
**Minutes of the Students, Curriculum & QA Committee
held on Wednesday 22nd June 2011 at 4:30 pm
in the Principal's Office, Hagley Road Centre**

Present:

Jenni Ord (Vice Chair)
Lynette Cutting (Principal)
Henrietta Dalton (Student)
Tracey Pearce
Tim Sunter (p/t)

In attendance:

Louise Jones (Vice Principal)
Elaine Giles (Vice Principal)
David Beasley (Clerk)

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were recorded for Ian Hart (Chair) and Tom Skidmore (Student Governor). Jenni Ord and Tim Sunter joined the meeting via the teleconference facility. Jenni Ord chaired the meeting in the Committee Chair's absence.

2 Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 None declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**3a Approval**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2011 were approved.

3b Matters Arising

- 3b.1 Involvement of Link Governors in Self-Assessment The Clerk said that the summer term link meetings were focused on performance of each link area over the year. For curriculum areas, the curriculum review reports had been circulated and for the support areas the team action plans. This provided link governors with the opportunity to discuss strengths and areas for development with the link team managers.
- 3b.2 Committee Compliance vs TORs The Clerk had circulated an amended report to members reflecting the input received at the previous meeting on the draft report. The Principal suggested that it would be useful if the requirements set out in the Terms of Reference were cross-referred to key governor responsibility headings such as the Financial Management & Control Evaluation (FMCE) return. The Chair agreed and suggested that the link to value for money was a key one to bring out. The Clerk said that this would provide a helpful link to the Work Programme as well; the report to be revised and re-circulated to the Committee.
- 3b.3 Student Travel Concerns Louise Jones said that the subject had been discussed at the College's Curriculum and Quality Committee where it had been agreed that it was important that at the start of the autumn term all staff were aware of the process that had been instituted and that communications were in place for all students. The Chair said that this topic could now be closed as work-in-progress.

4 Reports for Information

4a Development Plan 2011-14, including 2011-12 Targets for recommending to Corporation for approval

4a.1 Louise Jones explained that the Development Plan was the 'roadmap' for the College, issued for information to Governors but also containing the targets for 2011/12 that needed to be approved by the Corporation. The Plan was still in draft and some of the information would be updated prior to its submission to the Board on 7th July. The Chair said that it was a very good document and should be compulsory reading for all governors.

[Tim Sunter joined the meeting at this point.]

4a.2 The Committee asked about the relationship of the Development Plan to other key documents such as the Quality Strategy. The Principal reminded members of the role of the Development Plan looking forward, into which all the other plans fitted, and the context of the Self-Assessment Report looking backwards, both feeding into the team action plans. It was agreed that the Clerk would look at adding some contextual information to the 'Notes for Governors' section in the reports to aid understanding.

4a.3 The Committee questioned the relationship of the 2010-11 performance data to the derivation of the targets defined for 2011-12, making the point that the new targets needed to be challenging but achievable and not 'beyond stretch'.

4a.4 The Committee asked how value for money was reflected in the figures and whether there were metrics for the cost of achieving success. Louise Jones confirmed that this information had been reflected in the team targets and would be reported via the Performance Target Report. Concerning potential aspirations to review the student population distribution, the Principal said that the College's focus at present was on improving the students' achievement levels. The Chair suggested that the Plan would benefit from a commentary against the 2006 Inspection results on the steps that had been taken in the intervening period in each of the key areas; it was acknowledged that this information was covered in the Self-Assessment Report.

The Committee Resolved:

To recommend the 2011-12 targets to the Corporation for approval, noting that they were also being reviewed by the Finance, Resources & Property Committee, and to note the draft Development Plan 2011-2014.

4b Performance Target Report 2010-11

4b.1 Louise Jones said that this report was an interim end of year report and would be updated with the final year-end achievement figures and presented to the Committee at the first meeting in the autumn term. The Committee observed that there were some significant actions still needing to be completed; Louise Jones said that there had been a lot of positive work on the action plans in the year, one area that still required more focus was that of retention where it hadn't proved possible to do enough in-year. The College had developed some robust plans around enrolment in September and the on-going monitoring activities which were intended to improve the retention figures.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Performance Target Report 2010-11.

4c Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy & Action Plan

4c.1 Louise said that Heather Ross, the EDI Officer, was presenting to the Corporation at the July Board meeting; Governors would then understand the development of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan, which were fundamental from Inspection and Equality Act perspectives. Heather Ross had set up an 'Equality Champions' network at the College and had recently updated the Equality Impact Assessment process which features as a standard part of the internal policy review. Louise Jones explained that the EDI Action Plan would be tracked by the EDI Group, of

which the Chair was a member, and progress reported to Governors. The documents were compulsory reading for all Governors.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.

4d Student Involvement Strategy 2011-12

4d.1 Elaine Giles explained that the main theme of the Student Involvement Strategy was fostering more student involvement; the Student Council was central to this ambition and a lot of work had been done this year with the Council. She agreed to clarify two of the headings in the strategy in order to distinguish them more clearly. In response to a question from the Chair, Elaine Giles confirmed that the content of the strategy would be fully integrated into the Teaching and Learning Strategy and that an Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Student Involvement Strategy 2011-12, and the actions agreed.

4e Student Council Report 2010-11

4e.1 Henrietta Dalton presented the key points of the annual Student Council Report, saying that it had been a very successful year characterised by active promotion and communication, including presenting meeting outputs to the College Curriculum and Quality Group, ensuring that issues raised were picked up by managers. She cited several of the positive outcomes from the increased presence of the student voice at the College through the work of the Council and the support of the management team. The Student Council constitution was currently being updated using the latest national guidelines, with the intention of formalising it after the summer. She highlighted the list of objectives for 2011-12, building on the good work achieved this year.

4e.2 The Chair thanked her for the report and said that it was a very good summary of the year; she looked forward to hearing more good outcomes in the future. The Principal said that it was very encouraging to hear about actions being taken and positive results achieved and looked forward to 2011-12 starting off in the same vein.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Student Council Report 2010-11.

4f Curriculum Review Reports 2010-11 (Group 2)

4f.1 Louise Jones said that the three reports submitted to the Committee complemented the two reports submitted earlier in the year for Vocational & Professional Studies and Creative Industries, Humanities & A Levels, all of which had been provided to the relevant Link Governors to assist in their discussions with managers. The Committee commented on the retention figures for Foundation Learning and Construction as being difficult areas of the curriculum in this regard. Louise Jones said that the reports were a useful tool for Governors when they came to review the Self-Assessment Report, which was the overall end-year report, as they gave a picture of the strengths and weaknesses in each area; she confirmed that a draft SAR would be available for the October Committee meeting.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Curriculum Review Reports.

4g Quality Improvement Plan 2010-11 Progress Report

4g.1 Louise Jones said that this report brought together the position at the end of the year from the progress reports issued during the year on the QIP. She said that reasonable progress had been made overall; outstanding items would be carried forward to the QIP for 2011-12. The Chair said that it was important to test that actions set out in the Improvement Plan were on track with reference to the plans and targets set out in the Development Plan, and she noted

that information in this report linked in to those areas in the Performance Target Report that were outstanding. In discussing what could be done to support the staff more in this area and how to impact on the timely completion of improvement actions, the Principal said that some practical steps had been taken in the area of action reminders and reporting that should help. The Chair noted that the theme was that discussed earlier regarding how Governors could best help.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the QIP 2010-11 Progress Report.

4h Confidential Item – Minuted Separately

5 Any Other Business

5.1 No items raised.

6 Confidential Item Review

6.1 The meeting noted that the discussion under agenda item 4h was business sensitive and therefore must be treated as Confidential. In discussing the need to maintain a balance between protecting the College interests and meeting the Corporation's remit to be open and accountable, it was observed that whilst the content of reports may by necessity need to be treated as Confidential for a period of time, the associated discussions may not be. It was agreed that the Clerk and Principal should review draft minutes regarding their confidentiality and level of business-sensitivity, balancing the requirements for openness and accountability with protecting the interests of the College.

The meeting closed at 18:15.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chair