



CORPORATION TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 11 MARCH 2011

PRESENT : Mr I Standen Chairman
Ms A Mollart
Mrs A Thomson
Dr G Wilson
Ms W Wright Principal

IN ATTENDANCE : Mrs P Connell Clerk to the Corporation
Mr S Andrews Deputy Principal

ACTION

1/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms P Martin and Ms R Griffiths, who was not a Member of the Committee but who usually attended the meetings as a Staff Member of the Corporation and Student Services Manager.

2/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2010 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

3/11 MATTERS ARISING

31/10 College's Annual Self Assessment Report. It was noted that all actions recorded under this item had been completed.

35/10 Annual Report on Student Destinations for 2009/10. The Principal reported that destinations data for HE students completing their courses was now being collected as part of the HE Consortium's normal processes.

4/11 MINUTES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Quality Assurance Committee meetings of 21 January 2011 and 18 February 2011 were received and approved.

It was noted that matters considered at the meetings would be reviewed separately under the following agenda items.

5/11 **STUDENT ATTENDANCE REPORT FOR THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR**

The Committee received a written report from the MIS Manager, which was attached as appendix B. It was noted that the report related to student attendance rates up to 31 January 2011. The Deputy Principal spoke on the report, giving details of the progress which had been made towards achieving the student attendance target of 90% which had been approved by the Corporation. Overall attendance to 31 January 2011 stood at 89%. This figure was 1% down on that for the same period during 2009/10. However, various strategies had been put in place to improve attendance and the rate was expected to rise by the year end. Formal sector benchmarks remained unobtainable. The only available data was attendance information in Ofsted / ALL inspection reports. Members noted that the average attendance rates in these reports was 77.7%.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning data in the following categories:

- i **attendance by age.** There was only a small difference between cohorts. There had been an improvement in the attendance rate of 14-15 year old learners. 16-18 year old students remained on target. The lowest attending age group was 19+.
- ii **2010-11 full-time courses with the highest attendance (6 or more students).** There were some examples here of courses with exceptionally high attendance levels. The Deputy Principal emphasised the importance of disseminating this best practice across the whole College.
- iii **2010-11 full-time courses with the lowest attendance (6 or more students).** The Deputy Principal gave a full account of the strategies which had been put in place to improve attendance levels. These included amendments to the timetabling arrangements, ensuring an enhanced balance, where appropriate, between practical and theoretical work for students, staff development to achieve continuously improving teaching and learning, responding effectively to student feedback and encouraging curriculum teams to constantly monitor their own performance in a rigorous way.
- iv **attendance by curriculum sections within Schools.** Discussion ensued concerning the volatility of data here between different academic years. Members considered it to be particularly disappointing when courses had fallen below performance achieved for the previous academic year. The Deputy Principal advised that the measures put in place to address any difficulties should lead to significantly improved performance by the year end. Indeed, it was his belief that the corporate target approved for 2011/12 should be raised even higher than that for the current year.

In conclusion, Members recorded their concerns regarding any areas of poorer performance. They noted the measures which had been put in place to secure improvements and reiterated their desire to see sustained excellent performance across the College. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal should provide a further progress report to the meeting of the Committee in the summer term.

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The Committee received a written report from the Deputy Principal, which was attached as appendix C. Members noted that this appendix contained the information on student retention for 2010/11, which had previously been reported as a separate item.

The Deputy Principal spoke on his report, advising that Performance Monitoring had been introduced to replace the Management Review process. However, it was intended that the annual Principal's Review should continue to take place in October every year. The Deputy Principal gave details of the eight areas upon which the agenda for the performance monitoring focused. The current report considered performance in five of these key areas, all of which were considered to be crucially important in enhancing students' experience and securing optimum levels of performance in the current academic year. Discussion ensued concerning the data presented in the following tables:

- i **retention continuing (LSC rules applied).** Some concern was expressed in relation to retention at Level 3 in LZ6, in both 16-18 and 19+ age groups. Again, strategies had been put in place to secure improvements during the rest of the year and to ensure that performance was rigorously monitored. Members recalled that the method by which this data was reported had recently been altered to comply with the framework used by Ofsted. Level three performance was no longer presented to governors in relation to individual academic years but over the length of the whole course. Adjustments had been made accordingly in the performance indicators reported termly by the Principal to the Corporation (Corporation minute 65/10 referred).
- ii **attendance.** This subject had been discussed under the previous agenda item. It was noted that the operation of electronic registers had been reviewed and improved to ensure that Heads of School could monitor information in relation to individual courses more effectively. A new user group had been established with a view to identifying any technical issues which needed to be resolved. Generally, attendance rates across the College were good but, as reported under the previous agenda item, there were some poorer areas of performance which were being addressed. It was felt that it would be helpful to include some information in table 2 relating to the number of students included in the various categories. The Deputy Principal agreed to pursue this matter further.
- iii **lesson observations.** Members noted the number of observations carried out in Trimester 1 and the grades achieved. Since the observation process was risk based and focused initially on teachers awarded a grade three in the previous year, together with new staff and newly qualified teachers, the grade profile was expected to improve as the year progressed. The Committee reiterated its view that every effort should be made to ensure that all observations resulting in a grade three were further improved. The Deputy Principal advised that developmental support was provided to all staff who received a grade three or below. Follow-up observations were conducted and there was no evidence of any future regression once improvements had been secured. Members noted the data in relation to the individual Schools. TALOs would be explored in more detail under the following agenda item.
- iv **student feedback.** The data showed the results of the induction survey

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conducted in October 2010. Questions listed in the table represented a selection of those asked. The Deputy Principal believed that they gave a clear indication of performance in key areas. Significant progress had been made in the student rating for the five key questions covered in the induction survey. However, there was still room for further improvements to be secured in the 'distance travelled' by students which, in some cases, remained below benchmark. The Deputy Principal had recently received the results from the survey conducted during the current term. These results would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee, once they had been formally evaluated. However, the Deputy Principal was pleased to report that significant improvements had been secured within year. It was particularly noticeable that, in those areas where much work had been done, good progress had been made.

- v **staff qualifications.** The staff qualification table revealed that a very high percentage of full and part-time staff were either qualified or working towards a teaching qualification. Heads of School had responsibility for monitoring rigorously the situation within their own Schools. The Deputy Principal was pleased to report that the position regarding staff qualifications remained very strong. He believed that, naturally, this would have a positive impact upon student performance.

In conclusion, Members thanked the Deputy Principal for his report and supported the format of the latter. It was felt that it might be helpful to include some additional narrative, at least on an annual basis, and, also, to include some form of exception reporting. **The Committee invited the Principal and Deputy Principal** to explore these suggestions further and to bring forward proposals to the next meeting of the Committee in June.

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7/11 **ANALYSIS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATIONS FOR THE FIRST TRIMESTER OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

The Committee received a written report from the Deputy Principal, which was contained within appendix D. It was noted that the programme for the current academic year included two hundred and fifty observations, of which twenty would be of 'A' Level staff within a total of seventy three observations to be conducted within LZ6. The Deputy Principal advised that the main purpose of the programme continued to be to identify and address any improvement needs and to disseminate best practice. The TALO reports indicated that many lecturers were responding to the lesson observation plans and securing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Members considered the grades awarded by School and noted the summary of staff development needs emerging from the process. The latter would inform future staff development sessions. Members noted that Subject Learning Coaches were allocated to provide additional support where teaching and learning had been judged to be 'satisfactory'. The Deputy Principal reported that he intended to review the operation of the TALO system for the forthcoming academic year. In particular, he felt that there needed to be an increased focus on the impact of related staff development activity.

Members thanked the Deputy Principal for his report and commended the work being undertaken in this area to continuously raise standards. They supported the intention to include further information regarding teaching and learning observations within the Performance Monitoring Review reports

presented to the Committee, on a regular basis.

8/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be held on Friday 10 June 2011, at 9.30 am.

Pamela J Connell
Clerk to the Corporation
16 March 2011

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