

THE CORNWALL COLLEGE GROUP
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of the HE Committee meeting
held on 25 June 2020 at 12.00 noon by Video Conference

Present	Ian Tunbridge	IT	Chair
	John Evans	JE	
	Wilf Hudson	WH	
	Pat Wilde	PW	
Observing	Tracey Hooper	TH	
In Attendance	Alison Phillips	AMP	Corporation Secretary
	Kate Wills	KW	VP Curriculum and Quality
	Ruth Allen	RA	Head of HE

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first meeting of this committee held by video conference and particularly welcomed Tracey Hooper, governor, who was observing this meeting. The Chair explained that the shortened agenda was designed to cover key decisions and thanked colleagues for responding to the invitation to raise specific questions on the papers with the VP Group Curriculum and Quality in advance, to facilitate the smooth running of this meeting. The VP confirmed that some questions had been raised and addressed. Specifically the HE Action plan and HE Operations Group Terms of Reference had been circulated to the committee by email in response to a committee member's questions.

The committee noted that Paul Smith, student, who had previously accepted an invitation to join this committee had contacted the Corporation Secretary to explain that he did have sufficient time to commit to the role in addition to his studies. The appointment of a new student would be considered in the new academic year.

Declarations of Interest – there was no specific declaration of interest in addition to those previously disclosed on members' written declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Minutes of the HE Committee meeting held on 12 March 2020

The minutes of the meeting were received and agreed as a correct record.

All matters arising from the minutes had been addressed by the meeting agenda and papers with the more recent circulation of the HE action plan and HE operations Group Terms of Reference.

2.2 HE Action Plan – Confidential (Minute 5)

The updated confidential HE Action Plan was received and reviewed. The VP C&Q confirmed that the plan had been reviewed following the previous committee meeting to reflect the committee's feedback, and mapped to the Self-Assessment Review with some indicators being revised. Looking forward there would be a new format for the plan, the operating statement. The committee noted the changes, including HE being put back into the curriculum with Curriculum Area Managers covering both HE and FE. This was working well with support for those staff who did not have the appropriate expertise, from the HE team. The HE operations team would be focussing on quality

and scholarly activity with administration being moved to the admissions team. Responding to a question the Head of HE reported that student voice would be a key area for development next year and particularly reporting back to students.

The committee noted the progress made and areas for development.

3. FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD FOR INFORMATION OR DECISION

3.1 Higher Education Reporting and Meeting Structure

The report detailing a new reporting and meeting structures to provide clarity and remove duplication of meetings was received. The Chair endorsed the streamlining of the reporting structure but expressed some reservations regarding the loss of the HE Academic Board's functions in terms of involving grass roots HE academic staff in development and emphasised that it must be retained for its functions in relation to the College's Foundation Degree Awarding Powers. The committee considered ways in which HE academics could be engaged within the new structure and noted plans to engage HE lecturers in communities of practice as well as plans to supplement scheduled meetings with task and finish groups. The committee also discussed the development of the College's own new courses and the need to develop rigorous academic regulations. The committee suggested that awarding organisations should be referenced in the terms of reference for the HE Operations Group.

RA

Concluding the discussion the committee agreed that the right reporting mechanisms to manage research and scholarly activity and support local communities of practice, alongside developing robust academic procedures would be key for the coming year. The committee agreed that Pat Wilde would support the VP C&Q and Head of HE with this work and there would be a further report at the next meeting.

KW/RA

3.2 Quality of Education Update

3.2.1 Retention

At the invitation of the Chair the VP C&Q presented on screen, in-year HE retention data by campus including comparative data for the previous year. She confirmed that retention had generally improved but there were some pockets to be looked at further. She also shared HE Retention by level and confirmed that a lot of work had been done to understand why retention was as it was. Subject Assessment Panels had been completed on-line in June and Award Assessment Boards would be held in early July. It was likely that more students would have referrals over the summer months as a result of regulation changes. More information would become available over the new few weeks.

Committee members posed various questions to clarify their understanding of the data presented and specifically understand whether the College was doing well or not in the absence of any comparative data albeit that retention had improved on the previous year. The VP C&Q confirmed that data would be input over the summer and then matched with Office for Students' data for comparison. The disappointing performance of Business and Professional was discussed and the VP confirmed that plans were progressing to move this provision into the curriculum so that there was greater ownership and alignment with the quality assurance processes.

The committee noted the report and improvements being made.

3.2.2 Changes to Regulations

The report was received and reviewed briefly by the Head of HE. She explained that each provider had made changes to regulations in order to alleviate disadvantage to learners as a result of Covid-19.

The committee noted the report and was assured by the 'safety netting done' to protect learners at this unprecedented time. Responding to a question regarding communicating these changes to students, the Head of HE reported that the providers had initially tried to contact students directly but it had subsequently been agreed that communication would come through the College.

3.3 Recruitment and suspension of programmes update

The VP C&Q presented on screen HE recruitment accepted first year places by campus across the College. At 333 this was an improvement on the same time the previous year but there was further work to do. To support conversion, a more personalised 'keeping warm' approach had been introduced including contact from Programme Managers and more frequent contact. The Chair suggested that rolling data be presented to help the committee identify which areas were of most concern and the VP C&Q agreed that this information could be provided and would be useful for the management team also.

KW

The VP C&Q updated the committee on plans to suspend courses with low accepted numbers, alternative provision and progression opportunities. The Student Protection Plan would be put in place to support students as soon as possible. The committee accepted that these were difficult but necessary decisions.

3.4 Access and Participation Plan – implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The report detailing the progress of planned interventions against associated targets was received. The Head of HE reported that the work that had taken place mapped into activity which she wanted to take forward next year. The Chair commended the robust plan and asked the Head of HE to keep the committee informed of any developments.

3.5 Compliance update – Office for Students and Department of Education

The report detailing progress against each of the OfS conditions of registration was received. The Head of HE explained that the OfS and DfE has introduced measures to stabilise the market with OfS also seeking to reduce the regulatory burden during the pandemic. She reported that her key concern was the Student Number Control. The College was well within its allocation at the moment but she would be monitoring this carefully over the summer mindful of the penalties for over recruiting. The committee discussed the challenges and potential opportunities for additional numbers which would not generally apply for FE institutions, and noted that the College was reasonably well placed at the moment.

The Chair also asked whether the report from the OfS review visit to look at HE Management and Governance in January had been received. The report had still not been received and the Committee agreed that the Principal should write to request a progress update.

JE

4. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

17 November 2020

10 March 2021

AMP

23 June 2021

Meetings will usually be held at CC St Austell commencing at 12.00 noon