

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

Present	Paul Cotton David Pomfret Spencer Cranmer	Acting Chair Principal
Attending	Andrew England Andrew Gedge Glen Singleton Rochelle Woodcock	Head of Organisational Development and Quality Head of Faculty – Public Services and Landbased (part) Director of Resources (part) Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Arlene Clark Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting – 26 May 2010

The Minutes of the meeting of 26 May 2010 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Vice Chair.

3 Matters Arising

- (i) Page 3, Item 5 – AE confirmed that the College Charter had been distributed.
- (ii) Page 5, Item 10 – DP advised that a full review of performance against Priority Objectives will be presented to the Board meeting next month.
- (iii) Page 7, Item 12 – AE advised that the Quality Policy and Quality Strategy will be presented to the Board meeting next month. He confirmed that a discussion around the differentiation between 'complaints' and 'issues' had been held with the Principal and it had been decided to continue with the current system.

4 Curriculum Area Review – Faculty of Public Services and Landbased

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality referred governors to the report, indicating the SAR grades awarded for provision in this Faculty over the past 3 years, which ranged from Grade 3 to Grade 1.

The Head of Faculty, Andrew Gedge, made a presentation to the Committee, supported by Power point and a handout. The presentation addressed strong performance within the Faculty and outlined the actions being taken to mitigate identified weaknesses.

(i) Sport

Sport was graded 2 in the 2008/09 SAR, but is expected to achieve a grade 1 in the 2009/10 SAR. It has seen a significant increase in its high grade pass rate and retention has improved. This area has also been working in collaboration with the Thomas Clarkson Community College and the King's Lynn Academy.

(ii) Uniformed Services

Uniformed Services was graded 2 in 08/09 and, over the past four years, has consistently improved. It is a high performing area.

PC asked if any follow up was carried out on students on completion of their course.

AG advised that this has become increasingly important and that Funders are looking not only at numbers that enter employment but also at soft outcomes, such as personal development.

(iii) Animal Care/Equine

This area was graded 1 in 08/09 and has consistently performed at a high level. Recruitment on equine has increased, despite the closure of the Wisbech facility.

(iv) Ag/Hort/Countryside

This area represents a small, specialist provision and was graded 3 in 2008/09. The 2009/10 position continues to raise concerns. A target was set 2 years ago to increase recruitment and performance, but the subsequent staffing restructure impacted negatively on performance. A number of interventions have taken place over the past 2 years to up-skill staff, and this has had considerable success with some in the early stages. Recruitment has improved recently, giving more viable group sizes, but performance is not improving. Course duration has been changed to one year, to aid success/achievement rates. Recruitment of good quality staff remains problematic.

PC enquired whether there is an opportunity to out-source this type of provision.

AG advised that this would be difficult and that a number of colleges are struggling with the same problem currently.

SC asked the nature of the staffing problems encountered, and what support was provided to staff.

AG advised that staff are often recruited from industry, with the need to then develop teaching skills and attain qualifications, which causes new staff to struggle at times, particularly in a small team which lacks the strength to support a new teacher. The Learning Practice has also provided support, but it is important to ensure that a good application and selection process is in place.

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality affirmed that a radical rethink was needed on how to address the problems in this area.

Further challenges, which would form the focus of the 2009/10 SAR, were to reduce the variation in performance between different teams and campuses delivering the same programmes. Early indications are that there are some outstanding Level 3 performances, but overall retention has dipped slightly, which may be linked to the new funding regime.

The Principal commented that there is a real sense of direction, in terms of the use of data to inform practice and drive performance, by the management team, aided by improved facilities for data management/production.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Head of Faculty and his staff.

The report was noted.

Andrew Gedge left the meeting at 10.40 am.

5 Complaints received May 2010 – September 2010

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality summarised key aspects, relating to complaints from May 2010 to September 2010. A total of 41 complaints had been received during the period, the most (53.6%), being from the largest campus at King's Lynn. For the first time ever, the number of complaints from Landbased was higher than that of Isle campus. This will need to be monitored to see whether the trend continues.

A list of all complaints in the period was included in the report, and governors comments/questions were invited.

PC asked for further clarification around the circumstances and resolution of two specific complaints (693, 695), which was provided by the Head of Organisational Development and Quality.

SC observed that there were quite a number of complaints around internet access and IT.

AE advised that there were fewer than in the past, particularly in light of more recent problems, but possibly more students were currently aware that management are dealing with the issues as they arise. He also noted a growing concern around complaints related to the administration of interviewing and allocation of places on courses.

The report was noted.

6 Summary of Complaints received 2009-10

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the summary report of complaints for the year 2009-10. A total of 196 complaints had been received, representing the highest number since the merger. Trends indicated an increase in numbers of complaints at the Kings Lynn campus, a decrease at Isle campus and a significant increase at the Milton campus (possibly reflecting the increase in the number of students at this campus).

The Principal reported that two complaints had gone through the full complaints process to external appeal to the SFA. One complaint had been closed, and affirmed the decision of the college; the second one is still to be closed by the SFA. Such actions support the message that the college is willing to make tough and appropriate decisions to support staff.

The report was noted.

7 Hearing the Student Voice (results)

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the report and set the context for the pilot. He advised that, in previous years, a major student survey had been conducted half way through the year, which had been very costly. Last year, it had been decided to do something different and a pilot was run, led by a retired Head of Faculty, Trish Bailey, which included focus groups and small scale surveys. Her report outlined the background to the pilot and summarised outcomes of surveys conducted. This also ensures compliance with Ofsted requirements. The headline data indicated that percentages tended to be lower, compared with the QDP method, which may require further investigation.

The Principal asked how many surveys had been completed.

AE advised that 478 students had been canvassed.

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality referred to the outcomes from the FE focus groups, on Page 3 of the report, and advised that the concerns listed are currently being addressed. Posters are to be displayed: You told us / What we are doing about it. HE students have also been canvassed.

PC noted that there was a problem with class representative meetings not being effective.

SC asked if issues could be discussed at tutorials.

AE reported that the meetings had been redesigned to make them more structured. Class representatives were being asked to discuss issues with tutor groups and then come back to management with their views. It is also hoped to hold a student conference in February 2011.

PC commented that pages 10 & 11 made reference to a number of complaints, in the Public Services and Landbased area, which would appear to have not received a response. He also highlighted a worrying report on page 16 regarding theft of personal items in the Hospitality area.

AE advised that it would have been most unusual for complaints not to have been responded to as the complaints system is very robust. Occasionally complaints are received without names and addresses, so a response is not possible, although the complaint will have been investigated. In terms of the reported theft, he stated that sometimes issues are raised through the focus groups that have not been raised elsewhere. Issues raised at focus groups are reported back to the Faculty Manager and management acts swiftly to deal with all such matters.

In conclusion, the Head of Organisational Development and Quality, highlighted the advantages of the new system, compared with the QDP, in that feedback to management is received throughout the year; different questions can be asked as needed, and resources are more channelled and effective.

The report was noted.

8 Observations 2009-10

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the report summarising the grades awarded for all observations of teaching and learning undertaken in 2009-10. He confirmed that the outcome was extremely pleasing, with 84% of sessions observed graded 1 or 2, compared with the national average of 72.1% (BW Consultants). He advised that there may be an element of inflation in the figures but, overall, they were still good.

PC asked if tutors are given advanced notice of an observation.

AE advised that there is usually a two day or six session observation window, which may lead to some positive skewing in results.

An action plan has been implemented to include the following:

- Training all managers in moderation of observations to ensure accuracy of grade awarded;
- BW Consultants engaged to peer observe and assist with training;
- Continue work with Lincoln and Peterborough colleges on cross-moderation;
- Training observation team – 2/3 sessions per year, including how to give feedback;
- Continue work of the Learning Practice to up-skill staff.

The report was noted.

Glen Singleton joined the meeting at 11.30 am.

9 **ILT Strategy - Performance Report**

The Director of Resources introduced the ILT Performance Report and summarised that work over the summer had not achieved all that had been hoped, which had impacted on the performance and reliability of the network at the start of the new term.

Issues which have arisen included:

- Wisbech Landbased site – problems with band width, compounded by increased student numbers on site this year. A temporary solution is being put in place to allow limited internet connection and local computer access. Longer term solutions include increasing band width, putting in an accelerator between sites and reviewing in-house set up of servers/systems.
- Isle campus – communication issue between IT services and Isle, which the Head of IT is currently working to resolve. There have also been problems with the activation of student ID cards, which allow access to network accounts, and loss of network drives associated with storage issues.

The issues have arisen due to problems with advice from the Consultant, and delays in scripting the programmes that tie systems together, which has now been re-scheduled.

PC asked about cloud computing and if any services were being considered for out-sourcing.

GS stated that this was being done, in part, eg student email accounts.

SC commented on the frustration felt by staff and students at the current situation.

GS advised that additional resources are being put in place ie, the help desk, and that the situation is gradually improving with log in etc, but some individual PC's still need to be re-configured. New hardware is expected on 5 October, which will take 2 days to commission, and will run alongside the current system.

The report was noted.

Glen Singleton left the meeting at 11.45 am.

10 **Teaching and Learning Policy**

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality explained that there is an expectation that the college should have a policy which describes the college's approach to teaching and learning. A draft of a proposed policy and guidance was presented for comment.

The report was noted.

11 **ISO 9001 Annual Review (b/f from meeting 26 May 2010)**

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality re-presented the Annual review of the ISO 9001 (2000) Quality Management System, discussed at the previous meeting of the committee, which had subsequently become inoperative.

Paul Cotton proposed, seconded by Spencer Cranmer, to recommend to the Board adoption of the Quality Policy. Agreed.

12 Safeguarding Child/Vulnerable Adult Policy

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the Safeguarding Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy on behalf of the Executive Director of Partnerships. The policy contained two changes:

- Updating of job title (2.2)
- An addition regarding reporting to the local safeguarding board (3.4.7)

PC suggested that it would be clearer if the four main elements to the policy could be listed together on page 1.

Action AE to discuss with JF

Spencer Cranmer proposed, seconded by Paul Cotton that, subject to this minor amendment, the policy be recommended to the Board for adoption. Agreed unanimously.

13 Equality & Diversity – Equality Policy, Equality Scheme, Action Plan

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented the Single Equality Scheme and Policy on behalf of the Executive Director of Partnerships. He highlighted sections on impact assessment and specific equality duties.

PC suggested that the statement entitled 'Intention', currently on the last page of the Single Equality Scheme document should be given greater prominence and moved to the beginning.

Action AE to discuss with JF

David Pomfret proposed, seconded by Paul Cotton that, subject to this minor amendment, the policy be recommended to the Board for adoption. Agreed unanimously.

The Principal advised that, disappointingly, one wheelchair bound student had not been accommodated on a creative arts course, due to problems in providing a safe evacuation due to his health problems. Alternative options had been explored with him, including courses at alternative colleges.

14 Any Other Business

The Chair advised that, due to the current ongoing risk of inaccuracy, Sandy Willatt has agreed to serve on the PR&Q committee for a temporary period commencing in December.

The Principal stated that a recruitment drive for new governors is currently underway which he hoped would help the situation.

15 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Faculty report – Public Services and Landbased
- Complaints review
- Hearing the student voice
- IT situation
- Quality Policy and Strategy
- Safeguarding and Equality

16 Date and time of next Meeting

Wednesday, 1 December 2010 at 10.00 am.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm