

External Relations Committee

Tue 08 November 2022, 17:30 - 19:30

Online Meeting

Attendees

Board members

Dave Vasse (Principal Governor), James Gould (Vice Principal), John Kirk (Clerk), Jonathan Service (Assistant Principal for Intervention), Maurine Lewin (Designated Safeguarding Governor), Stewart Maclean (Governor, Chair), Jamie Davies, Marian Orafu

Absent: Wasif Khan (Student Governor), Tim Stockings (Governor)

Meeting minutes

1. Apologies for Absence and Quoracy

Stewart Maclean

Apologies were received from Tim Stockings. The Meeting was declared quorate

2. Declarations of Interest

Information

None were declared

Stewart Maclean

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 6 June 2022

Decision

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

Stewart Maclean

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

 Minutes 06-06-22 Draft for Circulation.pdf

4. Matters Arising

Discussion

To note any matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Stewart Maclean

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda

5. Risk Management Report

Information

To note any matters of Board Level Risk for the attention of the Audit Committee

Stewart Maclean

It was noted that the Board level risk falling within the remit of the Committee is considered under Agenda 6 below.

No other risks needing to be drawn to the attention of the Audit Committee were identified in the course of the meeting.

6. Communications and Marketing Report, inc. Student Enrolment

Information

JG provided a background narrative to the report, and noted the much improved enrolment process this year.

James Gould

There was an increase in the number of A level drop outs this year, which need further interrogation of the data.

Enrolment was closed four weeks earlier than usual due to courses being filled - a very encouraging development.

New A level courses were added which increased the numbers, though not the proportion of A level students.

A discussion is required on enrolment for next year, given the larger number of progressing students, changes may be considered to entry requirements.

A 'heat map' shows some interesting areas to consider on curriculum planning and local employment needs under the Skills Agenda.

The area with most room for improvement is the interview process, and continuity of relationship throughout year 11.

SM noted warmly welcomed the largely positive report, which will allow a more selective approach next year

DV said the fundamental question is the enrolment target for next year, and the opportunity to change the overall student profile. The number of dropouts before the 42 day cut-off period is not as good as expected. The majority of those drop out students have poor attendance and do not meet the higher learning aspirations. It begs the questions of how brave we need to be with entry requirements and standards across the board.

JD asked if we know accurately why they do drop out?

JG noted that greater interrogation of the data is required. Anecdotally, the stricter regime and structures at Monoux compared to other colleges might be off-putting to the less committed learner.

JD asked about the drop out rate of offer-holders compared to and 'walk-ins'.

JG responded that offer holders are less likely to drop out in the first six weeks, however, their rate of drop-out is an area that still needs to be addressed.

DV noted that almost all colleges had under-recruited, and it appears many A level students are prepared to travel a distance to school sixth forms. Against this background the College has performed very well

SM asked whether applicants from within the borough generally had lower points on entry, or were more inclined to apply for vocational courses.

DV said our proportion of higher achievers from the borough was not as high as it should be. The intention of the college is that all students work hard and progress to HE. We are not yet reaching the right number of the more academic school students.

JG noted that the change of exam board and the introduction of exams for vocational courses have caused issues and leads to questions over entry requirements..

SM asked about how best to devise a strategy of 'spending the capital' of higher numbers of internal progression and good enrolment?

DV noted that the beginning of 2023 has been set for developing the strategic plan, which would include the physical aspects of the estate as well as the overall student profile, learning behaviours, and the curriculum offer.

JG added that IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) could be improved during the interview process.

SM asked if there was an identifiable reason for the higher numbers of female students?

DV noted the popularity of the Health and Social care, was a likely factor.

In summary, SM welcomed the report, noting that this was a much improved position from previous years. The increased attractiveness and better all round offer to students is to the great credit of SLT and staff .

 Agenda 6 and 7. Marketing and enrolment.pdf

7. Work Experience Report

Information
James Gould

JG reported that Zainab has now taken over WEX (Work Experience) and has now established a number of welcome relationships, including with the Civil Service.

The KPI for WEX has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and has caused a considerable lag to the outturn for the year.

SM asked if this would be levelled out by next year.

JG said that given all previous work and history, there is confidence that it is achievable.

JD asked how the 80% target was set.?

JG and SM noted this was always known to be a very ambitious target, and in terms of benchmarking it was decided not to reduce it during the pandemic.

JD asked by not 100%?

JG given that internal progression of students is about 80%.this figure is as high as is reasonably practical..

JD asked about employers coming into College, and barriers to WEX

JG One barrier was travelling distance, and one broker had provided placements which were too distant, incurring excessive cost for the student. That broker is no longer used.

MO asked about the use of brokers.

SM asked about using Zero Gravity mentoring, and industry placements

JG noted that industry placements are always much more difficult to source but having a marketing specialist in Zainab in charge is a real bonus, and using the right brokers should help considerably.

JD asked if placements could be done at the College

JG noted that WEX can be a work project completed in college but must also include an experience of the world of work, so it is possible, but are very rare and not ideal.

SM asked about the Pledge referred to in previous meetings

JG noted that plans are in place for the first event this year, with Zainab driving groundswell support for a number of employers to come to the first event.

SM asked about budget and staffing levels

JG responded that while budget and staffing levels have not increased, having Zainab doing a great job in now managing both marketing and employability, there is a positive efficiency gain.

SM thanked JG for this encouraging report.

 [Agenda 8. Work Experience and Employer Links dashboard.pdf](#)

 [Agenda 8. Work experience KPI note.pdf](#)

8. Key Performance Indicators 2022-23

Information

James Gould

JG Highlighted a slight reduction so far in progression to Russell Group universities though final figures are not yet available. There were more students with late UCAS applications which may have been a factor. in not being offered places at more prestigious universities.

Vocational students had arrived with TAGs, which was not an accurate indication of ability, and the change of exam board had adversely affected their progression.

SM suggested that a KPI be introduced to monitor the number of learners retained at the 42-day cut-off period.

DV did mention that some learners simply do not arrive, most likely those with multiple enrolments, so this is not always a simple issue to address, but there are actions that can be taken to improve retention, such having students sign up to enrichment/leadership programmes before the start of term.

The Committee agreed that a KPI would be introduced at the next meeting, and recommended the KPI report to the Corporation for approval

 [Agenda 9a. KPI table 2122.pdf](#)

 [Agenda 9b. KPI table 2223.pdf](#)

9. Annual Safeguarding Report

Information

Jonathan Service

JG introduced Jonathan Service as the AP for intervention, who leads on Safeguarding.

There has been a significant increase in Safeguarding cases, mostly as a result of Covid, but there appears to be a slight reduction this year..

Mental Health mentors are doing a good job with the large numbers of those with mental health (MH) issues.

SM asked JS if we have adequate resources to tackle the volume of MH issues.

JS said that the increasing numbers are a greater degree of higher need and is always a challenge.

ML asked about bodies such as CAMHS (Children and Adult Mental Health Service)

JS said that mentors frequently made referrals and signposts to other groups and through GPs, as appropriate, and students are also encouraged to self-refer.

JS noted that many of the students are aged 17 + and are more in need of adult MH support rather than for children.

Much work has been done to ensure mentors are working to provide solutions and strategies, and mentors are also receiving supervision and support themselves to ensure their own health and wellbeing.

SM asked about the process if a student were to present with suicidal thoughts?

JS said that that staff have had specialist training to address suicidal ideations. These trained staff have access to specialised routes to keep the student safe until they are in front of a professional, including a hospital or crisis team, whilst a support plan is put in place which would involve every member of staff. They also work closely with the Local Authority team, Interact.

ML asked if there was any governor training on this specific issue for training on MH?

DV noted that Saturday morning development days would be an ideal opportunity for such training.

DV welcomed what a good job the Personal Mentors are doing in supporting the amount of students requiring intervention. It should also be noted there had been a considerable increase in difficult domestic situations, resulting in more students requiring support.

JD asked about looked after students (LACs) and if there was robust procedure for identifying and referring to mentors any who were struggling.

JS confirmed that all LACs are monitored by the Senior Mentor, Lisa, and all are identified as being at risk of low achievement, and continuously monitored.

JG noted that LACs are often subject to exclusion and this impacts on their achievement. The college is always looking at improving the support available to LAC students.

JS is monitoring LAC students, and though it is still early in the year, engagement is noticeably lower where the student has no parental involvement or responsibility. This is continuously being monitored to see what additional support may be required.

JD noted that it should be fed back to the Borough, which has a responsibility to provide further support for LACs.

JG welcomed this proposal, and also the huge amount of work being put in by JS and his team.

JS noted that ALP learners often have very high needs in addition to ESOL support, with so many unknown factors, as they often arrive from overseas with no background notes or history.

DV also noted the additional Safeguarding needs that come with the accommodation situation of these students who were housed in hotels where serious crime was taking place.

The committee welcomed this report, and thanked JG and JS for their excellent work.

 [Agenda 10. Annual Safeguarding update.pdf](#)

10. Prevent Risk Assessment

Information

JG this has been updated on 'incels' and other social media influencers.

Jonathan Service

This report was recommended to the Corporation for approval.

 [Agenda 11. Prevent Risk Assessment.pdf](#)

11. External Corporate Hospitality

Information

None was reported

Stewart Maclean

12. Governor Compliance Report

Information

The committee was gratified that this had been so thoroughly completed, save for one document.

John Kirk

 [Governor Compliance Register.xlsx](#)

13. Any Other Business

Information

The committee noted that requirement to review how well the college meets the local skill needs is now compulsory, though the college is already involved with Business London, and this is referenced in the Self-Assessment Report to

Stewart Maclean

ensure we are meeting local needs.

 [Ministers_Skills_Act_duty_to_review_statutory_guidance_20220706.pdf](#)

13.1. Stewart Maclean

Committee members noted their very grateful thanks to Stewart for his excellent leadership of this committee for the past seven years. It was also noted that Stewart had been foremost in visiting the college and talking to and encouraging all the staff he met, which is a huge boost to the morale of the college.

14. Dates and Times of Next Meetings 2022-23

Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 5.30pm

Tuesday 6 June 2023 at 5.30pm

Information

Stewart Maclean