

CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date	Wednesday 9 th March 2016	Time 5.30pm	FINAL
Venue	The Executive Boardroom, New College Stamford		
Chair	Alison Grant (for Items 1-3) and Paul Wingfield for the remainder of the meeting.		
Membership:	Alison Grant, Andrew Tofts, Luke Rurans (Items 1-12) and Paul Wingfield.		
In attendance:	Janet Meenaghan (Principal), Rachel Nicholls (Vice-Principal, Curriculum & Quality ("VPCQ")) and Sally Brook Shanahan (Clerk to the Corporation).		
Apologies:	Zoe Nash and Allison Sunley		

Disclosure of Members Interests: There were no disclosures of interests beyond those already declared in the Register of Interests.

Item	Actions
<p>1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 6th January 2016 The minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee held on 6th January 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>2. Actions Table and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th January 2016 The Actions Table was received and the following additional points were made: From the Meeting held on 6th January 2016 <u>Action No. 1 – Minute 4 – Page 2 – Departmental Self-Assessment Summary Grades 2014-15</u> – The return visit by the Consultant engaged to advise on actions to address performance issues in the Sport department took place on 2nd & 3rd February 2016. The outcome was a positive report that was well received by staff. The Principal has seen the Sports staff and they have confirmed to her that they valued the feedback. Retention in Sport has improved significantly in 2015-16 and was currently at 96.5%. Attendance has also improved to 90% at week 27, up from 82.3% in week 26. It was agreed the action can be closed. <u>Action No. 2 – Minute 7 – Page 4 – Study Programmes</u> – It was agreed that the action to brief Members about Study Programmes can be closed after the paper on the subject has been presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 16th March 2016. <u>Action No. 3 – Minute 7 – Page 4 – Study Programmes</u> – A short session about Study programmes will also be convened at the Corporation Development Event on 17th</p>	

	<p>March 2016, after which it was agreed the action can be closed.</p> <p><u>Action No. 4 – Minute 7 – Page 4/5 – Study Programmes</u> – It was agreed that this action about opportunities to enhance the student “Passport” will be incorporated in the Corporation paper and so can be closed.</p> <p><u>Action No. 5 – Minute 9 – Page 5/6 – Curriculum Planning</u> – Members were updated on progress with Curriculum planning. This included the Visioning Day where managers submitted proposals for their departments. With the benefit of the feedback provided the proposals were resubmitted and a number crunching exercise followed in order to produce the first draft of the Plan. Departments have been encouraged to see how they can do things differently in order for the College to grow. Managers are looking at developing new offers including new HE Access provision. In response to a question about whether this could be validated in time for the start of the 2016-17 academic year, it was stated that efforts are being made to achieve this but if it was not possible then the opportunity would be on offer the following year.</p> <p>The need for some tough decisions to be taken about certain faculties was outlined including Hairdressing and Travel & Tourism. Members discussed the opportunity to change hairdressing provision to an apprenticeship model and considered competition in the local area. They also suggested other ideas for new courses in which the opportunity to consider Media, Games and Animation was well received.</p> <p>From the Meeting held on 28th October 2015</p> <p><u>Action No. 5 – Minute 7 – Page 6 – Post Inspection Action Plan (“PIAP”) – Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”)</u> – It was confirmed that a paper on the impact of CPD will be presented to the Corporation in June/July 2016 in conjunction with the PIAP. In response to a question it was confirmed that the role of Teaching & Learning Coaches has been extended so they are now attached to a department with their role including organising departmental CPD and evaluating its impact. Clarification was sought about CPD in relation to Higher Education and it was confirmed that picking up on the HE specifics is included in their remits.</p> <p>From the Meeting held on 10th June 2015</p> <p><u>Action No. 7 – Minute 6 – Page 4 – Feedback on College Performance Reviews</u> - Approval of the revised feedback form for use on Governor Link Visits will be sought at the forthcoming Corporation meeting and if given, means the action can be closed.</p> <p><u>Action No. 8 – Minute 7 – Page 5 – Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan</u> – The development of the Apprenticeship Awards Ceremony idea will be considered by the SLT and reported back to the Committee at a future meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Committee Chair and Vice Chair With the agreement of the candidates to stand for election, Members voted unanimously that Paul Wingfield will be the Committee Chair and Allison Sunley its Vice Chair with immediate effect.</p>	
4.	<p>Key Performance Indicators 2015-16 Members received the KPI Report and focussed their attention on those with Red</p>	

	<p>ratings. The Attendance figures for both full-time learners and HE learners were scrutinised with Members informed about the initiatives being taken to improve attendance in-year. The work taking place around the HE Attendance Policy and the exercise in connection with the marking of Registers were noted. Although work is in-hand that is expected to maintain the position Members were informed that realistically Attendance is unlikely to improve to a Green rating in-year.</p> <p>In the discussion that followed it was suggested that rather than looking at a range it might be more effective to target attendance in a number of specific areas and meet it. Whilst some departments have improved the profile remains spiky. With the College carrying the data from the past year and with the half way point in the year now passed, work is concentrating on expectations that are anticipated will deliver improvements next year. Meanwhile it was confirmed that all actions in the Attendance Plan continue to be progressed.</p> <p>Turning to the Red rated aspects of Teaching and Learning Members discussed the observation grades profile including the length of time to carry out observations and the slow progress in moving staff to Good or better. A member commented on the students' views about the support they are given which the student governor said reflected the feelings of students around the College.</p> <p>In response to the comments made, the Vice Principal, Curriculum drew attention to the impact that the interventions are having on teaching observation grades with only five of the staff observed on Grade 3 and no one on Grade 4. A member reflected that these improvements are not yet having an impact on the student base from what he had seen. In the ensuing discussion about actions to improve the student experience it was suggested that these include the establishment of focus groups comprising randomly selected students to discuss teaching. It was pointed out that the Student Council is a vibrant group that feeds back information from regular temperature checks taken via course representatives to the Student Engagement and Liaison Officer who in turn reports back to the Council. Members endorsed the importance of student feedback and it was agreed that it is a subject that will be picked up in the Curriculum Area Reviews with the benefit of the results of widely used QDP mid-year Survey that will be available in a fortnight's time.</p> <p>In the discussion that followed Members made it clear they accept that work is being done to improve the student experience but evidence of uncertainty remains. They advocated a selection of focus groups including the inclusion of a neutral person whose role it is to listen and encourage students to talk. The need for detailed feedback to inform the actions to be taken was noted and it was agreed that the Committee will review the evidence based responses from the QDP survey together with the output from Curriculum Area Reviews at an early opportunity.</p> <p>It was confirmed that in-year retention currently stands at 94.9%. The benefits to financial performance from improved retention were noted and a discussion followed about how Retention would be improved by enhancing student experience, teaching, learning and assessment.</p>	VPC
5.	<p>Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Update The areas for development within the Self-Assessment Report have been lifted into the Quality Improvement Plan and an Action Plan built around them. Additionally where</p>	

actions in the Post-Inspection Action Plan closely match those raised in the SAR these have also been included in the QIP to ensure joined up working. Given where the College is, the document is very detailed with a risk it becomes cumbersome as many of the actions cross over several different areas. In order to ensure that actions are not overlooked a simpler document of actions has been produced for operational purposes and following initial review by the Committee can be developed further with the benefit of discussions at the Governors' Development Event to be held on 10th March 2016.

In the course of the detailed scrutiny by Members a number of matters emerged including around RAG ratings. In particular comment was made about an Amber rating being applied where the Progress on actions showed nearly all to be complete with the explanation given that the RAG rating is about the judgment and not the individual actions.

Members emphasised the need for assessments on risk ratings to be applied consistently and suggested that that in future Reports the RAG judgment should appear on the left hand side of the table and that individual Progress on actions will have a RAG dot placed against each them to enable Members to see where any actions are outstanding. In the event that this refinement is unmanageable or does not show a true view then it is open to senior management to propose an alternative.

VPC

Members discussed the Actions and progress around apprenticeships whilst noting the delays resulting from the lack of head in that team. There is a likelihood that the candidate appointed to the position may be released early which should increase the rate of progress.

In relation to the tracking of learner progress the Vice Principal, Curriculum, expressed her intention to implement the effective use of a system that will enable progress to be monitored formally in-year and that she intends to add a new action to the Plan to enable it to be monitored effectively. Meanwhile progress with the current Action is on track.

VPC

Turning to the Appraisal and staff target-setting processes Members noted that all should have been completed during December 2015/January 2016 but they have drifted beyond that timetable. A discussion followed about whether those dates were too late but with the required data not available until October it was concluded that the dates could not be brought forward. The current incomplete status of some Actions around appraisals was noted with reassurance provided that the management team are working to re-establish them as a meaningful exercise and one about which the Governors need to have reassurance that the system is being effectively managed.

The next subject considered was subcontracting which was rated Green. The effectiveness of this area that had the benefit of being externally audited was considered to be secure.

The promotion of equality and diversity was similarly felt to be secure with the good progress made in completing actions noted.

In relation to the Actions to strengthen governance it was confirmed that the Report from Mike Carver, the National Leader of Governance, who observed at the last Corporation meeting, will be shared with all Governors at the Development Event on

	<p>17th March 2016. The need for all Governors to understand the Quality Improvement Plan and be Inspection ready was emphasised. In the course of a general discussion that followed, Andy Tofts commented that the timing of meetings does not suit him.</p> <p>In summary, good progress is being made and the impact of actions in the Plan continues to be measured. Moving forward the particular areas of focus are the development of the Strategic Plan, teaching and learning, Ofsted preparations, Student Services, destinations, Marking Policy, appraisal and actions around Apprenticeships. The Committee Chair had scrutinised and highlighted the Plan and will send his marked up version to the Vice Principal, Curriculum for her reference.</p> <p>The week of 20 – 24 June 2016 has been identified as a week in which “A” Level students who are not going to university will go on work experience. Many more students are engaged on meaningful work experience and Members discussed the good progress that is being made.</p> <p>Members exchanged final comments on the Plan in the course of which it was noted that some staff have indicated they feel over observed. The Vice Principal, Curriculum, confirmed that work is underway to address this.</p> <p>The work being done to ensure there is synergy between the SAR and the QIP as well as consistency around RAG ratings was also noted.</p>	<p>Committee Chair</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Post Inspection Action Plan - Progress Update</p> <p>Members received the updated Post Inspection Action Plan and in the course of their discussions about it raised a number of points including the need to ensure there are no inconsistencies with the QIP. In response to questions about Ref. 5.1 covering Employer Engagement it was confirmed that that this area is risk rated as Red as it is not currently covered at present pending the new Executive appointment. A Sales Manager position is also being costed as a potential addition to the team in order to further strengthen it.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Mid-Year Complaints and Praise Report</p> <p>Members were briefed on the updated reporting process covering investigation, close down and lessons learned. Whilst there have been more complaints, it was considered the increase is due to the promotion of the Complaints Procedure. Members discussed the operation of the Procedure during which it was recognised that too many complaints relate to student behaviour and that as a result more work is being done around behaviour in order to change the culture. The Student Governor endorsed this and said he felt the culture is becoming stricter, citing the example that catering staff will not serve students unless they are wearing their ID badge.</p> <p>Some negative feedback reported around HE Computing has been addressed by convening focus groups at which the issues have been unpicked and addressed. Otherwise there were no other particular departmental concerns.</p> <p>Going forward it was confirmed that complaints will be analysed via Equality & Diversity measures.</p>	<p>VPC</p>

<p>8.</p>	<p>Value Added Report</p> <p>By way of introduction to the paper it was explained that performance measurement is moving away from Success Rates to a Progress/Value Added model that compares the grade a student achieves at the end of their Level 3 programme with the GCSE score achieved at school, and matches that with learners nationally. If the student does better than other students with a similar profile then value has been added.</p> <p>It was noted that the measure splits Level 3 Value Added into two – Academic and Vocational – and that Value Added for the entire current AS/A2 cohort is significantly below National Average.</p> <p>Members’ attention focussed on the table on page 4 of the Report (p91 in the pack) which gave a stark message of just one subject area being significantly above National Average for Level 3 Value Added academic performance. In the discussion that followed views were expressed that much of this is the consequence of the College having chased numbers and that the situation would be different if Grade U predicted students had been stopped from sitting the exams.</p> <p>Turning to Level 3 Value Added vocational performance an overall positive picture has emerged with eight areas significantly above the National Average as shown on page 5 of the Report.</p> <p>Members discussed the further actions being taken to address the areas of weakness in addition to the College Performance Reviews.</p> <p>The increasing government focus on student progress/value added was noted, including the introduction of new 16-18 accountability measures/benchmarks in January 2017 that will apply to two-year programmes started in 2013/14 and all programmes in 2015/16. Members scrutinised the details of the government’s intended new measures to replace Success Rates contained in Appendix 2 of the paper and examined closely the outcome of an internally conducted exercise to illustrate the likely outcome for the College reporting against the new measures in the table at Appendix 4 on page 17. In the ensuing discussion Members reflected on past shortcomings in relation to Value Added and were reassured the way it is being managed going forward.</p> <p>In view of the importance for all Members to understand fully the new measure it was agreed that subject of Value Added should be revisited. Noting that the subject will remain a topic for further and regular discussion by the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee it was agreed that a presentation will be included on the agenda at a meeting of that Committee in or around October 2016 to which all Corporation Members will be invited to attend.</p>	<p>VPC and Clerk</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Mid-Year Learner Voice Report</p> <p>The Report that builds on the information in the Key Performance Indicators was received. Greater levels of engagement in the Temperature Checks are expected to be included in the next Survey at the end of March 2016. Focus Groups continue to be held and all actions emanating from them are being implemented. It was confirmed that the results of the QDP and FE Choices surveys continue to inform actions to improve the learner experience. With the benefit of the QDP data that is expected to be published shortly it was suggested that the Learner Voice should be included again at future meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk & VPC</p>

10.	<p>Mid-Year Teaching & Learning Report: Business</p> <p>Members received the paper and scrutinised the data incorporated in it, including the table that provided information about actual performance versus the Targets for Learning Assessment and Observations including the Actual Unadjusted figures comprising all observations and the Adjusted figures calculated using the most recent observation grade. Attention focussed on the Table showing Observations by Curriculum Area using the most recent grade that showed the impact of the support being provided. It was confirmed that just four staff still need to move up from Grade 3 with a fifth currently off sick. With 56 observations having taken place Members commended the fact that 91.06% of observations are graded Good or better and the positive impact of there being no Grade 4 staff.</p> <p>In the course of the discussion that followed Members canvassed their views about the observations generally and considered other measures that could be used including a Teacher Score Card which has recently been seen in operation at another college.</p>	
11.	<p>Curriculum Area Review Report</p> <p>The draft Curriculum Area Review Report for Business, the first area identified for review, was received. It was agreed that the Report will be circulated as a separate document and that Members will submit their questions and comments to the Vice Principal, Curriculum.</p> <p>Further summary verbal feedback was provided in relation to Business curriculum area and also about the Skills for Work & living and “A” Level areas all of which was positive.</p>	VPC
12.	<p>Link Governor Scheme – Revised Template</p> <p>Members reviewed the revised Guidance and template for recording Governor Link Visits. Discussion followed about Members’ experiences on visits. Whilst some Members preferred to have conversations it was recognised that the form provided a structure for Link meetings where required but did not have to be followed prescriptively at every visit.</p>	
13.	<p>Any other urgent business</p> <p>(i) <u>Staff Governors</u> – After discussion about the need to recruit a second Staff Governor, the Committee agreed that a recommendation should be made to the Corporation to change the references in the Instrument & Articles of Government from “academic staff” to “teaching staff”. Members emphasised their preference for the current Staff Governor vacancy to be filled by a member of the teaching staff but that if this is not possible then it is open to all staff.</p> <p>Luke Rurans, Student Governor, was thanked for his contribution and left the meeting before the next item was considered.</p>	Clerk

14.	<p>Item raised under the Collective Disputes Procedure by Godfrey Jennings</p> <p>Before leaving the meeting the Chair made two observations: Firstly that Mr. Jennings had not been pushing for a Staff Governor to be appointed after the resignation of Nick Nielson. Secondly, she stated that Mr. Jennings has accused her of “getting her mates shoehorned in”. Noting that being Chair is a voluntary job with no personal gain she pointed out that if such comments were picked up on by the outside world it could be damaging to her career in a profession where integrity is everything. Accordingly, with the comments verging on libel the Chair stated that if Mr. Jennings continues to make such accusations she will consider taking action.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair of the Corporation and the Committee took the Chair and he and the Members present confirmed they had read the pack of documentation submitted by Mr Jennings. The Deputy Chair continued by recounting the process by which it had been agreed that the appointment of Staff Governors will be via an interview process. Members agreed that it had been clear and transparent throughout and allowed any member of staff to put themselves forward for interview. Equally the Union could elect a candidate who would then proceed to be interview.</p> <p>Members examined the correspondence and discussed the issues and concluded they were not satisfied that Mr Jennings was representing the view of a collective group as evidenced by the speed of replies to messages that made it clear no-one else could have been consulted about the response. Members commented on how intimidated they felt by the silent protest by Mr Jennings and his colleagues before the December Corporation meeting and that such conduct was unacceptable.</p> <p>Members concluded unanimously that they continue to support the application of the appointment process via interview for Staff Governors that had been agreed by the full Corporation in December 2015. The Deputy Chair emphasised that this is the final ruling on this matter and noted that when communicating the decision to Mr Jennings a request will be made that he refrains from sending emails to the Chair and returns to using normal business processes for any communications with her.</p> <p>Members agreed that the invitation to all employees to put themselves forward for appointment as a Staff Governor will be re-issued.</p>	Clerk
15.	<p>Date of next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 9th March 2016 at 5.30pm in the Executive Boardroom.</p>	

The meeting ended at 7.40pm

Signed Chair

Date