

BARNSELY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 APRIL 2018

PRESENT	N Bowen	Governor (Chair)
	S Perryman	Governor
	D Shepherd	Governor
	C Moss	Governor
	C Webb	Principal
	R Wood	Governor (FE Student)
	E Hodgson	Governor (HE Student)
	R Hooley	Governor (Staff)
IN ATTENDANCE	A J Oaks	Clerk to the Board
	Y Koursis	Deputy Principal (to Minute 17.96)
	L Leek	VP Curriculum
	L Copley	Dean of UCB

APOLOGIES

18.18 There were no apologies.

18.19 D Shepherd and C Moss participated in the meeting by teleconferencing.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

18.20 The Chair reminded members of the requirement to declare any financial or personal interests in any agenda items. Members reserved the right to declare any interests should any arise during the course of the meeting.

MINUTES

18.21 The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

18.22 The Committee received a list of actions arising from previous meetings noting only one outstanding action which was addressed by Item 8 of the Agenda.

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT RATES

18.24 The Principal made a presentation to the Committee summarising the College's performance compared to other Colleges in the region following publication of the National Achievement Rates. The achievement rates for all students at the end of 16/18 in 2017 were summarised in the following: A Level performance, Tech Level performance, Applied General Qualifications performance. Data was also provided for Level 2 vocational performance and Technical Certificate performance at the end of 16 to 18 in 2018; and Student Destinations for all students who left in 2015 after 16 to 18 study were summarised. Further graphical presentation was provided to show how the College compared to national averages for all levels and also timely Apprenticeships.

18.24 The College had performed very well, although it was below the national average in attainment in the Sixth Form. The Chair commented that it was important to understand the reasons for this in order to assess performance, particularly when comparing the

College with its geographical neighbours rather than nationally. He added that it was important to look at comparative data and aspire to improve the achievement rates. In Tech level performance the College had performed well with average grades of 341 entrants being distinctions. In terms of the Technical Certificate and going forwards in a transitional year, the college had performed very well and was in the top 10% of colleges nationally. The Principal was aware that more work was required around student destinations but emphasised that the data was 2015 and that the College had made significant progress in 2016/17/18.

- 18.25 Governors raised questions about the destination data, which showed that 9% of students were not staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after their study, and 4% were unknown destinations. The Principal explained that the College would continue to invest in sound advice and guidance in order to help sustain students in the right employment. He added that a high proportion of the 4% were disadvantaged students who had dropped out of the course. He spoke of other work the College was undertaking to provide life skills to students through Project Connect the aims of which was to mirror the behaviours expected by employers. Another project, 'More and Better Jobs' was also securing outcomes for adults and examples were provided, such as the work with ASOS. Members were informed that the College was revamping its Project Connect for rolling out in September with a view to embedding positive behaviours. The VP Curriculum, who had oversight of the project commented that it would align to the More and Better Jobs strategy.
- 18.26 Referring to the graphical representation of the data, the Principal said that whilst the College had always performed highly, the gap was starting to close as other colleges improved, indicated by the comparison with national averages. He assured members that intervention and projects already mentioned were already having a positive impact. In respect of 19+, whilst there had been an increase in achievement rates from 15/16 to 16/17, the College was still behind the NA; this was mainly due to the decline in the Sixth Form last September and GCSE maths and English results. Achievement by level showed the College to be above NA. At Level 3 the decline from 15/16 to 16/17 was attributed to the Sixth Form performance. The Principal stated that in 2017/18 there would be a statistical spike in performance at L3 due to the changes in the way A levels were now delivered. It was noted that the College's policy in respect of L2 GCSE had impacted positively on the achievement rates at L2.

The Chair thanked the Principal for the report.

QUALITY STRATEGIC PILLAR AND BALANCED SCORE CARD

- 18.27 The Principal spoke to the paper. The Committee had received a comprehensive report from the VP Q&SE updating it on progress against the quality strategic goals. In terms of the KPIs within the goal to deliver English and maths outcomes which was rag rated amber, the target for English added value of 0.045 had moved to red. Within the goal to enhance the quality of HE provision, also rag rated amber, the overall student satisfaction target of 75% remained red.
- 18.28 The accompanying report indicated that the goal 'Deliver an outstanding sixth form' had moved from amber to green. The Chair made reference to the summary report which provided a brief explanation of the reason for the improvement, which was a substantial shift from the report at the previous meeting. Responding to Governors who asked for a more detailed explanation of the movement, the Principal explained that it was due to the predicted ALPS scores being much better than had been reported at the last meeting. D Shepherd referred to the statement indicating that the year 13 target had moved to a 5, (which means good to satisfactory) and asked for further clarification around this. The Principal stated that there had been a significant improvement since the December scores were reported and that he believed a grade 5 was conservative at this stage. However he had confidence that this would move to a 4 by the time examinations took place and that

the outcomes overall would be significantly higher than the NA. He added that there was a minimal risk of this having an impact on the College but the College was maintaining its impetus to achieve a target of 3.

- 18.29 The Principal indicated that due to the improving trends, the Sixth Form was clearly on track in its journey to become outstanding. Governors discussed this statement in the context of the information available, and considered whether, based on the information provided, the goal should remain amber until the evidence confirmed the improvement. The Chair and members agreed and accepted that whilst good progress was being made, the goal should remain amber. The Chair informed members that he and the student governor for HE were due to make a second link visit to the Sixth Form on 30 April and would be able to report on progress to the Board in May. S Perryman suggested that a direction of travel arrow within the rag rating may also help identify trends.
- 18.30 Governors discussed the outcomes for English and maths and the actions being taken by management to bring about improvements. A programme manager had been appointed to oversee both subjects, which had already brought about a positive impact. R Hooley made reference to the 'buy in' from Heads of Department to give their HE Provision parity with their FE provision and asked for further information. The Dean of UCB explained that by placing HE pathway leaders in each department it provided a more focused approach in terms of raising the profile of HE which was new to many staff working in FE. The work of the pathway leaders was enabling staff to gain in confidence and with support from the VP Curriculum the work was becoming more embedded. The Principal commented that there had been significant improvement in the student satisfaction for year 1 and 2 due to the intervention from the Dean and the VP Curriculum. The VP Curriculum informed members of the forthcoming Development Week (previously Teachers' Fair) where for the first time there would be a Higher Education strand running alongside other development strands.

The Report was noted and received.

HE UPDATE

- 18.31 The Dean of UCB had been invited to the meeting to present the report to the Committee. The report had been circulated previously to members and highlighted the outcome of the recent Annual Provider Review process for 2016/17 together with arrangements for the forthcoming QAA visit in June. In respect of the latter, the overall aim of the QAA visit was to provide the funding body with an expert judgement about the readiness of the College to enter, or continue to operate within the HE sector.
- 18.32 The Dean reported that the QAA visit would commence on 5 June for three days and that the process would be a desk based exercise. Staff had been well briefed through Teaching and Learning Forums, Whole College management team meetings and additional briefings to HoDs and SMT. A further briefing was due to be given on 25 April. The Dean referred to the Performance Review documentation and the complexity of the information required to be uploaded to QAA by 17 May 2018. Alongside the briefings and collation of information meetings were taking place with students, which included the HE Student governor. It was likely that QAA would want to meet the Chair of the Committee during their visit.
- 18.33 The Principal reported that following HEFCE's visit to the College earlier in the year, a letter was received in February concluding that they would like the College to continue to implement its Action Plan to support improvements in metrics. The letter, which had been copied to the Chair of the Board, confirmed the outcome and was appended to the report for Governors' information. The Principal highlighted the statement within the letter which reminded the Board of its responsibility to ensure that risks were identified and managed effectively. The letter would form part of the evidence being submitted to QAA to demonstrate the academic rigour within the College around HE.

- 18.34 In response to an observation by C Moss in relation to the visit, the Dean of UCB assured the Committee that the visit was part of a four year cycle and was unrelated to the 2016/17 APR and subsequent action plan. In response to further questions the Dean was confident that the College had made sufficient progress with regard to the action plan and specifically the metrics where significant improvements had been identified. She added that the HE surveys conducted in November and March 2018 showed real progress and provided examples of where this had been demonstrated, as indicated in the report to follow on the Agenda.
- 18.35 The Principal remarked that retention was currently high at 99.2% but that as the exam period became closer this may drop. However he was confident that levels would remain high leading to high levels of achievement. Referring to the journey, C Moss raised further questions around the HE data and potential delays in moving towards graduate outcomes, which could be important to QAA. The Principal stated that the VP Funding, Data and Compliance would be better placed to answer the question and that he would be able to provide further information following the meeting.

The Report was noted and received.

HE STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

- 18.36 The Committee received a report summarising an analysis of the March 2018 HE Student Survey. The Chair thanked the Dean of UCB for the update, noting the positive and improved results in the HE student survey. The survey had achieved the objective of providing the group with feedback captured at induction and on stages in the programme. The results had supported the identification of best practice and enabled each department to measure distance travelled from the November survey, identify course level strengths and facilitate timely actions where issues had been highlighted.
- 18.37 The Chair commented that the positive results were pleasing to see.

The Report was noted and received.

HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

- 18.38 The Deputy Principal tabled the report which provided interim findings in respect of the HE Review which had commenced in the autumn of 2017. The aim of the review was to consider the purpose of HE provision, identify any quality issues and address future income growth aspirations. The review had been initiated by the Board following concerns around the quality of performance and achievement of growth. Six recommendations were proposed for the Committee's consideration. In January 2018, an external consultant had joined the HE review group and was commissioned to produce a full report in line with the Board's remit.
- 18.39 The interim findings set out the objectives of the review, the current offer and validating partners and challenges identified. The report alluded to the message given out by the College in its publicity material to prospective students around small class sizes. Small class sizes such as those delivered at the UCB did not allow for the full range of HE experience, particularly group work. The decision to keep fees below the threshold for returns being required OFFA or the OFS could be perceived by students to undervalue their HE experience. In summary, it was suggested that the College might consider its fundamental post Level 3 message as being that of Career Development Programmes rather than HE courses, particularly because internal progression from vocational and applied L3 to L4 was limited.
- 18.40 The Report summarised the College offer and target market and considered the value and benefit of the current validating partners. The consultant had offered several advisory points regarding the College's future relationships with HEIs.

- 18.41 Whilst the Deputy Principal had provided an overview of the recommendations, due to the report being tabled at the meeting, D Shepherd and C Moss who were participating by teleconferencing, were unable to provide a valued contribution. S Perryman proposed that it would be prudent in the circumstances for the Committee to take away the report for consideration and provide feedback at a later stage. The Chair of the Committee agreed, commenting that it was essential to distil the information provided before reaching any conclusions regarding the recommendations.
- 18.41 Given the HE review group was still active, the Principal suggested that governors were welcome to attend the next meeting, particularly C Moss, or for C Moss to undertake a second link visit as soon as possible which would provide essential assurance and confidence to the Board when the final report was presented in July.

RESOLVED 18.42 **that the Committee consider the report and recommendations and provide feedback to the Deputy Principal and Principal as soon as possible.**

C Moss left the meeting.

ANALYSIS OF EV REPORTS

- 18.42 The Committee received a report summarising the outcome of EV reports between September 2017 and March 2018. A total of 20 EM/EV reports had been received, four of which had required an action plan. This compared favourably to the previous year in the same period where 26 reports had been received and 7 action plans had been required. Two of the four requiring action plans were more significant and details of these had been annotated in the report for governors' information. The Chair, acknowledging that the VP Quality and Student Experience was absent proposed he discuss these outside of the meeting to obtain assurance around actions taken to address the issues.
- 18.43 In terms of the remaining reports, the Chair said that it was pleasing to see the issues had been dealt with quickly and satisfactorily.

The report was noted and received.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 18.44 The next meeting would be held on 21 June 2018 at 4.00 pm.

Signed _____ Chair Date _____ 2018