

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday 27th November 2019 at 15.30**

Present: Mrs. Sally Bromley (Principal), Ms Lisa Karandeja (Student Governor), Dr Grant Powell (Governor), Mrs Helen Smith, Mrs Clare Ruaux (Staff Governor), Dr David Skipp (Chair of Governors), Mr Dominic Wakefield (Parent Governor)

Apologies received: Ms Emily Leddy (Student Governor)

In attendance: Ms Naomi Lask (agenda item 5/ min. 4), Mr James Gordon (Agenda item 6/ min 5), Mr Dan Lodge (Vice Principal – Quality and Curriculum), Ms Andrea John (Vice Principal – Student Support), Mr. Steve Martell (Deputy Principal), Ms N Whitehead (Clerk)

Chair: Dr David Skipp

The Chair welcomed new members of the Committee, agreed the consent item and focus on the Governance QIP.

1. **Declarations of interest:** There were no declarations of interest.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2019** were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**

Item 5: The Deputy Principal (DP) confirmed that the additions had been made to the Admissions Policy.

4. **Policies and procedures**

Paper: Student Voice Policy, RCU Constitution, Staff and student consultation procedures

The Vice Principal (Student Support) explained that the three complementary documents on the agenda reflected the College's commitment to ensuring that the students, as the key stakeholders in the College, had a voice in how they might be best served. The **key changes to the Student Voice Policy** on this occasion **reflected the:**

- **Latest Ofsted (EIF) framework 2019** including a requirement for effective engagement with students;
- **Increased interaction between RCU members, governors and SMT on strategic issues** including staff recruitment;
- Regular **reporting on student feedback** (most particularly on the Q&C's summer agenda).

The **RCU Constitution** also reflected increased RCU interaction with SMT as well as **changes in voting processes and increased emphasis on wellbeing and charitable efforts.** In response to questions, the RCU Manager explained that the inclusion of social and charitable activities was more accurate than the former inclusion of 'cultural' although RCU officers did attend the E&D Committee meeting and report regularly on its discussions. The **RCU Officer/ SMT pairings on a range of topics including academic and environmental issues had been most effective and complemented the student governor roles.**

The Clerk reported that **changes to the consultation procedures were minimal** reflecting changes in College committee structures and consultation practice and had been endorsed by the F&GP Committee.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the Student Voice Policy (as a consent item) at their next meeting in December

Resolved: The Q&C Committee approved the changes to the RCU Constitution

5. Curriculum update

Paper: T Levels update, The Collyer's Transition Programme

- The VP (Q&C) explained that **T Levels and the Transition programme were at the heart of strategic aim 1** in the new Curriculum Strategy 2020-25 in **offering a broad and balanced choice of study programme encompassing academic, vocational and technical courses**. Both would **launch in September 2020** as new provision for the college, forming part of DfE-led initiatives which would be **funded in-year during 2020/21**. **T levels had also attracted significant additional funding**: Early Adopter Development Funding (EADF) in 2019/20 (£85K), a Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant to support the new Digihub (£206k) and a Specialist Equipment Allocation of £35K.

- **T Levels**: Members noted that the **election purdah had silenced significant national promotion of T levels** but that the **College was busy informing parents and students** (with interviews for the next cohort in the New Year the best opportunity) as well as **continuing to address capacity development for industry placements**. Currently **promotion of placements was challenging** in that **students in the pilot phase were still on a full timetable**. There would also be **no specification or content details until March 2020** which limited the College's ability to plan staff deployment and schemes of work and discuss the courses' potential application in the work place. A perceived lack of accreditation by universities was also a disincentive. **15 placements had been identified for 15 learners for 'Digital'** for c. 40 days for each placement but there was a **target of 39 for the Capacity Development Fund**.

Members asked questions about the scope for **employer** involvement in selection and the **availability of guidance** which was not however expected for the capacity development phase. Two members had been involved in the pilots and/or were considering taking students and, having already provided some feedback, suggested that **a focus group to facilitate two-way communication on issues such as age and payment might be useful**. This would be particularly valuable when targeting SMEs (most prevalent in the area) who might have less experience of student placements. *(Action: VP to raise with RLR to follow-up).*

Applications for September 2020 had only recently opened so **a clearer picture of interest in the new course would be available for the next meeting**.

- **Transition programme**: The Director of the Business Faculty explained that the College had been consulting on and **planning redesigned L2 provision as part of a DfE trial of a new 'Transition offer'**. The DfE approach fitted well with the College's own concerns about the size of the L2 cohort and that too much time was spent on **content at the expense of softer studentship skills**. The structure would therefore include a BTEC first award (of one GCSE equivalent), an enhanced 'Tutor Plus' session in Block 2, materials for which were being developed in-house, and more work experience in Block 3 with scope on Day 5 for additional work-related learning. The evidence suggested that part-time work or volunteering made a marked difference in confidence and communication skills. The College was also **looking at how to track and demonstrate the work-based skills acquired in addition to the BTEC qualification**. A bid had been made to the Mercers' Company to help fund staff provision in organising work placements.

Members asked about the funding implications of a three-year programme, with students typically 19 in their third year **and the type of study programme to be followed** at Level 3 which was most likely to be a vocational or mixed programme. Those going into T levels would be better prepared by the previous work experience. Whilst some would inevitably leave at the end of the first year, it was **hoped that many would stay** or at least follow a well-chosen path building on their Year 1 experience. **Advice and guidance on progression would be available as part of the Year 1 preparations.**

Members thanked the VP and DoF for their curriculum update.

6. Examinations Review of Marking Report

Paper: Summary of enquiries about results

The Principal reported on the College's actions on exam marking following previous discussion with governors. The Vice Principal had **targeted students who had underachieved particularly at the top grades and encouraged Heads of Subject to contact students to request reviews of marking.**

There had been 40 requests for a Priority Review of Marking (30 in 2018, 14 in 2017) for those students for whom their university place depended on their A level grades. 10 students had been upgraded by 1 grade (6 in 2018, 4 in 2017) and these students were subsequently accepted by their first choice universities.

There had been 167 requests for Normal Review of Marking at A level (112 in 2018, 73 in 2017). 44 students had been upgraded by 1 grade (25 in 2018, 23 in 2017). There had been 16 requests for Normal Review of Marking at GCSE level (7 in 2018, 16 in 2017). 2 students had been upgraded from a 3 to a 4 in English.

In spite of this **increased number of requests**, the rise in unconditional offers and offer of university places to students who had not met their conditional offer, meant that some students could not be persuaded to request a review of marking. Whilst **principally for the individual's benefit**, the targeted approach, although time consuming for the examinations team, had **helped the college improve the high grade rate and achieve strong value added.**

Members noted the **reduced risks in such a targeted approach and its impact on the c.25% success rate.** The costs (of £50-£60 per request) were borne largely by parents though reimbursed if successful. In seeking confidence in a fair process, they recognised the difficulty in moderation especially in essay subjects. Given the potential impact on life chances, it was proposed that it would also be **worth looking more closely at the lower grades, especially for those not progressing to HE.** (*Action: VP*)

7. KPI Health check report

Paper: KPI Health Check November 2019

The Principal explained that there was a good prospect that the successful enrolment for 2019/20 meant the number of **funded enrolments (for 2020) would be up by 100 students on the current year.** **Attendance had started higher but now dipped** so was being closely monitored taking account of anticipated peaks and troughs e.g. post progress reviews and towards the end of term respectively.

The staff governor commented on the **improved methodology for anticipated grades** which she believed was now better understood than in the previous year and therefore **more consistently applied across subjects.** That said the VP commented that efforts would continue to level out any difference of approach in incentivising students to improve. **Students also appeared to like the system** which allowed them to **make their own assessment prior to staff and with greater**

refinement of grades on effort, systems and practice which aided subsequent discussion. **Predicted grades** were more difficult for non-UK students given their different base qualifications but similar in that it was **in everyone's interest for these to be a fair and accurate assessment of potential.** UCAS predicted grades at the start of the second year could take account of work ethic and transfer exam results. **MyStudent facilitated transparency** with members noting that the **percentage of parents given consent to access MyStudent was in the high 90s.** c. 60% appeared to be using this tool but this could be higher if they were accessing the information with the student via the student account. Where students did not grant permission, the College did seek to pursue the reasons for this. Members noted also the results of a recent UCAS report on the accuracy of predicted grades.

8. DfE performance measures

Paper: DfE performance measure slides

The VP (Q&C) reported that unamended performance measures for the college were now available, enabling a year on year comparison. In January the government would release all the national information so that college to college comparison would be possible – to be reported to the next Q&C Committee.

To-date the data looked very positive with a pass rate at A level of 99.4% and close to 59% high grades. Whilst the latter was slightly below the previous year, the reduction was far less significant than at many, suggesting even better L3VA (value added) - anticipated to be 0.31. This would probably place the College as top state provider in the county and in the top 5% nationwide across all providers.

There had been a 100% pass rate in BTECs with value-added looking to take a further jump (in those new specification subjects monitored by L3VA) from 0.27 in 2017/18 (Alps 4) to 0.64 (Alps 3) in 2018/19, well above average.

9. College Self-Assessment Report 2018-19 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20

Paper: Draft College Self-Assessment Report 2018-19 and College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20

The VP explained that the only difference in the **top-level College SAR/QIP**, following the more fundamental changes the previous year, was **recognition of the new EIF** with, for example, increased evidence on progression. The **data was a little clearer** and some previous repetition had been addressed within discrete areas of the QIP. As before there were **similar documents for every subject and faculty, every element of support for students and from all support service teams** reflecting analysis by all staff members of their work.

The College **SAR clearly evidenced a highly successful year with a number of key themes:**

- **'Raising Aspiration'**: this agenda had been **successful in taking student achievement to amongst the very top providers** in the country and **additional funding would enable the College to do more**
- **Curriculum development**: continuing to meet the needs of learners through new launches
- **Significant range of well-implemented new initiatives across academic and pastoral provision** including **improved monitoring, attendance and student self-awareness**
- **Marketing and enrolment were stronger with significant growth in numbers**
- Prudent financial management and new revenue streams had kept **finances outstanding**

Key challenges in the QIP included:

- **Improving VA for B target grade learners and individual smaller subjects**
- **Launching new curriculum provision *successfully***
- **Bringing greater consistency to interventions** within a strategic approach
- **Growing and diversifying the international offer**
- **Improving the estate** to enhance the student experience

Working through each strategic aim in terms of performance, areas for development and action plans as reflected in both the SAR and QIP, members asked about:

- **the reasons for the underperformance of some 'B' grade students**, noting these could include different levels of motivation or aspiration and/or subject specific issues but more about skills than a lack of ability. There appeared to be no gender bias. Analysis in Business suggested some weren't accessing the mark scheme or taking as much ownership as 'A' grade students. They were also disproportionately affected by unconditional offers. The College was also looking at the best fit for mixed A level/ BTEC programmes for some students;
- **how governors could best track progress in underperforming subject areas, hearing that some had improved greatly but not in all cases.** Members recognised the greater accessibility of the top level QIP and the strengths and knowledge held in the faculty link governor scheme but were concerned that the Q&C Committee should -have a regularly updated overview building on the subject information provided to all governors at the start of the autumn term. *(Action: VP (Q&C) to consider method of efficient and effective reporting in light of SAR/QIP changes);*
- **the sustainable strategy for student support taking account of the availability of external services**, noting the synergy of approach across both the curriculum and pastoral support in encouraging effective behaviours;
- **the extent to which work experience can be offered**, taking account of costs and other curricular and wellbeing priorities (as reflected in changes in approach to Year 10 work experience in schools) whilst being mindful that those students who would most benefit might find it hardest to access such opportunities. Members recognised the need to fit in with enrichment and Gatsby benchmarks and the provision to-date in a part-time careers adviser, the signposting of opportunities through the Library and the targeted employability course as well as the bid to the Mercers' Company for additional support to help build external connections further. The lack of recognition of students' existing part-time work was considered puzzling and could potentially be better charted;
- **The increased competition from the re-opened Haywards Heath campus** within the Chichester group to which the College believed it **might have lost c. 30 students.** **Collyer's – a Sixth Form, rather than FE College - was still thought to have a strong reputation with consistently high results to help attract aspirational students;**
- **Feedback on the new College website** which sought to provide **better functionality** and fit more closely with management systems. No complaints had been received and **work continued on amplifying and regularly updating the content** (to include drone footage);
- **Adult Education development including staffing changes and appropriate coursing of students;**
- **Environmental issues**, where the students took a strong interest in new 'green' initiatives. The Principal commented that a new Travel Plan was soon to be circulated and that GB2, as the next capital project, would seek to be carbon neutral through, for example, the use of solar panelling if feasible.

In conclusion, the Chair proposed that the college's self-assessment appeared to be reflective and accurate based on the evidence and achievement of the previous year and that the areas identified for development seemed well thought through to help the College best serve its students and meet its strategic aims. Members thanked the VP for his comprehensive work on the two reports.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the College Self-Assessment Report 2018/19 (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019/20 at its next meeting.

10. Any other business None

11. Meeting Assessment

Members commented that the meeting had enabled members to be assured that the College's self-assessment processes remained robust. They welcomed the greater focus in identify priority themes and clear targets which would in turn facilitate effective tracking. Any further feedback subsequent to the meeting was welcomed, either to the Chair and/or Clerk.

12. Date of the next meeting: Wednesday, 11th March 2020 at 15.30.

Meeting ended at 17.55

Chair

Date

NCW 1-12-19