

Approved

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th June 2016 in the Board Room, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	Dave Underwood Bindu Arjoon John Laramy John Bunting Elaine Hobson Craig Marshall Martin Owen Emma Webber	Chair
Observers	Philip Bostock Chris Hoar	
Apologies	Abbie Lawless	
In Attendance	Barbara Sweeney Julie Skinner <i>Item 6 only</i> Gemma Noble <i>Item 5 only</i> Megan Snell	Clerk to the Corporation Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience Head of People Deputy Head, Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Student Experience

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

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting, including those attending as observers. He particularly welcomed Julie Skinner, as the new Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience.

Apologies were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2016, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

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3. **Matters arising**

3.1 **Reach Academy**

Responding to a question on progression at the last meeting, Julie Skinner, Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience, confirmed that out of the 13 students who had been offered places at Oxbridge in 2015, ten were from the REACH Academy (77%). Therefore, whilst the majority, Oxbridge entry was not exclusive to the Academy.

Julie confirmed that REACH was not elitist and that the programme was advertised to the whole student body through Information Advice and Guidance at enrolment, as well as during College Advisory Team visits to schools. However, entry was via a selection process, and it was more likely that to attract those with strong soft skills. The Principal and Assistant Principal (Sixth Form) had recently visited Exeter College Oxford and noted that this College prepared students well for the transition.

The Chair commended the performance of REACH Academy students at recent presentations to the Met Office. He recommended that benchmarking be used to evaluate how the College compared with other providers in outcomes for gifted and talented students.

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3.2 **Quality and Resources Review Update**

Julie confirmed that Sarah Brampton from the Business Services Committee would attend a session of the next Quality and Resource Review Days in June 2016. The style of reviews had changed and was now more faculty led, with Heads of Faculty making initial presentations to demonstrate self-awareness of key issues.

4. **Risk register**

The revised Risk Register was received and the Chair invited Governors to review each risk for which the Committee was responsible. The narrative describing the risk and mitigations for each were considered.

Recommendations were made, when the register is next reviewed, where the risk description needed to be expanded or clarified. No changes were recommended to the risk ratings.

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Turning to specific risks, the Principal confirmed that the Quality Improvement Plan was high level, providing strategic oversight. Whilst it was important to remain agile, it was at an operational level, through the Quality and Resource Reviews, that flexibility was demonstrated. The Committee was assured that recruitment practice was efficient to attract the best candidates to fill vacancies.

The Committee agreed to

a) Note the report

b) Accept the recommended risk ratings

c) Recommend changes in narrative for agreed risks to provide greater clarity

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5. **Teaching and Learning**

Megan Snell, Deputy Head, Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Student Experience, joined the meeting for item 5 only.

5.1 Learner Voice

The report was received and Megan highlighted the key issues. She confirmed the role of tutor reps within faculties. The significance of the role was recognised and included in students' Records of Achievement and, in 2015/16, there had been a record number of tutor reps. All faculties were represented at the cross College Learner Voice events, which provided one of many opportunities for the Learner Voice to be heard, and there was an effective process for feedback to the whole student body via the bulletin, which had a wide reach including apprentices.

Megan confirmed the strong link between the Student Representative Committee (SRC) and the Learner Voice. Future developments included working with lead tutors and weekly involvement in faculty meetings to ensure more direct feedback. Two new officer posts had been created to represent HE and Apprenticeship learners. The SRC had built up reserves which were being used to support learners, invaluable at a time when funding was challenging.

The Chair commended the involvement of students during the recent recruitment to senior posts. Candidates had acknowledged the strength of the Learner Voice in the College.

The Committee agreed to

Note the report.

5.2 Success of the College Charity 2015-2016

The report was received and Megan confirmed that the original target of £6,000 had been based on last year's fundraising. However this year the amount raised for the College's chosen charity, Teenage Cancer Trust (with 10% going to the local charity FORCE) had exceeded all expectations and was currently £13,000, to which every Faculty had contributed and with more events planned.

The process for choosing the College Charity of the year had changed, with all students able to nominate a charity and a shortlist of ten chosen by the SRC and put out to a vote by the whole student body. In 2016/17 the College would support a local charity, Devon Air Ambulance.

The Committee considered how to celebrate such a positive story, which

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reflected so well on the students. Cross College communications already made frequent reference to the successful fundraising and there was the potential for media coverage. The Principal would include it in his end of year talks and celebrations.

The Committee commended the success of fundraising for the College Charity 2015-16 and noted the report.

5.3 Youth Social Action

The report was received. Ofsted had visited, with two working days' notice, to look at best practice within the College of how students engaged in Social Action. There was evidence of embedding in the curriculum, for example, creative writing providing an opportunity to engage with the community. Social Action also formed part of the tutorial programme. Enrichment activities promoted volunteering placements and students frequently continued after the completion of placements.

Social Action had a positive impact on employability skills. The Committee commended the report at a time when funding challenges had resulted in a decline in enrichment activities in many colleges, and recommended publicising such a positive message.

The Committee noted the report.

Gemma Noble, Head of People joined the meeting for item 6 only

6. **HR Policies**

The report was received and Gemma updated the Committee on the changes to the received HR Policies.

Subject to minor amendments to reflect the new Senior Leadership Team structure, the Committee agreed to approve the following policies:

- a) Suspension and Dismissal**
- b) Capability**
- c) Special Leave**

Vote: Unanimous

7. **Quality Assurance**

7.1 **Balanced Score Card**

The report was received and Julie reminded Governors that at its last meeting it had considered proposals for a balanced score card to identify high level outcomes and underlying metrics to support the Committee in monitoring progress. A high level balanced score card provided end of year targets focusing on the most important issues to help the College remain outstanding. The second provided key indicators to support

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monitoring in-year, and which should be considered by the Committee circa three times a year.

The Committee commended its simplicity. Progression metrics would develop over a number of years and support the change of focus to value added. In a time of changing government priorities, the Principal cautioned that if additional criteria were added the score card could become unruly, and he recommended that there should be a 'one in, one out' principle and that all metrics should support the long term priorities of the College.

In the light of earlier items on student experience, it was noted that the proposed metrics were focussed on quality of education. Was there a need for a complementary score card to monitor student engagement? Julie confirmed that programmes of study included enrichment and that therefore student experience was inherent in the metrics. However it would be possible to drill down to evaluate other aspects such as soft skills. The new Vice Principal role combining Standards and Student Experience demonstrated recognition of this vital link.

The Committee agreed to

a) Note the report

b) Recommend an update at its next meeting in September 2016.

7.2 Retention, attendance and targets

The report was received and Julie highlighted the key issues in the narrative which provided background to the data. In the main it was a positive picture. However the impact of attendance in maths and English had impacted on the overall attendance outcomes. This was a national issue, and some colleges extracted maths and English attendance from overall data. Nevertheless, the College's maths and English attendance data was better than for many providers. New initiatives were being explored and the College was seen by many as a beacon of best practice.

Although funding would be withheld in the following year if students were not enrolled on maths and English courses, Governors were assured that maths and English attendance did not impact on funding as the College could demonstrate that it had enrolled learners and was providing teaching sessions. However there was a moral obligation to ensure students attended and achieved, and the full Board would receive an update at its next meeting on 6th July 2016 on proposals to improve attendance in maths and English.

As a national issue, and given the low motivation of learners and, in some cases, their parents, the Committee pondered whether the mandatory requirement might be dropped. However, it was unlikely that this would

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be changed after the first year. Governors asked about the wider impact, on school targets and sixth forms entry requirements. The initiative had also resulted in a national shortage of maths and English teachers.

The Committee noted the report.

7.3 Intensive Care update

The report was received and Julie updated the Committee on each of the subjects in the intensive care process and their progress.

The Committee noted the report

7.4 Higher Education Review Update

The report and updated Higher Education Review Action were received and considered. Julie confirmed that the interim HE Manager had been appointed on a permanent contract and would be a member of the College Leadership Team. As a significant funding stream, the College's HE offer had been developed over the past few years, with operational as well as strategic working groups, and a focus on consistency in quality assurance, given the number of different awarding bodies. Bureaucracy was significant, and there was the corresponding administrative burden.

HE learners needed to be considered as consumers, and with the lack of a dedicated HE centre, strong branding and effective student engagement were essential. A dedicated student engagement officer would support this. Nationally, recruitment to FE in HE was down and the College had adopted a marketing strategy to reinforce the vocational aspect of its degrees. Internal progression was vital.

The Principal confirmed that funding was in-year, as opposed to lagged. Tuition fees would be reviewed, but any increase would be subject to complying with value for money criteria and demonstrating spend per student.

The Committee noted the report.

8. **Minutes/ reports for information**

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

8.1 Self-Assessment Process

The Committee agreed to approve the process, unchanged from 2015-16.

8.2 Safeguarding meeting – 6th May 2016 (draft)

The safeguarding Governor confirmed that the College was seen as at the leading edge. The annual Prevent report was deferred to the September meeting so that outcomes for the academic year could be included.

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8.3 Internal Inspection Report BIT

Julie commended the strong inspection for the Business and IT Faculty to the Committee. It had been an outstanding result.

8.4 QIP update

The Principal confirmed that whilst there was good progress against most actions, the exception was in the mandatory wearing of lanyards by students. The Committee noted the rationale for the rule: to support the safeguarding agenda, but acknowledged that this was not perceived as critical by students. With students travelling across sites, there was no appetite to be seen wearing the lanyards out of College.

8.5 HR Update on Teaching Staff Qualifications

Received and noted.

8.6 Items to take to Board

The Committee reviewed the agenda and agreed on the items to be reported to the Board at its next meeting on 6th July 2016.

8.7 Items for next meeting

The Committee reviewed the cycle of business for the September meeting and agreed that, in addition, there should be a Prevent update and item on the Balanced Score Card.

9. **Dates of meetings for 2016-17**

19	Sept	2016
5	Dec	2016
6	Feb	2017
27	Mar	2017
5	June	2017