

BOSTON COLLEGE**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 APRIL 2021**

1. PRESENT

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

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Craig Gosling (Assistant Principal: Performance & Quality) and Paul Tomlinson (Governor observer).

Attendance 100%

2. PRESENTATION ON COLLEGE COLLABORATION FUND PROJECT

In response to the committee's wish to see an example of the work on the digital hub development, Gary Chapman-Jones joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the work that is being carried out. He gave a run through of what is within the system and how it can be used.

Daran Bland asked how long it takes to create the content for the digital hub and whether it can be used for accreditation. Gary explained that it keeps track of progress for learners and has a simple pass/fail grading system, accessibility is built into it. He cited an example of a course which took him 2 days to produce from first being introduced to the system. Daran asked how the system could be updated if priorities or strategies changed and it was suggested that a number of authors could be positioned to do updates since it was designed to be put together or changed quickly. When asked where the College sees this going, Gary explained that he would like to see staff and students being able to go to the digital hub for immediate support.

Craig Gosling explained that since the project was now complete this area of work was being handed over to the Head of Digital Learning for further development. Five colleges have taken part in the project and have all done something similar. It has given a good step forward for Boston College.

3. ACTION LOG

Members reviewed the committee's action log.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 10 February 2021 were reviewed and approved.

5. QUALITY AND STANDARDS KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020-21

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal which was presented on her behalf by Craig Gosling.

Craig advised the committee that there was a slight increase in attendance on study programmes but English and maths attendance is still not where the College wants it to be. Adult attendance was slightly lower than before and areas of concern in Apprenticeships were highlighted. An area which was significantly below target was the learner view about broader development beyond their qualifications since the College had not been able to provide enrichment as previously due to the pandemic. Programme areas have plans to address this. Another area with lower performance than hoped for was the number of apprentices recommending the College

Daran Bland noted that Higher Education applications were down and asked whether there was any indication as to why this was. Craig advised that internal promotion was a key part of recruitment and that there had been a lack of taster opportunities with a lot of work to be done in the final term. The reduced numbers may reflect the impact of the pandemic and an external marketing campaign is underway. The College feels that it has a good offer for progression.

Daran asked what a targeted approach to timetabling for English and maths meant. Craig advised that focussing English and maths into a single day had worked in the past but the College was now looking at whether the learners preferred a more integrated model. There is a need to reinforce learners' reasons to attend.

Kate Folling asked about EV report outcomes which were lower than the target. Craig explained the process for tracking EV reports and providing the support which is required. It was noted that in Engineering there had been some delayed claims from last year which had resulted in resampling and affected the performance against this target. Reports for 2020-21 had all been good.

Daran asked whether there was an opportunity for committee members to visit learner focus group meetings. Craig agreed that there could be an opportunity to join online focus groups and information will be provided to members.

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020-21

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal which was presented on her behalf by Craig Gosling.

On behalf of the committee Daran Bland expressed appreciation for the information provided on what success looked like and how the College had identified when it was achieved.

Daran asked whether the College had any indicators at present about GCSE performance but the committee was advised that, although a lot of work was going on, it was too early to predict outcomes at this stage. Craig identified that each Programme area has a theme linked to English and maths and that learners are feeding back positively on it. Staff teams are open to learning from each other.

Kate Folling asked about industry updating for staff. Craig advised that there are plans in Staff Development to encourage industry updating with a need to focus on this in the future. In response to a query from Kate about what has been done to focus on people development, Claire Foster advised that this is a College priority and there is a move to increase personal responsibility for development. Daran asked whether the College knew what the impact of the focus on industry updating was and Claire advised that it helps teaching reflect real world practice which is seen as a priority.

Daran asked whether there was a barrier to progress in learner groups having an assisted tools channel within their Teams groups. Craig advised that staff are dealing with this but it needs to be embedded into learner awareness.

7. LEARNER SURVEYS 2020-21

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

Craig Gosling explained that it was hoped that survey response rates would improve now that learners were back on site. Overall the full time mid-year survey had been quite positive. He explained the follow up processes and identified where there was less satisfaction. Reviews included looking at delivery models and where learners were undertaking online delivery fast tracking return to College.

The committee noted that the apprenticeship survey was the first one of the year. It is analysed at programme level and followed up with apprentices through focus groups and Microsoft forms.

8. TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE

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

The report provided information on the outcomes of observations and information on the elements which are judged within observations. Where there is a need for follow up the College has systems in place to identify this. The changing approach to observations has gone down well with staff and it was noted that learners are able to articulate how they are progressing.

Daran Bland asked where teaching practice fell within the elements being judged, Craig explained that guidance is given on what is being looked for in observations. An audit of schemes of work is carried out outside of the observation process and the observation focusses on whether members of staff can talk about what they are doing and why which is then cross checked with learners. Much of this falls under the curriculum articulation element of the judgement. The changed process has encouraged staff to move forward.

Daran Bland left the meeting at this point, Kate Folling in the Chair

9. RISKS AND REPORTABLE EVENTS

It was noted that there were no reportable events.

The main risk identified by the Deputy Principal is outcomes for all learners post pandemic despite all efforts to engage and support catch up of 'lost learning'. The Association of Colleges has recognised nationally the impact of lost learning on learners' current progress/work standards.

As a provider, key areas of concern linked to the impact of lost learning are:

- Adult ESOL and Functional Skills affected by disengagement of adults, impact of the pandemic on their ability to cope and commit to learning amidst other pressures.
- High Grade rate for applied generals relating to work standards, delays in progress made, slower progress than in a non-pandemic year.
- Achievement rates in study programme – especially where there is a high percentage of non-native speakers e.g. Business, ESOL. There are a higher number of NNS withdrawals than for home learners. Some are returning to home countries, families are re-assessing priorities post pandemic.
- Achievement in highly practical (technical) courses e.g. Motor Vehicle, Hair and Beauty where lost learning has impacted more. Catch-up is achievable but still presents a risk.

For 2021/22 the risk continues as we welcome new learners to college who will have experienced 2 years of lost learning which will have impacted on academic standards, confidence, well-being, resilience and coping strategies. Our approach to induction and assessment of starting points is undergoing a full review to support with this challenge.

Craig Gosling explained that the team were going into adult groups to get learner feedback on their experience.

Helen Rumbold asked about how staff were dealing with the unique circumstances. Craig advised that staff are coping well despite it being massively challenging for them but the support being put in should be helping. Ruth Catlett commented that staff have had a complete change to their work but the College has very good support systems in place. She identified that it was about pulling together and focussing on learners. Claire Foster advised

that the staff survey would be going out in the next couple of weeks and would include questions on what is working well and what can be done to improve. Kate Folling identified the need to retain good staff.

10. CRAIG GOSLING

The committee noted that Craig would be leaving the College shortly and on behalf of the committee the Chair thanked him for his work and wished him well in his new role.

11. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be held on 9 June 2021.