



**MINUTES OF THE TRC
QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT

Ms M Allen; Mr D Fitzgerald (Chair); Mr P Jagger; Mr J Ellis; Dr P R Williams

In Attendance:

Mrs S Martin, Clerk to the Corporation; Mr T Dowling, Vice Principal Teaching and Learning.

APOLOGIES

14.67 Apologies were received from Dr R J G Bloomer; Mrs A Todd and Mr B Owen

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

14.68 Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests. No interests were declared in respect of agenda items however, members reserved the right to declare an interest at any stage of the meeting.

MINUTES

14.69 The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

14.70 Members received a list of actions arising from previous meetings which had been completed.

COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014/15

14.71 The Principal presented members with an update on the whole College Development Plan, highlighting the areas that had been updated since the previous meeting.

TRC's 2014 performance figures are set against those typical of Grade 1 'Outstanding' Sixth Form Colleges. TRC's 2014 success rate was 88% with a typical Grade 1 SFC being equal to or greater than 88%. The A-level value added is -0.15, whereas typically for a Grade 1 SFC this varies between 0.04-0.48. The overall TLA grade for 2014 is 2.

Within NORVIC (North-East SFC Federation) TRC's value-added at A level in 2014 placed it 10th out of the 15 colleges – 10 of the colleges, including TRC, had negative value-added at A level, with all these colleges' scores being closely clustered together. The top NORVIC score was 0.17.

Within Rotherham TRC's 2014 A level score was equal to its nearest neighbouring school Sixth Form's (Wickersley's) and joint 7th among the 9 A level providers in the borough. 6 providers in the borough, including TRC, had negative value-added at A level, again with scores of these providers closely clustered together. The top score was 0.13.

Given the above, Members discussed the decision made at the previous meeting to amend the 2015 A-Level value added target from 0.14 to 0.08 and agreed this had been the correct decision, in the light of a general drop in value-added scores in local and regional providers, probably linked to the removal of January modular exams.

The report was noted and received.

UPDATE ON RETENTION 2014/15

14.72 A report on the retention of students was provided, including the year on year comparisons of monthly retention from 2004 – 2014. The overall -1.6% drop-out figure from 1 Nov to 1 Jan is slightly better than last year (-1.7%). The Principal commented that last year proved to be a very good one for retention so, while any drop-out is regrettable, this represents a continuation of the solid start reported last time, especially given the much larger number of students this year. Level 2 drop-out has now stabilised.

Members agreed there were no concerns, particularly given the larger number of students this year. The report was noted and received.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

14.73 The Committee received the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2014-2016. The VP T&L referred to the priorities in which good progress had been made before reporting on the priorities still, predominantly, in progress.

14.74 Priority 3 focuses on the utilisation of ICT as a learning tool to enhance the learner experience. Members discussed the actions to be taken, in particular the development of a 'flipped' learning approach to encourage independent learning via the use of Moodle. The aim being that students should arrive well prepared for lessons, allowing classroom time to be focussed on 'deeper thinking' around the subject area. Members acknowledged this approach as being a positive move forward, with the VP T&L stating that he was optimistic about its success.

14.75 Priority 4 is focused on the skills students will need to broadly be successful and independent in their future lives. It was noted that all of the actions remained 'in progress' with none completed as yet. There was significant discussion amongst members regarding the merits of providing time to developing the skills students need for life in general and for employment as well as the need to achieve their qualifications. The possibility of taking time out of the curriculum to focus on this area was considered, with the Principal commenting this may be more feasible once the linear programme of study is in place. The Chair questioned the likelihood of moving the actions from 'in progress' to 'completed' within the target time. The VP T&L responded that there is still time as the TLA strategy is in place until 2016 but further work is needed to determine how the actions will be achieved. One possibility is further training provided at the start of the academic year, something that has proved successful this year with key aspects from the training notably being fed in to routine staff meetings and improving productivity.

The Report was noted and received.

GRADEBOOK UPDATE ON 2014/15 PERFORMANCE

14.76 The Principal reported on current student performance, providing data showing performance measures aggregated from current student performance on all courses.

AS Level figures show a current value added outcome of +10.5 (1.0 in performance table terms), which is expected to remain good but reduce by the end of year as performance in examinations is inevitably lower at the E/U borderline than in aggregated homework marks.

A level high grades show 43% against a target of 46%. 43% would actually be above the contextualized expectation of 40%. This can be seen from the positive value-added (0.15 in performance table terms) which is being generated on current performance.

BTEC performance in the first half of the academic year has a tendency to be below target for high grades, as courses move the students progressively through pass/merit/distinction criteria. This fits the pattern of previous years, when final BTEC performance has been excellent.

Comparisons between male and female students show that female value-added at A level this year is holding up as positive so far, though slightly lower than male value-added at present.

The White/Pakistani comparison shows positive-value added for both our major ethnic groups but with higher value-added for White students currently, though the validity of an overall aggregated value-added figure is at this stage undermined by the BTEC issue explained above.

- 14.77 Members queried whether there are interventions in place for those at risk of an 'E' grade. The VP T&L confirmed that there is an established routine in place that involves the ongoing monitoring of underperforming students. Students are made aware of their performance level via one-to-one sessions with subject teachers and tutors, as well as their results from mock exams.

LEARNING WALK PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 14.78 The VP T&L reported that all learning walks in the current cycle will be completed by Friday 13th February 2015 and confirmed that overall the move to learning walks had been positive, not least due to the reduced stress levels for staff. The outcomes from the reports will be reviewed and decisions made as to which departments require further visits during the next cycle of learning walks.

Each learning walk report is delivered to the department as a whole, with individual practitioners remaining anonymous within the report. A decision is yet to be made by SMT regarding the provision of individual feedback as part of this process. The Chair offered his view that learning walks are a very positive move forward in evaluating performance, and that receiving collective rather than individual feedback provides a sense of responsibility to each individual as a member of that department. Where significant issues are raised in the report, although anonymous, the individual is most likely to recognise themselves. It was suggested that one possibility could be to provide individual Learning Walk feedback only in cases where a second round of departmental learning walks has been considered necessary.

Having attended a learning walk, the Chair gave an overview of his experience and queried how many Corporation members had participated in learning walks to date. It was confirmed that three members had attended learning walks during the first cycle. It was noted that this was less involvement than with the 'link governor programme' previously in place and members may need to be encouraged to participate in the learning walk programme. It was agreed that once the next schedule of learning walks is complete, this should be issued to all members as soon as possible.

RESOLVED 14.78 **That the schedule of learning walks, once complete, be issued to all members with a reminder of how they can make arrangements to participate.**

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT

14.79 The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2013/14, having been circulated with the agenda, was reviewed by members. Compared to the previous year, the number of learners by gender were noted, along with the significant increase in minority ethnic students and the stability in the numbers of students classed as having a disability. In terms of outcomes a significant feature was that value-added was especially strong for male students.

14.80 The Principal referred to additional data released since the publication of the report which showed overall TRC success rates above national and above or equal to Sixth Form College averages across the statistically significant categories of male, female, White, Pakistani and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

14.15 The next meeting would be held on Monday 8 June 2015 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____