

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held on 14 February 2019 at 9.30 am

¹PRESENT J Blaber (St); A Owen (E); R Palmer (E); H Perry (S); C Wilson (E).

In attendance: C James, Dean of Higher Education (mins 1 to 29)
J Milburn, Deputy Principal - Curriculum
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies were received from T Jackson.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no interests to declare.

MINUTES

3. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Committee Chair.

Prevent Duty (min 123/18)

4. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed that the scoring of the Prevent Duty risk assessment presented to the Committee in November had been reviewed and corrected and had been agreed by the SLT. There were no areas of concern to report to the Committee.

Looked After Children (min 142/18)

5. The Committee was updated on discussions with Hampshire County Council in relation to identifying Looked After Children and data protection. It was agreed that the position of the Council was frustrating the College's ability to provide the desired support to Looked After Children during their enrolment with the College. It was noted that senior representatives from Hampshire Children's Services were due to attend a meeting of the Hampshire College Principals where the concerns would be discussed.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality and Performance

6. The Committee had received the progress report of the Assistant Principal - Higher Education (HE) on current trends in quality, performance and recruitment for Higher Education provision at the College.
7. The Committee noted that levels of retention and attendance indicated that the performance of the HE curriculum was not at risk and that student feedback continued to be a major influence to improve and develop the HE provision.

¹ (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

8. The completion rate for the autumn survey of new students at Sparsholt was 85% with an overall satisfaction level of 96%, an increase of 3% from the previous year. There were some areas identified for improvement, including providing additional workshops on accessing the online resources available from the University of Portsmouth (UoP).
9. The Committee discussed the engagement of students via the Student Association meetings, hearing feedback from the Student Governor about some students not feeling sufficient confident to get involved and noting initiatives being undertaken to support more students to take part.
10. The Committee reviewed the summary of progress against ASQER (UoP's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review) actions which formed part of the UoP's programme of monitoring and review with University Centre Sparsholt (UCS), along with the twice yearly Board of Studies. The UoP had stated in the annual report that "The team at UCS is a strong and dedicated one with a clear desire to provide first class education for their students...".
11. Responding to a Member's question about the action in relation to students' feedback, the Assistant Principal – HE confirmed that, through taking actions in response to feedback and reporting back on those to students, it was hoped to respond to students while they were enrolled rather than concerns being raised subsequently in the National Students Survey (NSS). This could be challenging where the timescales to implement actions resulted in improvements only benefiting the next student cohort.
12. The Assistant Principal – HE provided a verbal update on the summary in her report in relation to the NSS survey, reporting that the current response rate was over 68%.
13. The Assistant Principal – HE tabled an update on section 4.1 in the report with the results of the MSc exam board in December and the Committee Chair reported that the results were in line with those he had seen elsewhere. The Committee also noted that the External Examiner report had been very positive, identifying a number of areas of good practice, including links to industry and provision of examination feedback, and two areas to improve.
14. The Committee noted that the strategic focus on marketing and internal progression was supporting an increase in applications year-on-year which was a positive trend compared to last year, although the national demographic trend was still challenging. The Assistant Principal – HE provided Members with examples of actions being taken in relation to progression of FE students and outreach activities to other colleges. It was noted that more detail would be reported to the Curriculum, Employers & Market Requirements Committee, including in relation to the areas of the country from which HE students originated.
15. Asked about the impact of Brexit, the Assistant Principal – HE explained the current position regarding fees and visas for EU students and the potential changes.
16. The Assistant Principal – Higher Education drew the attention of the Committee to the new transparency information requirements published by the OfS for HE providers (Condition of Registration F1), explaining that the College must submit a Transparency return by 3 June 2019 to cover the gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic background of

students starting in 2018-19. This data was already recorded by UCS and would be submitted by the deadline. The Committee noted that the OfS would publish the results.

Access and Participation

17. The Committee had received the report of the Assistant Principal - HE on the annual HE Access Agreement monitoring return for 2017-18 and supplementary information on plans for oversight and reporting for 2018-19.
18. The Committee noted that the annual monitoring return for 2017-18 had been submitted to the OfS by the January deadline and reviewed the summary of expenditure. HE institutions were required to provide data and explanations to the OfS and there were sizable penalties in use where HE institutions were deemed to have not complied with funding requirements.
19. Members sought further information about areas where expenditure had been below predictions, discussing the reasons why, including in relation to bursaries, and noting that underspend on Access had been directed to increase spend on Success and Progression in order to support students to continue their studies and achieve comparably with their non-disadvantaged peers (evidenced by continuation and achievement data).
20. The Assistant Principal – HE explained the history of Access and Participation Plans (APP) and the target setting process which had previously responded to a government policy focus on student success. Under the OfS, the primary focus had moved to access and there needed to be a great cross-College focus on access activities. Progress was already being made on access focused outreach activities, such as Andover College providing English and Maths revisions sessions for local schools and Digital Futures Day.
21. Asked about the issues which had previously been reported to the Committee in relation to students entitled to DSA, the Assistant Principal – HE reported the actions taken by UCS and that the majority of students were now receiving DSA funded in-house UCS support.
22. It was noted that the next APP to be considered by the Board would be from 2020-21 to 2024-25 and that the OfS was due to issue updated regulatory guidance (Condition of Registration A1) shortly which would include OfS directed targets. The new APP would be required to be submitted by the end of June and consideration was being given to the process for Board of Governors' oversight and approval of the APP, given the timescales. Additionally, governors would have increased involvement in monitor in-year reporting going forward and there was also an expectation that students should be engaged in the planning, implementing and evaluation of the APP.
23. The Committee endorsed the increased prioritising of planning, delivery, recording and reporting of the APP across the College going forward.

Teaching Excellence Framework

24. The Committee had received the report of the Assistant Principal – HE on a review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) which was required under the Higher Education & Research Act 2017.

25. The Independent Reviewer had requested that provider responses, which were due by 1 March 2019, be considered by their governing body and the report set out the proposed themes to be incorporated into UCS's response together with the full survey questions.
26. Members had a detailed discussion of the TEF, concurring that its value to UCS had been in validating the quality of teaching but that the design of income-based employment metrics and timing of the DHLE (destinations) survey disadvantaged small specialist providers. It was also noted that small providers were disadvantaged in having more limited resources to develop TEF submissions, particularly with new requirements for subject level TEF.
27. Members were also disappointed by the lack of diversity of representation of the wider HE sector, including FE colleges, on the review panel and the TEF panels.
28. The Committee agreed that the Assistant Principal – HE finalise UCS's response for submission to the review in line with the key themes set out in the report and the Committee's discussion and that the approach be reported at the next Board of Governors' meeting by the Committee Chair.
29. It was noted that the AOC and Landex were also anticipated to respond to the review on behalf of their members.

FURTHER EDUCATION QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

30. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum on in-year performance of FE and Employer Responsive learners in 2018-19 and progress in relation to the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2018-19.
31. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum provided an overview of the key points in relation to performance data, highlighting areas of action and improvement and provided detailed examples.
32. The Committee commended the clarity and comprehensiveness of the report and noted the continuing positive progress made by the College towards fulfilling the QIP targets with all of the targets set currently on track to be delivered.
33. Members noted that improvements included enhanced monitoring of attendance and more timely interventions, including in English and maths classes, and good progress with associate apprenticeship delivery and achievement rates. Student satisfaction with the College remained high, underpinning the positive view of improvements within teaching delivery, including in relation to the quality of teaching in English and Maths.
34. Asked by a Member about the QIP action in relation to Vet Nursing, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum assured the Committee that the limited progress reported was in only relation to finding available time and that no issues were anticipated in completing the action.
35. The Staff Governor provided additional context, based on her experience, to the Committee in relation to the A level attendance data, explaining that some students with underlying issues were being supported to take AS qualifications, where a full A level qualification was not achievable, in their interests and that this was reflected in the cohort (not class) sizes and attendance rates.

36. The Committee noted that there had been some recent challenges on the Sparsholt College in relation to some instances of poor student behaviour which were being addressed through final written warnings and exclusions. The exclusions would have a negative impact on retention and overall achievement rates. However, it was reported that the decisive action taken had had a positive impact on general behaviour within the student community and that was welcomed by parents as an indication that the College was keeping students safe. The Curriculum Leadership Group (CLG) was considering if any lessons could be learnt in relation to early interventions in a limited number of instances of substance misuse.
37. Responding to a Member's question about progression planning and achievement, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained the approach to setting aspirational targets for progression, while also helping struggling learners to manage expectations, with events at different points of the year to provide information, advice and guidance.
38. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported the College's complaint to City & Guilds in relation to the previous year's Animal Management synoptic exams had been unsuccessful and would now be taken to Ofqual.
39. Members discussed the change to the maths and English condition of funding for 16-19 year olds from September 2019, whereby learners who had achieved a L2 functional skills qualification would receive funding without studying maths and English GCSEs, and the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that consideration was being given by the CLG as to whether the College should nonetheless continue to encourage learners to work towards one or both GCSE qualifications where they had the capability.
40. The Committee was satisfied that the report represented an accurate picture of the College as a provider of education, learning and skills which demonstrated a standard equating to Ofsted's "Good" categorisation and agreed that it was evident that College management had a clear and effective plan of continuing improvement based upon detailed analysis of available information.

HEALTHCHECK REPROT

41. The Committee reviewed the most recent College Healthcheck report received by governors (2019/01) which included key performance indicators for quality which included data from FE learner surveys.
42. Members sought additional information about the performance of Construction and Hair & Beauty, noting that retention had improved. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported that consideration was being given to beauty curriculum and qualifications and the extent to which these continued to deliver relevant skills given developments in the beauty sector, noting that this was a common challenge for the FE sector.
43. The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.