

The College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee
17 December 2008 – 10.00 am Board Room

Present	Paul Cotton	Chair
	Di Atkinson	
	Chris Barnes	
	Cheri Crosley	
	Roger Ward	
	David Pomfret	Principal
Attending	Andrew England	Head of Organisational Development and Quality
	Arlene Clark	Executive Director, Curriculum and Learning
	Glen Singleton	Assistant Principal, E-Learning (part)
	Hilary Reid	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Kate Atherton.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting – 8 October 2008

The Minutes of the meeting of 8 October 2008 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

(i) Page 3 – item 7 Complaints (Student Survey)

The new questions for the Student Survey had been received and action would be taken to incorporate questioning regarding specific clusters of complaints as requested at the last meeting.

4 Report on Teaching and Learning ILT Developments

The Assistant Principal, E-Learning, referred governors to his detailed report and provided an overview highlighting the following points:

- The range of investments made in the IT infrastructure as part of the College's ILT Strategy: Core switches, Storage Area Network, and Server Virtualisation
- The visit to Queen Margaret's University, Edinburgh – a new build project similar to the College's new build plans. As a result of this and other visits and additional research, SMT had agreed to a proposal to move forward and investigate specific Thin Client hardware and software technology.

- An Enterprise Workstream Tender had been prepared by PTS inviting pre-qualified suppliers to review the College's operational requirements and to propose an Active Directory Technical design, a Netware Migration plan and a Server Virtualisation plan.
- Three projects within the context of classroom provision of ILT –
 - (i) Staff training and further installation of interactive whiteboards in teaching rooms.
 - (ii) JISC 0808: £200k funding had been secured to establish an Internet TV Station. Project Manager and a Project Technician had been appointed and were to take up the posts in early January 2009.
 - (iii) MOLENET: £90k funding to support the development of the use of mobile technologies.
- The College had been “Highly Commended” at the AoC Beacon Awards for its work in ILT in Maths.

In response to queries, Governors were advised that a strategic decision had been made to provide PCs rather than laptops in order to ensure a consistent, secure environment for staff and because it was a more cost effective and sustainable option. Further, that it was hoped the JISC project would be successful and continue beyond the initial funding stage.

The report was noted.

Glen Singleton left the meeting at 10.20 am.

5 Self Assessment Report (SAR) for 2007-2008

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality (HoOD&Q) introduced the SAR for 2007-2008. He explained that, overall, there was a slight downturn in student performance principally as a result of key skills. However, key skills remained well above national benchmark. It was noted that in January Ofsted were to undertake a desk-top analysis of the College.

The Committee reviewed each of the SARs presented and the comments of the HoOD&Q, Principal and Executive Director were noted as follows:

(i) Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Grade 1. Despite a drop in success rates it remained significantly above national average. The re-structure of the NVQ programme into two separate one-year programmes should have a positive impact on retention.

(ii) Business, Management and Administration

Grade 3 – down from Grade 2 the previous year. Success rates were down from 76% to 69% and a number of programmes were subject to intervention. Programme offer within Accounts was being reviewed.

(iii) Sport, Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Pursuits

Grade 1. Success rates were 89%, well above national benchmark - a high quality department.

(iv) Maths and Science

Grade overall: 2, with subsidiary grades; Maths 1; Science 3. Maths was an outstanding area but Science needed to improve in a number of subject areas where performance had fallen significantly, particularly on AS/A2 courses. Wider partnerships with schools in Fenland were being explored.

(v) Agriculture, Horticulture and Countryside Management

Grade 3. A slight drop in performance had been recorded – the success rate was down from 73% to 70%. The number of starts had also fallen. Agriculture and Countryside Management were in intervention and it was felt the SAR grade could soon be improved. Retention for 2008-09 was positive. Other land-based areas had remained Grade 1.

(vi) Performing Arts, Music and Media

Grade 2. SMT believed this area was nearing Grade 1. Session observations had moved significantly above the national average and the overall success rate was up over the previous year.

(vii) Engineering

Grade 3 (Grade 2 2006-07). The number of starts had significantly increased from 584 to 858 this year. The overall success rate had declined from 79% to 71% but remained above benchmark. There had been a 13% drop in success rates for key skills performance which had impacted significantly on the overall grade and on the overall College performance.

(viii) Foundation Studies

Grade 3 (Grade 2 2006-07). In-year enrolments and technical changes had impacted on the outcome. The LSC ceased awarding certificates for units within courses part way through the year. The Head of Faculty believed success rate would improve in the current year. Retention rates were high at 95%.

(ix) Key Q1 – How well do Learners Achieve?

- SMT were to finalise the grade for overall performance on 9 January 2009. The College recognised that performance had slipped and had down-graded KQ1 from 1 to 2. KQ1 highlights where improvements are needed.
- Success rates for whole College qualifications were down from 81% to 78% this year (81% to 80% excluding key skills); there was a 5% dip in success rates for long qualifications 16-18 (4% excluding key skills); for Level 1 a 6% dip and slightly less at Level 2.
- By campus, success rates at King's Lynn remained high at 83%, 11% above those at Isle. Success rates at Milton rose by 1% to 78% and those at Wisbech remained stable at 75%.

(x) Key Q2 – How effective are Teaching, Training and Learning

The data in this section had been considered at the previous meeting.

(xi) Key Q3 and Q4 – How well do Programmes and Activities meet the needs and interests of Learners/How well are Learners Guided and Supported

Both areas had been graded 1 at inspection and remained at that level.

(xii) Work Based Learning

This area had improved markedly over 5 years and was now graded 1. The WBL team had been recognised at the 2008 Staff Awards for driving up standards and credit was also due to the Faculty of Technology for the part it had played in achieving this success.

(xiii) Learning Resources

Although there were still some issues to be addressed, learning resource centres, print room and the ILT unit remained Grade 2.

(xiv) Health and Safety

This area had been upgraded from 3 to 2. Some significant work was being undertaken and new approaches were being adopted around quality audits. The Staff Awards had recognised the work of the Health and Safety staff for the second year running.

(xv) Quality

Overall provision remained grade 1.

(xvi) Key Q5 – Leadership and Management

Grade 1/2. SMT were to review on 9 January 2009.

(xvii) Every Child Matters

Grade 1 – upgraded from 2 the previous year. Inspection found overall provision grade 1 and evidence had not changed.

(xviii) Finance

Grade 1 – maintained from the previous year.

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality concluded his report and explained that the complete SAR would be uploaded to the LSC's website on Friday, 19 December 2008; that any changes after 9 January 2009 would be uploaded; and, that the typographical errors identified would be corrected beforehand.

The Committee noted the report and agreed:

- (a) An Executive Summary of the SAR would be presented to the Board at the next meeting on 11 March 2009**
- (b) The Leadership and Management SAR would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 4 March 2009.**

6 Complaints received from September 2008 to December 2008

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality presented details of the complaints received from September to December 2008. He was asked to delete references to individual students who could be identified in the report.

In summary, the HoOD&Q reported 37 complaints, the majority of which came from the Isle Campus. The complaints were to be considered at the next meeting of the Isle Managers.

Of the 37 complaints 11 were concerned with issues related to on-course administration/management, but it was important to note they were varied and represented a range of issues.

Governors sought, and were given, further information on complaints numbered 395 and 408.

Governors were pleased to note the low level of complaints and that there were no significant issues arising.

The report was noted.

Roger Ward left the meeting at 11.50 am.

7 Student Induction Survey September 2008

The Head of Organisational Development and Quality reported on the outcomes of the Student Induction Survey held in September 2008. He commented that the results were broadly in line with last year. 89% of students rated the induction process good or very good compared with 90% in 2007 and 81% in 2006.

A governor asked whether student representatives were consulted on the questions used and what feedback had been received. The Principal/HoOD&Q would check with the Executive Director, Customer Services and Cambridgeshire Liaison. **Action: DP/AE**

It was noted that 96% of students had received a course handbook, up from 90% in 2007.

Response to the survey, only completed by full-time students, had been high at 90%.

The report was noted.

8 Any Other Business

None.

9 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- SAR
- ILT Developments
- Complaints – numbers reducing/less serious
- Student Induction Survey

10 Date and time of next Meeting

4 March 2009, 10.00 am.

The meeting closed at 12 noon