

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 30th April 2019
at the Sheepen Road Campus

Present

David Gask, in the Chair	David Gronland
Alison Andreas	Kevin Prince
Martin Fordham	Terry Smyth

In Attendance

Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
Nils Franke	Dean of Higher Education
Caroline Fritz	Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jason Peters	Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Keith Moule.

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

None.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2019 (CIC/CQ/19/2/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

5. **Institutional Annual Review 2017-18**

CIC/CQ/19/2/2, Institutional Annual Review 2017-18, was received and presented by the Dean of Higher Education. Governors' attention was drawn to a number of areas in the report.

(i) **National Student Survey (NSS)**

Feedback from the NSS improved compared to the previous year. The rating for Organisation and Management increased by 12.52%, and recognition of the student voice rose by 9.56%. Overall satisfaction received its highest rating in three years.

(ii) **Discontinued Courses**

It was reported that the BA(Hons) in Acting and Creative Performance and FdA in Popular Music had been discontinued due to insufficient numbers. The last cohort on the BA(Hons) in Technical Theatre will graduate this year. These programmes had historically done well, but would need considerable investment going forward to resource state of the art facilities which is not justified by the number of students applying to join the programme. Governors asked about the outcomes in terms of employment, and were advised that they were very flexible, for example short term contracts with touring companies.

(iii) **Assessment**

The UCC is bringing in more creative forms of assessment such as video diaries, which are very much welcomed by the students and also at validation events. The Chair of a recent

UEA (University of East Anglia) validation event indicated that the College should feel free to move away from traditional forms of assessment.

It was reported that two successful validation events had been held the previous week. Three music programmes have been reworked so that they now share a common first year. This is an approach that has been in use in universities for some time, and enables students to spend their first year of study considering which type of musician they want to be.

The second validation event was for the first ever postgraduate certificate and diploma to be delivered entirely on line. This will involve a mix of pre-recorded material and study activities. All the material will be produced in house, and the time zone will be plus eight hours to maximum geographical spread. Governors asked about the financial implications for this type of delivery and were advised that the upfront costs would be the investment in time in getting the resources up and running. There are twelve sessions and every second one will use pre-recorded material. Governors welcomed this development.

(iv) **Research and Scholarship**

HE lecturing staff have increasingly made use of the 144 hours research time that is available to them, and for the first time the research fund to support worthwhile projects had been fully utilised. The change of culture is gradual. Two members of staff are on the editorial boards of academic organisations, and one individual is in the final few months of writing a book. In response to a question it was confirmed that the College does not differentiate between staff who purely teach and those who teach and take part in academic. To do so would have considerable HR and cost implications. Feedback from the UEA suggests that Colchester Institute is the only partner organisation that places this emphasis on scholarship, and this sets the College apart from other college provision.

Governors noted the UCC Strategic Plan 2017-20, UCC Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017-20, and UCC Action Plan 2017-2018 which were appended to the report.

6. **Office for Students / Quality Assurance Agency**

This item had been reported in detail at the Corporation Board meeting the previous week.

7. **Overview of progress against Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)**

CIC/CQ/19/2/3, Overview of progress against the Post Inspection Action Plan, was received and presented by the Principal. The paper had been requested by the Committee Chair shortly before the meeting to provide an overall context for the more detailed papers on the agenda, and will be updated ahead of each meeting.

Governors asked when the FE Commissioner Team and Ofsted were likely to re-visit the College, and what the focus would be. It was reported that the FE Commissioner Team was scheduled to return in July to review progress against the six recommendations in the diagnostic assessment report. Three of these will be quickly dealt with:

- the financial plan has been extended to 2021;
- an aged creditor analysis schedule has been included in the Monthly Management Report;
- the Chair is receiving support and guidance from a National Leader of Governance.

The College has made good progress on the other three recommendations. A comprehensive change to management meetings was recently approved and will commence on 20th May. The College will be able to provide detailed papers including the terms of reference and membership of each committee, and interrelationships between the meetings. The College will also be able to talk about the new quality assurance arrangements and the quality assurance calendar, but it will be too early to provide any impact data.

It was anticipated that Ofsted would carry out a two day monitoring visit in September or October 2019. It was not clear whether the monitoring visit would be under the current Common Inspection Framework or the new Education Inspection Framework. Inspectors will be looking to see what the College has done to address the weaknesses identified during the Inspection in 2018. The College should have some early indicators of final outcomes compared to 2017/18 and will be able to talk about plans for 2019/20. It was anticipated that the next formal Inspection would be in the autumn 2020.

Current progress against the PIAP was noted. The College has made good progress in putting systems in place. The outcomes will be reflected upon in the Self-Assessment Report. (SAR). Governors noted that a number of colleges produce their SAR much earlier than Colchester Institute. It was reported that the College will try to produce the SAR earlier, but the final results against which judgements are made are not available until mid-October. Governors discussed the merits of a shorter SAR document. There was support for a succinct executive document with the opportunity to look at more detail in appendices.

It was reported that there will be more activity around teaching, learning and assessment and on English and maths next year if the College's bid for SCIF funding is successful.

8. Current Performance including in year Progress (PIAP Priority No. 2)

8.1. Study Programmes

CIC/CQ/19/2/4, Current Year Performance – Study Programmes, was received and considered. The Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance presented the programme of study data on Scorecard (the data had been updated at 4.00pm that afternoon). It was reported that the overall picture was positive, but may be over optimistic. At the same point last year (the third round of predicted grades) areas were 3% optimistic; by the time of the final round in June predicted grades were in line with the final outcomes.

It was suggested that the predicted grades for maths and English (80% and 90% respectively) was too optimistic. The majority of the fails represent students who are no longer in the College. The risk is around how many students turn up for the examinations, which is hard to predict. Last year the College put considerable effort into this area and managed to increase overall attendance to 90%.

There are very few entrants for Functional Skills English and math. The College took the strategic decision two years ago to move students from Functional Skills to GCSEs because of poor results.

Governors asked if the change to streaming in maths and English this year had been successful and were advised that it was working extremely well and there was an improvement in progression scores. The GCSE predicted progress for students who joined the College with a Grade 3/D and expected to achieve a Grade 4 was noted. The Vice Principal: Curriculum, Delivery and Performance reported that the predictions were believed to be over optimistic and over the previous week every student who was predicted to achieve a grade 4 had been checked against their scores in mock examinations and in their lessons. For all students there is evidence of assessed work where the students has gone over the grade 4 boundary.

It was expected that the achievement rates for British Values (currently 91%) would rise to 96%. The data in Scorecard for British Values is actual rather than predicted.

Progress checks were brought in as part of the PIAP. It was noted that at the last progress check, 5% of the cohort (4020 students) were identified by staff as being in serious difficulty. This data correlated with the predicted outcomes. Governors asked if the system was designed such that better information on the judgements on progress is fed back to students in a meaningful way which

the student can work on. It was reported that there has been some teaching development on how to work with students and write targets for them.

8.2. Apprenticeships

CIC/CQ/19/2/5, Current Year Performance – Apprenticeships, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. It was reported that the achievement rate for apprenticeships in 2018 was 74%, significantly above the national average. Due to a range of issues and challenges this year, the current best case achievement rate for 2019 is expected to be 1.6% down on the prior year at 72.7%. This could worsen if any students withdraw from their programme or are put on the risk register. The College introduced a comprehensive risk register this year which records any apprentices at risk of not successfully completing any part of their programme. It looks at all the factors that might influence the success of learners, and is monitored closely. The College is doing everything it can to work with these students and end the year ahead of the currently published national average achievement rate of 69% for general further education colleges.

Governors asked about the mix and quality of employers compared to the national average and were advised that the worse performing areas are often those that have the most difficult employers to work with. As an example learners in trowel occupations are often sent out to contractors who do not provide a lot of support in the workplace, and those employers do not come in to the College for information sessions etc. In other sectors the employers are much more willing to engage and provide support and guidance. The College needs to get better at spotting the early signs of issues through regular and robust reviews of what is happening in the workplace. Most areas now use Smart Assessor, an interactive online package which enables employers willing to engage to see how their learners are doing.

Governors asked about the impact of End Point Assessments (EPA). It was reported that unlike apprenticeship frameworks, which had a work-based element and were mainly assessed in the College, the new standards have an assessment at the end of the apprenticeship which is externally set by the sub sector and is rigorous and challenging. As an example, the EPA for a mortgage adviser is carried out over three days and includes examinations, an interview, a presentation, and case studies. Some sectors put the students on an apprenticeship for the underpinning knowledge and are not concerned with the EPA, but if the students do not complete the EPA they are recorded as a fail and the College does not receive the achievement funding. Arising from the discussion it was reported that there are number of standards with students in learning with no arrangements in place yet for the EPA.

8.3. Adults

CIC/CQ/19/2/6, Current Year Performance – Adult Learners, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement.

It was reported that the predicted achievements in Scorecard for 19+ learners were believed to be over optimistic in some areas and had been downgraded to reflect previous trends in ESOL and accountancy results. The adjusted predicted achievement rate (88%) still represented an improvement on the previous year's outcomes, although it was noted that the national achievements rates for adults is high (89% in 2017/18).

Governors were advised that the mix of adult provision is a factor in the achievement rate. Many colleges offer a mix of leisure and short employability qualifications, which have high achievement rates nationally. Colchester Institute looks to support the local economy by offering courses that young people want and need. Its mix of adult courses includes larger programmes such as accountancy, which do not have high achievement rates nationally. Colchester Institute is better at delivering adult provision than 16-18 programmes but does not deliver as much adult work as other colleges. The College is looking at its adult provision, but smaller qualifications generate less

funding.

8.4. **Vulnerable Learners**

CIC/CQ/19/2/7, Current Year Performance – Vulnerable Learners, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support. It was reported that this was the first report of its kind reviewing the performance data of vulnerable learner groups. Although the performance of certain vulnerable groups has always been reported in the Self-Assessment and Equality and Diversity Reports, the introduction of the Power BI reporting system now enables the College to look at the in-year progress of learners by vulnerable learner type. The report presented compared the performance of learners with Education Health and Care Plans; learners with high needs; and learners in receipt of financial support, to that of all students for whom the College had comparative data. There are other groups, such as learners in receipt of Additional Learning Support or other vulnerable bursaries, which will be included in subsequent reports.

It was reported that attendance for high needs was predicted to be above the average for the College as a whole.

It was reported that the information in the vulnerable learner reports will be passed to Area Heads and Curriculum Managers to consider what strategies need to be put in place to support these students. The reporting process will be developed and strengthened over the next academic year.

Governors asked what the types of learner receive vulnerable bursaries, and were advised that there were three types of learner: students in care; students who have left care; and students living independently who receive benefits in their own right. Data on these students was not included in the report to this Committee because the number of students was low and not statistically valid.

9. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Survey 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/19/2/8, Teaching and Learning Survey 2018-19, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching Learning Improvement. The headline data was noted. Governors were pleased to see that the scores relating to questions on target setting and progress had improved compared to the previous year.

10. **Teaching and Learning Development (PIAP Priority No. 1)**

CIC/CQ/19/2/9, Teaching and Learning Development, was received and presented by Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement. The in-year quality assurance mechanisms and development activity undertaken in 2018/19 and the action to be taken forward were noted. No judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment would be made until the College had a clear idea of final outcomes.

Governors asked if there was a way of amalgamating observation reports, so that they focus on the quality of the teaching and learning of the students rather than on particular lecturers. Governors suggested a paper exercise to review the reports on teaching and learning to get an indication of whether an individual student or student group overall received a high quality experience, perhaps trialling this in an area where outcomes are known to be strong or weaker, to get an understanding of the teaching experience of that student group.

11. **English and Maths – Grade 3 to Grade 4 activity (PIAP Priority No. 3)**

CIC/CQ/19/2/10, English and Maths – Grade 3 to Grade 4 activity (PIAP Priority No. 3), was received and noted. This agenda item had been taken earlier in the meeting (see minute 8.1).

12. **Calendar of Quality Assurance and Improvement Activity (PIAP Priority No. 5)**

CIC/CQ/19/2/11, Calendar of Quality Assurance Improvement Activity, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. It was reported that the new calendar would ensure that all the quality activities are carried out in a cohesive way, with

mechanisms to check on the progress of previous monitoring activity. As an example, formal observations of teaching and learning would take place in October, with a further round of observations in February/March to measure progress of the development actions that have taken place as a result of the earlier observation round. This has not previously happened in a comprehensive way. Information about development needs will be used to put on CPD activities, and the findings from progress checks will influence what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning. The curriculum and apprenticeship monitoring meetings will have focussed agendas to ensure the discussion is around the data, performance and action planning.

It was reported that next year, teaching would not start until 10.00am on a Tuesday. This will give staff time every week to attend staff meetings and work on teaching and learning developments.

13. Collection of Student Destination Data (PIAP Priority No. 4)

CIC/19/1/12, Report on Student 'Actual' Destinations for the 2017-18 cohort, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Curriculum, Delivery and Performance. Governors were reminded that the College has a legal obligation to collect 'intended destinations' for funded learners at the end of each academic year. The College is very good at collecting this data and last year had intended destination data for 99% of students. Ofsted Inspectors challenged the College to go beyond the legal obligation and collect actual destination data for students. Actual destination data is easily collected for students who re-enrolled at the College or on a UCC programme for 2018-2019. The College also receives a report from UCAS for students who when on to university. The College looked at different ways of collecting actual destination data for those students who did not re-enrol at Colchester Institute or go into higher education. In early November the duty managers carried out a telephone survey, and in March the College emailed all 2017-18 funded students for whom there was not a known actual destination and for whom there was a valid email address. The College was pleased with the 20% response rate to the email survey.

Governors asked how other colleges collect destination data and were advised that many use an external agency. Governors supported the decision of the College Executive not to make further efforts to collect actual destinations for 2017-18 leavers. For next year the College will email leavers during late September when there is still a strong link to the College and they are more likely to respond.

14. Update on One Year Strategic Action Plan

CIC/CQ/19/2/13, Update on One Year Strategic Action Plan – sections 1 and 2, was received and presented by the Principal. Governors noted Plethat good progress was being made in all areas.

15. Review of Progress Against PIAP Not Covered Elsewhere

15.1. Management Communications and Meetings (Priority No. 6)

CIC/CQ/19/2/14, Update on progress against PIAP Section 6, was received and presented by the Principal. It was reported that good progress had been made in reviewing the management structure and management communication and a different approach to management meetings was about to be launched. The Colchester Institute Meetings Structure (May 2019) was noted. The new structure will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

15.2. Other Issues (section 7)

CIC/CQ/19/2/15, Update on progress against PIAP Section 7, was received and presented by the Principal. It was noted that progress was mixed on the four areas for improvement in Section 7 of the PIAP. Further work needs to be undertaken on how to engage part time adult learners in British Values.

16. Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Statement

CIC/CQ/19/2/16, Student Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Statement, was received,

considered and APPROVED. The statement sets out the referral routes and opportunities available within the College to support students' emotional wellbeing and mental health, and includes an action plan to improve processes next year. It was reported that the action plan was predicted on the successful recruitment to a vacant welfare adviser position.

Governors noted that approximately 100 staff had successfully completed a mental health first aid training course to increase their knowledge, confidence and awareness of emotional wellbeing and mental health. It was reported that an analysis of the people who have undertaken the qualification shows that there is a lot of coverage in some areas of the College and none in others. In particular, no one from the area of Construction or Engineering has been trained to date, although statistically young men are more likely to be at risk of suicide. The College is looking to target areas where no staff have volunteered to complete the course.

The Lead Governor for Safeguarding welcomed the statement as a good summary of what the College is doing and asked if there was a requirement for an associated policy on suicide. The Vice Principal: Student Services and Support responded that Essex County Council recently undertook a thematic review of child suicide after nine suicides over a one year period. She would like to look at the outcomes of that review and areas of good practice and integrate something within this statement document .

17. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 25th June 2019 at 4.30pm.

18. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There Corporation Chair thanked the College Executive for the quality of the documentation received for this meeting, which led to a high level of debate. .