

# EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

<b>Present</b>	Emma Webber Dave Underwood John Bunting Elaine Hobson James Jefferson Craig Marshall Martin Owen	Chair Vice Chair
<b>Observing</b>	Bindu Arjoon Steph Barnard	
<b>Apologies</b>	Richard Atkins Vicki Carah Mark Overton Tim Tamblyn	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Barbara Sweeney John Laramy <i>Items 5.1 &amp; 6.1 only</i> Martina Esser <i>Item 7 only</i> Gemma Noble <i>Items 5, 6 &amp; 7 only</i> Julie Skinner	Clerk to the Corporation Vice Principal Quality Manager Head of HR Assistant Principal

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.** Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first meeting of the academic year. She particularly welcomed John Bunting and James Jefferson, 16-18 Student Governor, to their first meeting. She also welcomed Bindu Arjoon who was attending as an observer, and Steph Barnard who had taken up the post of PA to the Clerk.

The Chair updated the Committee that the 19+ Student Governor post was still vacant. After two attempts, nobody had come forward to stand and at its meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the Search and Governance Committee decided that it was important for the voice of the 19+ learner to be heard and therefore recommended that the College continue to seek a student governor from this constituency.

The Chair confirmed that in order to expedite the significant increase in committee business a new style of agenda had been introduced, with greater use of the "for Information" section. However in order to provide appropriate scrutiny of papers it was important that Members of the Committee read reports in advance, and alerted the Clerk if they wished to raise any points.

Apologies were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

## 2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

## 3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Feedback from QRR – Deferred to the next meeting

3.2 Safeguarding Committee

It was confirmed that in addition to the attendance of the Safeguarding Governor, other Governors would be welcome to attend meetings as observers.

3.3 Learning Strategy

John Laramy, Vice Principal, confirmed that following recommendations from this Committee, amendments had been made to the style and content of the strategy. With the title "Generation Exe Strategy", the focus was on supporting innovation following the Ofsted inspection, promoting monitoring and assessment as drivers of performance, and the engagement of learners to ensure continuing challenge. Whilst it was important for the style of the document to be innovative, it must retain its clarity for the target stakeholders. The Committee commended the Strategy and agreed to

**Recommend the Generation Exe Strategy to the Board on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

*Vote: Unanimous.*

## 4. **Quality Assurance**

4.1 Exeter College results 2014

- A level and IB
- Success Rates

The report was received and John confirmed that results were changing daily and that the College must submit its final outcome to the funding body by the 24<sup>th</sup> October, which was significantly earlier in the academic year than previously. He tabled papers providing the latest data by level

for 16-18 and 19+ learners. He confirmed the definitions of short, very short and long courses, which was the key indicator. Level one, two and three for 16-18 data showed that the College was, at this stage, well above the national average. Turning to level three excluding A levels, which pertained predominately to BTEC, these had probably stabilised following a three year increasing trend. Previously BTEC's were two year courses, but these have now, in the main, reduced to one year and there has been an increase in enrolments and a positive impact on student outcomes.

All long success rates were strong, with a three year increasing trend. Whilst short results were good, there was concern that functional skills may not reach the performance level of the previous year. In 2013/14, all learners who had not achieved level two Maths and English were required to study to this level and the targets were not likely to be achieved, either locally or nationally. Functional skills were known to require an ongoing strategy of support, as confirmed by internal observations. Significant growth in student numbers and the challenge of predicting the need also impacted. However the challenge was to improve in two years the legacy of many years of failure, for some students, in these subjects.

AS Level success rates remained stable at around 83%. The impact of C grade entry requirements and the staffing profile within subjects was challenged by the Committee. Would higher entry grades and an increased proportion of full-time lecturers lead to improved results? The phased introduction of two year linear A levels was seen as a retrograde step, as assessment after year one was lost. There was a need for a strategic review to consider continuity of staff and consistency of teaching learning and assessment across two years. It was important to support the staff in the relevant subjects. The Committee therefore requested a further report, including the impact on linear A levels, at its February meeting.

BHS

The Committee asked how the results related to national data. John confirmed that the majority of data lines were likely to be performing at a level which placed them in the top 10% of colleges, but this could only be confirmed when all results were in.

Turning to 19+, data was volatile, with stunning results in some areas. At levels one and two, because of small numbers of students, enrolment had a significant impact on outcomes.

John confirmed the success of Access to HE and that given the 19+ outcomes had been an area of weakness at the 2007/08 Ofsted Inspection, there had been significant and sustained improvement.

Finally John confirmed that apprenticeship results were above the

national average for both overall and timely. However the timely data of one sub-contractor had had a negative impact.

The Committee commended both staff and the students for all their hard work in achieving these results.

**The Committee noted the report.**

4.2 Intensive Care Update

The report was received and John confirmed that three of the four subjects in intensive care for 2013-14 had made significant progress and had left the process. He alerted the Committee to two new areas requiring scrutiny in addition to the remaining subject from last year. The Chair reminded the Committee that it was a supportive process and had had a very positive impact on outcomes. The Committee asked whether a new faculty would benefit from the process but John updated the Committee on the management structures and confirmed that cultural changes need to be made. However it was possible that subjects within a faculty rather than the whole faculty might benefit from the process in the future.

**The Committee noted the report**

4.3 Aplus Update

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

4.4 Student Recruitment Update

The tabled confidential report was received and John confirmed that despite a 4.6% demographic downturn numbers had grown, due to progression to the second year following significant growth in first year numbers last year. The number of first year learners in 2014/15 would necessitate effective recruitment in 2015/16 to sustain learner numbers, and the promotion of new facilities would support marketing. Against a national trend, HE enrolment was up. However recruitment to Apprenticeships was too early to confirm.

The capacity of faculties was challenged and it was important to ensure that management structures were fit for purpose. This would need to be reviewed.

The Committee discussed recruitment as demographics fell. Internal progression was essential, as schools worked to retain year 11 students, and there had been a restructure of student services, with a new progression post created. In addition, Faculty Heads and the Senior Curriculum Group also recognised that recruitment was key.

**The Committee noted the report.**

*Martina Esser, Head of Quality, joined the meeting for items 5 and 6 only. Julie Skinner, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for items 5, 6 and 7.*

## 5. **Responsiveness**

### 5.1 College's Feedback Systems

The report was received and Martina confirmed that she had included additional detail requested by the Committee. The increase in complaints was due to better recording and whilst the majority were dealt with at a grass roots level, the People and Performance Department had encouraged faculties to be more active in logging both complaints and compliments and the numbers were evenly spread across the College.

The Committee commended the report and the speedy resolution of complaints and agreed to

#### **Note the report**

## 6. **Teaching and Learning**

### 6.1 External and Internal Verification Update for 2013-2014

The report was received and Martina highlighted the two key issues. There had been an increase in the number of verification exercises due to changes in the BTEC processes. Previously there had been sampling on a need to know basis, but now there was sampling verification for everything. There were four blocked subjects which were released after a second round of sampling. The Quality Review and Development Visit had been positive and reported that all quality processes were in place and effective.

There was discussion on the role of Lead Internal Verifiers (Lead IVs). New changes in systems and increased devolvement to colleges by the awarding bodies meant that there were capacity issues. Turnover was high for this role, but the staff involved were provided with some remission from teaching. Succession planning was difficult but most progressed to Lead IVs from Internal Verifiers and went on to become Improvement Practitioners and deputy Heads of Faculty. The Committee commended the work of the department and agreed to

#### **Note the report.**

*Gemma Noble, head of HR joined the meeting for Item 7*

## 7. **Human Resources (HR)**

### 7.1 HR Update

The report was received and taken as read and Gemma confirmed that the format was that of the previous year, with the addition of disability data as requested by the Committee.

The Committee discussed turnover of staff which was commendably low. However there was an optimal point as some turnover was desirable. Sickness was also very low, attributed to effective internal occupational health.

Gemma clarified the difference between Associate Lecturers and Lecturer A's, who were a hybrid of technicians who also undertook some teaching. Both were often an entry point for the profession. She also explained the anomaly of lecturers working across departments which appeared to affect departmental head counts. The balance of full time staff, for continuity, versus the flexibility of part time staff meant that a balance was important.

The Committee recognised the improvement in HR over the years and thanked all concerned, and agreed to

**Note the report.**

7.2 HR Policies

The report was received and Gemma updated the Committee on the changes to the received HR Policies, which were the only ones for which approval was required in 2014/15. The Committee asked if the interests of carers was included in the Health and Wellbeing Policy and was assured that this was covered in the Special Leave Procedure which was referenced in the policy.

**The Committee agreed to Approve the following:**

- a) Recruitment and Selection Procedure**
- b) Substance Misuse Procedure**
- c) Health and Wellbeing Policy**

BHS

*Vote: Unanimous*

8. **Holistic**

Student Experience

- Learner Voice Strategy

The report was received and John updated the Committee on the changes made to the structure of the department for Safeguarding, Tutoring Equality and Wellbeing to mitigate capacity issues. A new post had been created to lead on the student experience to provide synergy between the Student Representative Committee, Learner Voice and enrichment. There were also new leaders on progression and wellbeing,

and greater clarity in the management structure. The Committee requested a report and attendance at the Committee meeting by the new post holders in February.

BHS

John confirmed that existing processes to engage with learners would continue, particularly the twice yearly Learner Voice meetings. The voice of the learner was a powerful marketing tool and it was proposed that representatives from the Student Representative Committee and Learner Voice be invited to the Board Residential with a theme of marketing.

BHS

### **The Committee noted the report**

#### **9. Committee Self-Assessment**

The report, including a draft self-assessment report (SAR) for the Committee, was received. Following discussion and amendment the Committee agreed, subject to two amendments

**To recommend that the SAR be incorporated into the Board's SAR and presented to the Quality and Standards Committee for subsequent recommendation to the Board.**

BHS

#### **10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**The following reports were received and noted:**

10.1 Learning Strategy – **Resolved to recommend to the Board in item 3.3**

10.2 Approach to Stakeholders' Surveys - **Noted**

10.3 Teaching and Learning Observation Strategy 2014-2015

Julie Skinner confirmed that currently staff were given two weeks' notice and a three day window when internal inspection might occur. The proposal was to reduce this to two days' notice and a two day window. There was discussion on reducing this further to a one day window, given the significant amount of internal and external observations endured by staff over the past few years. However the Committee agreed that it was important to maintain standards following Ofsted and to maintain the focus on making sure that we still do what is needed to be a grade 1 college.

**The Committee agreed to Approve the Teaching and Learning Observation Strategy 2014-15**

*Vote: Unanimous*

10.4 Internal Inspection Strategy and Year Plan 2014-2015 **Noted**

10.5 QIP Update **Noted**

10.6 Safeguarding meeting – Minutes **Noted**

- 10.7 HR Update on Teaching Qualifications **Noted**
- 10.8 Key Performance Indicators **Noted**
- 10.9 Committee Risk Register **Noted**

**11. Dates of next meetings**

Monday	8	December	2014
Monday	9	February	2015
Monday	27	April	2015
Tuesday	8	June	2015