



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 25 February 2020
Seevic campus
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.15hrs**

Present

Ian Hockey	Independent Member	Chair
Ralph Henderson	Independent Member	
Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member	
Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive	
Julie Snelling	Staff Member	
David O'Donovan	Staff Member	
Ruta Dubinskas	Student Member	
Emily Riseborough	Student Member	

In attendance

Gordon Haines	Chair of the Corporation
John Revill	Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning (VP P,F&BP)
James Parker	Head of Quality (items 7.3 – 7.6 only)
Hannah Austin	Head of Teaching and Learning (item 7.2 only)
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services (items 9 and 10 only)

Clerk

Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation
------------	--------------------------

QC.01.20 Declaration of Interest

Members and officers were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any item to be considered during the meeting.

Ralph Henderson advised that he is a Director of Rugby at Thurrock, President of William Edwards' Alumni and a member of the William Edwards' Trust.

There were no other declarations of interest.

QC.02.20 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

QC.03.20 Appointment of Committee Chair

The Clerk advised members that as the previous Chair of the Committee, Alex Dobinson, has resigned from the Board it is necessary to appoint a new Chair of the Committee at this meeting.

Members were advised that, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Committee, the Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Corporation from among the independent members of the Committee. It was unanimously agreed by the Committee that Ian Hockey should be appointed Chair of the Quality Committee.

Resolved

The Quality Committee recommends to the Corporation Board that Ian Hockey is appointed Chair of the Committee

QC.04.20 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2019

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.05.20 Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting

Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting the items that would be picked up under this agenda and those that would remain on the schedule as ongoing.

The Student Governors advised with regard to the Exit and Induction Surveys discussed at the previous meeting, they would be liaising with the student reps on the wording of questions for the Exit Survey and the timing and questions for the Induction Survey.

Members agreed there were no other matters arising from the previous meeting.

QC.06.20 Higher Education

The VP P,F&BP presented a self-evaluation document (SED) and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the HE student academic experience, HE student outcomes and the standards of the HE awards for which the College is responsible.

Members were advised that there is no requirement by the Office for Students (OfS) for providers to submit an Annual Quality Assessment Assurance Statement as had previously been required. However, the Corporation Board should continue to receive appropriate assurance and the self-evaluation document and action plan are presented to provide a clear statement on the quality of the College's higher education provision and to set appropriate actions at a provider and where appropriate, programme level.

Members reviewed the detail of the SED on the Higher Education provision at USP College in 2018/19, noting the key areas:

- Excellent National Student Survey Results with 100% overall student satisfaction – placing USP College in the top 10% of all HEIs in the UK and the best rated provider for student satisfaction in Essex
- The College was awarded TEF Silver for outcomes significantly above sector benchmark, which included excellent performance judgements on the satisfaction of teaching on the course, assessment and feedback, academic support and progression to employment or further study. However, further improvements are required to evidence any performance differences between full and part time students
- The impact of the new HE marketing plan has led to a 39% increase in new recruitment
- The growth and increased risk of subcontracted provision at Docklands Academy – there have been some fundamental operational issues with the Academy and the College is working transparently with the awarding body and Student Loans Company to resolve any issues

In discussion, members considered the course performance information presented and noted that some of the achievement and retention rates had not been completed and asked if these could be included in the document and presented to the next meeting. In addition, the committee asked to be kept informed on the performance of the subcontractor, Docklands Academy, in the light of the issues raised. Members were advised that there is the potential for securing a new HE subcontractor and the Committee and Board would be kept informed of this when this is known.

The Committee noted the letter received from the OfS, which had been received by a large number of other Colleges, relating to the non-payment of fees. Members were informed that the College did not pay the fee within 30 days of invoice, but within 45 days. This has been noted and future fees will be paid in a timely manner within the annual cycle

Resolved

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the SED and action plan and to recommend to the Corporation Board for acceptance as assurance on the quality of the College's HE provision

Quality Performance

QC.07.20 Student Work Experience

The VP P,F&BP presented the outcomes from the Student Work Experience Survey.

The survey summarised the outcomes, which gave feedback from student and employers, as:

- 1835 placements in over 920 employers
- The majority of the students stated they felt their work experience was beneficial to their career progression and overall the work placement was excellent
- The majority of employers stated that the student's contribution to their business had been excellent/good and were likely to offer a recurring placement

In discussion, members agreed that this presented some excellent feedback on student work placements. However, it was noted that there was a small proportion of students who felt there had been no benefit and asked if some further work could be done to ascertain the reasons why and this is reported back to the committee when complete.

The student governors commented that their work placement experiences had been very positive and were beneficial to their chosen careers.

Agreed

The Committee agreed to receive and note the presentation

John Revill left the meeting

QC.08.20 Quality of Teaching and Learning

The Head of Teaching and Learning presented a report, which provided an update on the quality of teaching and learning.

Members were advised that

- 37% of the current cohort of teachers are new within the last 3 years
- 23% of the current cohort of teachers are unqualified, but 62% are currently in training
- 52 teaching staff have accessed the Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIP) team for regular one to one support since September 2019
- As part of the performance panel process, all teaching staff are RAG rated in relation to their teaching and learning ability

The Committee reviewed the RAG rating of teaching staff, noting that there is the same number of amber and green rated teaching staff to those who are blue and red rate rated. All amber and red RAG rated teachers have an action plan and work closely with a TIP and it was noted that a number have made a significant improvement with a small minority who have left the organisation.

Members discussed the issues raised and agreed that the processes in place to embed new teachers gave an appropriate level of assurance that they are being well supported. However, it was noted that the maximum time for a teacher to be in intervention is 6 weeks and it was agreed that it was important to ensure that teachers are properly supported and managed through this process as quickly as possible.

The Committee was advised that teachers who are rated 'blue' are part of the process for mentoring and supporting teachers in intervention and it was suggested that perhaps the 'blue' rated teachers could be compensated in some way for demonstrating inspirational teaching by way of a bonus or as part of the staff awards. This would be further investigated and the outcome reported as part of this report at the next meeting.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

Hannah Austin left the meeting

QC09.20 Progress against A level Strategy

The Head of Quality presented a summary of the progress made against the A strategy that had been put in place to improve A Level achievements.

Members were reminded that the Board had asked that a strategy for improvement was put in place following the disappointing 2018/19 A level results and the committee was asked to monitor the progress made at each meeting.

The Committee was advised on the key changes made to date:

- Enhanced IAG – students had subject alternatives available, priority subjects introduced where learners would need these as their first choice
- Linear Assessment focus – study workshops introduced to the summative exams to support under-achieving learners
- Communication enhancement and strategy overview – A level time plan, A level email group
- Tracking and monitoring of formative assessment
- Introduction of an innovative A level study space at Palmer's campus

Members discussed the issues raised and noted from the report that the result of putting a new management structure in place had led to effective IAG at enrolment, evidenced by a 48.6% reduction in students transferring from one course to another and the new approach had shown a marked improvement in A level Year 1 retention.

It was agreed that it would now be timely for a Quality Improvement Plan to be put in place, along the same lines as the College QIP. This should clearly set out the areas for improvement, the actions taken and the progress made against these so that the Committee could carefully monitor the impact this would have on the overall achievement by A level students. This would be presented to the next meeting.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed

- to receive and note the report
- that a Quality Improvement Plan is put in place to monitor the areas for improvement, the actions taken and the progress made against these

QC10.20 Key Performance Indicators for Attendance and Retention

The Head of Quality presented a report detailing the key performance indicators for attendance and retention.

Members were advised that

- College retention and attendance is monitored through the use of the college dashboard and reported weekly
- At risk courses are reviewed in detail and the actions put in place during a 6 weekly Head of Learning Performance Panels

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting that

- Current retention across the College for the current year end 2019/20 is 92.9%, which is 1.2% above last year
- Current retention across the College for next year 2020/21 is 96.2%
- Overall college attendance is 85.3%, which is 1% below last year, with
 - Seevic at 86%, which is 1% below last year
 - Palmers at 85%, which is equal to last year

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to question, were advised that the drive on attendance by Departments has seen an improvement compared to last year across December and February. Actions have been put in place to support areas of low attendance and the Committee agreed to review the progress of these at the next meeting.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC11.20 Summary of strategy for achievement

The Head of Quality advised that the data available to support this is not yet available. It was agreed that this would be deferred to the next meeting.

QC12.20 Destinations/progression

The Head of Quality gave a presentation on the destination and progression of students in 2018/19.

Members were advised that

- 83% of students completing their courses went on to positive destinations
- Of this percentage, all agreed that the course studied was relevant to what they are doing now and their future career path and IAG helped them to understand the different paths that could be taken to achieve their goal
- 84% of UCAS applications had resulted in an HE destination
- 85% of A level applications had resulted in an HE destination, against the national average of 76.6%
- A very small minority of Level 3 were in a 'non-sustainable destination'

In discussion, members agreed that the outcome was very positive and asked that this information is circulated as appropriate to SMT.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

James Parker left the meeting

QC13.20 College Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20

In the absence of the Quality Improvement Consultant, the Principal presented the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), detailing the progress made on the key areas for improvement.

Members were reminded that the Corporation approved the College self-assessment report (SAR) and the QIP at the meeting held in December 2019. The top level SAR set the key areas for improvement in the QIP as:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour & Standards
- Personal Development
- Leadership & Management

Members reviewed the detail of the document and agreed that good progress is being made against the key areas for improvement, but that the key focus should remain on the achievement of A levels.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.14.20 Termly Safeguarding Report

The Chair of the Committee took the opportunity feedback on his visit to the College Safeguarding Team in his capacity as the Governor Lead for Safeguarding.

Members were advised that he had met with staff in the safeguarding team, reviewed the accident log, some random staff files and CPD training logs, the website and discussed some open cases. He felt that safeguarding is a real strength within the College and could only make one comment regarding improvements, which related to external evidence. He has given a full report on his visit to the Chair of the Corporation.

The Chair of the Corporation took the opportunity to thank Ian for undertaking the visit and reviewing the safeguarding arrangements in place, which gave further assurance to the Board that these are more than adequate and appropriate.

The Head of Student Services presented a report detailing Safeguarding and Prevent related activities during the Autumn term 2019.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the

- Summary of wellbeing activity and support
 - the number of monthly wellbeing interventions compared to previous year
 - gender split
 - interventions by mental health category and campus
 - interventions by campus
- Looked After Children

Members were advised that the Wellbeing Dashboard, which provides a live data set, has improved the monitoring of learners in receipt of wellbeing support and indicates trends to help inform on further staff development and the ability to target bespoke enrichment for learners, including tutorials, one to one support and workshops.

The Wellbeing Team have implemented a RAG rating system, which is independent of the learner's academic RAG rating and is used in conjunction with the dashboard to identify learners that may have future difficulties.

As requested at the previous meeting, the Committee was presented with a Case Study, which demonstrated how the RAG rating was used to identify significant difficulties so that relevant support was given.

Members were advised of a number of developments that continue within the Safeguarding Department, including a Wellbeing Website and the recruitment of a Positive Behaviour Support Officer.

In discussion, it was agreed that there is a real strength with the safeguarding arrangements in place at the College. The student governors commented that these arrangements certainly do give value to students and feel that it is very beneficial for students to know that they feel safe and well supported.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.15.20

College Policies

The Head of Student Services presented, for consideration and approval, the Prevent Policy.

Members were advised that changes the previously approved policy have been made to meet legislative or other requirements.

Members reviewed the detail of the policy and agreed there were no further changes required.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Prevent Policy

QC.16.20 Any Other Business
There were no items of any other business

QC.17.20 Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2019/20
Tuesday 16 June 2020

All meetings commence at 4pm at the Seevic campus

As there was no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Smith', written over a light blue rectangular background.

DATE: 17 June 2020