

CORPORATION BOARD

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Committee held at 6.00pm on
Monday 30th November 2009 at the Abingdon campus

Present: Robin Smith (Chair)
Carol Baker
Barbara Harker
Bruce Hunt
Teresa Kelly

In attendance: Di Batchelor
Jim Evans
Keith Higgins
David Bramble (Clerk)
Nikkie Almond (up to
Stuart Matthews Item 5.2)

Action

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Mike Gaston

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2009 were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Lack of books in LRC

Di Batchelor reported that this isolated incident had been investigated and resolved.

4.2 Part 'A' Submission Training Quality Standard (TQS)

Teresa Kelly reported that a notification of the intention to register had been submitted. A new group, Chaired by the Principal, had been formed to prepare the application.

5. COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2008 – 09 (SAR)

5.1 Health & Care

Nikkie Almond, who had been in post as Programme Area Manager (PAM) for a year, outlined the broad range of provision under Health & Care. Key strengths and weaknesses were reviewed in detail. In answer to questions, she explained that her main challenge had been to change the mind set of long serving staff in order to focus on obtaining a Grade 1 by 2012. Support from SMT and College staff generally had been excellent and she was particularly pleased with a new course which had started at Milton Park. Oxford Brookes University's refusal to accept apprenticeships as an entry qualification to a degree course was a further challenge. Teresa Kelly

interjected to advise that this was a national debate as a number of universities followed this line. Nikkie advised that access to computers had improved and the introduction of laptop trolleys had been a great success. The introduction of two taster days had been successful as it helped students select which course they should enrol on. To date, only one student had dropped out.

5.2 ESOL and Languages

Stuart Matthews advised that there were between 250 to 300 part-time students from over 30 nationalities in his Programme Area. The range of languages was extensive and included French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Modern Greek. It was pleasing to report that people got along with each other extremely well and there had been no equality and diversity issues. A summer school had been organised which had resulted in the enrolment of 30 students and there had been a significant increase in new students this year. Stuart explained the dilemma with regard to fees for courses and qualifications. Many adult students were not particularly interested in gaining a qualification and therefore had to pay more for their course. There was a risk that some would enrol on a cheaper qualification course but, through disinterest, not pass the examination and therefore lower the College's success rates. Teresa Kelly explained that this was a political issue with a government keen to subsidise courses leading to a qualification but expecting adults to pay the full costs of other courses.

In answer to questions, Stuart confirmed that most students owned laptops and used their individual learning plans conscientiously. He advised that there was sharing of good practice and he had found this particularly successful in small groups within programme areas. There had been no requests for Mandarin during the last 2 years and the majority of foreign students came from East European countries. This led to a question on overseas recruitment to which Teresa Kelly responded that it was under investigation.

Robin Smith thanked the two PAMs for their clear, succinct presentations which had been extremely informative and interesting,

Nikkie Almond and Stuart Matthews retired from the meeting

5.3 College SAR

Keith Higgins reported that an external peer review of the SAR had been carried out with representatives of two colleges and Bruce Hunt. Overall it had been thought that the College was "underselling itself". The grades had been re-evaluated and some upgraded. Keith pointed out that over 300 learner outcomes were awaited. A summary of the report was reviewed together with summaries of 16 – 18 Long Success Rates, Learner Outcomes 2008/09 and Programme Area SAR Grades – Distance Travelled since 2006/07. It was noted that Sport & Tourism was being investigated by a task group.

After a number of questions had been answered, it was agreed to recommend approval of the SAR to the Board.

6. DESTINATION '2012' – PROGRESS

Teresa Kelly presented the monitoring report which recorded progress under the 2012 six key objectives and each of the specific sub measures. As some governors had raised the question of sub measures at the Strategy Day, Robin Smith asked that a copy of this report be made available to governors at the Board meeting on 10th December.

David
Bramble

The Principal highlighted significant points in the report. At the request of the Corporation Board, "Safe" had been added to Key Measures 2 & 3. Success rates were progressing satisfactorily in the core programme areas and as retention rates were very high the College should reach the top decile. The success rate position for Apprenticeships was queried and Teresa reported that no difficulty in reaching the 60% target for 2009/10 was envisaged. The position of students who were unable to purchase their own laptops and therefore unable to use the wireless facilities was queried. It was explained that SMT would, in due course, investigate means of providing laptops to ensure that no student was disadvantaged by financial circumstances. It was confirmed that the College would try to keep pace with new technological innovations e.g. touch screens provided funds could be made available.

SMT

The sub measure to Key Measure 3 relating to CRB compliance for governors was questioned. Di Batchelor explained the impact of the latest legislation, particularly in regard to the limiting of grades awarded by Ofsted for non compliance with safeguarding regulations. After a discussion it was agreed that the subject of CRB checks for governors should be considered by the Corporation Board.

David
Bramble

Bruce Hunt thought that the last recorded staff satisfaction level of 78% was disappointing and suggested an annual survey should replace the current bi-annual survey. It was explained that a survey was due to be carried out in January 2010 but it was agreed SMT should consider the suggestion.

SMT

It was agreed that satisfactory progress was being made towards reaching 2012 targets. Robin Smith asked if a RAG report of Key Measures with 2010 targets could be available for the next meeting. It was noted that Key Measure 5 'Annual Income Exceeds £30m' embraced confidential matters which would not be reported on openly.

Teresa
Kelly

7. MONITORING OF PROGRESS TOWARDS REACHING LSC TARGETS

Mike Gaston presented a monitoring report of LSC numbers and funding targets. Overall the situation was regarded as satisfactory and it was accepted that the Finance & Employment Committee carried out a detailed review of this report.

8. INTEGRATED QUALITY & ENHANCEMENT REPORT (IQER)

Di Batchelor explained that a draft report for review of accuracy had recently been received. It recorded 7 'Good' practices, one 'Advisable' recommendation but no 'Essential' recommendations. The overall judgement was 'Good'. [This information should be treated as 'Confidential' until the final report had been received.] Di was delighted with the report and felt it was a testimony to the staff. The Committee wished to record their congratulations and thanks to all the staff concerned.

9. REVIEW COLLEGE COMPLAINTS LOG

Di Batchelor presented the College Complaints Log 2008/09. The number of complaints received continued to fall but whether this was a true reduction was unclear. It was felt that an increasing number may be e-mailed direct to the point of origin rather than writing a formal letter and were not recorded. A review of the current approach would be carried out.

No pattern of complaints that would be of concern to governors had been identified. There were no complaints relating to equality and diversity or safeguarding and none had been received from employers or providers.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that log numbers 27 - 29 had been resolved quickly.

The complaints log and actions taken were noted.

10. REVIEW EFFICIENCY OF COMMITTEE – DISCUSS ALIGNMENT BETWEEN OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

Robin Smith felt that the alignment between objectives and strategy was well demonstrated by the Destination 2012 Monitoring Report and he was now content. It was too late to discuss efficiency of the Committee but Robin raised the following points for members to ponder over and discuss at the next meeting:

- Can we suggest some areas which would benefit from graphic presentations ?
- Can we progress further on 'paperless' meetings ?
- Mapping of how things link.
- Exploitation of key information which is in place.
- Role of governors
- Agility – ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances
- Simple monitoring report to show that programme areas were improving – not in the same detail as Quality Improvement Panel would expect.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Carol Baker queried if enough was being done to raise the profile of the College by publicising the achievements of the College.

Next meeting: Monday 8th March 2010, 6.00pm, Abingdon campus

The meeting ended at 8.10pm