



**ST MARY'S COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**MINUTES OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 3.45 PM IN ROOM 201**

Present: Mrs E. Best (Interim Principal)
Mrs A-M. Francis (Chair 19/20)
Mrs P. Lightbown (Staff Governor)

Staff: Ms. K. Sharp
Mr M. Makda

Apologies: Mr C. Beesley (Vice Chair 19/20)
Mr P. Moore

In attendance: Mrs L. Farnhill (Clerk to Governors)

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Details of the apologies of CB and PM were given and accepted by members.

Item 1 – Resolved. Apologies were noted and accepted.

ITEM 2 – Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

Item 2 – Resolved

ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER 2019 (FOR APPROVAL)

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed for accuracy and content. One minor typing error on page four was identified and corrected. The Committee clarified that there were no matters arising that had not already been detailed in item 4. The minutes were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

Item 3 – Approved: The minutes were approved by the Committee and signed by the Committee Chair.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 4TH NOVEMBER AND 17TH DECEMBER

The Committee noted details of matters arising and actions already completed and discussed items identified as requiring a verbal update as follows.

4th November 2019 - Item 4 (HE)

MA2 – PL confirmed that in conjunction with Business Manager KH, a new payment system had been set up, flagging and paying all HE related invoices without delay. EB confirmed details of OfS emails and payment requests were included on the agenda of her bi-weekly KIT meetings with PL, with SH (EB's PA) documenting this.

MA3 – PL confirmed that the OfS had been notified of the error. The MIS consultant updated the ILR and included errors and submitted this to the OfS, who confirmed receipt.

MA4 – informing the OfS of the structural solution - EB advised the Committee that at SPA SG1, the Group agreed that key stakeholders should be informed, with EB taking immediate action to comply. The OfS responded positively asking for SMC to keep them informed of the solution with a further update expected in May.

MA5 – OfS financial updates - PL explained that this had been raised by SB in November, with SB asking that the College confirms with the OfS that they did not need to update them directly regarding the financial position. PL confirmed that the OfS are updated through ESFA who meet with the finance team on a regular basis and there is no requirement to update the OfS directly.

4th November Item 5 (Retention Targets)

MA 1 - EB confirmed that the targets were reviewed in November, proachieve was checked and the target was below that of the in-year data.

MA2 – Looking at actual students rather than % EB advised of the 181 students on A levels, 163 progressed on to year 13. Out of those 18 students, 7 restarted year 12, 9 left, 1 was withdrawn and 1 transferred. The Committee commented on this being a more favourable view and thanked EB for the information.

4th November Item 6 (A Level Outcomes)

EB commented that Bev cross had been very helpful, with MM confirming that she had been supportive providing good ideas which were all now being implemented including having provided the template and structure helping to author the SAR.

4th November - Item 9 (Teaching and Learning Calendar)

EB advised the Committee that learning walks and deep dives were conducted throughout January with EB and her team now looking at the next cycle of learning walks, confirming that this was now not all on LW, that there was support from the SLT including support following up on any actions.

17th December - Item 6 – SAR and Item 7 – QIP

EB confirmed that the updated SAR had been uploaded within the timeframe.

Item 4 – Resolved: The committee took note of the written and verbal updates to the matters arising and actions from November and December. None were to be carried forward.

ITEM 5 - SAFEGUARDING UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)

EB introduced KS who was welcomed to her first meeting by the Chair.

KS informed the Committee that time had lapsed since the writing of the report, resulting in figures having altered. KS advised that the report format had been updated, with previous internal processes preventing full reporting, with this having been addressed through the introduction of a new secure safeguarding portal making monitoring and reporting more effective.

KS worked through the content and statistics within the report, drawing attention to the even split in gender and ethnicity. KS explained that support was bespoke dependent on need with students

varying on contact from daily to light touch or distant observation with all information recorded on cedar.

KS notified the Committee that mental health continued to be the biggest issue, informing them that she had discussed this with the student council, members of which were unaware of the services available, being both surprised and impressed by support available which included introducing regular visits from the wellbeing service and nurse, with plans to increase the availability of the nurse.

KS advised the Committee that there were no open CP cases and only one LAC, noting that College support for those formally LAC continued at the same level once students turned 18 and were no longer considered LAC. KS stated that categorising the issues had been difficult with some with multiple issues overlapping. Having tried to put learners into only the most relevant or prevalent category had proved impossible.

Q – Are some students double counted? **A** – Yes it was impossible for them not to be.

KS outlined the process for managing incoming information from high schools, dependent on the detail and how historic the information was. KS gave detailed information regarding external services utilised by the College.

KS advised the Committee that there was one student under criminal investigation which was now with the CPS and with the student now turning 18, the legal position will be different, potentially less favourable.

KS gave detailed information on the circumstances of students where the fitness to study process had been initiated and gave details of preventative measures including training and information offered to students in different areas including extremism, social media and cyber security, driver safety and drugs awareness.

KS advised the Committee of the new safeguarding structure which now incorporates a staff wellbeing lead, a newly appointed safeguarding officer, the tutorial lead, which addressed the female dominance of the team and a lead on prevent in response to the new EIF. KS outlined plans to incorporate PL as part of the Safeguarding team representing HE.

Comment – the structure offers a wide skills range and cross College support, this is a positive move.

EB confirmed that this had been driven by the SLT structure change, leading to a cost saving which was utilised in the appointment of the new safeguarding officer, who as a social worker brings experience and is able to make immediate impact.

KS concluded by notifying the Committee of the training and support offered to the safeguarding team and staff, created in line with the skills people already have and those they still need to develop. In detailing further training plans, including wider participation in the YMHA programme, KS noted potential cost savings through offering SMC as a centre for delivery to gain free access to the course and the intention to incorporate student ambassadors as well as looking into the possibility of incorporating mindfulness training .

Q – Is the new system for recording and reporting fully implemented? **A** Yes – Cedar would not allow safeguarding reporting so this is securely logged on SharePoint and has been in place since January

With no further questions or comments, KS was thanked for her report.

Item 5 – Resolved: The committee noted the detail of the report.

ITEM 6 - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 To receive and approve the updated E&D policy

The Chair asked KS to assume that all have read the items and to draw attention where relevant. KS confirmed that it had been written by the assistant head of inclusion and would expand where relevant and able.

Comment - the policy is thorough and well written.

Comment - Cover sheet with dates is leaving the College open to failure to comply with its own indicative dates. **Response – (EB)** this is a legacy of the FoH, they had revised all policies and we have not been sent editable versions of many, only having access to PDF. SH (Principal's PA) will review and monitor all policies and has highlighted revision dates and is working through each to update the most urgent, it is an onerous task.

Action **Comment** – I would recommend that these are drawn up and passed to the Clerk to ensure that these fit in with the Board's cycle of business. **Response – EB** – There are not many up for revision, mainly it is only job titles that require amendment.

Comment – HE needs to be incorporated into all of the policies to prevent the need for duplication.

Response – (EB) we do not have the capacity to go back and rewrite every policy but as we revise a policy HE will be incorporated.

Comment – Link governors can support by critically reviewing the policies in their area, Equality and Diversity would sit with the Safeguarding governor.

Response – Clerk a new governor with extensive experience in policy and legislation has nominated himself as the link for statutory policy compliance based on the expected influx of policies for approval as the FoH are amended, but he is now unwell and may not be able to return, as is the safeguarding governor.

Action **Comment** – A policy link is not necessary but safeguarding governor is essential, they should be replaced even if they have not resigned. **Response – (clerk)** Board Members will be approached for their support in filling this vacancy.

No further questions or comments were received and the committee agreed to recommend the policy to the Board for approval.

The Committee agreed to approve the policy, which had been reviewed by the Board and approved subject the scrutiny and suggested amendments of the Quality Committee.

Item 6.1 – Resolved: The Committee approved the policy without amendment.

6.2 To receive and review the strategy and action plan

KS confirmed that the E&D strategy was included for information, also written by MP. KS confirmed that the E and D team had been put back together, with regular meetings and reviews, commenting

that ultimately teaching and learning need to be on board and it needs cross College implementation and buy in.

Q - Is there an E&D committee? **A** – Yes, it has been reintroduced. **Comment-** I would suggest that the link governor needs to sit in on this. **A – (KS)** I will invite the link once a new one is appointed.

Comment – Why are progress columns empty? **A - KS** –this could be an old or incomplete version distributed ahead of completion due to the change in meeting dates.

Action KS to review the progress columns and feed back to the next meeting including review dates and actions .

Item 6.2 – Resolved – The Committee noted the details of the E&D strategy, requesting the action plan is updated and sent to the next quality committee meeting.

KS left after this item.

ITEM 7 - IN YEAR RETENTION, ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWALS

The Chair commented that the headline data is really positive and asked MM to draw attention to any relevant points. MM informed the Committee that he was pleased that the figures were in line with last year and the College target even with the inclusion of tutorial which has historically not always been well attended. There has been specific focus on areas which have lower attendance including level 2 GCSE classes.

Action **Governor comment** – looking at the progress against actions, it would be useful to see the data, we can see what you are doing but don't know what position we are in. **Response (MM)** advised the committee that it is just below 90%, outlining the actions undertaken to continue with improvements including KS working with the tutor coordinator, and MM meeting with HOFs once reports became available which had been working well.

MM moved on to outline student in year retention data, describing this as positive, with all areas in line with or above retention targets. MM confirmed that where there were issues on A level and diploma subjects, all students were accounted for, from the 39 only 9 had left, with 10 having restarted and 20 having transferred. MM talked through all level 3 data and was thanked for the full breakdown.

EB stated that after last meeting it was decided to include numbers with a **governor comment** that they did not expect national averages to go up.

MM went on to provide a detailed breakdown of retention by ethnic groups, which as percentages provided a negative outlook, however this was adversely affected by low numbers with a **governor commenting** that trend data had not previously been cut this way before and that it was helpful.

Item 7 – Resolved: The Committee noted the details of the report with an action to include data within the attendance action plan in future reports.

ITEM 8 - In Year Progress Report

MM confirmed the process for obtaining the data for internal assessment 1 had used the SFC process with papers and marking checked and audited. HOF had been alerted to and concerned by issues which were being addressed. **A governor commented** on the positive results in English literature.

MM outlined the process for the health check with vocational subjects managed by HB and MM for A levels, providing insight into the process and significant improvements in results seen at KA2; however concerns remained in some subjects with 4 students really affecting the Alps which were being addressed with SLT interventions, which also included those who underperformed last yr.

Action **A governor asked that** future reports include entry numbers so that it is clearly evident to see where this is an issue.

MM provided detail of the process used for year 13 including quality checks by HOF, standardised scripts and a curriculum team meeting. MM informed the Committee that an intervention week has been introduced where staff will see individuals and complete 'my action plan', ensuring that students have the necessary tools over Easter to develop the skills they need to succeed. This was in addition to revision classes and workshops for all students which had been well received by staff with honest reflection that the final ALPS may not be as good as those detailed within the report. **A governor** commented that improvement on last year is essential.

MM gave detail of additional support measures for students from large departments to attend supervised study, targeting those who underperformed last year or in KA1, this included 2 extra sessions on their time table, supervised by MM or LW with the support of library staff to ensure that all time in college is time well spent. **A governor commented** that the interventions appeared to be both appropriate and sufficient to tackle underperformance.

MM provided detail of a vocational subject that had caused concerns, using the 'what if' tool which indicated that this could be moved to a 5, adding that it was thought this was an accurate reflection on what could be achieved.

Item 8 – Resolved: Governors noted the detail of the report with an action point raised to include entry numbers into the next report.

ITEM 9 - STUDENT PROGRESS AND DESTINATION REPORT

MM informed the Committee that this data was from the summer and generally in line with 2018 at 84% progress, with 13 students who had not yet provided any destination data.

A governor commented that this information was vital, that the College could be done a disservice if these are positive progress outcomes that have not been included. **Response - EB** Staff member RD will know the information, adding that if SMC does not have a programme, particularly for those who were 19 plus students, it would have been an exit but any L1 learner will have had something to go to but not necessarily here. MM confirmed that the 'not knows' for destinations were at 8%, against a target of 6%, with a strategy to tighten process with increased in year monitoring at 3 points in the year.

MM went on to discuss the detail from the report, adding that intended destinations this year were obtained through tutorial and UCAS. **A governor commented** that the destination data for apprenticeships would still be a positive progression but not obtained through UCAS. MM added that degree apprenticeships had increased in popularity and that this was seen as a positive. **A governor commented** on the need to ensure that all students are given the right information advice and guidance as apprenticeships, particularly at degree level have not been the outcome for significant numbers before, **a further governor commented** that apprenticeships have been pushed centrally and this is now filtering through into student numbers and destinations.

MM outlined the subject specific careers information and guidance which is supported by the VLE PearlTrees then linked in to work during tutorials and the 'Your Futures Programme'. MM highlighted the positive work done by DS towards achieving the Gatsby benchmarks with a policy having not been approved by the Board presenting a barrier.

Action **The Chair asked** that the Quality committee recommends the policy goes to full Board and in the absence of an imminent meeting this could be done by email approval. The Committee agreed and the Clerk agreed to add this to the agenda of the next Board meeting.

Action MM moved on to UCAS applications, noting that the total applications sent were lower than 2018, with a 10%, decline mainly due to apprenticeship applications. **Q** – Are degree level apprenticeships made through UCAS? **A** – (MM) this is unclear. An action was raised to establish whether degree apprenticeship applications are made through UCAS.

MM explained that SMC buys into a UCAS predicted grade report, with issues raised relating to the accuracy of predicted grades, with 39% over-predicted by 3 grades giving 12% accuracy against a national average of 15%, bringing into question the integrity of SMC predicted grades on UCAS applications.

Q - Is it in pockets? Can you see where it is occurring? **A** (MM) – It has highlighted some areas but appears more generalised with no clear pattern, a pertinent issue relating to unconditional offers which need high predicted grades. It is thought to be as a result of pressure from students and parents, to which staff have succumbed. SMC has gone out with a message that they must be positive but realistic and further training will be delivered and an audit of grades input into the system.

Governor comment – this is a warning sign, I wouldn't like for this to be linked to the positive internal exam results. **Response** MM provided assurance that this was a UCAS issue and not an issue relating to quality or College predicted grades, staff have vocalised it was as a result of parent pressure. The Chair asked for it to be made clear that this issue was not relating to internal exams but only the predicted grades used for UCAS.

Matters Arising MM continued to highlight other issues, including the need for support for DS in relation to the UCAS application process, having had to complete 200 plus checks, commenting that whilst DS had done a remarkable job, this is not a sustainable position. MM suggested a resolution of additional training for those within the tutorial system to check them more efficiently. The final issue raised was in relation to IAG with only 1 member of staff qualified at present, with no succession or

absence cover available, therefore the decision had been made for the tutorial lead to complete the careers leaders' course, which will conclude in June.

Other actions taken to improve destinations outcomes included the appointment of a high achievers specialist, a history teacher to start in February.

No further questions or comments were received.

Item 9 – Resolved: Governors noted the detail of the report with an action point raised to ask the Board to approve the CAIG policy and to establish if degree level apprenticeships were included or excluded from UCAS figures. An update should also be provided on the process for supporting the UCAS checking process, currently undertaken by only one member of staff.

ITEM 10 - SURVEY RESULTS

MM informed the Committee that the SLT were delighted with the results.

Q You detail a response rate of 71%, did you have a target? **A (MM)** 80%. **Comment** You need to look at who has and hasn't completed it to establish what has worked to gain responses. **Response** **MM** – text has worked well for parents, we will look at ways to do this with students for future surveys.

Comment these are such positive responses; it would be more powerful if it had reached the targeted response rate.

MM worked through the details of the report and College responses including evidence already available that these were effective, having been evidenced in the deep dives. MM explained some of the potential sources that had led to dissatisfaction including the resignation of staff and staff absence having impact, now resolved through recruitment and reappointment, describing new appointments as strong and more stable. MM indicated that to further inform and engage the parents there would be a welcome evening in September with the opportunity to meet and talk to staff, receive a pack of information including an induction on cedar and Pearltrees to ensure all parents can log in and use the services available. A **Governor suggested** that they could also have a parents information evening prior to GCSE's to build an early relationship and split the information to prevent it being overwhelming. **Response (EB)** commented on how this had been done in the past but stopped due to poor attendance, with the welcome meetings as an alternative, hoping this will provide better engagement.

Comment this implies that you have addressed issues instantly; you are behind it with a clear understanding of issues and ways to address them. It is imperative these actions are also communicated.

MM concluded by advising the committee that the staff survey will follow as well as an end of year survey.

Item 10 – Resolved: Governors noted the detail of the report.

ITEM 11 - HE TERMLY REPORT

PL advised the Committee that a meeting scheduled to review the reports and processes with the HE lead Governor had been postponed due to unsafe driving conditions caused by the storm.

PL provided the rationale for the restructured reports, highlighting OfS requirements within each report. In addition, a document was created which summarises the ongoing requirements with quality cycle information embedded, an early draft of which is included but will be refined further with the support of the Lead Governor from a quality assurance point of view.

PL asked the Committee to confirm that they were happy with the new process which would see reports and underlying data reviewed in detail by the link governor, the report with assurance from the link governor provided to the Quality Committee with a brief summary provided to the full Board. **Comment** – it is evident that a lot of time and effort has gone into this revision, and reminding governors of the requirements is beneficial. The committee agreed that the process should be put into practice.

PL advised the Committee that the outcomes report circulated met conditions B2 and B3 and demonstrated an improvement on both provisions with nothing to judge on masters but highlighted how a lot more had gone through with more students retained, adding that the ability to exit at different stages with diff awards meant that retention was an ongoing issue.

PL highlighted how the increase was steady across all subject areas, noting that it was broken down to highlight the numbers of mature applications, often entering the programme with no formal qualifications and needing more support, with this information also necessary for widening participation. **Q** are some double counted? **A (PL)** yes, they can be counted in multiple areas including ethnicity, gender, disability as well as mature students.

PL drew attention to the high value added (in orange) with high numbers of degrees awarded as a 2.1 or merits awarded for foundation studies. PL confirmed that no students had failed to achieve their degree.

PL confirmed that the last page provided detail of progression data by subject, with UCLAN at 67% which was concerning but felt it was due to the nature of the students that attend SMC, high numbers of mature students already in employment which had been justified in the TEF application. The course also attracted learners with complex backgrounds, including those who had been in rehabilitation and wanted to support those in similar situations. PL noted a target was retaining masters students, which they need to work with LHU on, as the lines of responsibility remained unclear as the students are LHU students but studying at SMC. Progression data had also been picked up on which will be present in the future, graduates don't get to high level jobs as most are already in full time employment so continue, until an opportunity comes up for promotion, rather than traditional graduates who immediately seek employment. **Comment/ governor request** – it would be useful to have national average information here, could this be included next time? **A (PL)** – Yes.

Matters
Arising
Action

Q – To what extent are Holy Cross still involved **A (PL)** – they are still involved for the existing students. We also have a relationship with UCLan and LHU. **Question** How was the agreement with Holy Cross drawn up? **A (PL)** It was based on a historic agreement where we needed enough numbers to bid for the provision against Blackburn College. We do our own recruitment and support, it was purely for numbers.

STUDENT FEEDBACK REPORT

Q - If there is nothing in the box, it is assumed we still need this, has this been addressed? **A – (PL)** This has only been done where responses are self-explanatory. Overall for UCLAN first year feedback is really positive.

PL summarised the highlights from the feedback and outlined areas of concerns providing detail of actions to address issues, reflected in positive feedback that students concerns were taken on board and resolved. PL identified the need for enhanced 1:1 support with amendments to timetables made for the following year to address this from the outset.

Q - What do you mean by pressure and anxiety? **A (PL)** this is an evidence based module which is very difficult, the requirements and expectations are greatly increased from in year one. We restructured the time table meaning that half an hour per week is lost, so although guided learning hours were adhered to, there was less time to deliver the material and it did not work, it was crammed in and the teacher and learners were stressed. This has been reorganised for next year to reintroduce that half hour to relieve this pressure. PL noted how at a meeting with other institutions, all had commented on similar issues with results from SMC having been better than others.

PL explained the different procedure for the LHU feedback, outlining issues which were mainly operational. PL notified the Committee that there were new issues being raised in relation to the 4 week strike which had been difficult to manage with the last minute cancellation of lessons, particularly with many students coming straight in from work, arriving to find that their lesson had been cancelled.

Q How is provision continuing? **A (EB)** – students have been assured that learning will be replaced but not necessarily by staff so students are missing out on face to face support but everything possible is being done to minimise the impact.

Q what are they doing to make learning happen, what format is this in? **A (PL)** – it is put online but this has not gone far enough, it has not been developed into learning material. The university has given other tokenistic gestures of goodwill including a £5 catering voucher and £10 printing credit, most sessions will run but 10 out of 28 will be affected, they will have to make them up after strike. We fought for it in November and it did happen.

PL highlighted other issues raised including evening IT support, which was resolved through the upskilling of library staff.

PL concluded by noting issues raised by one post graduate student, which had been vague in relation to support. Attempts to identify the student had failed, with universal offers of support and

opportunities to raise issues to look into this further but they had not come forward, making it difficult to address, particularly as the course is provided by and run by LHU.

HE STUDENT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Q - Please can you clarify why this needs Governor approval? **A (PL)** – The agreement was that as a policy it has to be approved, all policies are for Board approval but procedures stay as operational matters for the SLT/Exec Team, it has been approved by LHU and UCLAN. **Comment** there are no issues, it all looks ok. The Clerk added that the policy was seen by Board as part of the last meeting pack as it was included as an item expected to be reviewed and approved by the Quality Committee ahead of Board, so although Quality was cancelled, the documentation was included with the Board providing approval subject to any additional comments or alterations as recommended by the Committee.

The Committee unanimously approved the Policy.

Item 11 – Resolved: Governors noted the detail of the report and approved the Student Transfer Arrangements Policy.

ITEM 12 AOB

The clerk asked the Committee to reconsider the timing and agenda for the next meeting due to this having been postponed from January to late February, now impacting on the proximity to the next meeting. The clerk offered details of the proposed agenda based on the annual work plan. The Chair asked for agreement to hold the next meeting ahead of the Board meeting in April and revised the agenda to be more relevant to the changing circumstances and timing, prioritising a review of predicted grades after mocks and internal exams. MM agreed these would be completed although the information may not be available 7 days prior. A tentative date was proposed as the 23rd April subject to clarification with MS as to what needs to happen after SG3 to ensure the 23rd provides sufficient time.

Item 12 – Resolved: Members agreed to defer the next meeting to precede the board with a proposed date of 23rd April.

Action

Actions

SH to provide details of policies for review to LF and look at cycle of business to ensure they are worked in.

LF speak to MW re E&D and safeguarding link governor

E & D action plan/ strategy - KS to review the progress columns and feed back to the next meeting including review dates and actions.

MM - Include data for the attendance target against actions report

Item 8 – MM - future progress reports include entry numbers so that it is clearly evident to see where this is an issue.

Item 9 – MM - Careers policy - Quality committee recommends the policy goes to full Board and in the absence of an imminent meeting this could be done by email approval. The Clerk agreed to add this to the agenda of the next Board meeting.

MM - UCAS applications, detail updated procedure/support for DS so that all applications do not need to be reviewed by her alone

UCAS - establish whether degree level apprenticeship applications are made through UCAS

PL item 11 – include national average information within the report on progression data

PL – establish if the retention of masters is the responsibility of LHU or SMC

Meeting date – Clerk – confirm the tentative date 23rd April for Board and Quality. Subject to clarification with MS as to what needs to happen after SG3 and before the Board can approve the recommendation of the FEC