

**BOSTON COLLEGE****MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 APRIL 2019**

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**1. PRESENT**

Stephen Brown (Chair), Steve Crozier, Jo Maher, Helen Mather, Chris Pett and Helen Wright

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Craig Gosling (Head of Quality) and Vicki Locke (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality).

Attendance 86%

**2. ACTION LOG**

The committee reviewed progress on the action log.

It was noted that the Ofsted consultation had closed on 5 April. Chris Pett asked if the College was happy with the destination data reported on Apprentices. Vicki Locke confirmed that the figures were good.

**3. MINUTES**

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019 and approved them as a correct record.

Chris Pett asked about the e-portfolio development and whether VITAL is able to do what is needed. Vicki Locke advised that VITAL cannot provide what the College needs and there would be a cost to develop it to do so. The College is continuing to look at other software.

Stephen Brown asked about the Grimsby Institute visit and how useful this had been. Vicki reported that the visit had been interesting and useful although not necessarily in the area which they had gone to review. They had noted that Grimsby Institute has a rigorous performance management process and some interesting practices which the College will look into further. Rachael Baker has also visited Grimsby to look at their Library provision.

**4. 2018-19 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality on the 2018-19 Quality Improvement Plan.

Vicki Locke reported that the vast majority of QIP actions have either been completed or were progressing as planned. Indicators on current retention and in-year progress show that most of the targets are achievable. An exception is raising of retention rates of study programme learners in Hair and Beauty where the retention rate is higher than in 2017-18 but unlikely to reach its target or the National Average. Vicki reported that the College is really pleased with the impact of actions on Apprenticeship and best case achievement is currently 10% above year end position 17/18.

The committee reviewed and discussed progress in some specific areas. On e-portfolios, Vicki advised that a visit had taken place to Cambridge Regional College to look at the preferred choice of software and the College was looking at options for investment in this. Once purchased the College would roll out the system incrementally across the College.

Vicki advised that Craig Gosling is looking at a blended learning award which would assist with achievement of the target relating to preparation for end point assessments. It is likely

that this will not be available until the Autumn term. She advised that progress is being made in developing reports on Adult Learner progress tracking. This was going well but there is still further work to do. Craig Gosling reported that feedback so far had been positive. Vicki also reported that the Head of Learner Services was looking at creation of the new flowcharts on the approach to careers input to learners which would be implemented from September.

With regards to starting point assessments, Vicki advised that the College was working on a Skills Scan for apprenticeships. New ways of monitoring progress against starting point for full-time learners were being looked at to identify distance travelled ready for introduction next year.

Stephen Brown asked if a summary of the roll out of new initiatives could be prepared for the committee as either a flow chart or a Gantt chart. Vicki Locke agreed to produce an appropriate document.

A discussion took place about retention in Hair and Beauty where achievement is expected to be better than last year but retention is not where it needs to be. The College is looking at reasons for learners leaving and has identified a need for a consistency of approach and the quality of the taster event so that learners understand the implications of their course choices. Jo Maher commented on the need to increase expectations and to ensure that standards and requirements are clear from the outset. The College is also looking at ways of ensuring consistency between the two main delivery sites. It is felt that large groups may have had some early impact on retention. Chris Pett asked about employer feedback in Hair and Beauty, Vicki advised that employer feedback was followed up but there had not been anything substantial identified in this. Jo commented on the need to understand the local market and standards and also the presentation of the offer particularly in Boston. In response to a question from Helen Wright, Vicki advised that about 11 learners had left Hair and Beauty after the 6-week qualifying period and probably a similar number earlier than that. The area has been Grade 3 for some time and in terms of developing the physical resources, which the College would like to do, Hair and Beauty is not a priority area for external funding. The College is committed to managing its cashflow currently on other investments but will release resources to assist in this area if funds become available.

Helen Mather queried why Smart Assessor is identified as the preferred option for e-portfolios. Vicki advised that it is very comprehensive, good for off-site use and very flexible. Jo Maher confirmed that this is the market leader. Chris Pett asked about performance in apprenticeships and what the worst case scenario was likely to be. Vicki advised that the College is on track to be above National average.

## **5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018-19**

Members received a report from Vicki Locke on Key Performance Indicators.

Vicki identified areas of performance which were on track or above target as well as those which were currently below target. It was noted that new national averages were now out and the College was looking for its KPIs to outperform these over time. The most significant change in the national averages is in Functional Skills 16-18 performance where there has been a significant increase. Jo Maher advised that the increase is due to changes in the approach to Functional Skills and GCSE enrolments nationally. The committee noted that overall retention was good and observations were going well. The College's focus is now about securing achievements. It was noted that Higher Education and Apprenticeship feedback has improved.

The committee noted that there was still work to be done on attendance particularly in English and maths. Different approaches have been looked at to improve this. Rule changes in this area offer an incentive to improve. In respect of EV reports it was noted that the College was working on ILM and electrical reports but there were lots of EV reports still

to come in. A slight drop in the quality of teaching of full time learners was noted but work experience and long industry placements were going well.

## **6. LEARNER SURVEYS**

Members received a report from Craig Gosling on Higher Education and mid-year surveys.

With regard to the Higher Education survey Craig Gosling reported that the majority of the responses showed improvement. The questions mirror the national student survey and the outcomes were generally positive. It was noted that the College has started using Turnitin software for student work and this is proving very successful. There is still some dissatisfaction about Library provision and the improvements in place to support this. The committee noted the detailed information contained within the report and the actions being taken in response to the feedback received. Chris Pett enquired about the responses to a question on whether the courses were intellectually stimulating and whether learners are being challenged enough. It was felt that this was a question of learner perception and Jo Maher pointed out that there was an issue about what the focus of provision should be. It needs to be challenging but achievable but this might depress enjoyment. The committee agreed that the survey read very positively. Vicki Locke commented that the survey outcomes are pleasing because there are now more areas doing Higher Education and a better and more consistent team approach to it.

With regard to the mid-year learner survey, Craig presented an analysis of the survey responses and the management actions being taken. It was noted that there had been a slight dip in response rates but that this was not significant. 94% of learners would still recommend the College although the survey was not showing as many positive responses as the College would like. Survey outcomes have been discussed with individual managers and in particular work has been carried out with the Engineering team. The end of year survey will take place within the next few weeks and improved ratings are expected. Chris Pett asked about why learners were reporting that their lessons did not always start on time and Craig advised that the College was doing some corridor walks to check on what is happening because this should be non-negotiable. Systems are in place to communicate problems from transport but the position is being reviewed to see if there are other issues.

## **7. TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE**

Members received a verbal report from Craig Gosling about Teaching and Learning.

Craig reported that across all observations 22% were demonstrating best practice with this figure being 32% for QMR observations. All QMRs have been completed so the Quality team is focussing on an increase in best practice and challenging staff who were demonstrating best practice to take more risks. It is pleasing to note that new staff are appearing on the best practice list.

Craig reported that a Microsoft technology group has been set up which is pushing for best practice. In apprenticeships the first review has been carried out and the second will take place next month. No best practice has been identified in the first review, work has been done in this area and some improvement should now take place. It was noted that Higher Education has a new method of observation.

Craig advised that observations had been carried out with partners and teaching and learning has been the focus of a development session with partners which was well received.

Stephen Brown asked for an example of what best practice would be, Craig outlined some key features of best practice which would include every learner making progress, challenge and demonstrable new skills or knowledge. Jo Maher commented on her experience of visiting lessons within the College.

The committee had a discussion about the attributes of outstanding colleges and it was noted, in response to a query by Stephen Brown, that outstanding colleges can be identified quickly when visited. Jo Maher advised the committee that some of this related to confidence.

#### **8. RISKS AND REPORTABLE EVENTS**

Vicki Locke advised the committee on identified risks which included Hair and Beauty and Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships remain a risk because end point assessments are still new and this is a challenging area of work generally. Helen Wright queried the college's ceasing of Catering apprenticeships and it was identified that this was due to difficulties in delivering it and the low contribution rate of this area of work.

A further challenge is in the area of adult provision where the College is doing more and reducing partnership provision. Partnership provision has been strong and the College will have to work hard to keep up the achievement rates in the future.

Moving on to good news, Vicki advised that three new appointments had been made in Engineering and these are impacting positives on learner experience.

#### **9. AOC MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER**

Jo Maher advised the committee that the College had agreed to support the charter. Julie Hebdige has been sharing best practice in this area and the press release will identify the College's participation. The College is developing mental health training which may be extended to outside parties.

#### **10. NEW COLLEGE STAMFORD**

Jo Maher advised the committee that New College Stamford will be having an Ofsted inspection under the proposed new framework imminently.

#### **11. SKILLS COMMISSION INQUIRY**

Jo Maher advised that the College had received some very positive national publicity following an event at Spalding. John Hayes had been very supportive in this and it had created a lot of interest.

#### **12. T-LEVELS**

Steve Crozier asked about the progress in T-Levels. Jo Maher advised that the College had responded to the consultation and that there is currently concern about the way in which T-Levels are developing. It is hoped that there will be funding for the development of staff for T-Levels.

#### **13. NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would take place on 5 June 2019.