

## Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting

Held Tuesday 23 November 2021

**Present** Lance Hanson (*Chair*), David Allen, Andy Dobson (*Principal*), Joanne Rouse and Jonah Woodley

**In attendance** Joanne Williams (*Director of Learning and Teaching*)  
Gail Rothnie (*Governor*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies were provided on behalf of Zubeda Limbada.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	There were none.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 15 June 2021 and Matters Arising</b>	<i>Ap</i>
	<p>The minutes of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting held 15 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Under Matters Arising:</p> <p>Regarding the actions which remained outstanding from the meeting held in March 2021:</p> <p>3a, College targets were addressed at the Corporation and were provided for the current meeting. Item closed.</p> <p>4a, Student Performance and Progress Report to include numbers in addition to percentages across three years. Pending.</p> <p>6a, Reporting on Equality and Diversity being addressed through revised governance review documents. Pending approval or revised governance framework documents.</p> <p>9a Update report on Apprenticeships was addressed under the agenda. Item closed.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Update on Student Enrolments against contract - In-year 2021/2022 Data</b>	<i>M</i>
	<p>Members noted that A Level enrolment had increased significantly and that the College may qualify for in-year growth funding. Conversely meeting the Adult Education contract continued to be challenging.</p> <p>Joanne Williams highlighted where there had been a slight reduction in some course areas.</p> <p>Joanne Williams and Andy Dobson explained that the College was undertaking a range of activities to market courses for January enrolment. However, additional difficulties had arisen in gaining contract funding for courses outside the reported plan as provided for the West Midlands Combined Authority. The College wished to be responsive to additional opportunities to meet identified course needs in the locality and continued to correspond with the WMCA.</p> <p>Members asked questions about staff recruitment. Andy Dobson responded that the College was trying to recruit additional teachers for</p>	

	<p>whom the College was currently not funded. Additionally, there were some areas where recruitment was persistently challenging, and the College had to deploy a range of actions, including use of sessional staff. The pay differential between college and school teaching staff remained a disadvantage.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Student Performance Report 2020/2021 (including retention, achievement, attendance and destinations)</b></p>	<i>M</i>
	<p>Members noted the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students and in how colleges could consider student data and take action to improve areas of challenge across retention, attendance and achievement.</p> <p>In discussing the previous year review members asked a range of questions pertinent to the current year, including if there was correlation between staff recruitment and any course retention dips and if students not continuing with apprenticeships were in danger of falling into the NEETs category.</p> <p>Joanne Williams reported that while there were no systemic issues, strategies such as early intervention were being deployed. Members discussed lower retention based on a range of individual issues, including mental health, challenges to attendance including the impact of increased assessments, and the effort to enthuse students for Maths resits and Functional Skills and to get them to attend lessons and exams.</p> <p>Members also discussed achievement reported against qualification and the value of being able to do a deeper dive in subject areas.</p> <p>Positive Higher Education destinations were also noted, particularly that students now seemed to be looking forward to this.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Value Added Report for 2020/2021</b></p>	<i>M</i>
	<p>Members considered the value-added data with a degree of caution based on the variability of teacher assessed grades. The trend for A Level was positive but work on higher grade achievement was still needed.</p> <p>In response to questions Andy Dobson confirmed that Ofsted are less data driven and more focused on the student experience seen in the classroom.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Review of Level 3 Qualifications</b></p>	<i>M</i>
	<p>Joanne Williams reported that there had been two announcements with impact on Level 3 qualifications; that students would no longer have to pass English and Maths qualifications to complete a T Level (possibly helping inclusivity) and that BTEC qualifications would not be defunded for the next year.</p> <p>Members asked if the change on Maths and English would impact curriculum. Joanne Williams explained that the College would still encourage students with English and Maths qualifications which remained very much needed as part of wider studies.</p> <p>Members raised questions and debated the incomprehensible challenge of providing T Level work placements in relation to the Government's</p>	

	targeted course levels, and that the intent to remove BTEC's with any overlap with a T Level remained. The report was received.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Review of Courses Under Notice</b>	<i>M</i>
	Members monitored the movement and basis of courses under notice. A report on ESOL would be brought back to the Committee following curriculum areas review. The report was received.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Update Report on Apprenticeships</b>	<i>M</i>
	Joanne Williams reported on the slowly improving position regarding apprenticeships. A further external review was due in January 2022. Andy Dobson noted a more focused approach to recruitment including growth in the Colleges' areas of specialism. Members asked about the anticipated 72% level of achievement for 2021/2022. Joanne Williams noted that this compared well with the national rate, which remains low. The report was received.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Current year 2021/2022 – Annual Plan Actions/Targets</b>	<i>M</i>
	The current year targets were noted with performance being reported in March 2022. Members asked about progress in working with other Black Country Colleges, to meet the delivery targets of the Skills Accelerator Project. Andy Dobson outlined a successful bid with a letter of intent of funding received.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Pastoral Report (incorporating Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Wellbeing)</b>	<i>M</i>
	Members discussed the high proportion of safeguarding concerns being received daily, noting that staff and students were made aware of how to and structures for reporting. Regarding the increase in sexual abuse concerns, members debated in depth the approach to effectively educating learners, particularly across diverse cohorts. This recognised complexities in different student behaviours and perceptions and sometimes unacceptable behaviour. Several considerations across tutorials and lessons and the College Safe Week, including staff training and delivery by experts were raised. Learning support was working well and outcomes for students with Education Health Care Plans in place were positive, with the exception of English and Maths which needed further support. Questions were also raised on careers and destinations reporting further to the pastoral report. Following discussion of the range of areas covered in the report it was agreed that future invitations to managers to report to the Committee may be useful. The report was noted.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Student Complaints Analysis Report</b>	<i>M</i>

		Members received and raised questions of clarification on the analysis of complaints for the previous year. This tested comparison with previous years and specific outcomes. Andy Dobson explained that future reporting would be categorised.	
		The report was noted and would be provided for the Corporation	
<b>13</b>			
	<b>13.1</b>	<b>Progress Report on Quality Improvement Plan for 2020/2021 – (previous year)</b>	<i>M</i>
		Members received the final report against the previous year's Quality Improvement Plan. Attendance and achievement of high grades remained areas of work. The report was received.	
	<b>13.2</b>	<b>SAR 2020/2021</b>	<i>R/C</i>
		Joanne Williams reported on the findings of the self-assessment review for 2020/2021 and explained the termly quality review cycle through Curriculum Area Review meetings. Overall grading was still Good with some Outstanding provision. Functional Skills required improvement and Apprenticeships required further development. Outstanding areas were distinguished by high pass rates, outstanding employer engagement and excellent progression to employment or higher education.  The report supported that the curriculum is relevant, and both meets priorities and offers enrichment, teachers are knowledgeable, and students are enthused and engage with learning.  Areas on which to focus included the T Level Curriculum, growth by faculty, ESOL, Apprenticeships, English and Maths Resits.  Members discussed the setting of challenging targets and working with staff to challenge and stretch higher ability students. In the context of student experience being different to the previous two exam years, greater emphasis on exam questions had been noticed and that mock exams might be stressful. Impact regarding mock exams was not yet known.  Further discussion recognised the challenges of target setting and measuring progress based on potentially inflated previously assessed grades.  Members also discussed strategies to address maths anxiety and sharing strategies across different subject areas.	
		The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended that the College Self-Assessment Report be provided for Corporation adoption.	
	<b>13.3</b>	<b>Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022 (current year)</b>	<i>R/C</i>
		Members considered the new Quality Improvement Plan. Joanne Williams explained the challenges in ESOL provision and retaining students on long level courses. Providing a range of short qualification could enable better access and success.	

		The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended that the Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022 be provided for the Corporation acceptance subject to minor adjustments.	
	13.4	<b>Higher Education Self-Assessment Report</b>	R/C
		Members received the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report and noted the completed actions, the student voice responses, and the improvement plan for 2021/2022. Questions were asked and responded to on variable response rates to module evaluations and the range of student satisfaction reviews.	
		The Students Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended that the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report be provided for Corporation acceptance.	
14		<b>Any Other Business</b> Members were informed of Lance Hanson's retirement from the Corporation and thanked him for his work as a governor and as Chair of the Students, Curriculum and Quality Committee.	
15		<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> The next meeting is scheduled for 15 March 2022.	

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

#### Key

A	Approve
C	Consider
M	Monitor
R	Receive
R/C	Recommend to Corporation

JWi	Joanne Williams
JSu	Jenny Sunter

ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETINGS		
<b><i>Actions from the meeting held 17 November 2020</i></b>		
<b>Action 14a</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> Joanne Williams proposed that apprenticeships and adult provision be addressed specifically in March and June meetings of the Committee, respectively. <i>Achieved. /Closed.</i>	JWi March 21 June 21
<b><i>Actions from the meeting held 16 March 2021</i></b>		
<b>Action 3a</b>	<b>The minutes of the meeting held 17 November 2020</b> The Clerk also noted that with regard to reporting on Current Year targets under item 9, that this item be included in the June Committee agenda. <i>Update: These will now be provided to Corporation as part of all College targets. Closed November 2021.</i>	June 21
<b>Action 4a</b>	<b>Student Performance and Progress Report</b>	<del>June 21</del>

	Members asked questions about data provision. It was recognised that data across cohorts impacted by the pandemic could not be viewed as normal, and therefore it was hard to extract patterns or trends, however, reports could be adapted to include numbers in addition to percentages across three years.	September 21
<b>Action 6a</b>	<b>Pastoral Report</b> It was agreed that consideration would be given to reporting on equality and diversity.	21/22 Cycle
<b>Action 9a</b>	<b>Report on Apprenticeships</b> Members noted the large number of actions and how this related positively to close support, management and oversight of the area. It was agreed that the report would be returned to the Committee for monitoring. Closed November 2021.	<del>June 21</del> September 21