

Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee  
held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019  
at the Sheepen Road Campus

**Present**

David Gask, in the Chair  
Alison Andreas  
David Gronland

Kevin Prince  
Terry Smyth

**In Attendance**

Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
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 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (CIC/CQ/19/4/1) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

4.1. **Access and Participation Plan**

The Committee asked for an update on the current status of the Higher Education Access and Participation Plan. It was reported that it is an iterative process, and that the Academic Board had considered the second round of feedback from the Office for Students (OfS), asking for adjustments to the targets, earlier that day. The Plan commits the College to more financial investment than has previously been the case from September 2020. The OfS will be monitoring very closely what the College is spending on different aspects of the HE provision.

The targets are quite a stretch and will involve more outreach work and marketing, but it is believed that they are realistic and deliverable.

4.2. **High Level Performance Targets**

It was confirmed that a target for the percentage of students moving from a Grade 3 to Grade 4 in maths and English had been agreed. Work on how to measure the observation profile is ongoing and should be in place shortly. It is difficult because the actual observation process is very developmental this year and is not graded. A paper will be provided to the next Board meeting summarising findings this term.

4.3. **FE and HE Student's Unions**

It was reported that a President and Vice President of the FE Students' Union had been appointed following a by-election at the start of the autumn term. There has been some slippage in the

election timetable for the appointment of officers to the HE Students' Union, which were due to held at the beginning of November.

## 5. **Draft SAR 2018-19 and revised QIP/PIAP 2019-20**

### 5.1. **Draft SAR 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/19/4/2, draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2018-19 was received and considered. The SAR had been written having regard to the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which the College will be judged against. Governors asked if there is a prescribed format for the SAR and were advised that there is no guidance or template to work from. There is no regulatory requirement to produce a SAR, but it is a very useful internal document and important in the event of an Ofsted inspection. Senior managers confirmed that it had been a useful, reflective, process pulling the SAR together in this new format.

Governors agreed that the SAR was a great improvement on previous SARs, being much more focussed and succinct. It was reported that the College had received feedback on the quality of the SAR and whether the judgements match the data, from an ex HMI.

The new EIF has a very different approach and is broader than just outcomes, which the College has tried to reflect in the SAR. Governors felt that the intent of the curriculum came through very strongly in the document.

The grades were discussed. It was reported that, because of the dip in success rates, the Senior Leadership had debated the grading for apprenticeships at length, but taking into account the intent and implementation, and emerging evidence that nationally rates are likely to fall, felt that the provision is Good. Nationally there is likely to be a dip in success rates because the new Standards are more difficult to achieve than the old Frameworks. Achievement rates at Colchester Institute were 71% for Frameworks and around 60% for Standards, which meant overall outcomes were significantly below the previous year's outcomes, which were very good. Although it is disappointing that the results were lower, there are a lot of strengths within the provision, and the outcomes in themselves do not warrant a view that the provision is not good. It is recognised that there are things that can be improved.

Governors asked for the section *Introduction to the College* to be strengthened by including some detail on the size of the local population and the community that the College serves.

It was reported that Ofsted guidance suggests that if one of the major descriptors is graded 3, then the overall grade will be a 3. However reports that are being published of inspections under the new framework show that that is not necessarily the case if other aspects are graded 2.

Governors questioned whether the terms "most curriculum delivery teams" and the "vast majority" were too open ended and needed to be more specific. College management accepted that it was not a strong descriptor, but it is difficult to be more precise, and it is the language often used in Ofsted reports. Using the quality of teaching and learning as an example, the College could not specifically state that teaching is good in 15 curriculum areas, but is not good in five curriculum areas, because good teaching is found across the whole College.

Governors asked about data on observations, and where it is evidenced in the SAR that the College has processes in place that will sustain the improvement in outcomes achieved last year. Governors' attention was drawn to the teaching and learning observation data table in the section on quality of education. The biggest change introduced last year was the instigation of the progress checking and reviews process, which links to teaching and learning. Where teachers have an awareness of the progress that learners are making, they are able to take action and alter the teaching in year to meet

the needs of the students. Governors suggested that more emphasis should be given to the impact of the progress checks in the SAR.

Governors asked for some commentary to be added to contextualise the observations data in Appendix 18. Arising from the discussion it was reported that a large proportion of the observations had been undertaken early in the year before the Ofsted Inspection. The observation process was then adjusted during the year, making it difficult to draw conclusions on impact. Although the system was changed during the year, the observation form was not changed last year because some observations had been undertaken under the old categories. A different observation form is being used this year, based on the CI7 work. The College will be able to identify the proportion of sessions that demonstrate good impact.

An additional paper, which had been incorporated into the latest draft of the SAR, was tabled and accepted.

Governors noted that the College has lower results for English and maths than many other colleges and needs to do better. Governors asked if outcomes in these subjects were linked to attendance. It was reported that attendance is one of the contributory factors. The achievement rate is sound, but the College needs to convert more students from a Grade 3 to 4, and there is no clear pattern that students with a Grade 3 who attend well achieve a Grade 4. It was noted that of the reports published so far under the new EIF, maths and English are the only subjects that are specifically mentioned.

Governors noted that social disadvantage is only mentioned under Intent in respect of high needs, and asked for something to be added under the Intent section to set out how the College deals with social disadvantage as one of its aims.

Governors observed that the SAR started off strongly, but the writing style changed towards the end with more use of the passive voice. The College Management was asked to keep this in mind when reviewing and updating the draft document.

Subject to the SAR being updated with consideration given to the suggestions above, the Committee agreed to recommend the Self-Assessment Report 2018-19 to the Board for approval.

## **5.2. Update on PIAP Targets 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/19/4/3, Update on PIAP Targets 2018-19, was received and considered. It was noted that that College had set some ambitious and quite challenging targets. The College had focused on timely achievement in apprenticeships in the PIAP because overall achievement was strong, and did not achieve either of the targets for apprenticeships.

Governors noted a stunning jump in performance last year. The targets were ambitious and the College is far stronger in relation to national averages, which in some provision types are being driven up by a different cohort than the cohorts at Colchester Institute.

## **6. Compliments and Complaints 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/19/4/4, Compliments and Complaints 2018-19, was received and considered. The number and spread of complaints received was in line with previous years. There were no concerns to bring to the attention of the Committee.

Governors asked about the complaints under staff attitude and were advised that these were usually to do with a student objecting to a process or procedure or something that happened in the class.

It was reported that some complaints can take up a considerable amount of staff time. A new category was introduced last year to try and reduce the amount of time spent on dealing with

vexatious complaints. Two to three vexatious complaints are received each year, and can be very time consuming. In some cases, complainants email multiple members of staff, and are asked to communicate with a nominated member of staff to help the College deal with the concerns more quickly. In two situations it was necessary to set up a bespoke inbox to receive correspondence from the complainants.

#### **7. Learner Surveys – NSS (National Student Survey) analysis 2018-19**

CIC/CQ/19/4/5, NSS (National Student Survey) Analysis 2018/19, was received and presented by the Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality. It was noted that only final year higher education students complete the survey. As only a small number of students complete the survey (circa 130 in 2018-19) the results can fluctuate considerably year on year. The College has focussed on teaching, learning and assessment over the last two years, and it was pleasing to see positive outcomes in these areas. The outcomes for organisation and management and learning resources were down on the previous year. There were specific issues relating to staffing in two areas which impacted on the results. These issues have now been resolved. The outcomes for student voice were also down on the previous year. Three years ago the UCC had a specific Student Experience post to maximise feedback to students. This post was removed two years ago as part of a cost saving exercise. There is a recognised system in place for providing feedback through student representatives, but it is not effective for all students. As part of the arrangements for the new HE Students' Union, a new post has been put in place which it is hoped will target students as a body.

Governors noted that Construction and Engineering had been merged with Business and IT and asked if this was making a real difference. It was reported that the head of school had left recently and student numbers did not warrant the appointment of a new head of school. The number of students on IT has been reducing, and management students are mainly degree apprentices.

Arising from the discussion, Governors agreed that it would be helpful to be circulated with updated structure charts at the beginning of each year.

#### **8. Start of Year updates**

As the first internal monitoring meetings of the year have not yet taken place, it was agreed that for this meeting only, oral updates, rather than papers, would be used to inform governors of current progress against each provision type.

##### **8.1. Education Programmes for Young People**

It was reported that it had been a satisfactory start to the year. Retention and attendance was similar to the same period last year in almost every subject area. The exception is in GCSEs where attendance has increased from around 70% to nearly 80%; it remains to be seen whether this can be sustained. In the past, November attendance rates have been sustained across the year.

Teaching staff have just completed progress checks on behaviour, skills and knowledge. These are being checked by Area Heads, and the data will be discussed at Curriculum Monitoring Meetings (CMMs) to be held during week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> November. The data so far suggests that it will be a sound year.

The College is working with Tom Sherrington on the quality of teaching. Lesson observations and learning walks suggest that there is good engagement from staff with these new ideas, but the quality of the implementation is, as would be expected, variable. Governors asked if staff are involved in role play with some of these techniques. It was reported that the CPD is being taken forward by Heads of Area and this involves a range of techniques.

Governors asked about attendance at maths and English classes. It was reported that Area Heads had identified 60 individuals who were not complying and were talking to parents. Some students and parents had responded positively to a letter from the Principal, reducing this number to about

40. Ten parents have indicated that they will come to the scheduled meeting to discuss this. The intention is that Area Heads will be following this up, and more names could come off the list as a result.

## 8.2. **Apprenticeships**

It was reported that there had been a good start to the year in terms of enrolments. About 500 learners have been enrolled, with a further 80 in the process of being signed up, against a target for the year of 715. Enrolments are slightly down on where they were profiled to be at the end of November (620). There is one less group than anticipated in plumbing and a dip in enrolments in Business, IT and accountancy. Plumbing traditionally starts in September, but the College is working with that area to see whether another group can be run in the New Year. It was understood that the plumbing team almost had the numbers for another cohort. There does not seem to be a particular reason for the dip in plumbing.

There is a lot of competition in Business, IT and Accountancy. Some competitors offer an online accountancy programme, and the College is planning to introduce an online programme, with the students coming into the College for certain elements.

It was reported that there is a lot more engagement with levy paying employers than previously. Small companies are going to be put on to the same digital accounts system from September 2020, and this is currently being piloted.

CIBS (CI Business Solutions) recently merged with the Apprenticeship Department and is being headed up by Amanda Drew, Director of Apprenticeships and Business Solutions. Early signs are that closer working between these two areas will be very positive, and will improve communications between employers and the College.

## 8.3. **Adult Learning Programmes**

There has been a good start to the year with £1.8m of the £2.4m budget committed, with a number still to enrol. The College is slightly down against the target for the Learning Shops, and is closely monitoring ESOL. Attendance for adult learners is 88% and retention is 98%. There are no particular areas of concern at this stage.

## 8.4. **Vulnerable Learners**

The College has a relatively small number of vulnerable learners. These groups are now on Scorecard enabling curriculum staff to identify students in their area. The curriculum monitoring meetings being held during week commencing 18 November will be able to look at individual students and what the College is doing to support this group of students.

The other large group, which needs to be broken down into subgroups, are learners who have ticked a box on the enrolment form to say that they have a learning difficulty of disability (LDD). The College is working closely with the apprenticeship team to target support at apprentices who have disclosed a LDD and are at risk.

As part of the SCIF (Strategic College Improvement Fund) the College is taking forward a piece of work around improving additional learning support.

## 9. **Approach to Quality Assurance/Improvement for 2019-20 including process for Teaching and Learning Observations**

CIC/CQ/19/4/6, Quality Improvement Strategy, was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality, Teaching and Learning. The documents pulled together two previous guides and several policies within the Orange Folder. The Committee welcomed the document as a good oversight, but felt that the coverage on learner voice was a bit thin. It was reported that the HE Academic Board looks at the learner engagement strategy.

10. **Governor Learning Walks**

CIC/CQ/19/4/7, Governor Learning Walks, was received and noted. The paper summarised the comments and reactions of Governors who participated in the learning walks on 9<sup>th</sup> October. It was agreed that the process is very good at giving Governors an insight into what is going on and there is an expectation that all governors should participate. The next Learning walks are on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 11.00am to 1.00pm. The Committee thanked the leadership team for their participation in the walks.

11. **Principal's Report – November 2019**

CIC/CQ/19/4/8, Principal's Report November 2019, was received and noted. It was very early in the year to be reporting against the key performance indicators. It was reported that the final version of the AoC manifesto, which was not too different to the draft, had now been published and could be accessed via the link in the report.

It was reported that Governors are attending both of the ETF workshops for Governors in December (Understanding Sector, Policy and Inspection on 5<sup>th</sup> December and Teaching, Learning and Assessment on 6 December).

The next FE Commissioners Diagnostic Assessment monitoring visit will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Some Governors will be involved during the visit.

The December Board meeting will be held at the Braintree campus, providing Governors with an opportunity to tour the new facilities.

12. **One Year Strategic Action Plan, revised for 2020 – (Priorities 1-2)**

CIC/CQ/19/4/9, One year action plan (19/20) to meet Strategic Plan priorities (2017-20), was received and noted. This is the third year of the three year plan and some of the actions have been discharged. In line with other plans it has been made more succinct, and thereby more effectively monitored.

13. **UCC Validation Update**

CIC/CQ/19/4/10, UCC Validation Update, was received and noted. About half the programmes have now been validated by the University of East Anglia with further validations scheduled from the end of November through to April 2020. The programmes still with the University of Essex are being run out.

The partnership arrangement with the University of Huddersfield for initial teacher training provision has changed from a franchised model to a validated model. Governors asked what the practical implications of this change were and were advised that the College has more autonomy in terms of the delivery arrangement than under the franchised model.

The College will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency on 18<sup>th</sup> November. One of the sessions with the panel will involve representatives from the University of Essex and the University of East Anglia.

14. **OfS – Compliance with Regularity Deadlines**

CIC/CQ/19/4/11, OfS – Regulatory Deadlines, was received and discussed. It was noted that the financial penalty for missed deadlines could be significant (£0.5m).

Governors noted that the College had missed two deadlines. The Unistats deadline was missed by five minutes. The College contacted the OfS immediately but they were unwilling to offer any assistance. The second missed deadline was in respect of the QAA payment, but it was unclear when this fee was supposed to be paid.

Governors recognised the seriousness of the missed deadlines and asked the College Executive to put in place processes in the line with the recommendations in the paper to ensure this does not happen again:

- OFS deadlines where the Accountable Officer is required to upload, or sign off submissions, to be reviewed for availability of the Accountable Officer and where possible brought forward internally by at least 24 hours.
- QAA, OFS and HESA to be noted as preferred suppliers, with invoices processed swiftly by all.

15. **Policy Review**

CIC/CQ/19/4/12, updated Safeguarding Policy, was received, considered and approved for recommendation to the Board. The changes, which were in line with statutory guidance and best practice, were not significant.

16. **Link Visit Reports 2019**

The Committee received and noted the following link visit reports:

- 16.1. CIC/CQ/19/4/13 – English – Liz Goodall
- 16.2. CIC/CQ/19/4/14 – Higher Education – Terry Smyth
- 16.3. CIC/CQ/19/4/15 – Work-Based Learning – David Gronland
- 16.4. CIC/CQ/19/4/16 – Safeguarding/Prevent/Welfare – Terry Smyth
- 16.5. CIC/CQ/19/4/17 – College-wide events – Terry Smyth
- 16.6. CIC/CQ/19/4/18 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment – David Gask

17. **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 4.30pm.

18. **Any Other Urgent Business**

The Corporation Chair expressed his thanks to David Gask for chairing this Committee for a number of years and for his hard work on behalf of the College.