

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2017

1. **PRESENT**

Stephen Brown (chair), George Harrison, Prof Jayne Mitchell, Amanda Mosek, Chris Pett 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 Rowan Dalton and Helen Mather.

Attendance 75%

2. **ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed the committee's action log and noted progress made on the identified items. Although VITAL was not identified as an action to be followed up it is to be picked up through the reporting to the committee.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2016**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2016 were reviewed and approved.

Chris Pett asked about the final achievement rates and Fiona Grady advised that the data was now complete with a couple of learners carrying over into the following year. In response to a query from Jayne Mitchell it was confirmed that the Higher Education on-line journals have purchased and are being accessed and used by both HE students and staff.

4. **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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

Fiona Grady advised that the Quality Improvement Plan arises out of the Self-Assessment Report. Some items are dealt with at programme level and monitored at cross-College level but in addition to the College improvement plan each programme area has its own plan.

The committee reviewed specific targets within the plan:

a) AS achievement rates

The target is to get achievement rates back up to 75%. Actions are focussed on making sure that tutors know what has to be done to improve performance in their subjects. The Programme Area Manager is currently reporting directly to Fiona Grady on this area of work. Most tutors have now registered to be examiners to enhance their understanding of requirements. Curriculum organised study has also been brought in and is working quite well. Attendance on this is as good as attendance on main programmes and students are making good use of the time. There are a couple of learners currently identified as being at risk and VITAL is being used effectively in A-Levels.

In response to a query from Jayne Mitchell about the sharing of good practice and use of exemplars, Vicki Locke advised the committee on the ways in which good practice is shared and explained that staff development is being planned for February half term. Fiona Grady identified that one issue in lessons is not capturing learning sufficiently. Some exemplars of high grades for the new A-Levels have been identified.

b) English and maths

The committee was advised that Vicki Locke was working with the English and maths Programme Area Manager on the use of VITAL. Reports produced from the system show behaviour, effort and approach to learning. Fiona Grady advised the committee that the targets in the QIP primarily focussed on GCSE English, functional skills, Level 2 English and Level 1 English and maths. The Management of all of this is now sitting within 1 programme area with 1 manager and all of the provision is in the main building which allows for much better organisation and more team cohesion. There is significant development work going on and the resource for teaching in functional skills has been increased. Curriculum organised study is also focussing on maths and English. Fiona advised that the programme areas are taking more responsibility for maths and English and Amanda Mosek believed that they now fully realise the importance of maths and English for programme area grades. In summary it was felt that this was now working better but that more resource was having to be committed to it. Ben Webb felt that the tutors are now working more as a team and being developed as such.

Stephen Brown asked George Harrison how students were finding English and maths. George's feedback was positive although he advised that some students found having to take these subjects onerous. Stephen Brown said that he felt that the early indicators were quite positive.

c) Value Added

The committee was advised that the target of improving Level 3 Value Added was being supported by curriculum organised study and that there is a concentration on improving high grades. Software for supporting the sourcing of baseline information is being investigated.

d) Apprenticeships

The committee was advised that retention rates in Engineering apprenticeships were looking strong. Electrical work has now been moved into the Construction programme area and the committee was advised that the electrical provision was one of the largest apprenticeship areas. Fiona told members that the College is working with an apprenticeship company on assessments. Stephen Brown commented that electrical apprenticeships are such long programmes and are full of risks.

Fiona Grady advised that Motor Vehicle has temporary management arrangements in place. It is felt that there is a lot of risk in all of these areas.

Stephen Brown asked about the provision of additional support on apprenticeships. He said that Ofsted expect learners to be supported especially in English and maths in the same way as full-time learners are. The committee agreed that action should be taken on this and added to the action log.

e) Adult

Actions relating to maths and English and Access were noted.

f) Work Experience

Fiona Grady advised the committee that the Enterprise Manager's role had been restructured to focus on Work Experience. This seemed to be going well and there were already a lot more students having undertaken placements than in the last academic year. It was suggested that there might be a briefing for governors on the role of work experience.

Fiona Grady ran through the other items on the Quality Improvement Plan.

5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on 2016-17 Key Performance Indicators. The main item to note is that it is enrolments which are proving to be an issue. There is a focus on maths and English attendance which has seen evidence of improvement although it is not likely to reach the target. Fiona Grady advised that the performance should exceed last year's levels. Jayne Mitchell suggested that the committee note that this is the position.

Vicki Locke advised that VITAL is the source of a lot of the data in the Key Performance Indicators document. She told members that managers were getting used to the data and finding it useful.

6. TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE

Vicki Locke gave a verbal update to the committee on Teaching and Learning issues.

Vicki advised that observations were about half way through and work was starting in apprenticeships. Ben Webb explained the approach to development in the English and maths team which was a close focus of attention. The introduction of English and maths champions in most areas was also noted. These would provide local support and Vicki advised that she was quite pleased with how this was going so far. The AP team is undertaking two other new projects, support for teachers teaching Autistic and Asperger's learners and support to increase high grade rates in AS and A2.

Vicki talked to the committee about tutorial drop-ins and tutorial learner focus groups. She advised that the focus groups' feedback was proving to be useful. The team are continuing to develop the use of VITAL to include monitoring of learner progress in English and maths, monitoring of Work Experience, establishing links with inclusive learning to support monitoring of High Needs learners and the development of group profiles. There has also been further development in management reports.

Chris Pett asked whether feedback, such as a newsletter, was given to employers on progress being made within the College. The committee discussed this and agreed that it might be useful, particularly for smaller employers who were not able to attend events, and it was agreed that this should be looked into.

7. RISKS AND NEWS

Fiona Grady advised the committee that new Apprenticeship and Higher Education managers had been appointed from within the existing staff. This means that there are now large programme areas with vacancies and a restructure is being planned. The proposals are currently being worked up for this. The Senior Leadership Team has been extended to include Vicki Locke, Richard Chambers and Dawn Telford. Fiona advised that there is a concern to ensure that interim arrangements in Motor Vehicle are satisfactory.

Fiona advised the committee that an Access student had won a National Award for high level achievement and also a College student had had success in the World Skills competition.

The committee noted that recent Ofsted reports had given very poor outcomes for colleges which made it appear to be less likely that the College could move to Outstanding but it is essential to maintain the Good status.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will take place on 19 April 2017.