

**Minutes of the Students, Curriculum & Quality Assurance
Committee
held on Wednesday 1st December 2010
at 4:30 pm in the Principal's Office, Hagley Road**

Present:

Jenni Ord (Vice Chair)
Lynette Cutting (Principal)
Tracey Pearce
Tim Sunter

In attendance:

Louise Jones (Vice Principal)
Kevin Stevens (Assistant Principal)

David Beasley (Interim Clerk)

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The meeting was conducted via teleconference in the light of the weather conditions, with Jenni Ord and Tim Sunter dialling-in. Apologies had been received from Ian Hart (Chair), Tom Skidmore and Henrietta Kubwimana.

2 Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 3a The minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2010 were approved.

3b Matters arising:

- (1) The Principal noted the point in Para 5 of the minutes regarding Governor training, and advised that the Board would be working with an external consultant reviewing various governance topics in terms of best practice, and training was a key area given the number of new governors. She confirmed that a training agenda would be circulated to governors in the New Year and advised that the Clerk was looking at the topic on behalf of the Governance and Search Committee. Tim Sunter offered to work with some of the new governors in a mentoring capacity.
- (2) Referring to the discussion at Para 6 of the minutes on student satisfaction levels, Louise Jones said that more recent feedback had shown a slight increase and that this data would be analysed further. The Principal said that the overall satisfaction level of 87% was not where the College needed to be; this was an important topic. She asked that it be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Louise Jones said that she would communicate the recent findings to the Committee in mid to end January.

4a Committee Terms of Reference

- 4a.1 Jenni Ord advised that there had been dialogue between the Chair and the Clerk concerning the proposal that both Student Governors be members of the Committee, rather than the present situation of including one of them. She supported the proposal and Tim Sunter thought that this was a good idea; he said that the student governors had made a positive contribution to the previous Board Meeting. The Clerk added that given the proposal to stagger the elections for Student Governors in future, this approach would also ensure better continuity for the Committee. He noted that the draft Terms of Reference had been reviewed by the Governance and Search Committee.
- 4a.2 Tim Sunter suggested amending Para 4.1 of the Terms of Reference to state 'Review, evaluate and advise the Corporation ...'; this was agreed.

The Committee Resolved:

To recommend to the Corporation the approval of the Committee Terms of Reference, amended as above.

5 Reports for Approval

- 5.1 None submitted.

6 Reports for Information

6a Risk and Performance Report

- 6a.1 Louise Jones said that the Risk and Performance Report reflected the operation of the College as a whole, but that she would focus on Curriculum-related activities. Performance data on attendance, punctuality and withdrawals was reviewed at the weekly Curriculum & Quality meetings. The Quality team was doing a good job in following up actions with the different curriculum areas.
- 6a.2 Confidential item, minuted separately.
- 6a.3 Jenni Ord queried the impact on the course delivery profile resulting from the change in funding strategy. The Principal said that the College was focusing more on internal delivery in order to improve the profit margins, as well as looking at partnering on training activities. Jenni Ord asked if the College was limited to the SFA profile or was diversification an option. The Principal confirmed that this strategy was being pursued, mainly using partners as it involved less risk. She said that the biggest challenge at present was recruitment and that more information would be available for the next meeting. Jenni Ord said that this would give more assurance regarding the partner/skill mix, adding that it was good news that the learner number situation had improved since October.
- 6a.4 Confidential item, minuted separately.
- 6a.5 Jenni Ord noted that the two key actions arising were:
- (1) An examination of the learner/curriculum data at the March meeting;
 - (2) The College to alert the Committee prior to the March meeting should the numbers not meet the required levels.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Risk and Performance Report.

6b Equality and Diversity Annual Report

- 6b.1 Louise Jones advised that she had taken on Equality & Diversity (E&D) responsibility across the College, and that the report provided an overview for 2009/2010. She was insisting that E&D aspects were examined on all reports throughout the year. She summarised the key points as set out in the report and noted the areas identified for further investigation or improvement. In discussions with Telford College, they had stressed that a key factor was recognising that every learner was important, and she said that information was now available that gave much easier access to learner characteristics.
- 6b.2 Jenni Ord said that she was pleased that good practice had been picked up from Telford College and noted that the next step was an analysis of the data and the production of an action plan. Louise Jones advised that an E&D Officer had been appointed from January and that the E&D Group was being re-formed.
- 6b.3 Jenni Ord asked if there had been any work done on trans-gender issues. Tracey Pearce said that there had been some training for staff on how to deal with issues but that this was an area where staff may not be confident. The Principal suggested that Mozz Baker, Head of Tutorials, attended the next meeting to explain the proposals and the aspects linked to the student tutorial programme. The College was looking at bringing in guest speakers to address larger groups of students. Jenni Ord thought that a presentation on the topic would be valuable, and the Principal suggested opening up the presentation to other Governors.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

6c Learner Performance Report

- 6c.1 Confidential item, minuted separately.
- 6c.2 The Principal said that the College staff were under huge pressure to deliver; use of agency staff was problematic regarding arranging cover, and the College was looking at using overtime as an alternative. Louise Jones confirmed that no agency staff had been used this year. Jenni Ord asked if the College had considered retaining a 'hit squad' to provide cover; the Principal said that due to Louise Jones's good work they had 98% staff utilisation which was very high, but may review this in order to provide flexibility. Louise Jones added that the introduction of the Bradford factor process had significantly reduced the level of sickness absence.
- 6c.3 Summarising, Jenni Ord said that the Committee was content with the report, noting that additional information was included in the Self-Assessment Report being submitted to the Corporation, and that actions were in place. She asked that thanks be passed on to Luke Adams and Pauline Hollis regarding the information provided.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Learner Performance Report.

6d Framework for Excellence

- 6d.1 Louise Jones explained that the Framework for Excellence performance indicators had been developed by the previous government for comparative purposes, and that they were based on a range of measures including success rates. She said that the grading methodology had changed since 2008/2009 but that the overall performance was Good, although it wasn't clear how this information would feature in the future. Jenni Ord said she was pleased to see that the Employer grading was Outstanding. Tim Sunter asked how the grades compared to other colleges; Louise Jones replied saying that comparative information wasn't available but that she thought quite favourably. Jenni Ord suggested that the College thought about publishing the information on the Web Site, and said that the Committee was content to receive the report and monitor associated work via the Quality Improvement Programme.

The Committee Resolved:

To note the Framework for Excellence report.

7 Are we living our Values?

7.1 Jenni Ord asked if the Committee had been mindful of learners, staff and working with partners during the discussions. The Principal said that she thought that they had been. Tracey Pearce agreed, noting the focus on success rates and Equality & Diversity. Jenni Ord agreed, saying that meeting's focus had been predominantly on students. They had also discussed the pressures on staff and the need for correlation with partners. Tim Sunter agreed.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 No items were raised.

9 Dates of Future Meetings

Wednesday 16th March 2011 at 16:30

Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 16:30

Wednesday 22nd June 2011 at 16:30

The meeting closed at 17:50.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairman