

**B O S T O N C O L L E G E****MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON  
15 JUNE 2016**

---

**1. PRESENT**

Helen Wright (Chair), Stephen Brown, Rowan Dalton, George Harrison, Amanda Mosek and Ben Webb.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Jayne Mitchell and Chris Pett.

Attendance 75%

**2. ACTION LOG**

Fiona Grady drew the committee's attention to the need to identify where low numbers might be affecting percentages in statistics. It is proposed to report on numbers rather than percentages where less than 20 learners are involved.

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2016**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016 were read and approved subject to the addition of Amanda Mosek to the list of those present. ●

**3. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2015-16**

Fiona Grady presented a report on Performance Indicators and drew attention to a number of issues of concern. The committee was advised that retention on adult long courses had been adversely affected by the reduction in partnership enrolments and the impact of GCSE English and maths. Fiona advised that the adult GCSE English and maths should be better next year because in 2015-16 there was not as great a focus on attendance compared to previous years. There are a number of staff development actions planned generally on attendance and a cross college approach is being taken to this.

Fiona advised the committee that employer feedback had been disappointing. A focus to improve this is on better communication with employers on apprenticeships.

Helen Wright asked if members will be informed about success rates prior to the next meeting of the committee. Fiona offered to put the details together and send them out to committee members. She warned that success rates will be adversely affected by Functional Skills and GCSE English and maths. Stephen Brown asked if the impact of these could be assessed when the information is circulated. ●

Helen asked about students who failed to attend for examinations. Fiona stated that this was a particular problem in GCSEs because there were no second chances. There were a couple of international A-level students who had also missed examinations because they had gone home before the exams.

Stephen noted that attendance overall, whilst not at the target, was on a par with last year.

#### **4. TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE**

Vicki Locke presented a report on teaching and learning and highlighted the outcomes of lesson observations. It was noted that there had been some inadequate performance but that positive action had been taken to resolve these issues. Helen Wright asked if the areas with poor staff performance correlated with student performance and Vicki advised that it didn't appear that there was a direct link.

Stephen Brown asked how teaching could be good and outcomes poor in Hair and Beauty. Fiona advised members that this in part related to poor information, advice and guidance at the outset which meant that some learners who should not have been admitted to courses were taken on. Fiona pointed out that there were a number of factors affecting outcomes not all of which were in the classroom.

Ben Webb commented from his perspective that he felt teaching had undoubtedly improved across the college. One area which remained challenging was the use of ILT although this had improved during the course of the year.

The report also identified further work being carried out through the Quality team, one element of which would be the extension of the VITAL system into new areas. Vicki explained that training is planned for the new areas and that the sections of the College which have had VITAL in 2015-16 have acted as good advocates for the system. Monitoring of English and maths is being built into the software. Stephen Brown asked if the software was stable and was advised that there had been some issues but not anything of great significance.

It was noted that the hub is very well used and that there is a good range of development activity undertaken. The committee noted a comment submitted by Chris Pett commending the focus on training and developing teachers and encouraging innovation.

#### **5. HE SURVEY 2015-16**

Vicki Locke presented a report on the outcomes of the HE survey. The committee noted that the response rate had improved. Vicki explained that a lot of work was being carried out to address the identified issues, particularly in computing which had some poor feedback.

Stephen Brown suggested that the positives from the survey could have been analysed as well as the negatives because it would be useful to note where things are going well.

It was noted that Chris Pett had asked specifically about what appeared to be an issue in computing. Fiona Grady felt that part of the problem was that some learners had expectations which could not be met. She advised that there was a big jump between Level 3 and Level 4 work and that the responses might reflect some residual impact from a poor experience in 2014-15 in this area.

#### **6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2015-16**

Fiona Grady presented a progress report against the Quality Improvement Plan and the committee considered some specific aspects of it.

In respect of apprenticeships the committee noted that best case for engineering was still below 65% but it was likely that others would be above. Overall Fiona felt that the best case was around 78%. The loss of the Gelders learners would be taken out in reviewing performance. Helen Wright asked if the change by Gelders was for reasons other than dissatisfaction with the College and the committee was advised that there were a number of

other factors concerning this decision and that Gelders had been very satisfied with the College.

Looking at the performance in English and maths the committee noted that there was more work to be done on this. In response to a question from Helen Wright, Fiona advised the committee that additional resources had been provided for this area of work and a new maths graduate had been recruited. It is hoped that improved timetabling next year might reduce the number of staff needed for delivery. The committee noted that one issue for the College is that the market for English and maths staff is very competitive as a result of the policy implementation.

A discussion took place about performance in individual areas. It was noted that **the** Construction area was performing better and that there were some concerns to be addressed in Engineering. Helen Wright asked about the embedding of ILT and the committee was advised that there would be a further investment in this in 2016-17 including the purchase of tablets for English and maths.

## **7. VITAL LEARNING TRACKING DEMONSTRATION**

Vicki Locke gave a demonstration on the VITAL tracking system to the committee. Helen Wright asked if all staff had seen this system and Vicki advised that they had but they had not all necessarily seen the management reports. In response to a question from Amanda Mosek, Vicki advised that staff using the system had found it satisfactory. There had been a steep learning curve in 2015-16 but this was proving to have been worthwhile. Stephen Brown suggested that the value of the system will depend on how the Programme Area Managers hold their team to account for what is on the system. Ben Webb advised that learners were checking on their own status quite frequently and it was noted that parent log ins had not yet been activated.

Amanda Mosek said that she felt the success of the implementation had been down to Vicki Locke and that things had moved forward a lot. The committee thanked Vicki for her work on this and noted that in future Quality audits would be able to use the VITAL information.

## **8. BOARD MEMBERS**

A discussion took place about how the committee might interest other members in its work. Stephen Brown reflected on his early experience as a governor and a member of the committee and suggested that it might be useful to sit down and look at the planned work of the committee. A specific area which could be reviewed as part of a fundamental review of the committee's work could be how the committee feeds back to the main board. Fiona Grady suggested that it might be useful to look at what other colleges, particularly high performing colleges, were doing in their Standards committees.

Amanda Mosek suggested that Helen Wright and Stephen Brown should be invited to have a look at this with Fiona Grady and Vicki Locke over the summer. ●

George Harrison advised that he felt that it was good for established procedures to have a change from time to time.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 16 November 2016.