

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2014

1. PRESENT

Helen Wright (Chair), Iwona Lebidowicz, Orla McMahon, Jayne Mitchell, Amanda Mosek and John Trigg

Also in attendance: Fiona Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality), Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation) and Vicki Locke (Quality Manager)

Attendance 86%

Kieran Smith did not attend.

Jayne Mitchell was welcomed to her first meeting and she explained her current role with Bishop Grossteste. She also gave a resume of her previous experience, including development of the UK Quality Code.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2014

The decision to elect to the post of Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee had been carried forward to today's meeting and Iwona was nominated, seconded and appointed to the position.

Members reviewed the use of slides at Corporation meetings. It was agreed that the use of summary slides will not be pursued at present.

Iwona reminded the Committee that the need for good communication was discussed at the recent development event.

The Committee considered inviting the whole corporation to attend the January meeting when they will look at the SAR. ●

Helen Wright identified the need to maintain a teaching and learning focus and Amanda Mosek reminded members that governors attending lesson observations would support this.

3. 2013-14 QUALIFICATION SUCCESS RATE REPORT

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on the 2013-14 Qualification Success Rates.

It was pleasing to note that the rates have improved pretty much across the board. Analysis of the data identifies that QIP items saw improvement but other areas sometimes slipped. Further detail behind the statistics presented was discussed. Apprenticeships have not done well in College provision overall but have been successful in Partnerships. High grade performance has improved. The Value Added calculation has changed and there were some disappointing areas identified e.g. construction. Teacher Education has had good results but is now affected by structure change which meant that its data was combined with Early Years. Non-apprentice work based provision is particularly good. Iwona Lebidowicz queried the effect of staffing issues on results. Fiona Grady confirmed that this had been an issue in Functional Skills and Construction.

Moving forward, some areas, including construction, have serious recruitment issues but the College cannot compete with salaries in industry in areas such as this. This is why the College has been keen to develop its own staff and in addition has been looking at alternative models such as working with employers to recruit. English and Maths is another problem area, not just for Boston but for other colleges too. Boston College has had to consider what it can offer because of recruitment challenges and has found it difficult even with incentives. A decision has been made that the College cannot offer Level 3 Construction due to staffing issues.

John Trigg queried where the construction industry obtains its new recruits as industry must be finding this challenging.

Jayne queried involvement with Sector Skills Councils. Amanda Mosek identified particular challenges with SMEs. Jayne said she felt that teams should get positive feedback on improved performance.

A number of questions were posed including how the College sustains improvements in areas not on the QIP and why partners are so successful in Functional Skills. Fiona Grady responded that the partners tended to have a very specific offer. In the past overall performance had been affected by provider failure which is why partners are so closely monitored.

Jayne Mitchell asked whether the College understood the differences in performance between sub-contractor and College apprenticeships. Fiona Grady responded, that the sub-contractor offer is again very segmented, the College offer is much wider. It takes a long time to see improvements in apprenticeships as they tend to be long courses. Amanda Mosek added that the College only lets sub-contractors deliver apprenticeships if it can be confident in them. Jayne commended HE success rates particularly given the expansion in provision. Helen Wright requested that feedback be given to those with positive outcomes.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA) ACTION PLAN

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on the QAA Action Plan.

Jayne Mitchell volunteered to deliver developmental sessions on the Quality Code Jayne felt that the Committee could help in identifying how issues feed into the action plan, particularly to build in sustainability in performance.

Helen Wright queried how impact of changes made under the QIP was monitored. Fiona Grady explained how this was dealt with through the quarterly performance monitoring process.

5. QUALITY AND STANDARDS KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014-15

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on the KPIs for 2014-15.

John Trigg queried how the target for College apprenticeships was arrived at. Fiona Grady explained that this included data already known on progressions. Helen Wright queried why lesson observation targets were not more ambitious and Fiona Grady explained that more people (including new starters) would now be in scope. Helen queried whether this might encourage complacency and Fiona explained that it was important not to be over ambitious whilst embedding consistent performance. Amanda Mosek explained how underlying targets contributed to more consistency. Jayne Mitchell queried the impact of

now inspecting/grading new staff. Fiona Grady confirmed that this would not affect a huge number of people. Vicki Locke explained the how process had worked last year and outlined current performance. Orla McMahon confirmed that staff were conscious of targets and prepared for them.

Amanda Mosek reminded the committee that the proposal is that governors will only go in to lesson observations where agreed and not in graded lessons. Amanda Mosek that some colleges are no longer doing graded lesson observations and a discussion took place on how colleges know details of performance if grades aren't given. Fiona Grady explained the processes and structures which would be in place.

The proposed targets were agreed.

6. START OF YEAR SURVEY 2014

Members received a report from the Head of Quality on the Start of Year Survey 2014.

This showed the best response rate so far achieved. Vicki Locke identified the pleasing rating of teaching and learning. EDI gaps were lower than usual but there were some gaps between areas eg Computing and Science/Animal Care.

Orla McMahon queried trends in comments but it was confirmed that there was nothing significant.

John Trigg queried apparent lack of knowledge of Enterprise Zone. Vicki Locke advised that this might be course specific and was being looked at. Amanda Mosek felt that rate was quite high for people to know about Enterprise Zone.

Jayne Mitchell queried whether the College planned to move responses higher and what the interventions are going to be to enhance scores. Fiona Grady advised that actions tended to focus on poor outcomes. Jayne felt that there is a need to ensure interventions are mixed between remedial and enhancement actions and it was agreed that the Curriculum and Quality Group could look at this. It was agreed that it would be developmental for managers to look at moving responses up. ●

The Committee agreed to look at this again with a verbal update in January. ●

7. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Members received a verbal report from the Head of Quality. Lesson observation outcomes were currently 85% good or better with no grade 4s. Developmental drop-ins have gone well and the process has got good buy-in from staff. SAR validation is underway and staff development is focussing on ILT and English and Maths.

8. THE FUTURE OF A-LEVELS AT BOSTON COLLEGE

Members received a confidential report from the Principal.

Orla McMahon expressed an interest in this and did not participate in the discussion.

The Local Authority view is that there is too much A level provision in Lincolnshire. The College's A2 results were good and A level provision is interlinked with other work such as Access and International. Amanda Mosek feels that College should continue with A levels but not Science and look to maintain a balanced offer.

Jayne Mitchell queried why improvement actions had been successful in A2 but not AS. Amanda Mosek felt that knowledge of the students could be key to this. Fiona Grady expressed the view that more stringent marking may have been introduced already in AS examinations and that school league tables may provide more information.

Jayne Mitchell asked about A levels being taken by international learners. Amanda Mosek commented that new International Strategy is being developed but numbers have reduced over the years due to competition. It was felt that the removal of Science from the offer was unlikely to make any impact as the College was already not offering Biology. John Trigg queried whether the College should have a mixed A level/Vocational offer. Amanda Mosek commented that others had not found this successful. Students find this attractive sometimes but it may not be best route for progression.

Jayne Mitchell commented that an A level route into the HE offer was sensible. Amanda Mosek commented that A level students do not generally progress to the College's HE and said that the College would review whether this could be improved.

Iwona Lebedowicz queried whether the College promotes A levels enough. The Recruitment Strategy Group is covering this and Amanda Mosek outlined some of the actions being taken.

Helen Wright queried overall College numbers against target. Amanda Mosek advised that the College was approximately 100 short on 16-18 learners, 19+ was on target.

The committee approved the recommendations in the report.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 21 January 2015.