

B O S T O N C O L L E G E

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 APRIL 2015

1. PRESENT

Helen Wright (Chair), Jayne Mitchell, Amanda Mosek and Kieran Smith.

Also in attendance: Fiona Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality), Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Vicki Locke (Head of Quality) and Tammy Ogden (Programme Area Manager Hair and Beauty – observer)

Attendance 57%.

Apologies were received from Orla McMahon and David Shutts.

It was reported that John Trigg had resigned from the Committee and thanks had been sent to him.

2. ACTION LOG

Student membership of committee remained an issue and is being considered further. Jayne Mitchell suggested something on the agenda to encourage engagement. Helen Wright pointed out that student feedback is useful. Vicki Locke commented that eliciting feedback from small groups of learners might be more effective than focussing on individuals. Possible use of programme area representatives was suggested.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21 JANUARY 2015

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and discussed.

Fiona Grady advised that she is looking at two student tracking systems and that the one available within EBS is not suitable.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR'S

Fiona Grady presented a report on quality KPIs.

One negative EV report related to lost tracking records but all actions have been completed and the College is awaiting a revisit. Jayne Mitchell queried the effect on students of the lost records and it was confirmed that there were none. The adult retention rate is very pleasing whilst the 16-18 rate is just above target and needs to be maintained. Helen Wright queried the range of attendance rates. Helen felt that it would be helpful to see the data. Helen queried apprenticeship retention and Fiona reported that there was variability. However for the 2013/14 academic year, data just released by the SFA showed that the College's apprenticeship success rates were above national averages and its learner responsive success rates are in the top third of all FE colleges and are higher than those recorded for Lincoln, Grantham and Stamford colleges. She emphasised that there is still room for improvement in success rates and it would be worth looking at other colleges that have very high retention and achievement rates. Helen queried if contacts could be made to review success rates but was advised that other colleges are not very forthcoming on their

data. Helen asked if we are happy that the College is going the right way and Fiona confirmed that it is. Fiona explained application numbers in response to a query from Jayne Mitchell.

5. **RETENTION UPDATE**

A report was presented by Vicki Locke.

It was identified that some differences relate to timing of reports. There are some long standing issues in Construction (plumbing) and ongoing staffing issues. There are problems of earnings as compared to industry and the College is looking at different options. The College is not doing higher level plumbing. Helen queried progression from lower levels and the extent of the problem and it was confirmed that it was a national issue. Jayne Mitchell queried employment models which could be used. Fiona confirmed flexible arrangements had been tried but had not been successful and the College was now looking at a new employment model. There is an issue with ongoing apprenticeships and an associate Ofsted inspector, Stephen Brown is acting as a critical friend and reviewing the College's apprenticeship provision.

The MIDES data comparing 14/15 retention rates with other AoC member colleges is looking positive. Now is a challenging time for learners reaching the end of their courses so support is in place to ensure that they complete and achieve.

6. **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Fiona Grady gave a report on progress. There is a big focus on Maths and English and ILT. Real progress has been made but ILT is quite challenging. The College has met target on lesson observations. Long course retention is better than last year. Amanda Mosek queried how A Level mocks went. Fiona reported that they went quite well and learners are now being supported to improve their approaches to answering exam questions. Challenging areas for Boston College appear to be similar to those experienced nationally. Chemistry and Physics A levels are being dropped as the College does offer alternatives. Jayne Mitchell queried Point 6 which refers to areas where apprenticeships have been identified as a concern. Data was not provided by specific areas but will be included in the next report. Helen queried if governors should receive updated QIP for link areas. This was felt to be a good idea and could be discussed with committee feedback to Corporation. Jayne felt that this might be useful if not too much work. Helen reviewed outcomes and queried if Maths and English would change. Fiona responded that with Staff Development still to come, Maths and English are likely to remain a focus along with targeted support for ILT.

7. **MID YEAR SURVEY**

Vicki Locke presented a report.

It was noted that the response rate is down but there were lots of positive aspects. Members looked at areas with low response rates. Amanda Mosek queried how survey results are shared with managers. Amanda said that she is proposing to ask support area about responses to learner feedback. Tammy pointed out the lack of a Library and Enterprise Zone are issues for Spalding and explained how her learners are chased to complete surveys. Vicki advised that the Functional Skills Survey had very good feedback. Helen queried if the response rate is a KPI – Fiona confirmed it no longer is. Helen queried what Ofsted view would be and Amanda thought it would be acceptable.

8. QAA ACTION PLAN

A report was received from Fiona Grady.

Fiona explained that Jayne Mitchell had delivered an excellent development session on the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Fiona outlined follow up developments being planned. Jayne was pleased that the session had led to follow up. Helen queried learner numbers for next year. Fiona reported that overall they were fine but some courses may have low numbers. This would be the first year without student number controls. The HE Strategy is for discussion and on main Corporation agenda. Jayne and Amanda queried arrangements for getting staff ready to teach HE and it was explained. Amanda queried who will be co-ordinator on Science HND and was advised that it would be Adam Sellars. Some more development could be planned towards year end. Helen queried progression for learners and the options were explained. Jayne commented that it is a good news story that College is preparing people to go on. In response to a query from Helen, Fiona explained the support that is given to learners on progression into employment.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will take place on Wednesday 10 June 2015.

10. FEEDBACK FROM TRAINING

Helen Wright reported on A Teaching, Learning and Development conference for governors. It had provided a good networking forum. Most topics were already being addressed. Link 157 group provided a leadership learning and assessment document to the network covering most of what was mentioned. Amanda asked for feedback from a planned visit to York College. ●