

Q35/11 Self-Assessment of the Committee's Performance 2010/11

The Clerk presented a report noting that the Corporation had approved a revised process for carrying out its annual self-assessment. The process required each Committee to carry out a self-assessment at their last meeting of the year. For the Quality & Performance Committee, this was at the present time.

The report set out the process for self-assessment and offered a review of the Committee's work in 2010/11.

In an update to the report, the Clerk informed members that attendance at meetings for the year overall was 76.2% against the target of 80%.

The Committee then undertook its self-assessment, considering that its key strengths were the challenges put to the management team and the way in which they had risen to these through performance improvements across the College; reporting mechanisms from Senior Managers leading to good understanding of the work of the College; the participation by student members at meetings; the Committee's commitment to the Voice of the Learner; being very student-focused; overseeing a further significant rise in success rates (this being a major contribution to the College's capacity to improve); very effective oversight of the quality cycle; recognition of the hard work and achievement of College managers in improving quality; and very effective oversight of the realisation of the College's capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement were considered to be the need to improve success rates to well above the national average; how to operate more strategically in the light of the good results coming through; and attendance (whilst noting that this did not detract from the thoroughness of the work of the Committee).

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) That its key strengths and areas for improvement be as per its discussion.
- (c) That its grade for 2010/11 be Grade 2 (Good).
- (d) To note that its self-assessment would be reported to the Search Committee at its Annual Review Meeting on 23rd November 2011 as the next stage of the self-assessment process.

Q36/11

Dates of Meetings and Annual Plan of Business 2011/12

The Clerk presented a report noting that at the last meeting it had been agreed that consideration of the dates of meetings and Annual Plan of Business for the Committee in 2011/12 be deferred until the present meeting in order to take account of decisions made about the Committee structure and remits at the Corporation meeting on 23rd March 2011.

At that meeting it had been agreed that the Committee should in future meet twice a year in the Autumn and Spring Terms, with agendas reflecting a rationalised and refocused approach to the Committee's activities.

The report made proposals accordingly for the Committee's dates of meetings and Annual Plan of Business 2011/12.

In the light of the dates now set for the Management Planning Conference in the Autumn Term 2011, the Clerk proposed that the meeting of the Committee in that term should now take place on Wednesday 2nd November 2011 rather than Wednesday 9th November 2011 as proposed in the report.

In discussing the report, members ascertained that the proposed dates would tie in effectively with reporting requirements to the Committee and the Corporation in respect of quality matters. Managers present indicated some further items which it was considered should be added to the annual plan of business.

The Principal indicated that further change was being considered for the Committee to reflect the Voice of the Learner issues.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To approve the dates of meetings for 2011/12 as now proposed and the annual plan of business subject to the addition of the further items indicated.
- (c) To keep the work and operation of the Committee under review as the new meetings structure was implemented.

Q37/11 Recommendations for Corporation

The Committee resolved that the Corporation be recommended to note:

- (a) The range of activities reflected in the termly report of the Students' Union and the continuity of the Students' Union's Executive for the next year.
- (b) That, as requested by the Committee, a report on sustainability in the curriculum had been received.

Q38/11 Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting would take place at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 2nd November 2011.

Q39/11 Publication of Papers

The Committee resolved that all the papers of the meeting be published.

Meeting Opened: 5.00 pm
Meeting Closed: 6.18pm

DPB