Colchester Institute Corporation

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 21 April 2022

Present

Kevin Prince, in the Chair	Angela O'Donoghue
Alison Andreas	Kevin Prince
Peter Cook	Jenny Thorpe
Brenda Rich	

In Attendance

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

Angela O'Donoghue was welcomed to her first meeting of the Committee.

1.   **Apologies for Absence**
      Apologies for absence were received from Olive Campbell-Lilo, Aron Leader and Terry Smyth.

2.   **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**
      None

3.   **Agreement to Starred Agenda Items**
      Members were invited to indicate any items which they wished to star for discussion or question. No additional items were starred.

4.   **Minutes**
      The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 (CIC/CQ/22/2/1) were received and approved as an accurate record.

5.   **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

5.1. **Quality Framework Strategy**
      CIC/CQ/22/2/2, updated section 8 (Monitoring Learner Progress: Predicting Grades and Progress Checks) of the Quality Framework Strategy, was received and noted. It was reported that, as requested at the last meeting, the section had been updated to clarify the target setting process.

6.   **Curriculum and Quality Update Report**
      CIC/CQ/22/2/3, Curriculum and Quality Update Report, was received and noted.

      The Committee challenged the Executive on the Progress Check scores, questioning whether amber 6 was the appropriate ranking for students making expected progress against a challenging target. The Executive responded that when the system had been
      put in place amber 6 was selected as it was top of the midpoint, but accepted that amber could be perceived as a student not consistently meeting their target. It was agreed to review the ranking for the new academic year.

A member expressed surprised at the high levels of attendance and questioned whether the overall attendance figure was masking lower attendance in some areas. It was reported that attendance rates, which did not include attendance at English and maths, had been at 90% until after Christmas and was now at 88%. The level of attendance at GCSE resits was about 75%.

The Committee asked about target setting and progress monitoring for apprentices. It was reported that progress is monitored every six weeks. Overall, the first time pass rate for End Point Assessments is very high.

Asked to summarise the key points and areas of concern, the Executive Vice Principal reported that:

- students on Study Programmes were where they should be, and the majority were expected to achieve as well as they could. The concern was around public examinations which were new to so many of them.
- Apprenticeships were more of a risk. The main concerns were keeping the learning on track, supporting them in their employment, and ensuring the End Point Assessment was scheduled in a timely way.
- Adults were on track, with no particular issues that that not been addressed. The area of most concern was the Learning Shops.
- Overall things were progressing well. Absences due to Covid had not had a huge impact, and students were catching up, with staff support.

It was noted that the exam results in January were good. It was reported that the students who had taken examinations in January were largely Level 3, with some Level 2 students. The vast majority of students that would be taking GCSE examinations in the summer would be Level 1 and Level 2, many of whom would not have taken public examinations previously. This year 52% of all entrants have some form of access arrangements which is a challenge for the College.   The GCSE resits would account for 28% of all results and are therefore a statistical risk to overall achievement rates.

The Committee asked for an update on the embedding of English development in vocational areas. It was reported that the College continues to work toward this. The Committee's attention was drawn to the report on the Teaching and Learning Student Survey 2021/22, where it was noted that the scores for the question "feedback on your written work helps you improve your basic English skills" had gone down compared to the results in 2019/20. It was noted that there was a wide range of scores amongst curriculum areas with very low scores in two areas. It was reported that a lot of learners had scored that question 100%.   The Committee's attention was also drawn to the actions in the Quality Improvement Plan, including a programme to support those new to teaching which includes introducing them to teaching English and maths in vocational areas. What had also been planned, but not yet commenced, was a programme of staff CPD to train everyone. The English and maths team were also providing a support.

The Committee said it would be helpful if future Curriculum and Quality update reports included:

- attendance for English and maths,
- retention and attendance data for the prior year to enable Governors to monitor if the College was doing better than previously.
- The grade profile and first time pass rate for End Point Assessments.

7. **Teaching and Learning Survey 2021-22**
CIC/CQ/22/2/4, Teaching and Learning Survey 2021-22 (February – March 2022), was received and noted.

The Committee questioned the Executive on some lower scores in the area of Access, Health and Social Care, and Science and were advised that these were associated with the impact of staff shortages in the Science team which had now been resolved.

In response to a question on how the results of the student survey are used, it was reported that each Area Head receives the data and student comments for their area. In some instances, areas have already put in place improvements and decided to undertake a repeat survey to measure what impact they have had. All areas are asked to report back to Curriculum Monitoring Meetings on action that has been taken and to reflect on the survey for their self-assessment.

Asked about any areas of surprise in the results, it was reported that the Executive had been pleasantly surprised at the high levels of student awareness on Prevent, safeguarding, and online safety.

The Committee said that it would be easier to monitor progress from previous surveys if future reports presented comparison data in graphical form (such as bar charts).

8. **Safeguarding Report**
CIC/CQ/22/2/7, Safeguarding Report, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support. It was reported that in a two month period there had been 40% increase in the number of cases that the Safeguarding and Welfare Team were dealing with. The cases of most concern continued to be related to mental health, particularly students who have suicidal thoughts. A Member commented that the number of mental health cases appeared low and was advised that cases are recorded against the most prominent category, and other recorded cases may include mental health concerns.

The Committee was concerned at the number of mental health cases and asked if there was anything more that the College could be doing to support students in this situation but was not due to lack of resources. It was reported that a range of support was in place. An additional 1.5 FTE appointment to Safeguarding and Welfare Team which had been approved as a fixed term appointment for this academic year had now been made permanent. A Team from WARMS (Wellbeing and Resilience Mental Health Service) was also working at the campus. Representatives from the College and Colchester Sixth Form College would shortly be meeting with the MP for Colchester to brief him on the issues and the impact on staff resources of supporting students with needs which should be dealt with by other agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services).

The Committee challenged the targets for mandatory training, questioning why the targets were not 100%. It was reported that the targets were believed to be realistic and achievable. Within the 5% tolerance were staff on maternity leave, long-term sickness absence and new starts. The high turnover of staff AT AROUND 19%) ,meant that a higher than usual number of people were within the first few weeks of their employment. Also, one of the providers of an online training package only provides data on completion rates on a monthly basis and this has to be manually entered into the system meaning that there is a lag in completions showing in the data. Members asked if new appointees were asked to complete mandatory training before they start as part of getting ready to start. It was reported that this had been discussed but there were concerns at giving people who are not employees access to College systems. Where packages are held on external platforms it would be possible to ask people to complete training before they join.

The Committee suggested that including percentages as well as number of cases might provide more accurate comparative data.

9. **Principal's Report**
CIC/CQ/22/2/6, Principal's Report – April 2022, was received and noted.

10. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020/21**
    CIC/CQ/22/2/8, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (EDI) Report, was received and considered.

    The Committee:

    - noted the inconsistent use of numbers and percentages in the profile data and suggested either using both or keeping to just numbers or percentages.
    - that the staffing profile was very different to the applicant profile and suggested that this was considered further.
    - were surprised that the report did not comment on the outcomes for students or the impact of any action plan.
    - asked who the report was aimed at and suggested making it a more interesting and representative document by adding stories and photographs to illustrate what the College does about EDI. Alternatively, it was recommended that there are two reports; one a public facing document for the website, and a separate, easy to read document for internal use.

    ACTION: the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement was asked to review the report in line with the feedback from the Committee.

The Principal, Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance and Vice Principal: Student Services and Support left the meeting to participate in a student event at the Braintree campus.

11. **Update on Progress Against Quality Improvement Plan**
    CIC/CQ/22/1/5, Update on Progress against Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), was received and presented by the Assistant Principal: Quality and Teaching and Learning Improvement. The Committee questioned the Executive on whether all the actions would be achieved and if they would have the expected impact on teaching and learning. It was reported that the College was on track; but a large number of actions were still at the point where it was not possible to say with certainty that they were going to be achieved. One area of concern was the completion of 'GAP' work placement hours. The Committee commented that the QIP was too diverse, and Governors could not easily identify the priority areas and the actions that would have most impact. It was reported that originally the intention had been to focus on three to four main topics. The decision was then taken to have actions for every section of the EIF (Education Inspection Framework) and what could be improved on more in readiness for an Ofsted Inspection.

12. **Update on Strategic Plan One Year Action Plan**
    CIC/CQ/22/2/9, Update on Strategic Plan Goals, was received and noted.

13. **Review of Meeting**
    The Committee considered:

    - Items/papers to be reported to the Board: Curriculum and Quality Report; Safeguarding Report
    - Items to be treated confidentially: - none
    - Effectiveness of meeting and potential areas for improvement:
    - Feedback on papers: as discussed during the meeting

14. **Date of Next Meeting**
    There will be a virtual meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee on Wednesday, 29 June 2022 at 4.30pm.

15. **Any Other Urgent Business**
    There were no items