

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 25th June 2019
at the Sheepen Road Campus

Present

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

In Attendance

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 David Gronland.

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

None.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2019 (CIC/CQ/19/3/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

5. **Access and Participation Plan**

The Dean of Higher Education reported that the draft Access and Participation Plan (CIC/CQ/19/3/2) was taking longer to assemble than expected, and would be circulated to Committee members for feedback and approval for submission to the Office for Students (OfS) the following week. He then gave Governors an overview of what would be in the Plan.

It was reported that the Plan would be a 15-20 page document, setting out the College's commitment to improve the education opportunities and achievements for under-represented groups in education. Five groups have been defined by the OfS and UCC has identified a sixth focus group which features strongly in its student body:

- i. Those living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or lower socioeconomic status groups.
- ii. Those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups
- iii. Mature students
- iv. Those with disability status
- v. Care leavers
- vi. Single parents (not set out by OfS)

The Plan will be a public document covering the next five years, and needs to set out what the College intends to do to address these five groups and how it will be financed. If there is a change

to the course fee structure after it is published due to a change in Government policy (recent announcements suggested that fees could potentially be lowered by £1500) then every provider will need to review and update what it has committed to in their plans.

In respect of the five groups defined by OfS:

- the College already recruits a lot of mature students and does not wish to commit to increasing the number of students admitted, but has identified a problem with the number of students continuing on their programme, particularly from year 1 to year 2. The College needs to look at what makes mature students drop out at the end of the first year and what can be done to address it.
- the data on care leavers is not currently accurate enough for the College to be able to make a commitment at this time.

The Dean of Higher Education summarised the proposed commitments and the rationale for them. These include a 2% year on year increase in recruitment in lower participation areas, and a 1% year on year increase for students who commute. The OfS is likely to reject these targets as not ambitious enough and the College will need to have the underpinning data to support these targets.

Governors were concerned to note that there are varying definitions for what constitutes a care leaver. It was confirmed that the Plan will be evidence based, referencing academic reports and government papers as appropriate, and setting out what the College understands the terms used to mean.

It was reported that the Plan has to be submitted by early July, but the OfS has not committed to a timeframe for processing the Plans and informing providers of what changes they required to be made. In response to a question it was confirmed that the Plan would be checked against the demographic data for the local area.

Governors asked what information the College holds on these under-represented student groups. It was reported that the College has information on achievement rates, but other data may not be accurate where there is a reliance on students to self-declare, such as care leavers. Of the five groups, care leavers do not regard that information as important or do not wish to disclose it.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that Asian and Black students are the highest achieving group in Essex secondary schools. Increasing the representation of this group at the College will be a challenge as these students are more likely to go to the sixth form college or school sixth forms.

The financial commitment was discussed. The Dean of Higher Education reported that he was proposing between £200k and £250k over the period of the plan, which includes some existing on-going expenditure. When the plan takes effect in September/October 2020 this expenditure will need to be monitored against particular categories. Two phases are proposed. The first two years will involve a data collection exercise, and performance will be measured during final three years of the plan. Governors asked what the College would be measured against and were advised that it is for each institution to set their own starting point, but the OfS want to see an ambitious commitment.

The final Plan will be a fifteen page narrative document with four appendices of data sets. In response to a question it was confirmed that the Plan will address the local demographic provision, the College's data and the achievements gaps for each of the five areas.

The final draft Plan will be emailed to Committee member for comment and approval for submission to the OfS.

The Dean of Higher Education was thanked for his presentation.

6. UCC Update

CIC/CQ/19/3/3, UCC Update, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality.

It was noted that as a result of quality concerns and administrative difficulties the subcontracting arrangement with the OLC partnership is being allowed to run out with no new starts.

It was reported that there is a potential risk in respect of the subcontracting arrangement with VLUK, now that their collaboration with the College in respect of FE provision is to cease. In seeking a new partner for its FE provision VLUK could potentially seek a new partner for its HE as well. VLUK already works with a number of FE providers, so the risk was thought to be low.

It was reported that applications were slightly down on the previous year. This was anticipated given the decreasing demographic over the last few years. The College is in a transition period as it moves to a new validating partner, and is in the process of validating new and updating existing programmes. The College did not expect to see an increase in applications until the programmes are moved to the University of East Anglia; this should be completed by the start of next year.

The College started a new course in computer games at the beginning of this year which is doing well in terms of applications. There are a good number of applications for the new degree in Policing, particularly through internal progression. Governors asked what had changed to result in the increase in internal progression and were advised that FE tutors and Area Heads are working much more closely with and engaging with their HE colleagues and doing joint work, taster workshops etc.

Governors asked if the curriculum was now right or whether further changes needed to be looked at. It was reported that the curriculum is under constant review and new programmes will be introduced over the next three to four years. The College is trying to respond to the market and is working with VLUK on sports coaching and management, where there is a natural market and few close competitors. The College has also introduced an Engineering top-up degree to meet employer demand.

The College has received formal notification of a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) inspection in the autumn term. Colchester Institute will be one of the first providers to be reviewed under the new inspection regime. The College will need to submit evidence by 18th October, and a panel of up to four people, including a student ambassador, will visit the College during week commencing 18th November. Further detail will be brought to the October meeting of this Committee. The Dean of Higher Education has asked his Link Governor Terry Smyth to be present during the visit, representing the Board.

7. Progress against Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)

CIC/CQ/19/3/4, Overview of progress against the Post Inspection Action Plan, was received and presented by the Principal. Governors noted that work was progressing on all seven areas, assisted by a successful SCIF (Strategic College Improvement Fund) bid.

8. Current Performance including final predictions for year-end outcomes

8.1. Education Programmes for Young People

CIC/CQ/19/3/5, Current Year Performance – Study Programmes, was received and considered. The Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance reported that at the time the paper was produced, Area Heads were still producing their final predictions for the year. Governors were updated with the final predictions for achievements for all ages and all qualifications against the national achievement rates for the courses that Colchester Institute delivers. A number of Areas

were doing very well (90%+) including Art and Design and Beauty Therapy. The overall predicted achievement rate for 2018/19 was 88.5% compared to 81% in the previous year. The adjusted achievement rate (the Area Heads estimate adjusted according to how accurate their predictions were last year) was 88%. This assumes the same degree of accuracy by every Area Head as last year. It was noted that last year, the headline achievement rates for local colleges with an Ofsted grade 2 were typically between 85% and 87%. An overall achievement rate of 86- 88% would put Colchester Institute in the norm for grade 2 colleges.

It was noted that the introduction of British Values was a success. The predicted achievement rate for main qualifications (excluding English and maths [GCSEs and Functional Skills] and small qualifications [British Values and Learning Curve]) is 86-87% compared to 83.5% last year. The overall national averages for all colleges including small qualifications is 86%.

It was reported that the April predictions suggested there would be quite an improvement in English and maths progress scores this year, but this needs to be viewed cautiously in the light of previous performance. Governors asked if there would be an improvement on the previous year. It was reported that with the introduction of banding of students this year, there is the possibility that more grade 3 students will get a grade 4, which will count as +1 progress score. A small improvement in Functional Skills is expected, but the number of students taking Functional Skills is reduced and comparatively small.

Governors asked about the performance of adult learners and learners with high needs. It was reported that at the last prediction round high needs learners were marginally ahead of the College as a whole, although the group is small (59 learners). Predicted outcomes for adult learners are in line with national averages for the qualifications that we offer, but there are some risks. Accountancy is predicting 70% achievement, which is down on last year but still ahead of the national average. The biggest area of concern is ESOL, which has 447 entrants. The leadership in ESOL were predicting achievement rates of 96% at Easter, which was not accepted as accurate by the College Management; predicted achievement rates are now down at around 80% although this may improve. The examination board for ESOL has been moved to one which will allow resits within 48 hours. The change of examination board means that papers are now marked internally rather than externally which has highlighted weaknesses and tutors recognise from this process that they may need to change their teaching strategy.

It was reported that performance has improved notably in Early Years, Motor Vehicle and Painting and Decorating, the weakest performing subjects in 2017-18..

8.2. Apprenticeships

CIC/CQ/19/3/6, Current Year Performance – Apprenticeships, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. It was reported that the introduction of robust individual action plans has resulted in some improvements in the previously reported difficulties in terms of retention and Functional Skills. The best case achievement rate was reported as 72.3% compared to 73.7% in the previous year, although the students currently at risk (45) could bring the final achievement rate down (worst case 67.8%). The College expects to exceed the national achievement rate for timely achievement. It was reported that the areas for action were very similar to the previous years.

It was reported that a new Functional Skills Manager had recently been appointed and is having a positive impact, and a new member of staff would be starting in August. The delivery plans have been revamped and monitoring systems are in place for every single learner. Two groups had achieved 100% success the previous week.

Governors noted that the issues that were impacting on performance appeared to be outside the control of the College, such as employer actions, but asked if there were also things that the College

was not doing as well as it could. It was reported that the College is working to improve communication between employers and their apprentices and the staff in the College. The areas of the College that are very good at this pick up and address issues early. The other area the College is working to improve is the standard of reviews. Again, some areas do this extremely well and go out to speak to learners and give them feedback on what they need to do next.

Kevin Prince left the meeting.

8.3. **Adult Learning Programmes**

CIC/CQ/19/3/7, Current Year Performance – Adult Learners, was received and considered. The Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement reported that there is likely to be an improvement on last year's achievement rate of 85%.

8.4. **Vulnerable Learners**

CIC/CQ/19/3/8, Current Year Performance – Vulnerable Learners, was received and presented by the Principal. It was reported that the best performing group was high needs students, with retention, attendance and predicted achievement rates in line with, or better than, the whole College. Governors asked about the performance of young carers and were advised that the College has data for nine vulnerable learner categories, including young carers, but the numbers are so low it is difficult to look at percentages. Governors asked about qualitative data for this group and the Principal agreed to include some comments in the next report to this Committee.

9. **Principal's Report June 2019**

CIC/CQ/19/3/9, Principal's Report June 2019, was received and noted.

10. **Students' Union**

10.1. **Students' Union Annual Report 2018/10**

CIC/CQ/19/2/8, Students' Union Annual Report 2018-19, was received, considered and accepted. Governors commented that it was not a positive report. Arising from the discussion it was reported that very few students engage with the Students' Union. Of the 4000 16-18 learners attending the College, no more than 100 attend the Student Zone, which is why the College took the decision to do something different with that area next year. The lack of engagement with the Union may be because students are able to participate in enrichment activities associated with their courses, such as visits, trips and charitable and entrepreneurial activities.

10.2. **Students' Union Constitution – FE**

CIC/CQ/19/3/11, draft FE Students' Union Constitution, was received. The Clerk reported that prior to the meeting she had received an email from the SU President and Student Governor raising concerns about the process which he wished to be brought to the attention of the Committee. The Principal outlined the context to the concerns raised by the Student Governor, which were partly around the adequacy of the consultation on the proposed changes.

It was reported that the driver for the proposed changes was mainly financial, and the need to find significant savings on the salary line going into 2019/20. The College identified that two of the three roles supporting the SU could be removed. This would mean reducing the range, remit and work of the SU and the SU Officers. At the same time, one of the conditions arising from the University of East Anglia's validation event was that the College should establish a separate HE Students' Union. The current SU budget has to be divided between the two Unions. This was a sensitive and difficult situation and the College was not able to discuss confidential staff information with the students whilst it was going through an HR process. By the time the proposals were presented to the SU, they were seen as a fait accompli. The students did provide extensive feedback on the proposed job descriptions, and many changes were made as a result.

The Committee agreed that they needed time to reflect on the concerns raised by the Student Governor and give a considered view before recommending the changes to the Board. It was agreed that the Principal would follow this up with the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support outside the meeting and then the Committee Chair would take a view on whether to recommend the proposed constitution to the Board for approval.

10.3. Students' Union Constitution –HE

CIC/AC/19/3/12, draft UCC Students' Union Constitution, was received and considered. The Constitution represented an amended version of the proposed FE SU Constitution, updated to reflect the higher education context. The Committee approved the Constitution for recommendation to the Board.

11. Academic Targets 2019/20

CIC/CQ/19/3/13, College Targets 2019/20 – Academic – FE, Apprenticeship and HE, was received and considered. It was reported that the Corporation Chair had identified that one or two of the KPIs were also in the PIAP but were not consistent for 2019/20. The Principal recommended that where there is inconsistency the targets in the PIAP, which was written in December 2018, are brought in line with these targets, which are more recent. This was supported by the Committee.

The Principal reported that she wished to change the proposed target for joint achievement (all qualifications, all learners, all ages – including maths and English and British Values) (86%) because it was not sufficiently aspirational and should be at least 88% based on current year data to date. This was supported by the Committee.

It was reported that the Corporation Chair would like to see a separate target for Grade 3 to Grade 4 in English and math. The targets from the PIAP (27% for English and 25% for maths) will be added to the paper.

Governors noted that no target had been proposed for the percentage of teaching sessions in which learners made good or better progress, and questioned this. It was reported that because the observations are no longer graded the College is looking at a RAG rated measurement based on a set of criteria including observations, learning walks, success rates etc. This needs to be developed.

Subject to the above changes, the College Targets 2019/20 were approved for recommendation to the Board.

12. Revisions to Committee Terms of Reference

CIC/CQ/19/2/10, proposed revisions to the Curriculum and Quality Committee Terms of Reference, were received, considered and approved for submission to the Board.

13. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday, 13th November 2019 at 4.30pm.

14. Any Other Urgent Business - There were no items.

PART II

These minutes are not confidential but the supporting papers are confidential

15. Part II Minutes

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2019 (CIC/CQ/19/3/15) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

16. Safeguarding and Single Central Record Report

CIC/CQ/19/3/16, Safeguarding and Single Central Record Report, was received and noted. It was noted that the two reports would be brought together into one report from September 2019. The

Designated Governor with responsibility for safeguarding reported that he would be interested in seeing data on how many students appear in the data more than once.