



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

**MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2014**

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### **PRESENT**

Dr R J G Bloomer; Mr D Fitzgerald; Mrs M Allen; Dr R Williams; Mr J Ellis; Mr B Owen;

### **In Attendance:**

Mrs S Martin, Clerk to the Corporation

Mr T Dowling, Vice Principal Teaching and Learning.

### **APOLOGIES**

14.49 Apologies were received from Mr P Jagger MBE, Mrs A Todd

14.50 Ms C Taylor was not in attendance

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

14.51 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**

14.52 The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

14.53 It was noted that 14.47 contained the word 'firs' that should read 'first'

### **MATTERS ARISING**

14.54 A list of actions arising was presented, all were covered by agenda items 10 and 11.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT**

14.55 The SAR was presented for consideration and discussion, with self-assessed grades of 2 for overall effectiveness. The Principal expressed his thanks to Andy Amery, Assistant Principal for his work in producing the SAR and highlighted the main changes to the content of the report. The changes include the addition of areas identified by Ofsted – a summary of subject reports and an expanded governance section.

14.56 The average SAR departmental grade had risen to 2.1 in 2014 from 2.2 in 2013. The grades per subject area show the strengths and areas for improvement and these link in with the results. AS and BTEC subjects have produced more favourable results overall compared to the A-Level subjects. Members reviewed the grading per subject area and raised questions. The Principal confirmed that these final externally validated grades and that action plans were in place to make improvements as required. It was explained that each grade has levels within it, meaning that there could be improvement from one year to the next, despite the overall grade remaining the same. There is more concern when a grade falls back from the previous year. Discussion ensued regarding the grades overall, and one member expressed their concerns that it still appears the college have yet to make a significant leap forward - a leap that will be necessary in pursuing the college target to achieve an 'outstanding' Ofsted

rating. Upon further questions, the Principal explained that the college policy of open access to A2 subjects with minimal progression requirements from AS does have a significant impact on the results. There is high success with the overall pass rate, but the weak starting point of some students at A2 level reduces the value added compared with institutions taking through students who have achieved a minimum D or C. That said it was acknowledged by the Principal that value-added at A level was disappointing compared with last year and that the priority was to raise it. Members suggested and considered the introduction of higher entry-level requirements and it was explained that all the science subjects do now have a higher level entry requirement for AS which may ultimately have an impact on the value added scores at A level. The Chair commented that, although the introduction of higher entry-level requirements does require consideration it is also important to note that the college can still be outstanding based on its current approach.

- 14.57 The Principal was asked whether there is student representation on the college's Equality and Diversity committee and it was confirmed that there is, although this has been omitted from the report.

**RESOLVED 14.57 To recommend the SAR for approval**

#### **DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014/15**

- 14.58 The Committee received a report updating progress on the TRC Overall College Development Plan 2014 – 2015 and the Principal highlighted the changes since the report had been issued for the previous meeting. The committee noted and discussed the changes, paying particular attention to the 2015 value added targets for A level and AS level. The discussion focused on whether the targets should be unreservedly aspirational or more statistically calculated, while still aspirational with the response from the Principal being that, ultimately, the college aims to achieve the highest value added score possible. Alternative targets for 2015 were suggested and discussed further.

**RESOLVED 14.58 To amend the 2015 A Level value added target from 0.14 to 0.08 and the 2015 AS Level value added target from 0.20 to 0.15.**

- 14.59 Collaborative work with Newman (Special) School is ongoing, providing opportunities for students to progress into further education where they may not have previously had the opportunity.

#### **UPDATE ON RETENTION 2014/15**

- 14.60 A report on the retention of students was provided, including the year on year comparisons of monthly retention from 2004 – 2014. The overall -1.4% drop-out was in line with the previous year for October and is considered to be a solid start to the year. Level 2 drop-out continues to be an issue and the college is looking to broaden the level 2 offer next year with the aim of providing greater choice, which should have a positive impact on student motivation. In response to members' questions the Principal confirmed that there are a mix of students migrating both to and from the college in this period, and that the 829 level 3 entries for 2014 shows a greater market share of a declining demographic.

#### **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING LESSON OBSERVATION**

- 14.61 The VP T&L provided a verbal update on the TLA Strategy as, given the short space of time since the last meeting there had been minimal substantial change since the previous document was issued for the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Changes have been made to training to address the strategic issues of providing increased challenge at A2 level. The greatest change so far this year has been the introduction of the programme of learning walks. The VP T&L updated members on progress so far, confirming that 4 had been completed in the last 2 week period. Further detail is provided in agenda item 11 – Learning Walk Programme Update.

MA Left the meeting

JE left the meeting (inquorate)

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

- 14.62 The Principal presented the performance management update, showing year to year comparison of outcomes from annual appraisals since its introduction in autumn 2012. Performance is graded using a traffic light system and the report indicated that the green/amber percentage has increased from 90% to 100% since the previous year, including a considerable rise in green scores. This upward trend does reflect the College's overall upward movement in success rates and the strong value-added performance in vocational and AS courses. However, given the negative value-added at A level in 2013/14 the methodology will be refined to give greater weight to that element to ensure that the overall scores do not mask any value-added issues.

### **LEARNING WALK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Previously Link Governor Programme)**

- 14.63 The Chair raised concerns that members may not fully understand the programme of learning walks, the rationale behind it, the process in place and how they can participate.

The VP T&L explained that the introduction of the programme has been influenced by a series of issues, including the fact that this is a method adopted by Ofsted. Specific weeks have been allocated for learning walks within identified departments. A named member of staff will be the learning walk leader, and it is their job to co-ordinate the schedule which will incorporate the range of courses, levels and teachers within the department. The classroom visit can take place during any lesson within the week and will usually last 20 minutes. A further classroom visit to a different group will usually take place immediately afterwards. Those involved in the visit immediately consult with each other once they leave the room, and this may include feedback from direct conversation with students if that has been possible. Following the learning walk the learning walk leader will produce a report that is delivered to the department for their consideration, including possible follow up actions. All those who participate in the learning walk are named on the report so there will be an audit trail for the participation of Corporation members. Members are able to participate by referring to the learning walk schedule in the first instance to identify a week that is convenient to them and / or a subject of interest. Members can then make arrangements by contacting Tony Dowling. All members of the Corporation are invited to participate. The Chair suggested that the learning walk schedule should be re-issued to all members along with explanatory information.

**RESOLVED 14.63 That the Clerk in collaboration with the VP T&L should re-send to all members the schedule of learning walks along with explanatory information about the process and how they can participate.**

- 14.64 There was considerable discussion about learning walks including the advantages and disadvantages, comparisons with the previous process for observing lessons, impact on staff and how the involvement of members can add value to the process. Points raised include the following;
- The 20 minute classroom visit provides a snapshot in time, but overall the programme provides a broader view of what is happening within each department and with a variety of cohorts. At the end of the current schedule, February 2015, the programme will be reviewed to determine the outcomes and make a decision for how to proceed in the future.
  - The report is delivered to the department as a whole, but a decision has to be made by SMT regarding how to proceed where issues with individual members of staff are identified.

- By participating in the learning walks, Members will be more involved in assessing quality within college. This results from a conversation taking place immediately after the observation with an experienced member of staff. Additionally, a two hour period of time may include 3 classroom visits meaning that a broader view is obtained than would previously have been the case with the link governor programme.

### **AS TO A2 TRANSITION SUPPORT**

14.65 A report, having been circulated with the agenda, was considered by the committee. Curriculum based actions were explained by the Principal, including strategies for improving feedback to students, regular monitoring and support meetings between SMT and their linked Heads of Departments, inclusion as a priority within the TLA Strategy and whole-staff twilight sessions focused on the issues arising. Actions with students include utilising direct contact at group sessions to emphasise the demands involved with the transition and the need to obtain grades for their CV not just for university, promoting the support available from the CLASS team and celebrating the success of high achievers at AS level. The Celebration Event due to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> November will be attended by the Vice-Chair, and students will be encouraged to repeat their performance in A2. Additionally the new tutorial system with Progress Tutors is designed to bolster follow up on under achievement.

The report was noted and received.

### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

14. The next meeting is to be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 5:30pm

The meeting ended at 7.15pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ D. Fitzgerald \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 09.02.15 \_\_\_\_\_