

**BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD**

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on 21 May 2013 at 4.30 pm
Main Committee Room, Bispham**

Present: N. Farley (*Chair*)
S. Bullen
H. Broughton
C. Mercer
B. Robinson
L. Smith

Together with: C. Hill, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Standards)
S. Hughes, Director of Quality & Standards
C. Thomas, Director of 14-19 Provision
C. Dunn, Director of HE Development (*items 3b) and c) and 4)*
M. Phelan, Director of Skills and Business Development
G. Winward, Clerk to the Board

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

All were present.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record, subject to the substitution of the word 'judgements' in place of 'grades' in item 4 (Higher Education SED 2011-12).

3. Matters Arising

a) ***Item 8 – Teaching Observations and Item 9 – Value Added Report***

Members noted the additional information that had been requested and subsequently circulated since the previous meeting. This was discussed briefly and Members were informed, following a question, that the observations data showed the position as at February and that there would be over 300 observations completed before the end of the year. Nonetheless, the view was expressed that these represented an insufficient sample and management **agreed** that the present Policy should be reviewed and amended to increase the volume of observations undertaken.

With regards to the Value Added data, the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards) reiterated some of the improvement actions that were in hand. Some reservations were expressed on the usage of the data.

C. Dunn joined the meeting

b) ***Item 3 – Matters Arising - QAA Review Feedback***

The Director of HE Development reported on the key findings that had been notified. A first draft of the full report was expected in mid-June. In the four areas of judgement, two had been deemed to have been 'met' and the other two were

'commended', these being the highest descriptors that could be awarded. Compared to other providers, the College was the only one to have had two commendations. The initial findings also identified good practices at the College and made other affirmations. No 'recommendations' had been notified at the present time, although it was possible that some could be contained in the final report.

The final report was expected to be received at the end of July and public promulgation was likely to coincide with A Level results. Members concurred with the delight being expressed at these outcomes and asked for their congratulations to be conveyed to all involved.

c) **Item 4 – HE SED – Gender Categories**

There was a brief discussion on the categories that had been used and it was noted that these were currently following the census categories.

4. **HE Curriculum Development**

The Director of HE Development presented the content of the paper that had been circulated which covered progress on the curriculum development schedule for 2012/13, including revalidations and validations. Mention was also made of the continuation of a new relationship with Salford University. It was noted that this involved different processes from those previously experienced but that this was fruitful to all involved. Other activity had included a review of Lancaster University degree processes. For the remainder of the year, activity would include the continued review of HE programmes and one new programme. Members' attention was drawn to the detailed schedule enclosed with the papers, including information on three confirmed course closures.

The report generated some discussion and a number of associated questions, including:

- Revised 'Summer School' offer
- Proposals for revised approaches to degree awards, where management confirmed that degree classifications (1st class honours etc.) would remain unchanged and that degrees nationally were criterion based through external validation processes
- Salford University's different approaches to validation
- Contractual arrangements with Lancaster University and the interface with their management information systems

The report was **noted**.

C. Dunn left the meeting

5. **Employer Responsiveness (WBL) – End of Year Review**

This item was confidential.

6. **FE Choices**

The Director of Quality and Standards presented the paper which reported on the 2011/12 results in the FE Choices Report produced annually by the SFA. This latter contained three sections:-

- Results of Learner Satisfaction Survey
- Estimated % of learners who progressed
- The provider's responsiveness to employer training needs

The Director explained that the Report had helped to inform plans for improvements but that, as the report was based on lagged 12 month old data, many improvements were already in hand before the Report had been produced. The Committee noted that this data was in the public domain and was intended to impact on learner decisions and choices.

The Director then gave some further detail on the outcomes under each of the above headings. This generated substantial discussion on progression and destinations data and management explained the difficulties in obtaining these and the challenges faced with there being 17,500 students to follow up on, particularly where mobile phone or other contact details may have changed since the students had left the College. A suggestion was made that social media could have a useful part to play on this in the future and management also explained the efforts being made to improve data collection by other means, such as an alumni network.

Further discussion drew out concerns over the usefulness of the information being collected, especially given the difficulties cited in collecting it. Members noted that, presently, such data collection was an external requirement placed on colleges and could not be avoided. With regard to some of the detailed data included in the report, particularly the learner satisfaction survey results:-

- The Director agreed to supply further information regarding the methods of scoring that were described.
- The year-on-year trends depicted in Appendix 1 of the report - Members noted the difficulties in obtaining views based on individual expectations and the fulfilment of those. A suggestion was made that these could be made more robust by the publication of a student charter (standards to expect) alongside the survey questions.
- Management also informed the Committee of the current College approach to feeding back to students on their responsiveness to any views expressed.
- The Committee was also briefed that internal surveys conducted along similar lines generated better results and that the national survey was no longer weighted for particular aspects.

The paper and its contents were **noted**.

7. Staff Development Annual Report

The Director of Quality and Standards gave an overview of the report and the activities undertaken in the year. He reminded Members that the academic year was not yet complete and therefore activities were still taking place. Underpinning the activities was the philosophy that learning and development for staff was crucial in helping to equip them to provide learners with the best possible learning experience.

In response to a question, the Director informed Members that over 225 managers undertook the Management Essentials Programme, where the target for completion was within 18 months. Internal feedback had been excellent and that this had been one of the best programmes ever delivered by the College. The Director confirmed that all associated activity was internally delivered but that management were looking at 'refreshing' the programme for the future. This could include looking at progression to the next level. The discussion then opened up to a range of further questions which were responded to by the Director of Quality and Standards and the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Standards. These included:-

Confirmed

- The time allocated for development activities
- The success of induction
- The volume of teaching observations ('graded' and 'supported') and plans to change the annual timetabling of these

The Clerk added that the performance management of staff was a topic receiving increased focus from Ofsted inspectors and there was a heightened expectation that Governors would be au fait with such activities within their College. It was therefore **agreed** that this would be a useful topic to discuss further in the autumn term.

In conclusion, a brief discussion took place on evaluating the impact of the time and investment made in staff training. It was noted that this could include improved staff morale and other non-quantifiable outputs.

8. Schedule of Meetings 2013/14

The circulated schedule was **agreed**. The new day and time for the Committee's meetings was **noted**.

9. Self Evaluation

The Clerk reminded the Committee of the background to this item, which had been a new activity the previous year, following suggestions from the internal auditors. Members were invited to engage in a degree of self-reflection on the Committee's work over the last year, which would feed into the Board's annual process in the autumn, and a number of strengths and points for improvement were aired and **noted**.

10. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 15 October at 4.30 pm in the Main Committee Room, Bispham Campus**.