



Exceptional Meeting
Planning and Performance Committee

Date: 30 November 2017

Clerk to the Corporation

Venue: T708, City Campus

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Present: Anne Wilson (Chair)
Gwyn Arnold
Angela Foulkes
Beri Hare
Saleem Rashid
Seb Schmoller
John Timms

In attendance: Joan Rudder, Head of HE and Access
Alison Shillito, Clerk to the Governing Body
James Smythe, Deputy College Principal

Action

17/5/1 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Jay Bhayani, Chris Linacre and Amy Smith. The meeting was quorate.

17/5/2 **Declarations of Interest**

Saleem Rashid declared an interest, as a Maths lecturer employed by the College, in discussions about the quality and standards of English and maths education.

17/5/3 **Higher Education Annual Review**

3.1 The Committee had been convened exceptionally to receive and scrutinise the Annual Review of Higher Education provision. The review completes the annual assurance cycle prior to Governors authorising the Accounting Officer to submit annual assurance statements to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) confirming that it is satisfied that the quality of the College's HE provision is appropriate and that there is effective action being taken to address issues identified in the Review. The Governing Body delegated this task to the Committee at its meeting on 16 October as the final Review report had not been available in time to be considered at that meeting. The scheduled meeting of the Committee had been postponed to 11 December due to the FE Commissioner's visit on 28th and 29th November and therefore an exceptional meeting had been convened.

3.2 The Head of HE and Access presented the report.

3.2 The report draws on the evidence and the standard data set of quality indicators defined by HEFCE and quality data generated by the College's own processes. A number of the indicators on retention and achievement are at or above the HEFCE benchmarks. The Committee wanted to understand the reasons for declines in

some indicators and the action being taken to address these in particular what action is being taken about:

- The relatively poor submission rates for National Student Survey (NSS) - 56% - which means that data cannot be published at course level.
- A slight fall, compared to 2015/16, in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which is a national measure of graduates' progression into employment or further study within six months of leaving.
- A decline of 4 percentage points (pps) in achievement rates, compared to 2015/16 and
- A decline in the duration/retention rate of 14 pps compared to 2015/16, taking it well below the national benchmark when previously it had hit benchmark.

3.3 Completion of NSS

The Head of HE and Access explained the steps taken in 2016/17 to encourage students to complete the NSS by scheduling time in IT classrooms for this purpose. It was noted that the College does not receive feedback on whether or not individual students have completed the survey so targeting communication is difficult. The new HE Tutor Mentor would be working on promoting the survey this year and consulting with students about solutions to improve completion rates.

3.4 Governors recommended that the action plan should include a promotional strategy for the NSS that

- encourages and enables students to complete the NSS
- highlights the benefits of completing the NSS - e.g. communicating improvements made due to the feedback from NSS and other student voice activities
- uses the data that is sent back from NSS about completion rates to target particular courses or subject areas to promote completion.

Head of
HE and
Access

3.5 NSS Issues

Overall most of the results for key questions in the NSS were in line with benchmarks except that students seemed less satisfied with course organisation and data. Governors stressed that there needs to be effective steps in the Action Plan to explore with students causes of dissatisfaction with course organisation and data and develop actions to address the underlying issues.

Head of
HE and
Access

3.6 Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE)

It was noted that the fall in the DLHE rate coincided with the College delivering Level 6 honours degree top-up provision locally whereas previously nearly all Foundation degree graduates had progressed to the awarding university to complete the honours degree - resulting in higher than average progression to further study rates. The College's performance in DLHE of 92% of the its graduates progressing into employment or further study within 6 months of graduating, although 0.2 pps below the national HE benchmark, is relatively good for HE in FE.

3.7 Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO)

The Committee commented that the College's score (18.3%) in the longitudinal measure of graduates into graduate employment is significantly lower than the national benchmark (36%). The Head of HE said that this is a new indicator, It is measured using a median graduate salary of £21,000, i.e. the threshold for repaying student loans. The measure is being piloted and is not currently being used

by HEFCE. The College has maps of where its graduates are employed, which indicate that most graduates move into employment in the local area where wages are lower than national average earnings. This may have contributed to the low score in the LEO. Longitudinal scores are likely to become important to applicants choosing a place to study in future and the College will need to address.

3.8 Achievement and retention

The Committee noted that there had been some analysis of the reasons for the fall in achievement and retention i.e. the students most at risk of not continuing were those who failed assessments at the end of Semester 1, who are less likely to pass those resits and progress to the next stage of the course. The Committee asked if there were any reasons other than module failure for students not returning to second year. The Head of HE said that the cohort analysis document provided individual reasons for students withdrawing or taking a break in study.

- 3.9 The Committee asked what feedback the College had received from its awarding bodies on the decline in achievement and retention rates. The Head of HE said that feedback from Sheffield Hallam University was due in January once it had completed its annual review at faculty and university level. It was noted that Sheffield Hallam University is due to undertake a periodic partner review

Head of
HE and
Access

3.10 Student recruitment

2016/17 had been a relative poor year for recruitment. There had already been action to validate new provision and strong promotion of access provision which had led to a stronger recruitment in September 2017. An update on in-year data would be reported to the Committee's next scheduled meeting. There are further new courses due to complete validation in February 2018 to start in September 2018.

- 3.11 The Acting CEO reported that a new Head of HE and Access had been recruited to replace Joan, who is retiring from the College. Joan had developed the HE portfolio from its inception and had initiated proposals to have different validating bodies for different types of provision, which had proved a wise change. In addition to the improvement plan for current provision, the objectives for the new Head of HE and Access would be

Acting
CEO with
Head of
HE and
Access

- to develop further the structures for quality processes for HE;
- to ensure that we are measuring the right things - i.e. measures that are defined correctly for the HE regime rather than trying to use FE indicators;
- to develop and recommend to the College a strategy for continuing to grow and develop HE provision.

- 3.12 The Committee recognised that the drops in achievement and retention rates needed carefully monitoring to ensure effective progress on the actions and their impact. Members agreed to review the action plan again outside of the meeting and provide feedback to the Clerk on sharpening the report and action plan. Comments to be provided by no later than 13 December to assist the new Head of HE in strengthening the action plan. The Committee would review the revised action plan at its next meeting with relevant in-year HE data and feedback from the College's HE validating bodies, once received. Review of the Action Plan should also include:

Members

- further analysis of the cohort data to identify any patterns of poor retention that could be addressed in recruitment or student support
- revisions to the action plan to make it clearer and more specific about the additional support and other measures that the College would mobilise to

improve retention and achievement.

- actions required or recommended by the awarding bodies once this is available.

3.13 In addition to a revised action plan, the Committee requested for its next meeting a report proposing the time line for the assurance process for 2017/18 including the timing of routine reviews of progress on the action plan and its impact on students. Head of HE and Access

3.14 The Committee resolved to authorise the Accounting Officer, acting as a governor to sign the Assurance Return on behalf of the Governing Body and submit to HEFCE by 1 December 2017. Acting CEO

3.15 The Committee thanked Joan Rudder for her long service to the College of over 34 years and wished her well on her retirement.

17/5/4 **Date of next meeting**

Monday 11 December 2017 at 8.00 am in the Boardroom, Sheffield City Campus