

MOULTON COLLEGE

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd October 2019

Present: Mr A Thomson (in the Chair), Mr A Eastland, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr B Hansford and Mrs C Harris

In attendance: Mrs G M Hulley and Mr J O'Shea

PART 1

19/56 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)
Apologies for absence were received from Ms S O'Connor, Mr D McVean and Miss L Watson.

19/57 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)
There were no declarations of interest.

19/58 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A and B)
The minutes of the last meetings held on the 4th June 2019 and 19th July 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record.

19/59 Actions outstanding (Agenda item 4, Paper C)
There was one action outstanding which was not due for completion until December 2019.

19/60 TLA Committee: Self-assessment 2018-19 (Agenda item 4, Paper D)
Members reviewed the responses from the recent Committee self-assessment and agreed that the feedback was a fair reflection of the Committee's performance during 2018-19. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for Members to complete the online survey again in November 2019 (**Action 46** – Clerk to the Corporation) in order to measure distance travelled in terms of the:

- Improvements resulting from accurate reporting of information and data now received at each meeting; and,
- Findings from governor learning walks that were planned for early and late November 2019.

The Committee would also support the proposal to the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting later in the week to share the governor self-assessment report with the internal auditors when an audit of corporate governance was due to be completed in January 2020. This would provide a clear direction for any further governance actions that were required as well as an external validation of existing systems and procedures.

Resolved: The report on TLA Committee self-assessment findings to be received.

19/61 Risk management (Agenda item 5, Paper E)
The Committee acknowledged that risk management was subject to a review and would be revised by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and then presented to the next Audit Committee in November 2019. The Principal explained the importance of this review in terms of all members of the SLT

taking responsibility for their respective risks. Some gaps were identified in the risk register around the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) and reputation that were missing.

The Chair of Committee invited members to make any recommendations prior to the review by the SLT:

- a. There was a need to make further connections with positive destinations and employer expectations (**A6**).
- b. Greater detail was required in relation to activity to improve performance (**B6**). Student voice needed a much higher profile.

Resolved:

- The two recommendations to be shared with the Chief Finance Officer to inform the review.
- The risk register for the TLA Committee to be noted.

19/62

FE Performance 2018-19 (Agenda item 6)

a. Summary of themes from external examiners and external verifiers (Paper F)

The report outlined the findings from external verifier (EV) and external examiner (EE) visits during 2018-19. Members were informed that future versions of the report would be RAG rated. The report included hyperlinks so that governors could drill down to specific issues that needed further clarification. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality (VP C&Q) explained that failure to adhere to EV and EE guidelines could place the College at risk of not having course approval or students' work not acknowledged. Only two high risk areas were identified. Internal verification and EV visits would be incorporated into the quality calendar which would provide an effective tracking mechanism that wasn't previously in place.

Questions raised by the Committee (*responses shown in italics*):

- a. Are all EV visits managed through a central point? *Yes, we do not want them to be ad hoc. There is a new quality team starting soon and they will be responsible for managing this.*
- b. Do you have cross-college forums where all the people teaching a particular exam board can come together to undertake some standardisation of paperwork? *That is standard practice in the sector but it hasn't happened at this College previously. We have performance monitoring boards (PMBs) happening monthly and mapped in with that cycle are how EV visits are going. I will make sure we will have examining board forums and heads of school will attend and share good practice (Action 47 – VP C&Q).*
- c. How often does this Committee need to hear about this? *We will present this report on an annual basis unless there is a problem. Any Red rated issues will be reported by exception.*
- d. There is some very good practice in Equine and Countryside and perhaps that could be spread across-College? *Agreed – there is also Sport that this applies to.*

Resolved: The summary of themes from EEs and EVs to be noted.

HE Performance 2018-19 (Agenda item 7, Paper G)**a. Annual report and action plan (Appendix 1)****b. Curriculum performance (Appendix 2)****c. National Student Survey results (Appendix 3)**

The reports confirmed that performance, management and enrolment on the College's HE provision had declined in recent years. Student enrolment had been extremely disappointing due to a number of reasons including targets that had been set too high; the need for a curriculum plan; an offer that wasn't sufficiently developed; poor quality of TLA; and poor retention. The action plan that was currently in use confirmed a set of agreed actions to address the decline.

The VP C&Q highlighted the importance of correcting the management and leadership failings in this area, the need to revisit the HE offer, to improve results and significantly improve the student experience. This was also important in the context of the Office for Students who as part of implementing its monitoring and intervention strategy whereby 20% of all providers would be visited, the College was likely to be one of the first. Going forward, HE would now be subject to the same quality processes and procedures as FE, for example, monthly PMBs, observations and learning walks. This would ensure a level of scrutiny that was needed to bring about rapid improvement.

Members were also informed of proposed plans for foundation degrees in various areas in 2020-21. A secondment arrangement from the University of Northampton (UoN) had been agreed. This would not only strengthen leadership arrangements in that area but also help with the development of courses and validation processes. The Committee commented that the proposed link with the University was a very positive move on behalf of the College and would offer a positive message to staff and students.

Student feedback from the National Student Survey (NSS) was very poor and indicated the poor experience that many students had in the previous academic year. Student voice would be a priority in 2019-20. The student governor suggested that there was an opportunity to bring a group of HE students together to talk about the results. There was also the potential to make connections with FE students in terms of making links with where they wanted to be next year.

The Committee offered its support for the proposed actions by the College Executive and requested a further update at the next meeting of the Committee (**Action 48** – VP C&Q).

Questions raised by the Committee (*responses shown in italics*):

- a. Where the retention figures are concerned, particularly female which is the biggest cohort in HE, this group has the lowest retention. This also applies to the BAME community which is lower. Are we creating a culture that is not welcoming to these groups? *There is a need to check with those groups and gather direct feedback. The data in the report highlights that we have not been sufficiently robust with our HE panels or student voice. Better tracking and bringing HE into the same quality system as FE will start to address this.*
- b. The important factor is not how many but whether there are any barriers? If the course isn't addressing the needs of different groups in terms of what they want, there will still be a difference. *Further work is required*

around retention figures in relation to equality characteristics to find out if there are any barriers, for example, gender (Action 49 – VP C&Q).

- c. How do our results compare with national benchmarks? *This needs to be included in the report.*
- d. In terms of the equality and diversity part of the College website, this does seem to be out of date and in need of some attention? *We have now got someone working on this and that part of the website will be updated. The whole website will be refreshed in due course.*
- e. I recall mentioning last year that when talking about widening participation, there is a need to develop study skills. Many students need that to be able to come to HE and FE . *If you want to keep them on course they have to know how to learn. Agreed.*
- f. I do not think I saw any HE actions but that may be dealt with differently? *You are quite correct. HE now needs to fall under all of our quality systems and this will be introduced with immediate effect.*
- g. Are you confident that you have done everything you can to minimise disruption to students? *The initial priority was FE due to that cohort of students starting earlier in the term. We are currently considering different options, for example, line management of FE and HE falling within schools. Another example is in Construction where we are exploring whether some form of partnership with a construction firm could have any benefits. The Director of HR is working on a people strategy which can be shared with the Committee when completed (Action 50 – Director of HR).*
- h. I welcome the cover sheets that are now included with the reports. Where actions proposed are included, please identify dates. *Agreed.*

Resolved: The three reports in relation to HE student performance 2018-19 were noted.

19/64

Teaching, Learning and Assessment 2019-20 (Agenda item 8, Paper H)

- a. **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20 (Appendix 1)**
- b. **Key Performance Indicators (Appendix 2)**
- c. **Observation of teaching, learning and assessment update and learning walks (Appendix 3)**
- d. **Staff Continuing Professional Development (Appendix 4)**

The reports focused the Committee's attention on four key priorities that would ensure the swift return to Good in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) throughout the College. The VP C&Q highlighted the following key points from the reports:

The QIP was a live document that responded to feedback from various external visits (Ofsted, FE Commissioner) but also internal processes such as lesson observations and monthly PMBs.

The KPIs were a live set of data that crossed all aspects of TLA. These were available throughout the College and school KPIs were in the process of sign-off. As a result of PMBs, data in the form of pass rates was now available and being uploaded to the College system. The dashboard presentation planned for the Corporation later in the week would mean that all governors would be able to look at any course to review performance across the College.

Members were informed that this approach was standard practice across the sector and something that should have been implemented in previous years.

Questions raised by the Committee (responses shown in italics):

- a. The link governor for quality commented that having attended a PMB last week, I was of the impression that the staff had the chance to tell a story and were allowed to explain what was happening. In discussions around moving learners onto different courses, staff clearly felt empowered having found out they had permission to do this. *Agreed.*
- b. The language is changing from 'we are not allowed'. Some people did not know they could do that (move learners onto different courses). My observation of the process was staff gave the impression of being 'supported and liberated.' *Our intention is that this approach will give the Committee and the Corporation some assurance that what we are saying is absolutely spot on and at the end of the year, data is accurate.*
- c. Can the Committee have some assurance that students know what is expected of them? *There is still some of that that needs to improve. We are relentless in our commitment to improving TLA and the student experience.*
- d. Do students have any involvement with PMBs? *We know that student voice needs to feature through it. This is a good point. We must find a way of students being involved in the process. We have curriculum and quality meetings every week and have all the heads and student services together. We discussed the student survey last week and the work that will be completed over the coming weeks. We also have student ambassadors and the need for representation on the student committee.*
Recommendation: To find a way of getting students involved in the monthly PMBs (**Action 51** – VP C&Q).

Observations of TLA were now already firmly embedded with 78% of staff observed to date. Observations of all staff would be completed by the end of the week. For those staff that had been identified as either Amber or Red in their observation, staff were placed on a monitored support programme. In the event of a Red rating, the individual would be re-observed within 10 weeks. The support programme was designed to help improve performance. Learning walks were planned for after half-term with the first focus being around 'stretch and challenge,' an issue raised in the last Ofsted visit. Members were encouraged by the number of observations completed to date and that all staff would be observed by the end of the week; the actions being taken to ensure the quality of TLA improved; and, a greater level of assurance that the support programme in place was sufficiently robust and effective for those staff whose lessons were judged as Amber or Red.

The Principal confirmed that Landex would complete a review of the College's residential provision. An external review of health and safety was also planned.

Questions raised by the Committee (responses shown in italics):

- a. Who is doing the learning walks? *Heads of quality, the quality team and two very experienced individuals with inspection experience. The Principal will also drop into sessions.*
- b. In appendix 3, No 8 in the 'Minimum expectations of student learning experience,' this needs to be amended to reflect Ofsted's expectations that 'new learning' is not an expectation in every lesson. A lesson can be about consolidation and deepening learning. *Agreed. Recommendation:* To change the criterion for 'new learning' to 'consolidation or deepening learning' in line with HMCI recommendation (**Action 52** – VP C&Q).

- c. Four people have left of the 12 who were Red. What has been the impact of this upon other staff? Has it created a culture of fear? *No, staff turnover is minimal. We are clear in our message to staff. We will support you to get better but there are some that have decided not to carry on in their role. People were nervous of it but that initial fear has now gone.*
- d. Of the 12 lesson observations that were rated Red, were these concentrated on a particular course? *Members received further detail in relation to each of the observations. Issues identified in lessons related to: compliance issues in relation to health and safety; delivery by agency staff; issues that were resolved quite quickly and when later re-observed improved to Green.*

The VP C&Q confirmed that a significant amount of CPD had already taken place since September 2019. The CPD had been delivered by external and internal staff and had focused on issues raised from internal and external quality measures. There was a programme of CPD for the rest of the term which would be overseen by the new quality manager in association with the heads of school and the VP C&Q.

Questions raised by the Committee (responses shown in italics):

- a. The report seems to indicate that some staff have not attended CPD at all? Is there a valid reason? *Some people are currently on long-term sick. Every single person in the College should have attended these sessions. Recommendation: To confirm that 'all staff' have actually attended CPD sessions (Action 53 – VP C&Q)*

Resolved: The four reports in relation to teaching, learning and assessment 2019-20 were received.

19/65

Safeguarding (Agenda item 9)

a. Annual College report (Paper I)

During 2018-19, there had been a steep increase in the number of safeguarding cases at the College with students presenting with more and more complex needs. The total number of reports in 2018-19 was 756 compared to 352 in the previous year. It was expected that this increase would continue in the current academic year. Since September 2019, there had been more referrals during this first term compared to the total figure for 2018-19. The report provided members with further detail around concerns raised within each of the school areas. The VP C&Q highlighted those courses that attracted the most vulnerable students. The largest number of referrals came from teachers which confirmed their awareness of their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding of learners. The report included a number of measures that were being put in place to address the increased demands. Examples included: the appointment of 5 pastoral officers; further developing relationships with external agencies to support the work carried out in the College and to access specialist advice and support; and, an additional counselling resource provided by students from the UoN.

The Chair of Committee invited feedback on the report:

- a. The report was interesting and explained the impact upon staff but I would also like to know more about the impact upon students? The answers I am keen to know: How many students are still in College? Have they succeeded? Has the money invested in this support had an impact? With ProMonitor I know that you can get reports on this quite easily. It would be good to know that this data is on the College system. Ultimately, if you are

putting in all this effort, and the students still leave, the support hasn't been effective? Recommendation: More analysis needed around impact on the learner to satisfy the Committee that the support being provided has an impact (**Action 54** – VP C&Q).

- b. My second point I'd like the report to explore is around links with external agencies. How many people are we referring on? Are we recommending the need for some learners to be referred to some external agencies? How many learners have been sent to the College because of the support infrastructure that we have available? We must have a balanced view around using College resources effectively. Recommendation: Further detail is required around our links with external agencies: are any of our students being referred? Are we using the College resources effectively? (**Action 55** – VP C&Q)
- c. A third area for further exploration would be around course planning and the impact on the individual student. Discussions with students highlighted anxiety caused by competing deadlines with assignments. If a course seems to have a lot of people with anxiety, there could be factors that could be addressed to overcome the issue. *We don't believe this will be a problem this year due to the mechanisms we have put in place to stop this.*

In a wider discussion around safeguarding, the Committee was informed that there would be 'swipe' access to every single door and it would only possible to access the College buildings with a card. Discussions had also commenced around ensuring better CCTV was in place.

Resolved: The Committee would recommend the annual Safeguarding report to the Corporation for approval.

b. Safeguarding champion

The governor safeguarding champion had arranged a meeting with the VP C&Q on the 24th October 2019. He had already submitted a list of 'areas to explore' during the meeting. The governor safeguarding champion would report on his findings to the next meeting of the Committee and Corporation. This would provide a further level of assurance to governors.

Resolved: The governor safeguarding champion's report was noted.

19/66

Any other items of urgent business (Agenda item 10)

There were no other items of urgent business.

19/67

Date of next meeting (Agenda item 11)

Tuesday, 5th December 2019 at 3.00pm in Thornby at the Management Centre.

Mr A Eastland and Mr J O'Shea left the meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.37 pm.