

## **SIR GEORGE MONOUX COLLEGE**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Quality & Performance Monitoring Committee held on 9 June 2011**

- Present** Beverley Graham (Chair), Ayoola Dixon, Toby Grainger, Cerise Hau, Paolo Ramella (College Principal).
- Clerking Services** Robert Smith (Clerk to the Corporation).
- Observers** John Kenyon (Interim Vice Principal), Emma Robson (Advanced Practitioner for Higher Education/UCAS) – items 1-6 only, Tina Street (Associate Vice Principal: Quality - Staff Experience).

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Cerise Hau, student nominee member of the Corporation, was welcomed on the occasion of her first attendance at a meeting of the Committee.

Apologies for absence had been received from the following member of the Corporation: David Johnston.

Louis Strover (Associate Vice Principal: Quality – Student Experience) was unable to be in attendance.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (9 February 2011)**

The minutes were approved as a correct record of the business transacted, and *prima facie* evidence of the proceedings to which they relate.

#### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

*Re. Item 11:* in conformity with the commitment to improve success rates across the College, as recorded in the Quality Improvement Plan, it was reported that eight conferences had been held for AS students at which pledges had been sought and obtained concerning target grades to be achieved and the measures required to accomplish them

#### **5. Higher Education Progression Report (Paper QPM 11-09)**

A report prepared by the Advanced Practitioner for Higher Education / UCAS was received and considered.

It was noted that:

- in 2010 there had been increased competition for university places as a result of capping their number together with other effects of the

economic recession, but the number of students progressing to university from A level or vocational provision had remained consistent at around 74%;

- there are no national benchmarks for comparative purposes, though in 2009 Framework for Excellence had graded the College as outstanding for progression;
- there had been a significant increase, though the reason is unknown, in the number of former students, approximately 90 in all, returning to apply for university a year or more after leaving the College;
- progression rates by gender, ethnicity and disability status had stayed consistent for the last three years;
- there had been a significant decrease (by 11 percentage points) in progression to universities in the Russell and 1994 groups, but an increase in progression to higher education institutions in London, possibly reflecting the need of students to stay at home to avoid additional costs – it was questioned whether the measure captures all competitive universities, some of which are not represented in either group, and suggested that an analysis based on UCAS points per entry for institutions, as well as taking account of progression to universities outside the UK, might provide more meaningful data;
- there continues to be some lack of realism on the part of students in relation to applications for the most competitive courses (e.g. medicine), but with improved guidance and advice this had become less marked;
- entry to some vocational courses (e.g. nursing and midwifery) continues to be problematic owing to the issues students face in demonstrating relevant literacy and numeracy abilities combined with increased competition for places;
- the amended format of the college's Higher Education (HE) and Career Day held in 2010 had been very successful, as had the HE Fair, with strongly positive feedback from those attending it;
- student compliance with UCAS deadlines had improved;
- reference writing compliance by teaching staff had also improved, though a difference between vocational and A level tutors had been observed;
- reference checking performance had also improved, but remains below the College's own target of three days.

Members also noted 2011-12 plans to improve a range of aspects relating to student progression to higher education, including measures intended to minimise the impact of the new tuition fee regime on progression rates.

The author of the report was thanked by the Committee for its clarity, comprehensiveness and greater utility by comparison with earlier iterations.

## **6. Supporting the Gifted and Talented Programme (Paper QPM 11-10)**

A report prepared by the Advanced Practitioner for Higher Education / UCAS was received and considered.

It was noted that:

- the programme aims to support the top 50 students, based on GCSE point score on entry, by the provision of additional opportunities to aid their preparation for higher education;
- there had been no significant difference between the top 50 students' scores on entry over the last three years;
- the percentage of E and U grades achieved by the cohort had fallen over the period, but no clear trend had been observed with regard to A and B grades (where an increase might have been expected);
- there had been a significant decrease (11 percentage points) in progression to competitive universities (see Minute 5 above) by comparison with the 2007-08 cohort;
- students in the current cohort are holding offers such that 64% of firm choices and 46% of "insurance" choices are from competitive universities, the majority being for science-based courses.

Members commented that:

- consideration might be given to the creation of a similar cohort of the top 50 BTEC students;
- options for the future, including the possibility of scaling down the programme in favour of focusing activities and resources on the next 100 students (in terms of GCSE points on entry), are operational decisions for College management to consider and determine.

## **7. Key Performance Indicators (Paper QPM 11-11)**

An updated report, prepared by the Associate Vice-Principal (Quality – Student Experience) and presented by the Principal, was received and considered.

It was noted that:

- of 16 out of 19 targets for which data are currently available, 10 are being achieved or exceeded, and 6 are not being achieved;
- it was noted in relation to those not being achieved that:
  - short courses are less significant than long courses in terms of the College's overall provision;

- under-performance in vocational level 2 long courses reflects a student retention problem – however, the target is based on the outstanding success rate (95%, being 12% above the national average) achieved by the previous year’s cohort;
- the percentage of teaching staff accessing training and development relating to IT reflects the trend to take up such opportunities late in the College year, and should not therefore be subject to judgement at this date;
- AS level success rates, as well as those in GCSE English and Mathematics, are below target but above the 2009-10 baseline values.

Members reaffirmed the value of the report as a governance monitoring tool, and welcomed its inclusion as a standing item on the agendas of the Committee.

## **8. Quality Improvement Plan (Paper QPM 11-12)**

An updated report for 2010-11, prepared by the Associate Vice-Principal (Quality – Student Experience) and presented by the Principal, was received and considered.

It was noted that the Plan summarises the output of quality improvement plans developed individually for all significant College activities, and incorporates those observations and measures set out in the post-Ofsted inspection action plan. Members commented with appreciation on the Plan’s comprehensiveness.

Objectives, success criteria and the extent of progress made were reported in relation to outcomes for learners, quality of provision, leadership & management, and the post-inspection action plan, and specific measures noted concerning improvement to:

- success rates across the College;
- student literacy and numeracy skills;
- value added data across the College, about which only provisional conclusions are possible at this point in time;
- the curriculum offer (including alternative provision for at risk students) such that it more closely matches the needs and aptitudes of students (as reflected in improved retention rates, and higher satisfaction scores in student surveys);
- methods of monitoring student progress, and implementing effective intervention strategies for support;
- the sharing of good teaching and learning practice;

- quality improvement tools (e.g. lesson observation policy and procedures, and other forms of monitoring and evaluating teaching activities);
- student support at all key points throughout their college careers, with particular reference to induction, tutorial support, a clear sanctions and rewards policy and appropriate student involvement in matters relating to the assessment of teaching and learning;
- application procedures (through development of on-line facilities);
- variations reported in student achievement based on gender or ethnicity (including mixed ethnicity) through, among other measures, more effective equality and diversity training of staff;
- the relationship between governance and management such that the distinctive roles are understood, communicated and effectively fulfilled, including clear and agreed protocols for the setting of meeting agendas, the furnishing of reports to the Corporation and its committees, and the record of their proceedings;
- leadership and management capacity across the College, including new appraisal arrangements and leadership training for middle managers;
- the College culture such that a self-critical approach to individual and team performance in the interests of continuous improvement is an embedded feature of the institution;
- the College Self-Assessment Report such that comparison with national averages, rather than previous College measures, becomes the key driver in the evaluation of performance.

## **9. Student Survey Report (Paper QPM 11-13)**

A report, prepared by the Quality Manager and presented by the Interim Vice Principal, was received.

It was noted that:

- students had been surveyed by course and tutorial arrangements as well as answering questions about cross-college provision (e.g. student support, equality and diversity issues);
- selection had been made from a battery of questions provided by an external consultancy, some of which had proved more valuable than others, allowing future refinements of the survey to be contemplated;
- all students had been surveyed, and a 76% response rate achieved;
- rating scores had been derived by aggregating the positive statements (i.e. "agree completely" and "agree mostly"), and applying a 50% attrition factor to the latter category;

- three of the four highest rating responses had related to equality and diversity, whilst the lowest concerned enrichment activities and the student voice which, whilst disappointing, nevertheless places the College above the average by reference to external benchmark data and, in most instances, represents progress by comparison with the survey's previous iterations;
- increased ratings by comparison with previous iterations had been shown in all but four areas, particularly in relation to the administration of Education Maintenance Allowance payments and the use of information and learning technology within lessons, but those concerning enrichment had shown disappointing progress and require investigation to establish if they are accurate or represent a possible misunderstanding of the term "enrichment";
- only one area, relationship with personal tutors, had shown a decreased rating by comparison with previous iterations, and will be the subject of special investigation to determine the attendant reasons.

The action plan drawn up in response to the survey results was noted, with particular reference to its priorities, methods of communication, opportunities for feedback from participants and the measurement of outcomes.

## **10. Tutorial Development**

A presentation was given by the Associate Principal (Quality – Staff Experience) dealing with new tutorial arrangements intended to assist the College in improving both its outcomes and the quality of the student experience, and noted as a key feature informing the restructuring of the College aimed at integrating the tutorial system with the curriculum.

Particular attention was devoted to the purpose of the tutorial system, the effects of funding cuts to tutorial provision, key characteristics of outstanding tutorial provision, tutor performance indicators, student feedback, and the College's commitments to its learners.

The tutorial system operable from 2011-12 was described, including its reporting structure and the time allocated for its activities. New initiatives (e.g. compulsory private study for all AS students in an attempt to improve AS results, and the nature and significance of the Sixth Form Baccalaureate and arrangements for it to be piloted within the College) were outlined.

## **11. Items for the Corporation**

Items 7 and 9 were agreed as competent business to be referred to the Corporation for information at the meeting being held on Monday 11 July 2011.

**12. Any Other Competent Business**

None.

**13. Items for Future Agendas**

None.

**14. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 8 November 2011 (6.30pm), subject to confirmation at the Corporation meeting to be held on 11 July 2011.