

STAFFORD COLLEGE CORPORATION

**MINUTES of
CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE,
8 NOVEMBER 2010**

Present: I Mason (Chair), Mrs S Green, G M Humby, Miss S Kenny, G Taylor-Marshall,
S Willis

In attendance: J P Charleton (Clerk), P Baker, S F Crouch, R D Jones, Ms A Piercy, Ms E Reed,
I Rigby, Mrs G Stepney

Apologies: I Blachford, Mrs H Haroon-Iqbal, Mrs V Woodward

462.0 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Mrs S Green, Staff Member (Non-Teaching) and Miss S Kenny, Student Member, to their first meeting of the Committee. The Chair also welcomed Ms E Reed to her first meeting of the Committee following her recent appointment as Quality Manager.

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Committee to be attended by Mr P Baker due to his retirement from the College at the end of the current term. On behalf of members, the Chair thanked Mr Baker for his major contribution to supporting the work of the Committee during his 8 years of service as Quality Manager.

463.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded members that it is their duty to declare an interest, financial or otherwise, in any items on the Agenda. No interests were declared.

464.0 MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2010

(a) Minutes

It was RESOLVED:

that the minutes be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

465.0 LEARNING RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Mrs L Turner, Library and Information Systems Manager presented the Annual Report of the Learning Resources Committee for 2009/10.

Surveys during the year had shown high satisfaction with arrangements for student induction to the work of the library and the quality of library resources. Utilisation of resources by students and staff had been effective, with a continued increase in the use of the study centres and PCs by students and staff. A key feature of the year had been the development of e-resources with more than 3000 JISC e-books now incorporated into the library catalogue.

Key aims for next year included an increase in the number of Information Skills sessions delivered to students, the further extension of e-resources and the development of library services at the Palmbourne site.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mrs Turner left the meeting

466.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Mr S Crouch, Learning Development Manager, presented the annual Staff Development report for 2009/10.

Key professional development initiatives in the year included training in the new e-ILP to refine Individual Tutorial skills and the delivery of a CPD programme for Faculty staff based on action points from the OfSTED Inspection in November 2009.

Health and Safety training had again been included in the College's incentivised College Pay Initiative, with 174 staff achieving the CIEH Level 2 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace. The OfSTED Inspection in November 2009 had expressed the view that the College's arrangements for staff development operated effectively and had commended the support provided to teachers through the Peer Coaching scheme.

Planned developments for next year included the development of the role of the LIFT team as Teaching and Learning Consultants and further monitoring of the effectiveness of the e-ILP system. Key risks included possible changes to the current staff fee waiver reciprocal agreement with Staffordshire University.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

467.0 OBSERVATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (OTL)

Mr Crouch presented the annual report on Observations of Teaching and Learning for 2009/10.

Data from observations during the past four years demonstrated a generally upward trend in a wide range of key teaching and learning indicators. The OfSTED Inspection in November 2009 had examined the College OTL process in detail with Inspectors expressing a high degree of confidence in the robustness and reliability of the College OTL scheme.

Planned OTL developments for 2010/11 included participation in a Peer Review and Development activity which is expected to involve paired observations with colleagues from partner colleges.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Crouch left the meeting

468.0 LEARNER SUPPORT FUNDS (LSF)

Mr R Jones, Head of Faculty of Professional Studies, reported on the use of the College's LSF allocation in 2009/10.

During the year this allocation had been supported by a grant from College funds to support learners aged 16-18 with travel costs who could not be supported with LSF due to national regulations.

Concern was expressed by members regarding the potential impact on College learners of the government's recent decision to withdraw the national EMA scheme from the end of this academic year.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Jones left the meeting

469.0 STUDENT COUNCIL

Mrs G Stepney, Student Liaison Officer, and Miss S Kenny, Student Member, presented the unconfirmed minutes of the Student Council meeting held on 12 October 2010 which had considered issues arising from induction and had received an update on the new Capital Project.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mrs Stepney left the meeting

470.0 STUDENT END-of-PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr P Baker, Quality Manager, presented a report on the results from the end of programme student questionnaire conducted in Summer 2010 on course and cross-College support facilities and services.

Student ratings for 33 questions were above the national average compared to 29 last year with the majority of rankings in the upper quartile. All 4 year 'distance travelled' ratings were positive with 25 questions having risen by double figures. 575 comments had been received, of which 73% were positive compared to 70% last year.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

471.0 STAFF ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr Baker presented a report which summarised the results of the annual staff questionnaire conducted in the summer term 2010. The ratings for 24 of the 45 questions which could be benchmarked were in the upper quartile of the national rankings with the 4 year 'distance travelled' rating showing significantly improved rating in 63 out of 83 questions.

Ratings for the College in general were positive with 78% of staff indicating that they were happy to be working at the College compared to 72% last year.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

472.0 NATIONAL RANKING REPORTS ON LEARNER SURVEYS

Mr Baker summarised the results of the National Benchmark Report which encompassed the results of all learner surveys conducted in 2009/10. Responses to 85% of questions that could be benchmarked were in the first or second quartile compared to 85% last year while ratings for 14 questions were in first place compared to 7 in the previous year.

Members welcomed all reports as evidence of the trend for continued improvement in learner satisfaction.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

473.0 NATIONAL RANKING REPORTS ON STAFF SURVEYS

Mr Baker summarised the results of the National Benchmark Report which encompassed the results of all staff surveys conducted in 2008/09. Responses to 61% of questions were in the first or second quartile while there were no questions which had ratings falling significantly below the national average.

Staff rating for the Governor Body being in touch with the work of the College had fallen by 5% compared to last year but remained 12% above the national benchmark and ranked in first place of participating colleges.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

474.0 14-16 VOCATIONAL SURVEY FOR YEAR 10 LEARNERS

Mr Baker presented the results from the second 14-16 Survey of Year 10 learners conducted by the Stafford 14-16 Partnership in Summer 2010. The survey had focussed on the start of the course, Assessment and Monitoring, Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities.

16 out of the 18 questions which could be nationally benchmarked were in the upper quartile with ratings for all 18 questions well above the respective national averages.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

475.0 EMPLOYER PHONE SURVEY

Mr Baker summarised the results of the employer phone survey independently conducted by phone by QDP services in June and July 2010.

6 out of 8 questions which could be compared to other providers were significantly above the National Average with 2 questions in the upper quartile compared to none last year.

Employers in the survey had rated the College highly in response to a question regarding the likelihood of recommending the College to others.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

476.0 QUALITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Baker presented the Annual report of the Quality Committee for 2009/10 including plans for 2010/11.

A key positive outcome for 2009/10 included the College's successful performance in all external inspections and reviews in particular the OfSTED Inspection in November 2009. OfSTED Inspectors had endorsed the College's self-assessment and quality improvement systems which were seen as contributing to 'good' capacity for improvement.

Good progress had been made in implanting targets in the Quality Plan for 2009/10, including major reviews of key policies/procedures and increased support for Course Leaders and Unit Managers to improve the quality of course and unit SARs.

Mr Baker outlined the key points of the Quality Plan for 2010 and the proposed Internal Inspection Review Programme. Minor changes to the Standing Orders of the Quality Committee were suggested and agreed.

It was RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be received;**
- (b) that the proposed Quality Plan for 2010/11 be approved;**
- (c) that the revised Standing Orders to the Quality Committee be approved.**

477.0 SUMMER EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report on full-time course examination results for 2009/10 in comparison to results over the previous three years.

Pass rates for vocational qualifications at all levels were at least as good as in 2009 with the BTEC Introductory Diplomas achieving a significant increase on the previous year. A levels had performed well while pass rates for AS level courses had improved by 5% compared to last year.

The majority of full-time courses with poor results that had been closely monitored and supported during the year had made acceptable progress.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

478.0 IN-YEAR RETENTION (INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL RATES)

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report which analysed in-year retention figures and withdrawal trends for 2006/07 to 2009/10.

The College's overall full-time in-year retention rate for 2009/10 was 87%, 2% lower than for 2008/09. In-year retention on part-time courses was generally high at 93% overall, in line with the previous year.

The College's strategies to improve retention and achievement included a telephone survey of early leavers and the promotion of a 'transfer desk' to offer students the opportunity to transfer between courses during the first part of the autumn term.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

479.0 LEARNER ATTENDANCE

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report on attendance figures for 2009/10 and a comparison with figures from previous years.

The College's overall attendance rate in 2009/10 was 87%, the same as in the previous year and in line with OfSTED's assessment of excellent as confirmed in the Inspection Report in November 2009.

Concern was expressed by members that the end of the national EMA scheme may result in some 16-18 learners struggling to maintain full attendance for financial reasons.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

480.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the Annual Report of the Equality and Diversity Committee for 2009/10.

Key activities had included an ongoing review of progress towards targets in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and detailed monitoring of learner achievement in relation to Equality and Diversity categories.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

Mr I Rigby left the meeting during discussion on the following item of business:

481.0 STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY REGIONAL FEDERATION ANNUAL REPORT

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report which summarised the Annual Report of the activities of the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) for 2009/10.

The Annual Report included a report from all of the SURF partner colleges with profiles of a number of students who had completed SURF courses.

Members discussed the potential impact on the College's HE provision of planned major changes to the HE sector in the light of the government's responses to the recommendations of the Browne Review.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

482.0 INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING (ITT) INSPECTION

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) gave details of a forthcoming OfSTED Inspection of the College's provision of ITT as part of an overall review of ITT within SURF as a whole.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

483.0 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 7 March 2011 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.