



**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting  
held on 17 November 2020 at 11:30am via Teams**

<b>Committee members present</b>	Pat Wilde	PW	Committee Chair
	John Evans	JE	Principal
	Wilf Hudson	WH	Governor
	Jane Warren	JW	Governor
	Ian Tunbridge	IT	Governor
<b>In attendance</b>	Wendy Randle	WR	Clerk to the Corporation
	Kate Wills	KW	Vice Principal, Group Curriculum and Quality (VP C&Q)
	Ruth Allen	RW	Head of Higher Education
	Andrew Richards	AR	Observer, potential co-opted Committee member

		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>WELCOME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jane Warren was welcomed to their first committee meeting.</li> <li>▪ John Evans was not in attendance.</li> <li>▪ There were no further interests to declare than those previously disclosed on the members’ register of interests.</li> </ul>	
<b>2</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Terms of Reference (TOR)</b> The Committee reviewed the TOR; the Clerk would confirm if the biannual Board approval was required.	WR
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Committee membership</b> An application form and CV for a potential co-opted Committee member had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee agreed to co-opt Andrew Richards subject to satisfactory DBS checks and references, with a term of office to be agreed; the clerk will progress this.	WR
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2020</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Clerk to the Corporation will arrange for these to be signed by the Chair.	WR
<b>3.2</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b> An actions update had been circulated prior to the meeting; all actions had been completed, there were no further comments.	

<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p> <p><b>4.3</b></p> <p><b>4.4</b></p>	<p><b>OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PICTURE AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Given that this was the start of the Committee’s first full year of operation and that there were two new participants, the Vice -Principal C&amp;Q had been invited to give a presentation on the following:</p> <p><b>The Cornwall College Group (TCCG) HE activity</b></p> <p>The focus for the previous and this academic year remains on growth and quality. In terms of growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A four phased approach for growth was implemented, focussing on rationalisation, with some provision stopped, as the College moves to being clear on the strategic intent of the organisation.</li><li>▪ The College are keen to ensure clear campus identities and provision that matches the industries in each location, with a clear FE to HE progression path.</li><li>▪ The College aims to secure University Centre status, further contributing to its ambitions for access to HE, as identified in the Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets.</li><li>▪ The College are on target with the aims identified in the current HE strategy presented to Board in 2019/2020.</li></ul> <p>In terms of quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The College has improved data quality and monitoring across all its provision, including HE.</li><li>▪ The same approach used for FE course reviews has been adopted in HE in order to ensure consistency across the group.</li><li>▪ Communication with students using Microsoft Teams has increased and is the only online delivery platform used to ensure consistency in approach and learning.</li><li>▪ Clarity in the HE team roles and responsibilities has been achieved.</li></ul> <p><b>Office for Students (OfS) Registration status</b></p> <p>Previously the College’s OfS registration status had been subject to enhanced monitoring regarding Condition E2. This requirement had now been suspended following a review carried out by Deloitte in January 2020 (the report of which had been received by TCCG in August 2020).</p> <p><b>Access &amp; Participation Plan (APP)</b></p> <p>Having an Access and Participation Plan in place was a condition of registration with OfS. The 2020/21 – 2024/25 Plan had been circulated for information prior to the meeting. Activity and progress on meeting the objectives set in the Plan were continually monitored and were on target. TCCG would be required to produce an Impact Statement relating to 2019/20 activity (which would be expected to cover the preparations made to implement targets identified for 2020/21) in March 2021. Activity leading into this year was linked to the growth and quality strategy. TCCG expected a successful outcome to the Impact Statement submission, the results of which would be known in June 2021.</p> <p><b>Covid-19 update and future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The majority of delivery has been face to face with some online delivery due to specific circumstances; health and care provision has moved online due to potential transmission into external settings.</li><li>▪ Face to face delivery will end on the 04/12/2020, with the final week online, in line with the government student travel window.</li><li>▪ The College continue to work closely with the awarding Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and are compliant with the plans in place (eg regarding assessment regulations).</li></ul> <p>Governors thanked the VP C&amp;Q for the presentation. In response to the governor question on whether the College were secure in their partnership with Plymouth, it was reported that a recent meeting had reflected a more flexible approach by the partner with greater interest in alignment between provision at</p>	
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TCCG and UoP to ensure the pathways were aligned. Governors were keen to ensure the College remain focussed on what is best for it's the learners in terms of range of opportunity available coming through.

Governor reflected on online learning and the risk of lower student engagement asking how the College engages all students on the online journey. It was noted that learners' contribution was closely monitored, (with the advances in Teams enabling this to take place) so that interventions to support and encourage engagement could be swiftly implemented if necessary.

Governor reflected on a new group set up across the HE sector put in place to consider small universities' financial sustainability, it was reported that this group has not been in touch with the College to ask their opinion (it was not clear if the group's interests encompassed the provision of HE in FE institutions).

A Committee member requested information on TCCG's strategy with respect to using its Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAPs). The strategic use of FDAPs (or the continuation with partner approval relationships) will be driven by the best outcome for learners in terms of progression opportunities and career destinations. A discussion took place on the opportunities available both locally and nationally to improve credibility of the HE offer and the impact of the current Ofsted grading on the College's attractiveness to HE applicants. The need to be prepared with appropriate HE progression opportunities once the College can deliver T Levels was noted.

The Committee requested information on how the College capture and manage the risks being discussed; it was noted these risks form part of the corporate risk register in which there is a HE strand.

A committee member asked if the College were likely to maintain their silver status at the next Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) assessment. In terms of data it was anticipated that the College would retain silver, though an assessment was not due this academic year. There were two areas of concern, however: continuation rates and progression into professional employment or postgraduate study. The data used in the TEF related to earlier cohorts and whilst performance was slowly improving, it was not yet at a sufficient level to ensure that further intervention by OfS would not occur. There were also identified achievement gaps regarding the retention and achievement of those students declaring a disability, compared to those who did not. The course review process will enable earlier intervention on these issues.

#### **Areas of development**

4.5

The following areas for development were noted:

- Strengthening of HE teaching and learning observations.
- Linking in HE with the course review process to triangulate data.
- Development of the scholarship activity; the College have put in place a fund for staff to bid for and agreed a range of research projects. A Committee member asked how the College would establish the level of scholarly activity in other areas as that achieved at Newquay. Several factors were highlighted: the establishment of clear campus identities, with focussed HE provision, as referred to above; the clarification of roles and expectations of HE staff; the ongoing drive to improve teaching and learning quality and share best practice.
- Improvement of the learner journey; to be achieved with focus on the learner experience, guidance and support. The Committee were keen to explore how the College was capturing the learner voice, using it to enhance the quality of the learner experience - and how this was fed back to learners. Additional data from these activities would be shared at the next meeting.

KW

	<p>A Committee member asked for information on who undertook lesson observations, if there was any resistance from staff, how were they used for quality assurance and if there are plans to strengthen the team to be able to complete them. The College have HE specialists who complete this work who are also involved in the development of staff. Where improvement is required, staff work with their line managers and the TLA team to achieve this.</p> <p>The Committee were invited to provide further feedback on the APP by the 27<sup>th</sup> November.</p>	ALL
<b>5</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR DECISION AND/OR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<p><b>Draft HE Self Evaluation Document Operating Plan</b></p> <p>The first draft of the document had been circulated prior to the meeting – the Committee noted that much of the information covered by the draft had been discussed in the context of the Vice-Principal’s presentation at the start of the meeting, described in Section 4 above.</p> <p>A Committee member requested external data against which to benchmark. It was reported that OfS produce threshold data, which is used in the TEF and for ongoing monitoring of compliance with conditions of registration. The College are not yet in a position to replicate this data exactly, although work is ongoing to produce as close a fit as is possible via internal systems.</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<p><b>Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The HEAB TOR had been circulated prior to the meeting. After discussion it was agreed the TOR wording be strengthened to ensure further clarity on the formal responsibilities of HEAB regarding the approval of programmes of study and the award of qualifications. The amendments would be completed and the HEAB TOR would be agreed with the Chair following the meeting, electronically.</p>	KW/ RA
<b>5.3</b>	<p><b>OfS update</b></p> <p>In addition to the issues covered in Section 4 above, it was reported that during the last six to eight months the OfS have reduced the regulatory burden on providers. This was a welcome development which had consequently permitted greater internal focus on those areas which the College had identified for enhancement. The Committee was assured that rigorous ongoing oversight of compliance with the Conditions of Registration continued.</p>	
<b>5.4</b>	<p><b>OfS Management and Governance update</b></p> <p>As indicated in Section 4 above, the January 2020 visit report was extremely positive, with seven out of the nine areas receiving substantial assurance and the remaining two receiving moderate assurance. The College have received formal notification that the enhanced monitoring has been suspended.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ DISUCSSION</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Development activity</b>	
<b>6.1.1</b>	<b>Enrolments</b> – enrolments were down yet remain in line with budget despite the pandemic.	
<b>6.1.2</b>	<b>Recruitment and Market update</b> - the College are focussing on recruitment for the next academic year which is anticipated to be difficult. A committee member stated this could be an opportunity to demonstrate a higher profile of employability in local destinations. It was noted that the government’s new adult education fund can be used as a conduit into HE.	

<p><b>6.1.3</b></p> <p><b>6.1.4</b></p> <p><b>6.1.5</b></p>	<p><b>Potential New Provision</b> – the College aim to be clear on the different offers at different campuses, with links to strong FE provision. The College are keen to retain the existing Level 3 offer whilst developing a strong academic Level 3 provision which could bring in a new market.</p> <p><b>HEI Partnerships</b> – key partners and the strength of relationships were noted.</p> <p><b>Research and Scholarly activity update</b> – the College has a clear research and scholarly activity policy statement in place and intends to hold a conference in to share the benefit of this when circumstances permit.</p>	
<p><b>6.2</b></p>	<p><b>Opportunities for engagement with stakeholders</b> The committee agreed that it was critical that the College engage externally to achieve the endorsement of stakeholders, suggesting the management team consider how to revitalise links to achieve clear statements evidencing that employers want to employ TCCG students.</p> <p>After discussion the committee agreed the need to consider the College’s strategy for coming out of Covid-19 and how the College can support employers, students and local communities. It was agreed this was a broader consideration for the Board and that the VP C&amp;Q will discuss this with the Principal and Head of Higher Education with an update provided at the next meeting.</p>	<p>KW</p> <p>KW</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</b> The committee noted the dates for the next academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 9 February 2021, 11:30am</li> <li>▪ 24 June 2021, 11:30am</li> </ul>	