

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JUNE 2014

1. PRESENT

Helen Wright (Chair), Iwona Lebedowicz, Amanda Mosek, Kieran Smith and John Trigg (external member).

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

Attendance 62.5%

Apologies for absence were received from Orla McMahon and Chaz Simpson. Nathan Ball did not attend.

The Chairman welcomed Kieran Smith to his first meeting of the committee and introductions were made.

2. INSPECTION

Fiona Grady gave a presentation on inspection outcomes from the preceding week. She provided an explanation of the processes which had been undertaken and noted that the College had been somewhat surprised at the way in which Foundation Maths and English had been inspected. The College felt that the drive for improvement in Teaching and Learning had been acknowledged in the inspection and the areas identified for improvement aligned well with those which the College was still working on.

Iwona Lebedowicz asked if the College was aiming to get an outstanding judgement next time and Amanda Mosek confirmed that this was the case. Fiona Grady advised the committee that the key issue will be to improve outcomes consistently across the College with a push on success rates and high grades being necessary. The College had been very pleased with the 82% good or better teaching judgement from lesson observations with no inadequate teaching having been observed.

It was agreed that the committee's congratulations on the Ofsted outcome should be sent to the staff. ●

3. MINUTES

The committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2014.

Helen Wright queried whether the suggested focus group review of the language used in surveys had been undertaken. Vicki Locke explained that she had met with the student lead on teaching and learning who was going to discuss it with other students. Kieran Smith identified how the student union carried out its surveys with some success and Fiona Grady explained how the student surveys were completed in groups.

Helen Wright asked when value added information would become available for the committee to review. Fiona Grady advised that once all the Level 3 results are in this would be available so that would probably be around October 2014.

During the inspection some issues had been identified over the data which had been provided in advance to inspectors on Value Added from the data service and they had been concerned about errors in the data and agreed it would not be taken into account during the inspection.

4. QUALITY & STANDARDS KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The committee received a report from Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on Quality and Standards Key Performance Indicators for 2013-14. A discussion took place about areas where lower attendance was being reported which tended to be in the more challenging areas.

Kathy Wood joined the meeting at this point.

The challenging areas were noted to include full time ESOL where the College was looking at the possibility of changing the working day for learners and Hair and Beauty where a review of qualifications offered was being undertaken to ensure relevance and engagement of learners.

Fiona Grady advised that the staff survey outcomes had still not been fully analysed and would be reviewed in depth. John Trigg queried whether there was an identified reason for low retention in teaching and early years and Fiona Grady advised that there were some specific issues relating to the group in question and to their information advice and guidance before they joined the course.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY

Members received a report from the Head of Quality on the Higher Education Student Survey. It was noted that the response rate had been lower than hoped for but that the outcomes were a mainly positive picture. Helen Wright queried why the response rates were so diverse between different groups. Fiona Grady advised that the higher response rates were often from students who come up through further education and that some groups of learners were unused to and not keen on completing surveys. This was particularly the case if they were only in College for a short period of time.

Kieran Smith queried whether the introduction of incentives to complete surveys would be helpful and a discussion took place about this. Fiona Grady confirmed that the College would keep pursuing the responses for the surveys and it would be interesting to see the outcomes in comparison with national results in due course. It was noted that the feedback was important to enable to the College to improve its provision. In reviewing the results Helen Wright queried whether there was consideration given to the needs of learners with disabilities given the EDI gaps identified on question 19 and it was confirmed that suitable arrangements were in place.

Iwona Lebedowicz suggested the introduction of a random prize for completion of the surveys which would be considered.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

The committee received a report from the Head of Quality on the Higher Education Review of the College. The committee was pleased to note that the College had met expectations in all key areas. Following receipt of the review, the College will formulate an action plan to address the recommendations made. The committee agreed that congratulations should be sent to Gill Bush on the outcomes of this review.

Kieran Smith queried whether the outcomes of this review could be publicised alongside the Ofsted outcomes in due course and a discussion took place about this. Fiona Grady advised that the outcomes were very pleasing and put the College in a strong position for expansion in Higher Education. Vicki Locke also advised that going through the process had helped the College prepare for the Ofsted inspection which had taken place very soon afterwards. The committee noted that a new board member who would be serving on the Standards Committee had helped to write the Higher Education Standards and, following a query from Helen Wright, a discussion took place about whether the Standards Committee should spend more time looking at Higher Education. The committee agreed that this could be a target for 2014-15.

7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality on the 2013-14 Quality Improvement Plan. Fiona Grady highlighted the key features of the report and the progress made.

Helen Wright queried the Ofsted interest in Apprenticeships and it was confirmed that this had been a focus and the Apprenticeship elements of the provision had been graded as 3 during the inspection. The lead inspector had provided information on good providers whose practice could be reviewed to potentially improve the College's provision.

Helen Wright queried whether destination data was likely to be more complete at the end of 2013-14. Fiona Grady explained the processes undertaken to secure this data but advised that it was not an easy task to improve the completeness of the data without incurring huge costs. The College was thinking about ways in which destinations could be followed up. Kathy Wood asked about any local authority support on the collection of destinations and offered to advise on work she was involved with. A particular problem noted in following up destinations was that once they had left the College many students' phone numbers became quickly out of date.

John Trigg queried how performance was reviewed through the Quality Improvement Plan and an explanation was provided. A discussion also took place about paired observations. In response to a query by Iwona Lebidowicz it was confirmed that a new post-inspection action plan would be created following the recent inspection.

8. BOARD ADVISOR

Kathy Wood congratulated the College on its inspection outcomes and confirmed that this would be her last meeting. Helen Wright thanked her for the work which she had done with the committee.

9. STUDENT GOVERNORS

Helen Wright asked that thanks should be recorded to the student governors who had served on the committee in 2013-14 and had made excellent contributions to its work.

10. CATERING STUDENTS

The exceptional performance of two Catering students in the recent national competition was noted by the committee and it was agreed that congratulations should be sent to the students.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for 17 September 2014. It was noted that this date may need to be revised but members would be advised if this becomes necessary.