

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 MARCH 2021 AT 4.00 PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Jill Lanning (Chair), Corrienne Peasgood, Nikki Gray, Andrea Blanchflower, Emily Staley, Aron Whiles, Philip Richardson (Observer)

Attendees:

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Helen Richardson-Hulme (Assistant Principal, Student Services), Julia Bates (Vice Principal, FE, Curriculum and Quality), Sue Millions (Administrator), Clare Johnson (Clerk to the Corporation)

The Chair welcomed Philip Richardson to today's meeting as an observer.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sophie Gray.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors and Committee members are requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

Jerry White informed governors that he has been appointed to the Towns Deal Board for Norwich City Council as part of his college duties.

There were no other new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2021 (Paper 02)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the first available opportunity.

4. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (Paper 03)

Action 8 (C&S 01): *Principal and Jerry White to review CCN's Risk Register following tonight's C&S Committee Meeting. The Principal advised that a complete review of the Risk Register will come to CCN Board in the New Year following the merger with Easton and the Risk Management will also be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee. The Principal agreed that the Risk Register will be revisited and brought back to a future C&S Committee.* The COVID 19 Risk Register has been reviewed at the recent Audit and Risk Committee Meeting and will updated again ready for Board approval on 23 March 2021. The Risk Register items that relate to the curriculum will be brought back to the next C&S Committee Meeting for feedback and review. **Action on-going.**

Action 1: *The MiDES data slides to be uploaded to OnBoard for Governor information and review.* It was noted that unfortunately Clare Johnson has been unable to upload the slides into Passageways in a way that allows for data to be filtered. The Principal informed governors that she will share a link with governors to enable them to access the slides. It was noted that individual CCN email addresses will need to be used to view the MiDES data slides.

Jerry White informed governors that the data format is being updated and it is hoped it will be more web based and more accessible for the next academic year. Action completed.

Action 2: *The analysis paper on the recent Government's White Paper, prepared by Jill Lanning, to be forwarded to CCN CLT members for information.* Action completed.

Action 3: *Curriculum and Standards Committee to recommend to the full Board at their next meeting that they are satisfied that they are all OfS requirements during the current pandemic.* This was discussed and agreed at the Board Meeting which took place on 9 February 2021. Action completed.

Action 4: *The Principal to set up a Teams Meeting to discuss the role of the Link Governor and the focus and structure of scrutiny reviews during February 2021.* It was confirmed that a useful meeting has been held to discuss the approach for Governor Scrutiny. Action completed.

5. SECTION A – papers for discussion and action

5.1 Quality Report

(Paper 04)

The Quality Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points were discussed and explained:

- Some internal progression benchmarking data is presented for 16-19 students that indicates good levels of progression to higher levels of study within the college this year. The question was asked whether this is typical of a normal year or is this due to the pandemic? Jerry White confirmed that the data is consistent with previous years. He informed governors that students on Level 1 courses have historically had a varied and often disrupted schooling and the challenge is to make sure that they receive the right IAG to place them on the most suitable courses. At Level 1, a greater proportion of students' progress to higher levels than sector norms (61% compared to 57%). Under this headline level there is some variability within curriculum areas. 80% of Engineering and Motor Vehicle Level 1 students progressed to higher levels in 2020/21 compared to only 50% in Health and Social Care. It was confirmed that ensuring appropriate progression pathways and reviewing the profile of the students for each course is part of the course review process (see agenda item 5.8). It was noted that at Entry level, which relates mainly to the Inclusive Learning provision, the data indicated higher numbers of students remaining at the same level in 2020/21 than is the sector norm. Jerry White informed governors that this data records the overall Entry level figures and does not show the three sub-levels within Entry level and therefore the progression that students make through the sub-levels. The Chair commented that it continues to be important that the college does what it can to capture the progression outside of the organisation e.g. into work.
- Whilst teaching and learning delivery has been impacted by COVID and lockdown, retention rates appear strong against college historic data and sectoral averages for 16-19 provision although some caution needed to be exercised when looking at this data. The question was asked how Easton's retention rate is strong, as historically this has been a big problem and Jerry White informed governors that the impact has come from the new emphasis this year on placing Easton students, as for all CCN students, on the right course and level at the beginning of the year. Aron Whiles asked why the A level retention rate of 74.6% at the Norwich site had fallen compared to the previous years figure of 83% and it was noted that this is due to the adjustments needed to retain students across a two year linear model for the first time. It was noted that the rates are better at Paston where the move to a two year model was done earlier. Table 2 was discussed, and it was confirmed that only the

top eight qualification types are shown, giving a disparity with the data in the 'total all qualifications' column.

- For 19+ retention, the College has improved compared to last year against a backdrop of considerable sectorial rises in retention year on year.
- Considerable work is underway to support Apprentices to catch up key assessments in order to enhance progress and complete their apprenticeships which has been impacted by lockdown. It was noted that the small loss in the number of apprenticeships is not due to teaching and learning but to industry being impacted by lockdown resulting in redundancies. The practical teaching in the apprenticeship provision had been significantly impacted by the combination of social distancing requirements within classes and workshops and the full closure of sites for all but essential examinations in Lockdown 3. During the last lockdown it was possible to deliver theory classes but now over 200 apprentices are returning on site and the priority is to focus on practical teaching and assessments, functional skills assessments and EPA opportunities. It was also noted that there are likely to be pressures on arranging EPA assessments with the volume of assessments needed nationally and the ability of the EPAOs to provide enough assessors.

The Principal informed governors that at the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting, discussions took place about satisfaction surveys as part of the consideration of the Employer Satisfaction 2019/20 internal audit report. The Committee has noted that national surveys such as FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey and the National Student Survey for HE can provide data that appears at odds with the experience in the college. It was agreed that it is important that the college can assure itself on students, apprentices and employer satisfaction levels and it was agreed that the Curriculum and Standards Committee would be asked to consider this matter at a future meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that the college approach to gathering satisfaction data will be reviewed at the next C&S Committee Meeting taking place on 10 May 2021.

Action 1: The approach to gathering satisfaction data to be reviewed at the next C&S Committee Meeting taking place on 11 May 2021 (CP / CJ).

The full content of the report was noted.

5.2 TLA Report

(Paper 05)

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Update, was discussed at the meeting and the following key points for discussion and explanation were highlighted:

- Online learning has continued with most of the learning delivered with 'live' sessions. It was noted that 100% live learning was aimed for although some Level 1 students engage better in other ways.
- Julia Bates informed governors that approximately 602 students were identified as experiencing digital poverty and all of these students were allocated a laptop, but unfortunately at least 350 students have not collected them to date. It was agreed that this will have a very beneficial impact on individual learners, and now students are returning to college, a push on collection is being implemented. It was noted that staff have made intensive and comprehensive enquiries of all students in order to assess the detail of students' digital poverty and ensure individuals receive the best help including receiving laptops, data cards or if they have connectivity issues, routers. It was noted that although students are back on site, they will keep their laptops etc as this will be helpful with any 'catch-up' activity.
- It was noted that the arrangements for the awarding of qualifications for 2021 have now been announced for GCSE and A Levels and some VTQ's. Teachers will be

required to provide an overall qualification level grade on a student's performance, based on evidence from assessments that has taken place throughout the year. The key difference from last year is that, as assessment has continued throughout the latest national lockdown, teachers can use assessed work to provide rather than predict, as last year, a qualification grade. Julia Bates explained that internal Pre-Awards' Boards have been set up to review the assessment position of each curriculum area in advance of the Awards Boards. At the meetings, managers consider the expected exam requirements and the assessment evidence collected to date for each area and each student. This has helped to identify programmes or students where there is not yet sufficient evidence "in their basket". This approach has provided additional assessment opportunities to be factored in to ensure students have opportunities to generate enough assessment evidence.

- Julia Bates informed governors that the requirements for VTQs are not yet known but are expected to require adapted assessments in most cases but some may have to be delayed. The guidance is expected in April. The concern is that the recent return to face to face teaching will not allow adequate learning time before their assessments take place for them to pass or achieve the grades needed to ensure a smooth transition to their next step. Staff are working with individual students, both VTQ and academic students, to consider their options if they do not achieve their required outcome including the possibility of repeating the year. The schedule for the final Awards Boards have been set and all staff have been notified to ensure their own learning and assessment plans allow students as many opportunities as they can to achieve at least what they set out to.
- It was confirmed that the TLA Grid meetings this next half term will make two judgements, one for the face-to-face and online delivery used in the second half of the autumn term and one for the fully online delivery in the first half of this term. These meetings will conclude in a meeting in the week commencing 22 March 2021 where cross-college quality improvement activities will be agreed. The Chair informed governors that she attends the TLA Grid Meetings and just wanted governors to be aware that they are more than welcome to attend if they wish to do so. The Principal agreed to send out an email to governors to inform them of the dates of the meetings and give them an opportunity to attend and get a flavour of what is discussed and how judgements are made.

The full content of the TLA Report was noted.

Action 2: The Principal to send an email to governors, with dates and times, to invite them to attend the TLA Grid Meetings (CP).

5.3 IAG Update

(Paper 06)

The IAG Update Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were highlighted:

- The paper informs governors of information, advice and guidance and careers education matters provided through centralised services and it was noted that the team are very busy delivering business as usual, and a full virtual service to students, through the pandemic.
- It was noted that Jerry White delivered two webinars for local Careers Advisers and Helen Richardson-Hulme delivered a similar session at the Careers Facilitators Group (Norwich Opportunity Area).
- Discussions are on-going with the Head of Marketing to discuss Information Evenings and what needs to be focused on. It was noted that any future events will

be focussed on ensuring that young people and their parents receive the best possible chance of finding out about the college's curriculum, the support available and the physical environment before joining in September.

- Aron Whiles informed governors that the majority of Year 11 students in the MAT have found places for September 2021 with only a small number still to be placed. Jerry White asked governors to recognise that students may not have explored their other choices as they would have done in previous years. Although they have accepted an offer of a place at their first choice institution, they may still choose to go elsewhere in September.

The full content of the IAG Update was noted.

5.4 Residential Report

(Paper 07)

The Residential Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were highlighted:

- Residential students have begun the return to Easton with five returning last Sunday and a further thirteen the previous Monday evening. It was noted that students will only reside on campus for the days when they are in college, returning home for the days when they have online lessons. A letter has been sent home prior to students' arrival back into residence, informing both students and parents of the college's expectations and outlining the COVID-19 rules and regulations. HE students will not be returning until after Easter when their face-to-face lessons will resume. Individual cases are being reviewed when a student may need to return to residential accommodation before then.

The full content of the Residential Report was noted.

5.5 HE Report

(Paper 08)

The HE Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were noted and the headlines from the report were as follows:

NSS Rollout update –the NSS was launched on 8 February 2021, although it is not a requirement this year. With teaching continuing online, it is anticipated that there might be some challenges in obtaining the required levels of response to ensure publication at both College and Course level. The threshold for each course to be reported is a minimum of ten responses, or 50% of cohort, whichever is the greater. It was noted that as at 1 March 2021, the response rate for the College is 51.1%. This is currently behind the final rate in 2020 of 52.8%. The National Average for completion in the 2020 survey was 68%.

Application update - applications for 2021/22 entry for some courses such as Aviation are strong in comparison with previous years although there remains significant variation between courses and the current breakdown for individual courses was appended to the main report for information. Philip Richardson commented that the low numbers for Agriculture are likely a result of the reputational damage associated with Easton and Otley College's difficulties prior to the merger. Jerry White agreed that it is a long term job to grow the numbers on the Land based courses, but he is hopeful that the revision and revalidation of the degree will help. He also commented, in answer to a question about the use of placements and internships, that there had been lots of offers of help from local employers and stakeholders that can be called on in the next academic year.

Validation and Revalidation Schedule –revalidation processes are progressing with the first Stage 1 events having taken place in all but two programmes, which will be completed by 18 March 2021. It was noted that the partnership with UEA colleagues had provided significant support and challenge that benefited the development of the new degree courses.

The full content of the report was noted.

5.6 Easton Report

Please see confidential minutes.

5.7 Governor Curriculum Scrutiny

The Chair and the Principal updated Governors on the plans for the 2021 curriculum scrutiny reviews as follows:

- The Easton FE Improvement Board, attended by Jill Lanning, will continue until January 2022. There will be a report on the quality of the provision at Easton at every Curriculum and Standards meeting in 2021 and be a separate item on the agenda.
- English and Maths scrutiny reviews undertaken by Aron Whiles and Andrea Blanchflower will focus on the improvements needed in the provision at Easton and the provision will be reviewed at the Curriculum and Standards meetings taking place in May and October 2021.
- The HE scrutiny reviews by Noel Bartram will focus on improvements in the student experience in the light of the 2020 NSS results. This area will be reviewed at the Curriculum and Standards meetings in June and December 2021.
- The scrutiny reviews of the T Levels by Nikki Gray will be looking at the lessons learnt, the good practice and any challenges in delivering these new qualifications. T Levels delivery will also be reviewed at the May and December meetings.

Julia Bates agreed to arrange visits for governors to their allocated scrutiny areas, except for HE which will be arranged by Jerry White.

All governors present agreed they were happy with this proposed schedule.

5.8 Curriculum Planning for 2021/22

(Paper 09)

The Curriculum Planning Report for 2021/22, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were noted:

- Jerry White informed governors the annual cycle of curriculum planning has begun and hopefully the main activities will be concluded by late April. Whilst COVID-19 has required an adaptation of the normal process which has been more interactive, and this has been a positive feature. Teams are asked to consider the profile of their current and potential students including their intended progression and whether the qualifications currently being used are the best ones.
- Considerations this year include the introduction of more T levels in September, the changing HE offer following the revalidations for progression, the need for a very responsive curriculum to cater for students with very different and disrupted school experiences with an aim to limit the expected significant increase in NEET.
- There are considerable pressures on physical resources especially for workshop space to meet demand such as in Construction and Engineering. Nikki Gray asked whether we would need to obtain additional estate to meet the need.

The Principal responded that work was underway to maximise the use of current buildings before looking to take on additional sites.

- It was unanimously agreed that the planning needs to reflect Ofsted's focus on the intent of the provision so that it gives all students a clear line of sight from entering their courses to their next step.

The full content of the report was noted.

Aron Whiles left the meeting at 6.05 pm.

6. SECTION B – papers for discussion only if required by Governors

6.1 Student Voice Report (Paper 10)

The Student Voice Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The full content of the report was noted and Emily Staley informed governors of the three main areas for discussion that are highlighted within the report. These being:

- Virtual Suggestion Form
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Forum / Form feedback which had been largely positive about the online delivery during lockdown,

The positive work undertaken by the Student Union was noted with thanks to Emily Staley.

The full content of the Student Voice Report was noted.

7. SECTION C – papers for information only

There were no papers tabled in this section of the meeting.

8. Other Urgent Business

The Chair thanked Philip Richardson for his input into the meeting and it was formally agreed that he would be appointed to the Curriculum and Standards Committee and whenever possible, attend.

Action 3: Philip Richardson to be appointed to the Curriculum and Standards Committee as of today's date (CJ).

9. Confidentiality

It was agreed at the meeting that agenda item 5.6 would remain confidential.

10. Date of Next Meeting

C&S Committee: Tuesday 11 May 2021 at 4.00 pm, via Microsoft Teams.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 6.15 pm.

Signed Date
(Chairman)