

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee  
held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
at the Sheepen Road Campus

**Present**

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| David Gask, in the Chair | David Gronland |
| Alison Andreas           | Scott Piper    |
| Christopher Bridge       | Kevin Prince   |
| Daniel Clarke            | Terry Smyth    |
| Martin Fordham           |                |

**In Attendance**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Caroline Fritz | Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning        |
| Jason Peters   | Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance        |
| Jill Wognum    | Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality |
| Hazel Paton    | Clerk to the Governors                                     |
| Maeve Borges   | Vice Principal: Student Services and Support               |

**Part I**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**

None.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>st</sup> June 2018 (CIC/CQ/18/3/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

5. **Performance against High Level Targets**

CIC/CQ/18/3/2, Performance against High Level Targets 2017-18 and Targets 2018-19 (including Success Rates 2017-18), was received and presented by the Principal.

The Board had received this paper in the summer to approve the target 2018-19. At that point very few outcomes were known. Actual results for 2017-18 had now been added where available, but for a number of measures the performance still reflects 2016-17 results because last year's outcomes will not be known until January/March 2019 when the performance league tables are published; the College is unable to replicate the data for these measures in house. Governors noted the paper, and agreed the paper would have been enhanced if it included data for 2016/17 so that progress could be measured.

Governors asked about national benchmark data and were advised that this is available for most of the measures. An exception is attendance, but the AoC (Association of Colleges) produces data for attendance (86% is the current benchmark for attendance). The Committee asked for future reports to include the most recent national benchmark data for similar providers and all providers.

It was reported that the College had put a paper before the Ofsted Inspectors the previous week

which compared the College's performance against other local colleges. The purpose was to demonstrate that colleges recently graded as Good have profiles very similar to (or worse than) Colchester Institute in the measures included in the Performance Tables (largely retention and progress, including Value-added at levels 2 and 3). The College had improved its performance on most measures since 2016/17 and was at or above national average in a number of measures including L3 Technical Completion and Attainment, Retention (all levels and types) and all measures relating to Level 2. Where the College performed notably less well than the national average was on recorded Destinations for students (2015) and in progress in English. Governors asked to be updated on our comparative performance in 2017/18 as soon as the league tables are published in the new year.

6. **Draft SAR 2017-18 and QIP 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/18/3/3, Draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2017-18 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2018-19, was withdrawn. In view of the feedback from Ofsted Inspectors the SAR will be revised to reflect their judgements. This will be easier once the draft Ofsted report is received. The factual data will not change, although some additional data may be included. The College is required to submit the SAR 2017-18 to Ofsted by the end of 2018, following approval at the December Board meeting. More important than the (retrospective) SAR though is the Post Inspection Action Plan which will now replace the QIP. Work has commenced on this already and a draft improvement plan should be in place by 23rd November and will be circulated to members of this Committee for feedback.

Governors who had met with the Ofsted Inspector for Leadership and Management reported that they had received feedback that the SAR should be a shorter, more focused document and asked that this is borne in mind when re-drafting.

7. **Compliments and Complaints 2017-18**

CIC/CQ/18/3/4, Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2017-18, was received and considered.

It was reported that all complainants had received an acknowledgement within the timeframe set out in the College's policy, and were informed if a final response would take longer than 10 working days (typically because a complaint was received out of term time when staff were on annual leave).

It was noted that one higher education complaint which had been referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator two academic years ago was concluded last year.

Governors asked if there were any issues that that they needed to be aware of. It was reported that there were one or two complaints which were ongoing because the complainants were not accepting the College's attempts to remedy them. The Corporation Chair reported that one or two complaints had been brought to his attention for information. Having been briefed about these, he was content with the way the College was responding and there was nothing for this Committee to concern itself with currently.

Complaints by category were noted and a Governor expressed concern that there were significantly more complaints in one category. It was explained that this category was something of a 'catch-all' for many types of complaint, and that there was nothing unusual about this. It was suggested that if these could be broken down further it would be helpful in understanding trends etc better.

8. **National Student Survey 2017-18**

CIC/CQ/18/3/5, National Student Survey (NSS) analysis 2017-18 was received and considered. It was reported that:

- Only final year higher education students are in scope (about 15% of the overall student base).
- The results were much improved this year. Overall satisfaction rates increased by over 10%.

- There were significant improvements in some questions: assessment and feedback; organisation and management (an area that had been on a downward trend for several years); student voice and overall satisfaction (10 points better).
- The result for learning resources is still below the national average. The main contributing factor is around the reliability of IT. There were a lot of issues with the WiFi system last year. The College is currently in the process of flooding buildings with renewed WiFi connections which it is hoped will improve the situation. Early feedback from students is that the WiFi is much better this year.
- The response rate was much better this year (150 of 220 eligible students), making the sample representative.

Committee members sought the views of the student Governors on the WiFi system and were advised that it is more accessible and the signal strength is better than it was, but is still not as good as students want and expect it to be.

The Committee asked if the satisfaction rating for learning resources will impact on the College's TEF Silver award. It was reported that the satisfaction levels are not far below the national average and this is something that the College wants to improve. The issue is that students are looking at brand new buildings in many university settings (there are three universities with excellent new resources within 20 miles of the College) and comparing them to the facilities at Colchester Institute some of which are much older and smaller in scale – although all provide what is required for our degree delivery.

A Governor asked where the HE student body is drawn from and was advised that the majority (85% to 90%) of students are from the local environment (within 20 to 30 miles of the College) but in certain subject areas (such as music) some students do still travel further.

#### 9. **OfS Annual Assurance Statement 2018**

CIC/CQ/18/3/6, OfS Annual Assurance Statement 2018, was received and considered. The report, which was introduced two years ago, had been compiled to enable the Corporation Board to sign off the annual assurance statement, confirming that they are satisfied with the quality of the higher education provision. The document reported on a range of quality markers such as meeting structure and cycle; student surveys; and degree outcomes.

The Committee asked if there had been any external assessment of the report. It was reported that the College had recently been through a validation event with the University of East Anglia which had validated University Centre Colchester's quality with no conditions and only 3 minor recommendations.

A Governor expressed concern that the report had been issued late leaving Committee Members little time to digest and make judgements on a large document. Members suggested that a more succinct document, with an executive summary, would be easier to evaluate and help Governors to concentrate on the main issues. Governors agreed that it would be helpful if the Dean of Higher Education attended future meetings of this Committee where papers relating to UCC provision are being discussed, to answer questions.

Governors were asked to raise any questions they may have on the content of the report with the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality outside the meeting, and if they remain unresolved to raise them at the December Board meeting. Subject to this, the Committee approved the annual assurance statement 2018 for signature by the Principal on behalf of the Board.

#### 10. **Student Enrolments 2018**

The Principal updated the Committee on student enrolments 2018:

- 16-18 learner numbers are as reported to the October Board meeting. There is a significant under recruitment (3750 learners) against the ESFA target (4131 learners). These figures will be updated when the ILR is run later this week. Under the lagged learner number system this will impact on income on this funding line next year. There will also be a much smaller year group progressing into year 2 the next year. The College Executive is already putting plans in place to mitigate the impact.
- The College has enrolled at least 420 apprentices with a further 100 learners in the process of signing up. The College executive is confident that the target for apprenticeships (681) will be met or exceeded this year.
- HE full time enrolments are about 25 below target across the three year groups. The College will recruit a further 10 to 15 learners in February on the teacher training programme that starts mid-year. The College has recruited 186 part time HE learners against a target of 192. Overall the College is about 50 HE students short across all year groups.

The Corporation Chair outlined the factors which impacted on FE enrolments this year:

- A smaller group of school leavers this year.
- Increased competition from other organisations (in particular schools with Sixth Forms which are increasingly offering vocational subjects) to retain students (probably the most significant factor).
- The changes to AS/A2 levels. Previously the College picked up a number of students who had completed one year of sixth form study and whose results were too poor to continue, or who decided that the A Level route was not for them.

It was reported that there is still an imbalance in the careers advice given to students on the merits of taking vocational or academic training. This has been a concern for a number of years. The Marketing Team continue to work with schools to publicise the opportunities available at Colchester Institute. We have been targeting our marketing recently on the genuine alternative that full applied general courses offer to students versus A levels.

The Principal reported that the number of applications was very similar to the previous year but the College converted far fewer applications into enrolments this year. One issue is that schools are encouraging students to make multiple applications. Another issue is the expansion in the number of sixth form places. It has been reported in the press this week that the sixth forms in Harwich are expanding into vocational education, starting with construction and hairdressing as well as health and social care and computing. The Staff Governor reported that a lot of colleges are now only offering these subjects as a single learning aim. As a result City and Guilds are targeting schools to protect their market share.

Governors asked what action was being taken to improve conversion rates this year. It was reported that the College needs to work hard to keep students warm between application and enrolment. As an example, 450 potential learners were being interviewed that evening for programmes starting in September 2019, and the Area Heads need to work with their staff to build a relationship with those students so that they convert.

**11. Approach to Quality Assurance/Improvement for 2018-19**

Given the fact that the Ofsted outcome cannot yet be shared outside the College, this item was deemed to be confidential and taken as a Part II item. The minutes are recorded separately.

**12. Principal's Report**

The Principal's Report November 2018 was delayed by the notification of the Ofsted Inspection. Governors agreed to receive a late report at the December Board meeting covering November/December.

13. **Update on In-Year Learner Progress (Scorecard)**

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality reported on the headline data from Scorecard:

- Retention is currently 98%, comparable to the same period last year.
- Attendance is currently 89.5%, better than the previous year.
- Attendance at maths and English is 5% better than in previous years. English is currently 71% and maths is 72%. The start of the year was much smoother with fewer organisational changes. Students settled into GCSE classes more quickly than in previous years. Changes to how GCSE learners are grouped have been implemented at Colchester this year. Grade 3 students are taught together and Grades 1 and 2 students are in separate classes. The groupings will be revisited in January and students moved according to progress and commitment.
- Overall achievement is currently in the mid 90%. Last year the November predictions were 10% higher than the final figure. This year the College needs to retain more students and, critically, make sure they pass. There must be a greater focus on progress in year.

It was reported that last year the cause of the underachievement in the weaker areas was not associated with retention; too many learners failed in the summer term. It was noted that there is a termly review of progress and the Committee asked to receive a report on the findings each term. Arising from the discussion, it was reported that the predicted achievement in Motor Vehicle is currently 20% higher than actual performance last year and one-to-one meetings are being held with the Area Head to review the evidence underpinning those predictions.

(Martin Fordham left the meeting for another engagement)

14. **Update on One Year Strategic Action Plan (Priorities 1-2)**

CIC/CQ/18/3/9, Update on One Year Strategic Action Plan (Priorities 1-2), was received and considered. The Principal reported that one or two areas in the plan may need to be revisited in the light of the Ofsted findings.

It was reported that the Ofsted Inspectors had expressed concern about the validation of the College's student destination data. The College had sampled 200 students who had said they had gone into employment, and found the data was 89% accurate. In addition there was the sample of students who had returned to study at the College. The view of the Inspectors was that the College should have follow up every student. The cost of doing this using a commercial company would be in the region of £45k. The College Executive have already begun to consider the best way of doing this and this would be reflected in the PIAP.

15. **Feedback on UEA Validation Event**

CIC/CQ/18/3/10, Report on the University of East Anglia (UEA) Validation Event, was received and noted. It was reported that the validation had just been formally approved by the Senate of the University of East Anglia.

Governors noted the three commendations and two recommendations in the report. There were no conditions. Governors sought clarification on a recommendation relating to the student experience and were advised that the UCC students see themselves as a community but there is currently little opportunity to mix more across UCC. The recommendation is around forming different groups including a higher education students' union to promote the feeling of a community.

A Governor noted that the advantage of the current validating partner being in Colchester is that students can access library resources at the University and asked about the opportunities for students to access digital resources under the new arrangement. It was reported that few students take advantage of the opportunities available under the current validation arrangements. The relationship with the University of East Anglia will inevitably be slightly different to the one with the

University of Essex, and some of the details around things like inter-library loans and use of other facilities, will need to be explored further.

16. **Matrix Accreditation Report - Apprenticeships**

CIC/CQ/18/3/11, Matrix Accreditation Report, was received and considered. It was reported that the Matrix standard focusses on information, advice and guidance given to students at all stages of their relationship with the provider. The FE careers service has held the Matrix accreditation for a number of years and was encouraged at the last visit to seek accreditation for the apprenticeship provision. It was noted that providers, including subcontractors, have to hold the standard in order to be able to draw down ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) funding.

17. **Policy Review**

The Committee received, considered and APPROVED for recommendation to the Board:

17.1. CIC/18/3/12, Safeguarding Policy. The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support summarised the changes in the policy, which were as a result of changes to the statutory guidelines Keeping Children Safe in Education. These included:

- New section on additional barriers.
- Changes around looked after children and recognising that if a student is not attending in some instances it may be because they are being drawn into exploitation etc. Unlike schools, the College does not have a statutory requirement to report a student if they have not attended for three days, but if there is a concern about a vulnerable student who has not been attending the College will make a report.
- Changes around sharing information with staff to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.
- A new section on the approach to safeguarding 14-16 year old students (the College only has a small cohort of learners in this group).
- Changes to designated staff members for safeguarding.
- Updating other policies that link to the Safeguarding Policy.

Governors asked if the College had sufficient resources to implement the policy effectively. Governors were reminded that as a result of concerns around an increase in the number of safeguarding cases being dealt with by the College a new member of staff was appointed to the team last year. Other changes implemented last year included opportunities for the safeguarding team to have structured supervision and the opportunity to talk to somebody independent to look after their own mental health and wellbeing while dealing with cases.

17.2. CIC/CQ/18/3/13, Additional Learning Support Policy 2018-19.

18. **Link Governor Scheme**

The Committee received and noted Link Governor Reports 2018 for:

CIC/CQ/18/3/14 - Apprenticeships (David Gronland)

CIC/CQ/18/3/15 - Arts and Design (Ian Thurgood)

CIC/CQ/18/3/16 - Business and Accountancy (Mark Davies)

CIC/CQ/18/3/17 - Digital Media, Music, and Performing Arts (Martin Fordham)

CIC/CQ/18/3/18 - Electrical and Business Development (Richard Wainwright)

CIC/CQ/18/3/19 - Engineering, Manufacturing and Associated Subjects (David Gask)

The Clerk asked Governors if they wished to propose any changes to the link scheme for 2019. It was agreed to refer the question to the full Board for discussion. It was suggested that in the light of feedback from Ofsted that it might be useful to have a thematic approach to links next year.

19. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of this Committee is Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 4.30pm. It was agreed to hold extraordinary meetings on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 3.00pm and Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 3.00pm.

20. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items.