

**MINUTES of
CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE,
9 NOVEMBER 2009**

Present: I Mason (Chair), G Davies Marshall, J Greenhill, Mrs H Haroon-Iqbal,
G M Humby, G Mason, S Willis, Mrs V Woodward

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

Apologies: J F Duggan, Cllr M Winnington

422.0 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Mr J Greenhill and Mr G Mason, Student Members, and in his absence Cllr M Winnington to their first meeting of the Committee.

The Chair also welcomed Mrs G Stepney to her first meeting of the Committee as the College's Student Liaison Officer.

423.0 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.

424.0 MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 2009

(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.

425.0 STUDENT COUNCIL

Mr G Mason and Mr J Greenhill, Student Members, presented the unconfirmed minutes of the Student Council meeting held on 8 October 2009. The meeting had considered issues arising from induction with a number of examples of good practice being highlighted.

Mrs G Stepney, Student Liaison Officer, provided an update on planned activities of the Student Council and its Interest Groups which included fundraising activities in support of Katherine House Hospice and a visit to the Clothes Show in December.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

426.0 STUDENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Mrs G Stepney presented the draft Student Council Constitution which had undergone considerable revisions to reflect the merging of the role and remit of the Student Council with the Students' Union and to make the document more accessible to students.

Following discussion members agreed that the draft Constitution be accepted on an interim basis, subject to further discussion by the Student Council. The final version of the Constitution would be presented to the Committee for approval at its meeting in the Spring term.

It was RESOLVED:

that in accordance with authority delegated by the Corporation, the draft Constitution be approved on an interim basis subject to further discussion with the Student Council.

At this point Mrs Stepney left the meeting

427.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Mr S Crouch, Learning Development Manager, presented the annual Staff Development report for 2008/09. Key priorities for the year had included supporting all staff to achieve appropriate professional qualifications and to enhance their level of work-related skills. Training initiatives had focussed on a wide range of topics including updating on Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity and Health and Safety.

Planned developments for 2009/10 included the enhancement of Safeguarding training up to level 2, the management of a further round of peer coaching projects and the further development of technology-enhanced learning.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

428.0 TEACHER OBSERVATION

Mr Crouch presented the annual report on Observations for Teaching and Learning (OTL) for 2008/09. During the year a total of 416 observations had been made, of which 242 had been graded. The average grade awarded had improved compared to the previous year, with Grade 1 observations increasing from 7.3% to 13.3% of the total observations. Planned developments for 2009/10 included the rolling out of the OTL Moderation scheme. Key OTL documentation had been revised in Summer 2009 to reflect the increased emphasis in Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity and Personalisation.

Mr Crouch explained that observations undertaken as part of the College's Initial Teacher Training and Mentoring programmes were developmental in nature and as such were not

graded. At the request of members, Mr Crouch agreed to provide OTL outcomes in future reports in tabular form.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Crouch left the meeting

429.0 LEARNER SUPPORT FUNDS (LSF)

Mr R Jones, Head of Faculty of Professional Studies, reported on the use of the College's LSF allocation from the LSC in 2008/09. The overall number of awards to learners had increased compared to the previous year following effective publicity to raise awareness of LSF throughout the College. During the year the College's LSF allocation had been supported by a grant from College funds to support learners particularly with travel costs who could not be supported with LSF due to LSC regulations.

While 73% of learners in receipt of LSF in 2008/09 had either partially or fully completed their main course of study, the monitoring of performance by the LSF Committee in relation to retention and achievement had been complicated by the lack of agreed national benchmark data.

Following discussion it was suggested and agreed that next year's report should include information on the take up of LSF by ethnic minority groups and its impact on retention and achievement.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

At this point Mr Jones left the meeting

430.0 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 2009 on course and cross-College support facilities and services. Student ratings for 29 questions were above the national average compared to 27 in the previous year with the majority of rankings in the upper quartile. In terms of 'distance travelled' ratings for 25 questions had risen by double figures over the last four years with 15 significant positive one-year results.

Members welcomed the report, whilst noting the actions taken and planned by College Management to address issues where the College's ratings fell below the national average, particularly in relation to IT facilities for learners.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

431.0 STAFF ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr Baker presented a report which summarised the results of the annual staff questionnaire conducted in the summer term 2009. 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 significant improvement in 53 out of 82 questions. The staff rating for the Governing Body being in touch with the College was in the upper quartile nationally at 18% above the national average.

While staff ratings for some questions had fallen compared to the previous year, the broad trend remained positive with ratings for the majority of questions in the first or second quartile.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

432.0 NATIONAL BENCHMARKING AND RANKING REPORTS ON LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRES

Mr Baker summarised the results of the National Benchmark Report which encompassed the results of all learner surveys conducted in 2008/09. Ratings for 75 questions were in the upper quartile (compared to 73 last year) with the College's results in first place for 7 questions compared to 3 in the previous year.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

433.0 NATIONAL BENCHMARKING AND RANKING REPORTS ON STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES

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 11% of the remaining questions had ratings which were below the national average.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

Mr G Mason left the meeting during discussion on the following item of business

434.0 SUMMER EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report which analysed examination results for full-time courses in Summer 2009 in comparison to results over the previous three years. Pass rates for vocational qualifications were at least as good as in 2008 with BTEC National Diplomas achieving an increase in pass rates and an improvement in high grades. While pass rates for A levels were strong, results for AS subjects were disappointing and showed a decline from 2008, partly as a result of revised subject specifications.

As part of its strategy to improve achievement the College was taking part in the Collegiate Key Stage 5 quality improvement project and reviewing its entry requirements for AS/A level programmes.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

435.0 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 2005/06 to 2008/09. The College's overall full-time in-year retention rate for 2008/09 was 89%, 2% higher than for 2007/08. In-year retention on part-time courses was generally high at 94% overall, the same as in the previous year.

The College's strategies to improve retention and achievement had been further developed and relaunched as the 'Going for Gold' initiative. Actions planned included a further telephone survey of early leavers in an attempt to establish any patterns in the reasons for withdrawals.

Following discussion the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) outlined actions taken and planned to address retention issues in HE provision.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

436.0 LEARNER ATTENDANCE

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented a report on attendance figures for 2004/05 to 2008/09. The overall College attendance rate in 2008/09 was 88%, 1% above that of the previous year and in line with OfSTED's assessment of excellent as reflected in recent inspection reports.

Following discussion the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) confirmed that a learner whose absence is authorised by the College is classed as being in attendance.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

437.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the Annual Report of the Equality and Diversity Committee in 2008/09. Key activities had included presentations on different faiths and cultural backgrounds and the ongoing review of College policies/procedures in response to legislative changes in respect of Equality and Diversity.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

438.0 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 2008/09. The report confirmed the College's successful partnership with the University and highlighted the development of new HE courses and the achievement of increased recruitment.

It was RESOLVED:

that the report be received.

439.0 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 1 March 2010 at 5.30 pm.