

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 20 October 2015
at the Sheepen Road Campus

Present

David Gask, in the Chair
Alison Andreas

Bryn Morris

In Attendance

Caroline Fritz	Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jason Peters	Assistant Principal: Curriculum
Jill Wognum	Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Apologies for absence were received from Christopher Bridge and Peter Hempstead.

1. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2015 (CIC/CQ/15/3/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.1. Prevent Agenda

Governors asked for an update on the implementation of the Prevent agenda, particularly on whether it had had any negative impact or was becoming intrusive on students. It was reported that most people see Prevent as an extension to Safeguarding duties and know who they need to go to if they have concerns and the outside organisations that may be involved. The College has an action plan, which has been well received externally. There may be a need to review some policies such as on guest speakers. In a recent learner survey, 99% of the 1000 respondents said that they feel safe, which is the main concern for FE learners.

4. Introduction to Scorecard

The Assistant Principal: Curriculum demonstrated the new Scorecard system, which was developed over the summer and introduced in September to give staff access to live data (the system is updated in the early hours each day) on student performance. The demonstration included the reports available, at College, Faculty, Programme Area and Course area. The system is based on a four point score, and a score of 2 (green) is at the College target. Red indicates performance is below the College target. Directors of Faculty and Area Heads can drill down to course and individual level.

Currently only the attendance and retention data is available. This year the College is moving to a more systematic and much earlier prediction of final outcomes. From Friday 23 October until 5 November teaching staff will be asked to make a prediction on ProMonitor on what they believe the student will achieve in the summer. The predicted outcomes data will go live from 24th October, as the scorecard is updated daily with the data from ProMonitor, and will give an early indication of where students are at for planning purposes. Governors asked how the predications are made, and

how accurate they are, and were advised that teaching staff will use their professional judgment to predict what will happen based on the student's current performance. Based on experience of similar systems, the first round will be exaggerated but after one year the predications will stabilise at just 2% more optimistic in November; 1% optimistic in spring, and accurate in May.

Governors asked about valued added, and were advised that value added data is measured through ALPS and is only applicable for BTEC and similar courses at Level 3; there are no value added measures for Levels 1 and 2. Value added data is included in the scorecard where available.

Access to the scorecard was discussed and it was reported that everyone has access. Governors asked if it was appropriate for everyone to have access at individual learner level and were advised that this had been considered when ProMonitor was introduced and the decision taken not to limit access dependent on the courses a member of staff teaches because of the complexity and the number of staff that teach across faculties. No new access rights have been granted; all staff with access to the scorecard already have access to EBS and ProMonitor and are not able to use EBS until they have received training, including awareness training on data protection issues. Also, this is a tool for managers, and the College wants managers to be able to see how they are performing and how they compare to other areas of the College. Governors supported the approach that the College Executive has taken but recommended that this is kept under review as the scorecard becomes more embedded and more widely used as a tool.

Governors asked about the extent to which individual learners will be able to access their own data, and whether access is tracked as a measure of learner engagement. It was reported that learners cannot access the scorecard but most of the pages on ProMonitor are accessible by the student. There is also a parent access to ProMonitor, but this has not been activated yet, although students can share their ProMonitor record with parents through mobile devices or home PCs. Governors suggested that there ought to be a way of flagging students at risk of not fulfilling their potential and were advised that there is a way of adding a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating in ProMonitor, which staff but not students can see, to alert staff looking at the system of students at risk and prompt intervention, which for Year 12 and 13 learners could include parental involvement.

Governors noted that the targets that were being used were College level targets and asked whether in order to become outstanding the College should be thinking about benchmarks above the national average at faculty level rather than institutional level. It was reported that the College is looking to make targets 3-5% above the national average

Arising from the discussions, it was noted that the scorecard has been live since the second week in September and the feedback from staff has been positive. It is currently being used for 16-19 Study Programmes; the next stage is to look at apprenticeships.

Governors welcomed the introduction of the scorecard as a very positive process improvement.

5. **Student Enrolments 2015**

It was reported that currently the College had 4190 active 16-18 learners against a curriculum plan target of 4200. These learners will need to remain in learning for 42 days in order to be funded and under the lagged learner number system this target needs to be exceeded to maintain numbers in future years. The College will continue to enrol on to the Skills to Succeed programme through the year and a couple of areas are looking to introduce a January start. Governors asked if numbers reflect demographic changes and were advised that there will be a dip in learner numbers in Braintree from next year; other areas are already in decline and will not start to pick up until about 2020.

The adult target is a financial target and it is too early to say if this will be achieved. The College has enrolled nearly 1600 learners against a numbers target of 2200 and recruitment will continue throughout the year.

It has been a good start to the year for apprenticeship recruitment and the College should achieve its 649 target with well over 400 apprentices already in the sign up process. Governors asked how much of this is College delivered and were advised that the College continues to shrink its sub-contracted provision and is moving from a position of 50:50 to 30:70 sub-contracted to own delivery.

The College is about 30 students short of its full time first year HE recruitment target but part time recruitment is strong, particularly in HN Construction and Engineering. The income shortfall should be made up with teacher training recruitment. Noting that the trend in HE appears to be moving more to part time, Governors asked if the College is looking at the courses it offers. It was reported that the College is looking at higher level apprenticeships, particularly in Construction, Engineering and Health and Care.

The full cost and special project targets had been discussed earlier that day and there is some concern around special project income. Health and Education have some existing projects which need to be developed further.

Governors asked if there were any programmes where the level of recruitment was such that the quality of the student experience will suffer either because of small or large class sizes. It was reported that most areas where there was a problem have been addressed and some overly large groups have now been split. There are still some second year programmes which are smaller than the College would like and one or two courses at the College at Braintree are smaller than desirable but wherever possible they have been linked with other courses for certain modules to give the learners a better experience.

6. **Performance against High Level Targets 2014-15 and Targets 2015-16**

CIC/RC/15/3/2, performance against high level targets 2014-15 and all targets 2015-16, was received and considered.

Targets 2014-15

Outcomes against targets and the distance still to travel were noted. Functional Skills had been excluded when the targets for success rates had been set. Performance excluding Functional Skills was close to or at target but in some cases has fallen short when Functional Skills is included. The Principal reported that there were no figures where performance deteriorated compared to the previous year and in many cases there had been a notable improvement. The effort put in during the year on learner progression between levels (FE) paid dividends with a huge improvement on previous years.

Targets 2015-16

The targets for 2015-16 are aspirational and challenging and reflect the level of performance required to be a solidly "Good" College. Now that the prior year actual data is available Governors asked if the action plan needs to change or whether the Board needs to change anything in terms of resource allocation if we are to have confidence that the 2015-16 targets will be achieved. Governors were advised that the College will have a better idea of where the focus needs to be once the Quality Improvement Plan has been revisited having regard to this year's learning walks and observation. This review will take place over the next couple of weeks. Many of the targets are interrelated and anything that is put into developing teaching is likely to be beneficial, for example if the quality of teaching and learning improves, value added will automatically improve. It was reported that a very experienced and effective external consult has been working with middle

managers. The outcomes of this two day consultancy and training need to be analysed and will feed into continuing CPD programmes for all staff. The College needs to do more, and better, focussed work with individual teachers on their own areas for improvement. Part of the external consultancy was around middle manager coaching and making the link between PDR objectives and the evaluation of teaching and learning.

7. Draft SAR 2014-15

CIC/CQ/15/3/3, draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2014-15, was received and considered. The earlier final data submission date (23 October 2015) this year has enabled the SAR to be produced much earlier than in previous years. A small number of results (60 out of 13000) are still not known but most judgements will not change as a result of the data being finalised. The College is still working with the national average data for the previous year. The first release of national averages for last year will be around 18th December, with an update published in the third week of January 2016. It was reported that the College is still too close to the national average; if the national averages remain unchanged than the College is just below the national average overall. Last year there were significant changes to the types of qualification, with a lot more assessment through examination. It is just possible as a result of this that national averages will not have risen at the same rate as is usually the case.

Governors asked how learner progress compared to the national average. It was reported that comparison data is only available for Level 3 and the College's Level 3 cohort is just below national benchmarks.

Governors discussed the overview of grades awarded, the grade for overall effectiveness and what a grade 1 for Leadership and Management would look like. Governors were advised that the College is moving in the right direction, and that performance management has improved the outcomes for learners, but better evidence of performance management at all levels is needed. Progress is being made but the jump in data is not enough to move the grade for teaching and learning.

Governors asked about the achievement gap for high needs learners and were advised that it is variable but as the numbers are often quite small it is difficult to make judgements.

It was AGREED to recommend the draft Self-Assessment Report to the Board for approval. The SAR will be uploaded to the Government Gateway as a draft once the data has been updated, and uploaded as a final version once it has received Board approval.

8. Compliments and Complaints 2014-15

CIC/CQ/15/3/4, outline of compliments and complaints received 2014-15, was received and considered. Governors noted the number of complaints by category and area/faculty during 2014-15, response times and the action plan for 2015-16.

9. Teaching and Learning Observations 2015-16

9.1. Teaching and Learning Observations 2015-16

CIC/CA/15/3/5, Observation of Teaching and Learning 2015-16, was received and noted. It was reported that observations are being carried out much earlier than in previous years and 158 observations had been carried out over the last two weeks; this represents just over half the observations planned for this year. The focus of the feedback is on three themes: progress made by learners; embedding of English and maths; and use of questioning, and the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement is meeting with the Area Heads to discuss development plans before they are agreed with staff.

9.2. **Higher Education Peer Review Policy**

CIC/CQ/15/3/6, Higher Education Peer Review Policy, was received and considered. Governors were advised that this is good practice and that the College has done something similar in the past but it has not been very robust. The focus over the last year or so has been on the quality of teaching and learning and it is believed that this policy will give the College a much better view of those individuals that need some professional development.

Governors asked about staff who teach across HE and FE and how this policy would interact with the observation process. It was reported that staff who teach on FE will have been formally observed but they would not have had any feedback on their HE teaching. The peer review process is developmental and not graded, mirroring the system used for FE.

It was AGREED to recommend the Higher Education Peer Review Policy to the Board for approval.

10. **Fitness to Study Policy**

CIC/CQ/15/3/7, draft Fitness to Study Policy, was received and considered. It was reported that this was a new policy to be used where concerns have been expressed over an applicant's/student's health or wellbeing. It applies to FE learners only. The policy provides a supportive framework and will only be used for a small number of learners where the College has concerns over the safety and security of the individual and/or other students or staff. Issues to do with conduct will continue to be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. The Student Services and Welfare Manager will be involved at all stages of the process.

It was AGREED to recommend the Fitness to Study Policy to the Board for approval.

11. **Link Governor Scheme 2015-16**

CIC/CQ/15/3/8, Link Governor Scheme 2015-16, was received, considered and approved.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 19 January 2016 at 4.30 pm

13. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items.

Part II – these minutes are not confidential but the supporting papers are confidential

14. **Principal's Report October 2015**

CIC/CQ/15/3/9, Principal's Report October 2015, was received and noted.

15. **Safeguarding Report**

CIC/CQ/15/3/10, Safeguarding Report October 2015, was received and noted.