

**BOSTON COLLEGE****MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2020**

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**1. PRESENT**

Daran Bland (Chair), Ruth Catlett, Kate Folling, Claire Foster and Helen Rumbold.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Craig Gosling (Assistant Principal: Performance & Quality) and Vicki Locke (Deputy Principal).

Attendance 100%

**2. ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed the contents of the committee's action log and the progress which had been made against the actions identified. It was noted that there were a couple of additions to be made to the log.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 30 September 2020 were reviewed and approved. Members noted that the training agreed at each meeting of the committee would commence with a presentation during this meeting on the EIF.

**4. SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT POSITION STATEMENT**

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal on the Self-Assessment Report.

Vicki Locke advised members that the SAR would be completed by Friday in line with College SAR timeline. She pointed out that this was an exceptional year which had been skewed by the pandemic affecting the use of national averages and Ofsted's approach to performance. The College is taking a 2-year approach to the SAR which will be submitted to the Corporation. Taking a 2-year approach the College self-assesses as a Grade 2 for 2019/20. For next year's SAR production, it is proposed to have a position statement in November Standard's meeting followed by a validation panel and the summary to the Corporation meeting in December.

Daran Bland commented that although he was new to this it did make sense and Vicki confirmed that this was the first year of production of the SAR against the new framework aligned to the EIF. Due to Covid the College had felt that it would be wrong to look just at 2019-20 data. Daran commented that the College's commitment to ensuring learning is taking place had come across in the information presented and asked which were the more important metrics. A discussion took place about this and it was noted that the full SAR has more information and to make full sense of the evaluation it needs to be followed up by direct contact with Managers and others. The committee was advised that the Search and Governance committee had looked at enhance processes to assist governors understanding of the learner experience which were being embedded.

The committee noted that the production of this self-assessment had been A-typical and agreed to accept the report and approve the approach to self-assessment. The planned approach to the 2020-21 SAR was also approved.

**5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020-21**

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal.

Vicki Locke advised the committee that performance against 2019-20 targets had been affected by Covid so the targets for 2020-21 being proposed also took into consideration national average data where this was available. In response to a question of Daran Bland, it was confirmed that links to the EIF were reflected in the KPIs which had been revised last year to reflect this. What learners are being asked in surveys has also been aligned as have lesson observations.

The committee noted that the indicators for 2020-21 were positive and the proposed KPIs were approved.

## **6. LEARNER SURVEYS (START OF YEAR)**

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Performance and Quality on the learner survey.

Craig Gosling presented information from the report and noted that this survey gave good information on how learners settled into College and how they feel about their experience. There had been a shift in modes of delivery to learners and the College was pleased with feedback on learning. The survey results are reviewed by Managers who address them with their teams.

Daran Bland asked about the numbers responding to the survey. Craig advised that there was a 67% response rate and that emails were used to prompt participation. The participation rate was felt to be quite good by the committee, although the College normally aims for 80% as a minimum.

Daran Bland asked about work experience for learners and Craig advised that in a normal year 100% of learners would participate in external work experience but it would be much reduced this year and is limited at this time to courses where this was a requirement. However learners were instead undertaking work experience activity eg live briefs from employers

A discussion took place about the role of course representatives which was explained by Craig. Claire Foster advised that the responsibilities of course reps included going to the Student Council which meant governors had also been invited to attend. Helen Rumbold is attending a student council meeting this week.

Daran Bland asked about the College's career provision and to what extent the College is measured on destinations. Craig explained that each area looks at progression information. It is early in the year for engagement with the careers service but that should increase over the year. Daran asked whether the careers advice was independent and Craig told members that he was satisfied that the careers team gave impartial advice. Helen Rumbold commented that there is a need to reflect on the unusual times affected by the pandemic and the difficulties of careers advice when the work situation is unclear.

## **7. HIGHER EDUCATION PERFORMANCE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2019-20**

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal.

Vicki Locke explained that this was the HE equivalent of the SAR. She noted that Higher Education learners had suffered less impact from Covid on their learning. This provision was quite small but is a growth area for the College. The committee noted the key strengths and weaknesses in the report including a good relationship with the University of Derby.

A discussion took place about closing the retention gap for learners with disabilities and actions being taken in respect of this were outlined.

Daran Bland asked whether the College was concerned about courses with lower numbers such as Computing and Business. Vicki advised that she was working on this in curriculum

planning and that there would need to be a change in the curriculum offer in Computing. Options which would be more attractive to employers were being reviewed and it was noted that there was a need to grow Level 4 and 5 provision to get a Level 6 in Computing. She confirmed that the College was working to improve the offer in these areas. Claire Foster advised that the Government is looking at more collaboration and partnerships through the recent White Paper and pointed out that the commitment is to have quality provision not exponential growth.

Daran Bland asked whether there had been an analysis of the needs of learners with disabilities and Vicki gave an outline of the main issues for the 33 learners concerned. There is more work to be done and to ensure that these learners achieve more closely so that early intervention happens where there is a risk of non-retention. The committee discussed the need to equip the people delivering courses to respond and support this group of learners.

## **8. TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE**

Members received a report from the Assistant Principal: Performance and Quality on teaching and learning.

Craig Gosling advised the committee that observations had been adapted to allow for the different delivery being undertaken. Classroom visits had been made more informal. There is more work to be done with learners to enable them to talk about curriculum content. It was noted that the College collaboration fund was allowing the College to release for 4 – 5 staff to the development of digital skills in staff and learners.

Daran Bland asked whether observing on-line lessons identified any particular issues such as assessing learner engagement. Craig advised that online learning tends to be a little slower but the staff are using technology to assess learning. A lot of work had been done on assessment methods to evidence that learning is taking place. Helen Rumbold commented that it was good to see how the adaptation was going.

As part of development for the committee Craig gave a presentation on the EIF and quality processes relating to it. Daran commented that in schools a challenge has been getting staff to talk about their contribution to delivering institution priorities. Claire Foster assured the committee that the College was taking a full College approach to being able to explain the rationale of what is being done. Vicki Locke advised that more work was being done with business support areas to identify their contribution to this.

## **9. RISKS**

Vicki Locke advised the committee that there were two key risks identified at this point. The first of these was the impact of Covid. The College is happy with learner feedback but there is concern about the impact of continual lockdown on retention particularly for lower level courses and there is a need to make sure that learners are assessment ready. The second is the reduction in sub-contracting which means that the College's adult delivery needs to have stronger performance to compensate or this will be a risk to the quality of the data.

Daran Bland thanked Vicki and other College managers for the quality of this and the other reports presented to the committee.

## **10. NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be held on 10 February 2021.