

Plumpton College
Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting
Held on Tuesday 9th February 2010

- Present: Denise Stokoe - Governor (Acting Chair)
Christine Howe - Governor
Nigel Ellis - Governor
David Evans - Governor
Des Lambert - Principal/Governor
Pat Foster - Governor
- In attendance: Jenny Brooker - Clerk to the Corporation
Emma Cook - Head of Department
Don Cranfield - Head of Department
Geoff Gregory - Deputy Principal (Resources)
Mike Gurney - Head of Department
Julia Hadden - Head of MIS
David Lamb - Head of Department
Richard Pemble - Quality Development Manager
Maurice Shorten - 14-19 Curriculum Manager
David Stokes - Deputy Principal (Academic & Quality)
Jenny Watkins - Head of Department
- Apologies: James Currin - Governor
David James - Governor
Neil Ravenscroft - Governor
Stan Stanier - Governor

Meeting commenced 5.10pm

Minute No.		Action by whom	Action by when
AC/10/01	Minutes of last meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2009 were approved.		
AC/10/02	Matters Arising AC/09/42: The HE Strategy had been submitted to HEFCE following its approval by the Corporation. AC/09/43: Additional work on the research strategy was being taken forward. AC/09/44: Consideration was being given to the future content of SARs.		
AC/10/03	Update on Strategic Workshop/Quality Report Dr Stokes reported that the Corporation had held a Strategic Workshop on 26 th January. The committee considered		

	<p>student recruitment targets up to the 2015/16 academic year which the Corporation had considered and which were presented to the committee.</p> <p>The figures reflected the College's aim to be inclusive in its curriculum offer. A significant increase in 14-16 student numbers was targeted including a growth in diploma numbers. Strong 16-18 recruitment was targeted and it was anticipated that the raising of the education age would assist the growth in student numbers. A £300k reduction in adult learner responsive provision meant that a review of priority provision would need to take place.</p> <p>The growth of work based learning was restricted by the number of employers that would provide apprenticeships and the political support of Train to Gain. Higher Education growth was restricted by the tightening of student numbers across the sector. The Corporation had agreed at its strategic workshop that the risk of being fined for over recruitment should be managed. Diminishing funder per learner would reduce HE funding by around £100k next year.</p> <p>Dr Stokes advised that there was much political uncertainty at present and the risk of further funding cuts was not known. It was unlikely that 2010-11 funding allocations would be altered but changes would be made the following academic year.</p> <p>Agreed: The recruitment targets from 2009-10 to 2015-16 be endorsed.</p>	DTS	
AC/10/04	<p>Headline Report</p> <p>Presenting his report, Dr Stokes stated that quality assurance and improvement were critical in the pursuit of outstanding and the concept of the road map and grade tracking sheets had increased the focus of activity. A sub group of the Academic Committee had met to discuss criteria for defining outstanding in HE. The key criteria identified would be used in evaluating HE provision.</p> <p>There was a risk that the introduction of equality & diversity and safeguarding as limiting grades would divert focus away from teaching and learning. The College needed to achieve at least good in these limiting grade areas with departments continuing to strive to achieve outstanding teaching and learning.</p> <p>For 2008-09 the College success rate was 81.4% for long and short courses against a national average of 82.2%. Success rates needed to be improved and although the College's value added scores remained the highest in the County, they would not be considered by Ofsted when evaluating success.</p>		

	<p>The criteria that defined national success rates had changed rapidly. In addition, the College success rate had been reduced by around 5% as a result of a one off data management issue faced by all colleges relating to the transfer of students to employer responsive provision.</p> <p>The importance of managing students and continuously reviewing if students were on the right course was identified. External influences however, such as a fragmented home life, impacted on whether students achieved.</p> <p>Agreed: The College strive to achieve a grade of outstanding in teaching and learning and a grade of good for the limiting grades of equality & diversity and safeguarding.</p>	DTS	
AC/10/05	<p>HoD Reports</p> <p>The Chair asked HoDs to identify one or two key issues that they were addressing to ensure success rates improved.</p> <p>a) Agriculture Mr Lamb advised that recruitment was on track and there was a great deal of focus on teaching and learning with 80% of lesson observation grades now good or better. The development of Flimwell provided the department with various opportunities and trial and research work was developing.</p> <p>b) Animal Science Dr Watkins stated that the department was focused on the management of learners including reviewing learner progress after the first few weeks of a course and ensuring student needs were identified early on. Recruitment was on target but there were some concerns regarding the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing due to difficulties in finding work placements. Actions to address this were being considered.</p> <p>c) Business Development The focus was on improving the achievement rates of teaching qualifications and improving the quality of business management teaching. Following the tragic death of Mr Simon Bishop, Mr Cranfield had taken over the management of short courses at Netherfield which were RDPE funded and work was ongoing on the promotion and delivery of these courses.</p> <p>d) Equine Stricter entry checks to the level 3 course had been developed and experience days for potential equine students had been introduced. Actions had been taken to improve the quality of WBL students. These had included the introduction of a trial period for prospective students and testing prospective students on practical tasks. Miss Cook stated</p>		

	<p>that the practical facilities for HE provision needed to be improved if the College was to keep up with its competitors.</p> <p>e) Forestry It was hoped the new provision at Flimwell would help improve retention as one of the reasons students left courses was due to the length of their commuting time to college.</p> <p>f) Higher Education The partner college review was scheduled to take place on 18-19 February and would involve the UoB reviewing the entire HE provision.</p> <p>g) Horticulture The standard of teaching and learning was superb but more floristry exam preparation was required and this was the current focus of the department.</p> <p>[Mr Shorten arrived at the meeting]</p> <p>h) Land-Based Technology The department was focusing on staff development, improvements to challenging programmes and course and learner management including tutorials and additional learner support.</p> <p>i) 14-19 Curriculum Development Mr Shorten advised that work was ongoing to ensure the entire diploma consortium was working effectively.</p> <p>j) MIS Mrs Hadden stated that HoDs were much more aware of the importance of transferring students early on and she was confident this would result in improved success rates.</p> <p>k) Quality Assurance Mr Pemble advised that the current profile of lesson observations as good or better was 70%. Although there was more outstanding teaching than ever before, there remained too much satisfactory teaching. The focus was now on ensuring staff got the necessary coaching and support they required and different strategies to help improve grades further were being considered.</p>		
<p>AC/10/06</p>	<p>Annual Student Induction Survey</p> <p>Mr Pemble provided a summary of the results of the survey. The results of the survey were very encouraging with increased positive responses to last year and many key strengths emerging.</p> <p>There continued to be some negative feedback regarding starter instructions but increased positive feedback about the enrolment process across all levels. There had also been far less negative feedback regarding learning resources.</p>		

AC/10/07	<p>Child Protection</p> <p>Mrs Brooker provided an overview of the annual child protection report which had been produced by Mr Hibbert.</p> <p>Mrs Brooker advised that the number of child protection incidences had reduced but it was not clear if this was due to the systems the College had in place or the particular cohort of students recruited.</p> <p>The child protection policy had been updated and endorsed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. Key changes to the policy included a change in its title to the 'safeguarding policy' reference to Every Child Matters, the addition of the role of designated governor for child protection issues and revised disciplinary, recruitment and selection procedures. Also, the procedure for the handling of CRB information had become an Annex to the policy.</p> <p>It was identified that section 4.4 of the policy should be altered to state that the Principal was responsible for securing arrangements rather the carrying out the actions listed himself. Also that section 7.21 concerning the suspension of staff required further review and info was required regarding visitor access on site. Some changes had also been put forward by the Chairman of the Corporation.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The policy be further reviewed and updated and submitted to the Corporation for approval. (b) Statistics on the numbers of child protection issues and types of issues be circulated to Academic Committee members and included in future child protection reports. 	<p>JKB</p> <p>JKB</p>	<p>30.03.10</p>
AC/10/08	<p>Equality and Diversity</p> <p>The Committee received its annual report on equality and diversity including student success rates broken down by age, gender, race and disability.</p> <p>A consultant had spent some time reviewing where the College was currently positioned with regard to equality and diversity and recommended that the College seek to achieve a grade of Good at its next Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>An equality and diversity committee had been established to take forward equality and diversity work including the development of an action plan. In order to establish baseline data that progress could be measured against, staff and students would be surveyed regarding their views on the College's approach to equality and diversity. One of the issues the committee had identified was the need to establish</p>		

	<p>reasons students and staff chose to left the organisation.</p> <p>The committee considered the work that the committee had taken forward and the importance of the audit of equality and diversity including governors was identified.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>(a) The College strive to achieve a grade of 2 (Good) for equality and diversity.</p> <p>(b) The working group develop an equality and diversity action plan based on the Ofsted criteria and the recommendations of equality & diversity consultants for approval by the Corporation.</p> <p>(c) Actions relating to equality and diversity of students be monitored by the Academic Committee through HoD reports and stand alone agenda items.</p>	<p>DTS</p> <p>JKB</p> <p>DTS/JKB</p>	<p>13.07.10</p>
AC/10/09	<p>Cross College Report – Business Development</p> <p>Mr Cranfield provided a summary of the current work of the Business Development Department.</p> <p>The department had secured some funding through the world class skills programme to undertake marketing development and was looking at ways to market the college including developing the College website, a website for employer engagement and a business twitter site.</p> <p>The marketing of the College through the selling of its produce was also being taken forward. In addition to the produce having a sticker on which advertised the College, shops selling Plumpton produce would be supplied with literature about the produce they could provide to members of the public.</p>		
AC/10/10	<p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Mr Cranfield presented his report on apprenticeships. A marginal increase in apprenticeship funding was attributed to an increasing number of employers using apprenticeship programmes.</p> <p>Current Government apprenticeship policy was focused on 16-18 apprenticeships. Employers tended to be reluctant to take apprenticeships in this age category however. A scheme had been developed that provided employers with a grant of £2,500 for apprenticeships. There was a limit of 5,000 grants across the Country. The difficulty with the scheme was that if a student left their apprenticeship the College would have to re-pay the grant by obtaining the funding back from the employer.</p> <p>The National Apprenticeship Service has begun providing the College with leaders. The College was currently above</p>		

	<p>recruitment targets with 27 16-18 apprentices and 37 19-24 apprentices.</p> <p>Risks to apprenticeship numbers included private training providers and the current change in demographics of a reduction in 16-18 learner numbers. The move from NVQs to the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework had caused some challenges regarding funding.</p> <p>Opportunities included the potential to develop NVQs in Food and Drink Preparation, Outdoor Education, Business Administration, Viticulture and Land Based Service Engineering.</p>		
AC/10/11	<p>Academic & Quality Committee</p> <p>The minutes of the Academic and Quality Committee held on 11th December 2009 were noted.</p>		
AC/10/12	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>On behalf of the committee, Ms Stokoe wished Miss Cook best wishes for her maternity leave.</p>		
AC/10/13	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 27th April 2010 at 5pm. There being no further business the meeting ended at 7pm.</p>		

JKB 15/2/10

Signed.....(Chairman) Dated.....