

Standards Committee 22 June 2010, Committee Room, Ashington

	<p>Present : T Shirley (Chair), R Ellis-Jones, R Casson, M Rossi</p> <p>In Attendance: D Simpkin, H Wright, L Kinghorn, M Charlton, L Attewell</p>	
Stnds/22june10/01	The meeting was agreed to be quorate.	
Stnds/22june10/02	There were no apologies received.	
Stnds/22june10/03	The minutes of the previous (2 February) meeting were agreed with two changes: Item 11 - 'EMA' payments not 'SMA'; Item 13 – added that the LBI plan was suggested as a framework/model by the Committee.	
Stnds/22june10/04	<p>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda:</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
Stnds/22june10/05	<p>Learner Involvement Activity/Student Satisfaction Review:</p> <p>MCharlton attended the meeting to provide Governors with an update on the Learner Involvement activity in the 2009/2010 academic year. MC highlighted that aims of the Learner Involvement Strategy. MC advised that information around the Learner Parliament was included as part of the Induction process for all learners in the 2009/2010 academic year and this was highly effective in ensuring that the concept was embedded in the minds of learners. As well as formal structures such as regular meetings, surveys etc, the provision of ad hoc feedback via our Voicebox service has been used throughout the academic year. TS asked what the use of the Voicebox was for which MC responded that this was an online mechanism for collecting positive and negative comments. She gave an example of the type of feedback received e.g., library books and some complaints.</p> <p>TS advised he would like more detail on what students are using Voicebox for at the next meeting. MC went onto comment that feedback from learners has confirmed that this activity was welcomed and that it enabled a better balance between 'administrative' and fun activities to take place. MC added that by including this activity in induction also generated interest in the general College enrichment programme that began at the beginning of the 2009/2010 academic year.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to ensure that this item is brought back to the next meeting in the new academic year/cycle of business.</p>	Clerk

A discussion then took place as to whether Learner Parliament meetings were well attended and what the numbers were attending the meetings. RC added the possibility of Learner Parliament linking up with Learner Youth Parliament and the Youth Cabinet. REJ confirmed that she had met with the Learner Youth Parliament and it was agreed that David Ferguson provide more information relating to this.

Action: Clerk to ensure that Governors receive this information/feedback.

RC added that he wished to congratulate staff of the college with regard to the activities which were scheduled for a Wednesday afternoon.

With regard to student satisfaction MC advised in the last two years the College has carried out two annual surveys with learners;

- i) An induction survey
- ii) On-programme survey

MC advised that in the previous two years the College has used the services of QDP to deliver and analyse our surveys. A decision was taken to move away from QDP to Survey Monkey and conduct the surveys initially. It was initially agreed for the College to carry out the induction survey itself using Survey Monkey and this decision was extended further to include the on-programme survey. Both surveys went ahead as planned alongside the Framework for Excellence survey, with additional ad hoc surveys being delivered through 2009/2010 e.g., ICT Evaluation Survey, Enrichment survey and a Connexions Survey.

MC commented that the completion rates in all the surveys were disappointing with the exception of the ICT survey which did offer incentives. However, target numbers were met which were required by the LSC for the Framework for Excellence survey to have our survey results validated.

REJ commented that it looks like the College position is worse than last year on a number of areas. However, it is difficult to tell if we are comparing like with like. REJ recommended that we return to QDP next year so that we can benchmark our progress against national outcomes. It would also eliminate the problem of comparison. However, where there were trends that had moved from one year to the next, we must action this and the College needs to ensure that something is put in place for the next year so problems are not repeated. HW added that she would look at this as to how it will impact in the SAR. MR commented that perhaps

Clerk

	<p>the College could look into building the surveys into tutorial time to avoid survey fatigue.</p> <p>TS then commented that the focus groups that had originally been planned for last year had regrettably not taken place, and that he hoped they would be used this year as it is important for us to tell be able to look beyond the survey data</p> <p>MC drew the committees attention to the recommendations within the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move back to QDP next year. • An annual survey plan is developed which includes timeline for completion. • Provide set opportunities during the year for targeted surveys by the Quality Team. • Develop a dissemination plan to ensure results are used effectively and fed back to learners. • Use Survey Monkey or Blackboard to go back to students once we have put in place changes to get feedback about the key questions we are addressing. • Governors consider the contents of this report and provide comments. <p>The above recommendations were agreed by the Committee.</p> <p>MC left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.</p>	
Stnds/22june10/06	<p>Staff Development Review:</p> <p>Linda Attewell provided Governors with a summary of staff development activities held between March and June 2010 for curriculum and support staff.</p> <p>LA provided an update on the most important activities as follows:</p> <p><i>Cross-College Subject Learning Coaches' Programme:</i></p> <p>LA advised that twelve members of staff were attending this in-house programme which is being delivered in conjunction with Northumbria University CETT. She commented that the College already has six qualified Subject Learning Coaches and that it is anticipated that there will be a team of eighteen by September 2010. LA was happy to advise that staff have been very keen and committed to this programme and that feedback has been very positive.</p> <p><i>Cross-College Staff Health and Well-being Events and Campaigns:</i></p> <p>LA advised the group that as part of the drive to ensure the health and well-being of staff, the College has signed up for the Healthy</p>	

	<p>was a priority arising from the Ofsted report</p> <p>The report was noted and approved.</p>	
Stnds/22june10/07	<p>Retention update:</p> <p>HW provided an update for Governors on retention which gave the College's overall position for 2009/10 at 92%. HW advised the Governors that this percentage could be broken down further to explore key aspects within an equality and diversity context.</p> <p>HW also advised that in addition there was a review of each department's retention for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 by age, gender, ward uplift and level and that some outstanding performance had been identified in all areas.</p> <p>HW commented on a concern of last October's Ofsted team which was that College staff were inconsistent in their ability to articulate the reasons for quality improvement. HW advised that each Head of Department had been challenged to identify the key factors contributing to success as well as to indicate what might be inhibiting further improvement.</p> <p>HW advised that the majority of departments are monitoring retention rigorously and exploring the implications of trends in a range of contexts. However, some staff still regard a challenge as a criticism as opposed to an enquiry to establish a rational basis for quality improvement.</p> <p>HW then drew the group's attention to the recommendations. A discussion took place regarding Governors being asked to consider which KPIs they would recommend for inclusion. REJ commented that this would be useful as part of the recovery plan. She also advised that the Strategic Plan was to be reviewed at the next Full Governing Body meeting in July. REJ advised that we need to think which KPIs will take us to exceptional and that the Governing Body need to offer suitable challenges. She asked for Governors opinions regarding which KPI would provide these. REJ added that it was timely for the College to decide what it is it needs to measure and report on. TS commented that as a way forward it would be better for REJ to send a list as a starter and the group discuss this over email.</p> <p>The recommendations were agreed.</p> <p>LA left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.</p>	REJ/Governors
Stnds/22june10/08	<p>Attendance update:</p> <p>HW provided an update on the report presented at Standards Committee on 2 February 2010.</p> <p>HW commented that in September, SMT set a target of 90% for</p>	

	<p>student attendance. HW advised that while this is a measure for individual attendance rather than for a cohort, the College as a whole fell short of this and is 5% down from this time last year.</p> <p>Governors expressed their disappointment at the apparent decrease in attendance shown by the data</p> <p>HW highlighted the common issues which affect attendance, but drew the groups attention to one important issue which is in areas where 19+ students are studying while also at work, shift patterns can be altered which adversely affect attendance, and that in some departments there are recurring situations involving pregnancy and mental health problems. HW stated that further interventions were needed in consideration of the last point.</p> <p>TS agreed that these were valid issues, but were one that affected attendance every year, not this year in particular.</p> <p>HW then highlighted the recommendations to the Governors which were agreed.</p>	
Stnds/22june10/09	<p>Review of quality assurance and self assessment process:</p> <p>Louise Kinghorn attended the meeting and provided a report to review the Self Assessment and Review Process for 2009/10. LK advised that this academic year had been unusual in the fact that the College was subject to an Ofsted Inspection in the first half term, and that the Assistant Principal for Quality left in March 2010, so therefore it is timely for the College to carry out a review of our major quality processes.</p> <p>LK advised on the Ofsted Report for October 2009 and the developments made since then. She advised that the College was given a grade 2 for its 'Capacity to make and sustain improvement', which indicated confidence that the College is aware of what needs to be done and progress has already been made.</p> <p>With regard to Self Assessment and Review Process for 2009/10, LK advised that SAR validation panels, including external representatives were scheduled for October and November 2009. She commented that all curriculum area SARs had been validated and that most were found to be self assessing at the appropriate grade with only one or two exceptions.</p> <p>With regard to the SAR consultation update, LK advised that following her appointment as temporary Quality Manager in May 2010, consultation had begun with Curriculum Area Managers and their Heads of Department and Support Area Managers involving the completion of 'Assessing your self assessment report' activity and key themes identified.</p> <p>LK advised that as a result of the review the identified priorities</p>	

	<p>which she highlighted would be formulated into an action plan.</p> <p>TS asked that in future could a column be included in the SAR and QIP templates to encourage cross referencing.</p> <p>LK then drew the groups attention to the recommendations. These were agreed.</p> <p>Tony Shirley nominated himself as representative to input to the quality policy review.</p> <p>It was agreed to raise the issue of wider governor involvement with the SAR?QIP validation process at the next full GB meeting .</p>	TS/clerk
	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>Agenda queries – TS was unsure whether the Terms of Reference had been reviewed. It was noted that it had, and TS asked that consideration of the ToR be added to the next agenda.</p> <p>Cycle of Business – TS said that there the committee needed to be sure that its cycle of business allowed it to carry out its duties under the ToR effectively. At the previous meeting it had been noted that the consideration of the draft QIP had come late in the first term and that a more appropriate timing was needed (2 February 2010, item 5). A draft cycle of business document, meshing the committees meetings more effectively with the college’s quality cycle to be circulated to Governors for comments/amends.</p> <p>College QIP – TS felt this progress under the QIP should be discussed at every meeting. This had been a responsibility of the Standards Committee agreed by the full GB under the previous chair. It should be a standing item of Committee business until the GB agreed otherwise.</p> <p>Essential skills – Noted that this was currently graded 4, and that the Standards Committee had agreed that they should monitor progress in this area until accepted data suggested that the problem had gone, or until an improvement programme had been successful in raising performance in this area. Item to be raised on subsequent agendas.</p> <p>Time of meeting – TS asked the group if the start time of the meeting was suitable for everyone. It was agreed it was.</p> <p>SARQ – HW flagged this up with regard to how it fitted into the cycle of business with regards to Governors self assessment. It was agreed that this be discussed at FGB. Since the meeting HW has established that FMCE has replaced the SARQ but is still undertaken alongside self assessment. In 2009/10 (for 2008/09) it was completed by the Finance Director, Clerk and Chair. It was then</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>HW/Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>TS/Clerk</p> <p>TS/Clerk</p>

	submitted to Audit Committee and then FGB. It was then uploaded onto the LSC gateway. This year it will be sent to the SFA gateway.	
	Confidential items: There were no items to be classified as confidential.	
	Items for the Risk register: There were no items highlighted for the risk register.	
	Date of the next meeting: TBA	
	Members of the committee: T Shirley (Chair), R Ellis-Jones, R Casson, M Rossi	

Signed by the Chairman of the Standards Committee

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Date

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