

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2018

1. **PRESENT**

Stephen Brown, Jo Maher, 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).

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Crozier, Helen Mather and Harley Smith.

Attendance 57%

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2018-19**

Having been duly nominated Stephen Brown was appointed as Chair of the Committee for 2018-19.

Stephen Brown in the Chair

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR 2018-19**

Having been duly nominated Chris Pett was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2018-19.

4. **ACTION LOG**

The committee reviewed the items on the action log and progress which had been made on them.

5. **MINUTES**

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2018 and approved them as a correct record.

Helen Wright asked about arrangements for T-Levels. Jo Maher advised that there was a consultation just out and gave the committee a summary of the latest position. She advised that it was likely that T-Levels would target courses such as Health and Social Care, Agriculture and Construction and that there have been suggestions that T-Levels may not be in every college. T-Levels would carry differentiated funding levels and once responses to the consultation are in early in 2019 the outcomes will be brought to the Standards Committee. Work placement capacity funding is likely to continue for an increased number of students. The committee noted that funding for T-Levels was banded with differentiated rates and an increased number of taught hours. It appears likely that after a pilot they will be introduced in 2020-21.

6. **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality.

Vicki Locke took the committee through the KPI's which highlighted the end of year position for achievement across all types of provision. It was noted that there had been a decline in

Apprenticeships achievement rates, other areas had generally held or improved performance apart from maths GCSE.

Vicki advised the committee that there had been some retention issues in Apprenticeships particularly in Construction, Electrical and Catering. Care Apprenticeships had also been impacted by a number of adult learners from the NHS and there had also been some slippage in the sub-contractor data this year. Apprenticeships will be a key focus in the Quality and Improvement Plan and the College is looking at which frameworks and standards should be offered.

Chris Pett asked about retention this term and whether it was too early to assess. Vicki advised that retention was looking positive currently for Apprenticeships this year but the committee needs to be conscious of achievements as well. New quality monitoring is being introduced for Apprenticeships.

Chris Pett asked about employer links and work experience and whether students can look at specific projects for employers. Jo Maher advised that work experience is a critical issue. The College is reviewing staffing arrangements and identifying industry leads for this. Chris Pett advised that employers would see work on specific projects more positively than generic work experience.

7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018-19

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum about proposed KPIs for 2018-19.

Helen Wright asked about 16-18 learner numbers for 2018-19 and the committee was advised that these were on track for delivering the target and some additional intakes are planned for January. Jo Maher advised that withdrawals were in line with last year but starting from a higher base number. Jo advised that the College needed to target higher earning areas. Stephen Brown noted that Higher Education enrolments were up. It was felt that the Derby validation was helpful but was at quite short notice. The College would have liked to have been further on with HE enrolments at this point.

Looking at the 2018-19 targets Chris Pett asked whether the College should flex the targets rather than using percentages in light of relative growth. Jo Maher advised that the College was looking at RCU data analysis to help it get into a growth position. The data would help with planning and the software seems to be very useful.

A discussion took place about attendance in 2019. At this early stage English and maths attendance is not where the College would like it to be and programme areas are looking at initiatives to improve this. There needs to be a balance between incentives and consequences to manage this.

8. START OF YEAR LEARNER SURVEY

Members received a report from the Head of Quality on the start of year survey. Craig Gosling advised the committee that responses were a little lower than for 2017-18 with Engineering having a particularly low response rate although this was not a large cohort. Members asked about the reduced positive feedback in 2018-19 on the question about work experience awareness. It was confirmed that the questions had changed this year and a not applicable answer had been introduced which largely accounted for the difference. The committee noted that responses to the feeling safe question can be affected by a number of issues and the slightly lower rating in response to this question from Electrical is being looked into by the Head of Learner Services.

The committee agreed that overall this was a very positive survey.

9. HIGHER EDUCATION PERFORMANCE 2017-18

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality.

Vicki Locke presented data and further information on Higher Education quality. The identified strengths and weaknesses within the key findings would lead into the quality improvement plan for Higher Education. The QIP will be monitored at quarterly performance reviews.

Vicki advised the committee that significant strengths were also being monitored and that good work was being done with Derby to support future growth. There has been a real improvement in achievement rates supported by improved retention. Stephen Brown asked about the progression, outcomes, achievement and destination data and about the achievement levels. Vicki advised that there are no National benchmarks and that achievement levels reflect the nature of the learners. The progression rate to higher standards/highly skilled employment is key and there is still too much variability in this. Vicki advised that some aspects of the NSS data had declined but are still mainly in line with sector averages and quality needs to focus on achieving consistency now.

Helen Wright suggested that the Board doesn't get a lot of information on Teaching and Learning and it was felt important that the governors should get a deeper understanding of this. While the Standards Committee receive frequent updates and reports on TLA, the full board has had less opportunity recently to receive updates or CPD related to TLA, including HE. The committee noted that Helen Mather had also supported this view. Jo Maher advised that Higher Education in the College is low volume but has a higher resource requirement and that there is a lot of change going on. She told members that Search and Governance Committee had been advised that Higher Education input to the board was desirable and there is a proposal to get someone from Higher Education in to talk to the committee.

Committee members were supportive of getting governors more involved in this area of work through link governors and Corporation updates. Jo Maher suggested that with the post 18 review out early next year the Board CPD in March could be split to look at different elements of focus. Helen Wright asked whether the committee was confident that governors understand where the College is with Teaching and Learning which is its key business. It was felt that it was useful if broader discussion happened when the minutes of the Standards committee were presented to the board. Stephen Brown asked that the key strengths and areas of development should be passed on to members of the Corporation. ● ●

Stephen Brown asked about weaknesses in learning resources and systems. Vicki Locke advised that this was about consistent use of resources and the Higher Education manager was doing an excellent job on this. It is clearer how this will work now that Gill Bush is settled into her new role and her priorities are current learners and quality.

Chris Pett noted that progression into low skill jobs was disappointing. Jo Maher advised that this was an issue across Lincolnshire with qualified learners leaving the County. The Chair of the committee was authorised to sign off the Annual Assurance statement for HE.

10. COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS SUMMARY 2017-18

Members received a report from the Quality Improvement Manager which was presented by the Head of Quality. Craig Gosling advised the committee of the process for dealing with complaints. It was felt that some complaints arose from poor suitability for courses and Vicki Locke advised that the College was doing some work on entry requirements to improve suitability. Stephen Brown commented that some complaints are to be expected and that it is not necessarily wrong for some people to leave their courses.

Chris Pett asked if there is a risk to changing entry requirements and the committee was advised that this was being brought in cautiously. Jo Maher told members that the College was working on building relationships with head teachers.

11 RISKS

The Chair of the committee asked about risks. Jo Maher reported that the College was not satisfied with the Apprenticeship data and staffing gaps in Engineering. There had been a higher number of significant health and personal events affecting staff attendance this year than last year and a number of staffing pressures had been identified. The College was looking at ways to provide further capacity.

On a positive note a plumbing student had achieved success in being named 'Student of the Year' and the Made in Boston event was reported by Chris Pett to have been very successful.

12. COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

Members received a report from the Clerk to the Corporation on committee performance in 2017-18 and this was reviewed. Members agreed to propose that the committee's targets for 2018-19 should be:

- Maintain an attendance of 75% or higher
- Maintain oversight of the impact of leadership actions to achieve a consistent and improved HE student experience
- Monitor apprenticeship performance
- Oversight of T-Level Strategy

13. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would take place on 23 January 2019.