

The College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee
3 March 2010 – 10.00 am Board Room

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|------------------|-----------------|--|
| Present | Kate Atherton | Chair |
| | Paul Cotton | |
| | David Pomfret | Principal |
| Attending | Spencer Cranmer | Staff Governor |
| | Andrew England | Head of Organisational Development and Quality |
| | Arlene Clark | Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning |
| | Hilary Reid | Clerk to the Corporation |

1 Apologies

Di Atkinson.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting – 2 December 2009

The Minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2009 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

(i) Page 3 item 4 – Self Assessment Report

The Principal confirmed that governors' thanks had been reported in CWA Scene.

(ii) Page 3 item 5 – Induction Survey September 2009

It was confirmed that the courses which had not responded to the survey had been identified by the Head of Organisational Development and Quality. The responses from approximately 20 courses had been overlooked by the new member of staff responsible for the data input. The inclusion of additional data had not materially affected the outcome reported to the last meeting of the Committee.

As a result of the limited value of the survey last year, the annual Student Survey had been replaced. SMT had agreed to take a different approach and a temporary appointment had been made (an ex Head of Faculty) who was now undertaking a series of surveys with targeted questions and running focus groups. The results had been excellent and, if deemed to be effective, would be replicated for the Induction Survey.

Interim details of responses would be reported to the next meeting.

Action: AE

The views of part-time student groups were to be targeted in the September survey.

(iii) Page 4 item 6 – Complaints

It was confirmed that the new website contained a link to "complaints" and was now established. There were also opportunities to record compliments.

4 Curriculum Area Review – Faculty of Creative Arts

The Head of the Faculty of Creative Arts, Jayne Walpole, made a presentation to the Committee, supported by Powerpoint, which addressed performance within the Faculty, focussing on areas that were considered problematic and outlining the actions being taken to mitigate identified weaknesses.

(i) Hair and Beauty

This area had been graded 3, down from 1 in the last academic year. Overall success rates had declined by 8% over three years from 85% to 77%, 2% lower than the national benchmark.

The following factors affecting the grading were:

- New qualification specification changes
- Skills levels
- Size of the course footprint
- Staffing level issues
- Data management, ie no opportunity to transfer students to a lower qualification

Key strengths had been identified as:

- Success rates for the majority of courses were above benchmark
- High apprenticeship standards and success with assessors in the workplace
- Session observations were 3% above the national benchmark
- The use of ILT and resources was very good
- Well-trained workforce
- Positive verifier reports

Key weaknesses had been identified and action taken to improve. Highlighted were:

- Retention rates last year were 84% - at mid-year review retention was 93%
- Data collection for apprenticeships – retention had improved
- Teaching and learning – feedback from observations indicated improvements
- Difficulty in recruiting apprentices – a new course had been established for September at Isle
- Intervention meetings with course teams and Programme Manager

The improvement focus was across the whole Faculty. A rigorous approach to learners' packages and experience was being taken. Course Directors were taking the lead and responsibility for all qualifications. There was confidence that the grade could be improved in the short to medium term.

(ii) Art and Design

This area had been graded 2, down from 1 the previous two years. Although data was 3% above the national benchmark there had been a drop in teaching observations. Weaknesses included retention, teaching strategies, some weak course management and insufficient resources.

(iii) Performing Arts, Music and Media

The area had been graded from 2 down to 3 this year because of weaknesses similar to those identified for Art and Design. A range of strengths were identified which included

success rates, achievements above National standards in some courses, high quality teaching and learning and improvements in management/leadership.

(iv) Hospitality

This area had improved considerably and had been upgraded to 1 from the previous year's grade 2. Overall success rates of 92% were achieved, 11% above the national benchmark; retention achieved 93%. Good practice within the Faculty was being shared across the College.

Weaknesses within the new team continued to be addressed but this was a strong grade 1 area.

In conclusion the Head of Faculty reported ways in which strengths across the Faculty were being maintained and how, through constant monitoring and development of strategies, weaknesses were being addressed and good practice was being shared.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended the achievements of the Faculty.

Noted.

Jayne Walpole left the meeting at 10.55 am.

5 Key Messages on College Performance in 2008-09

(i) Higher Education Provision

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality tabled a paper containing data from Anglia Ruskin University sources providing a trend analysis of enrolment on all HE programmes from 2006-07 onwards and performance data for 2008-09.

He advised that, overall, success rates were positive, many courses achieving 100%. However, there was concern about the level of achievement in DTLLS at 74%. This year HE recruitment targets had been met for the first time and it was disappointing to find growth being restricted by capping. Universities were to be subject to heavy penalties if they over-recruited for 2010/11.

The Principal added that the College would wish to see growth next year and remained in dialogue with the University about targets and with HEFCE about the proposed university centre. He advised that HEFCE were unable to fund the initiative currently.

The current position was noted.

(ii) Self Assessment Report (SAR KQ1)

The Executive Director of Curriculum and Learning presented a summary of the Key Question 1 Self Assessment Report and highlighted the following points:

- Overall success rates had risen beyond the 2006/07 level to 80% in 2008/09
- Success rates at King's Lynn Campus were up by 1% to 83%
- Success rates at Isle had risen by 5% to 78%
- Milton success rates had dropped by 8% to 70%
- Success rates at Wisbech rose to 79%
- Key Skills had dropped below the 2006/07 level but remained above national average with the differences between campuses narrowing

- Female success rates were slightly better than male (by 3%)
- White success rates were slightly better than ethnic (by 1%)
- Students declaring a disability/learning difficulty were slightly better than those without or not declaring (by 3%)
- Work based learning was generally very good

The Committee noted the improvement in overall performance.

6 Self Assessment Report for 2008-09 (KQ 2-5 and Table of Grades)

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented KQ2 to KQ5 from the Self Assessment Report for 2008-09 and a full list of final grades across the College.

He noted that KQ2, KQ3 and KQ4 had been graded 1. Despite success rates rising to higher levels than at inspection, there remained issues in leadership and management (KQ5) and grade 2 had been awarded

The Principal explained there had been specific reasons for the decision to award grade 2 to KQ5. These were declining financial health; inability to resolve on-going accommodation issues; first half year issues around MIS and quality of management information and data; some inconsistency in the quality of leadership and management across the College.

In summarising the table of grades across the College, the Head of Organisational Development and Quality commented that overall performance of the College remained strong, noting that 13 chapters in the SAR were grade 1, 9 had moved up, 10 had moved down, and 22 areas remained the same. He emphasised the importance of equality and diversity and safeguarding and how critical they were in achieving grade 1 or 2 on the overall effectiveness rate of the College.

Noted.

7 Equality and Diversity Self Assessment Report (SAR)

On behalf of the Executive Director, Partnerships, the Head of Organisational Development and Quality reported on the Equality and Diversity SAR. He reiterated the importance Ofsted placed on this grade and that it was a limiting grade.

Governors commented on the slightly negative responses of the Bangladeshi students highlighted in earlier survey data and agreed that some follow-up work was warranted. The reduction in enrolment numbers was queried. The Principal advised that adult funding had been cut significantly and fewer learners were being supported. However, work-based learning off-campus was offsetting this fall.

The Chair suggested that the changing face of the College might become a subject for discussion at a pre-Corporation meeting briefing. **Agreed. Action: DP**

The report was noted.

8 Current Interventions

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented a paper summarising current type 1 interventions in the College.

(a) Agriculture, Horticulture and Countryside

Restructure in 2009 had a major, negative impact on this area. Previous improvement dropped and performance was very poor, graded 3. Inexperienced staff, poor data management and student behaviour problems coupled with complex challenges presented by the new building triggered intervention. Robust actions had been undertaken and others planned to raise the grade to beyond satisfactory.

(b) Engineering (Norfolk) Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning

Although learner performance had improved significantly, restructure in 2009 impacted on the area. Staffing levels were reduced and a new management structure put in place. Although current performance levels were acceptable, there remained some significant work to be undertaken and intervention activity was on-going.

(c) Motor Vehicle (Norfolk) Apprenticeship/Work Based Learning

This area had been placed in intervention because of some poor assessment and performance outcomes. Performance in College was good under the direct control of the Course Director but there were problems with external work based assessment of the framework NVQ. A range of performance improving action had been put in place.

The report was noted.

9 Complaints Received from December 2009 to February 2010

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality reported there had been an increase in the number of complaints received in the period under review, with slightly more arising from King's Lynn than previously, a reduction from Isle and the number staying the same for Land Based. Comments and questions were invited from the Committee. These were noted as follows:

- The same themes arose over time – on-course management/administration, IT and general management/administration – and was of concern
- The number of incidents of ripped trousers on chairs was queried. Property Services Staff had investigated a number of chairs with jagged edges.
- The loss of students due to winter weather. Inappropriate accommodation for assessment purposes and the workshop issues had contributed to students' decisions to leave.

The Chair requested linkages between focus groups and complaints in order to better understand the reasons for the repetitive themes and to facilitate appropriate remedies.

The report was noted.

10 Any Other Business

None.

11 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- SAR and Equality and Diversity
- Interventions

12 Date and time of next Meeting

Wednesday, 26 May 2010 at 10.00 am.

The meeting closed at 12.10 pm