

# Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

**Date: 8 December 2009**

**Present:** C Jones (Vice Chair)  
S Singh  
N Chohan

**In attendance:** J Stott (Clerk)  
S Jones  
S Hooton  
S Butler (Minutes Secretary)

**Apologies:** G Upadhyaya (Chair)  
M Damant

**Meeting commenced:** 17:20

**Meeting closed:** 18:20

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**28 /09 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest**

There was no disclosure of financial and/or personal interest.

**29/09 To agree agenda and order of business as circulated**

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

**30/09 To appoint:**

**a) Chair of the Committee**

As we have a new Member on the committee, it was agreed to delay the appointment of the Chair until the next meeting.

**b) Vice Chair of the Committee**

Chris Jones agreed to continue as Vice Chair until the Ofsted visit was over and Members agreed to nominate at the next committee meeting in February 2010.

**31/09 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2009**

The minutes were approved.

**32/09 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**33/09**

**To receive a progress report on the College's Action Plan arising from the 2007/08 SAR**

The Principal introduced the item and guided members through the report explaining that the key aim was to improve retention. The following areas were highlighted:

- ❖ Retention has improved for 1 year courses and is looking positive.
- ❖ Retention however for Level 3 courses does not look quite as positive and we need to start addressing this next year.
- ❖ Adult retention has improved from 81% to 86%.
- ❖ The main aim is to get retention up by 10% across the board
- ❖ The sports facilities were part of the Capital Project and have not been improved

Room SG24 has been opened up to the students at lunchtimes as it was noted that many of them hung around the corridors eating and drinking. Although this did seem suitable, and despite encouragement to take advantage of the additional room, the students have not been using it. This will need looking into.

A member emphasised getting students onto the right courses is very important and suggested that it would be helpful if this was also recorded on the report.

The report was received.

**34/09**

**To undertake the annual review of the Staff Development Programme**

The Assistant Principal (Quality & Operations) introduced the item saying that the main priorities were:

- ❖ to improve the quality of teaching. Figures show that this does seem to have improved.
- ❖ to improve the application of ILT. There were various problems last year with some of the software which meant some aspects of development did not take place. The aim was therefore to focus on teams, rather than a global view, which proved more effective.
- ❖ to improve the quality of support and services for learners. Substantial work was undertaken in relation to employer related activities such as Pro-Engage (Customer Relations Management software), guidance and initial assessment, as well as Train to

Gain systems.

- ❖ to provide support to enable staff to respond to the changing environment. A Learning and Development portfolio was introduced for all support staff in 2008/9, so that all members of the college will have a similar mechanism for identifying, recording and evaluating their personal progress, and the volume of staff development undertaken by support staff increased markedly in 08/09. Internal staff development hours undertaken by F/T support staff has increased by 15%.

Members were guided to the recommendations on page 3 of the report.

The College signed up to a Skills Pledge in 2008. Some work has been done towards this, but not enough, particularly in relation to literacy. There has been so much demand for Skills for Life from external students that there is not the capacity to support staff development in literacy at present.

The report was received.

**35/09 To receive a report on the new Sector and Service Review Process**

The Principal introduced the item. Many staff do not appear to understand clearly the review process so the aim is to focus people on coming up with simple plans which are clear and easy to understand and will enable all staff to see how they fit into that plan.

The Sector review process starts with a finalised CAR from each course which is fed into the Sector SAR and, from that, each Sector head will produce a Quality Improvement and New Development plan. It should produce short, clear and focused outcomes and these will be regularly monitored by the Senior Management Team to ensure each perform against their plans. The model has been inspired by previous work undertaken elsewhere.

The Service reviews will follow a similar process, but more simple.

The aim is to sharpen up the whole process which will hopefully be achieved.

The report was received.

**36/09 To receive a report on:**

**i) **Headline figures on retention, achievement and success rates 2008/09****

The Principal informed members that it had been very difficult getting hold of data and figures had changed since this report had been sent out. He then took members through the report summarising as

follows:

- ❖ Retention and achievement are good for very short courses.
- ❖ Retention and achievement for long courses are satisfactory overall though still inadequate at Level 3 16-18 in retention and Level 1 16-18 and 19+ in achievement.
- ❖ Success rates for apprenticeships are satisfactory.
- ❖ Train to Gain: Full Level 2 & 3 success rates are outstanding, but Skills for Life success rates are poor.

The Principal stressed that we need to be able to get our achievement data in much quicker. The barriers to this are a College wide issue. There is a need to exert a bit more pressure on staff to produce this data to enable us to get ahead of the game.

The report was received.

## **ii) 2009/10 report on targets vs enrolments**

The Principal gave a short verbal report informing members that the data was only made available last night and may still not yet be accurate. Therefore the report will be made available and presented to the Corporation at their meeting next week. The delay in this data has been partly due to the installation of new systems.

## **37/09 To receive the outcome of the telephone survey on the reasons for leaving College**

The Assistant Principal (Quality & Operations) guided members through the report. This report had been requested at the last meeting and had proved a very useful exercise. Most students were recorded as 'stopped attending' when they leave, rather than giving a specific reason, but the QDP survey revealed that many left because they did not like the course they were on. Among the reasons listed on page 3 of the report it shows that:

- ❖ 19% leave as the course is not as expected
- ❖ 15% leave because they have lost interest
- ❖ 7 % leave due to problems with tutor/methods

The report provides a wide range of analysis which has proved very useful, though it was thought it would not serve much additional benefit to conduct this fairly expensive survey on a yearly basis.

It was commented that if we ask tutors to fill in the leavers form, the students will not be inclined to give the real reason for leaving especially, for example, if it is due to a relationship problem with their tutor.

One member noted on page 2 of the report that it states 59% had fee remission which is a high number and raises the question as to whether many of these people are actually applying for the right course. An emphasis is needed on getting the right people onto the right courses. It might also be worth looking at re-organising the length of some of the courses.

Quite a few students did not tell anyone there was a problem. If a course is free, then it is quite easy to just drop out without saying anything, especially with part time courses. There could be a whole host of reasons for non attendance and people tend to just drop out rather than specify their problems. We need to decide how much resource we spend chasing this up however.

It was agreed that we have good data, but we still need to dig deeper and make good interpretations of all the data.

### **38/09 To consider the 2008/09 Annual Report on Complaints**

The Principals highlighted the fact that there has been a reduction in complaints dropping from 22 to 16. In summary:

- ❖ 2 were from potential students
- ❖ 9 were from current students
- ❖ 4 were from members of the public
- ❖ 1 was from a parent

One query was raised about an exams mix up complaint. The Clerk clarified the issues involved and confirmed that lessons had been learnt leading to a change in practice.

The report was received.

### **39/09 To**

a)

#### **i) Receive a report on Learner Involvement and the Learner Voice**

The Clerk drew members attention to the report and booklet entitled 'Learner Involvement Strategy' and informed members that the College takes learner involvement very seriously.

- ❖ We have a Student Council as the main forum. It meets every three weeks at lunch time at which students are encouraged to raise issues on behalf of their peers.
- ❖ The Student Affairs Committee consists of a sub group of the Student Council, as well as Governors, Senior Managers and the Principal and at which issues are raised from the Student Council which could not be raise elsewhere.

- ❖ There are two student governors to be appointed in the next few weeks who become part of the Governing Body.
- ❖ Comments & Complaints boxes are located around the buildings which are emptied on a monthly basis and the Head of Learner Entitlement ensures any matters are addressed.
- ❖ An email address is available for any student wishing to make an electronic comment, though this function has yet to be utilised by anyone.

**ii) Review the Terms of Reference of the Committee**

Last year a new No 9 was agreed to be added to the terms of reference - '*to undertake periodic focus groups with particular groups of students to encourage the Learner Voice*'. On reflection, the Clerk pointed out that this could prove quite difficult to organise with governors and could also prove uncomfortable for the students and asked that, if we cannot meet it, should we keep it in the terms of reference.

Members agreed with its removal and agreed to replace it with '*to receive an annual report, provided by the Head of Learner Entitlement, setting out the topics which had been raised by the Learner Voice*'.

It was agreed that members would receive a report from the College on the learner voice at the last meeting of the academic year ie in June 2010.

**b) Identify any training needs for the Committee or individual Members**

The Clerk asked members if they had any specific training needs. It was asked if the upcoming changes with the LSC and funding etc would affect governors. The Principal confirmed that these changes do not actually change the role of governance.

The Clerk invited members to contact him at any time if they found they had any particular training needs.

**40/09**

**a) Dates of proposed meetings to December 2010**

- ❖ Tuesday 9 February 2010 at 6.30 pm
- ❖ Tuesday 29 June 2010 at 6.30 pm
- ❖ Tuesday 9 November 2010 at 6.30 pm

**b) To decide which of the above items are reported to the Corporation in more detail**

It would be helpful to report the key items to the Corporation so they do not have to go through all the items.

The Principal highlighted No 9 on the agenda as the key areas to report.