



**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting  
held on 9 February 2021 at 11:30am via Teams**

<b>Committee members present</b>	Pat Wilde	PW	Committee Chair
	Rhiah Harrison	RH	Governor
	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

		Action
<b>1</b>	<p><b>WELCOME</b></p> <p>Rhiah Harrison was welcomed to her first Committee meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from John Evans and Andrew Richards.</p> <p>There were no further interests to declare than those previously disclosed on the register of interests.</p> <p>PW thanked everyone who contributed to the recent successful Ofsted monitoring inspection.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2020</b></p>	
<b>2.1</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Clerk to the Corporation will arrange for the minutes to be signed by the Chair.	WR
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>An actions update had been circulated prior to the meeting; all actions had been completed.</p> <p>The Committee discussed a focus on employability at the next meeting; Committee members were encouraged to contact the Chair with any thoughts on this.</p>	ALL
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Self Evaluation Document (SED) Final Draft</b></p> <p>The Committee received the final draft of the SED circulated prior to the meeting, noting the Committee have previously reviewed a draft.</p>	

	<p>In response to a Committee member’s request for an update on the low completion rate of the agriculture programme at Bicton, it was noted that the College are monitoring this using the course review process.</p> <p>A Committee member noted that there was no explanation for why retention rates on foundation programmes were low; details will be incorporated into the SED and agreed with the Committee Chair prior to circulation to Board for approval.</p>	<p><b>RA/ PW</b></p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>HE Action Plan</b></p> <p>The HE Action Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. This plan presents the key indicators for improvements and links into the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and OfS conditions of approval. Although not an official requirement, the Committee recognised the assurance the document provided on how the College is delivering its current HE provision and will provide information on which to plan the longer term HE strategy. The following highlights were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Committee discussed the amber rag rated areas acknowledging that the College are robust in their assessment and that the action plan will reflect an improved position at the next meeting.</li> <li>▪ A discussion took place on the data collated on employer engagement and the equality of responsibility for employer engagement, for both programme managers and other teams within the College. The Committee were assured that the industry record engagement system no longer needed to be rag rated red and looked forward to seeing progress in this area.</li> <li>▪ A Committee member highlighted the achievement of disabled students, noting males did less well than females, enquiring if specific action should be within the plan. This area of development is incorporated within the Access and Participation Plan (APP).</li> <li>▪ The Committee noted the need to ensure that actions related to HE identified in the College operating Statement were reflected within the HE Action Plan and vice versa (assuming the two were to remain separate documents).</li> <li>▪ The Committee requested an update on how the College were using the Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP). Where feasible programmes are being moved over to FDAP and the College could now develop its own bespoke quality procedures and regulations for this provision (rather than having to use those of awarding partners) as well as for HE student support. Monthly strategic and operational meetings and retention and review meetings were used to keep track of progress.</li> </ul>	<p><b>RA</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>HE Fees for 2022/23</b></p> <p>The proposal circulated prior to the meeting detailed the increase in fees for some programmes. The Committee were informed that fees have remained unchanged for the last three of years.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the potential tipping point for increasing fees, taking into account the College’s position in the benchmarking data and the reasons why the College does not differentiate fees between foundation and first degrees, noting the perception of quality due to pricing.</p> <p>The College will be further exploring student financial support, including hardship loans and bursaries. An update will be provided at the next meeting once focus groups have been undertaken to identify student wishes.</p>	<p><b>RA</b></p>

	<p>It was agreed that the HE Fees 2022/23 paper will go to the Finance and Resources Committee for their consideration, with the recommendation from HE Committee for Board approval.</p>	<b>WR</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Office for Students (OFS) Update</b> A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>Internal review of Condition C1</b> It was reported that in late January the OfS had asked all providers to check compliance with Condition C1. The College completed a review of the admissions process, joining instructions and student handbooks, concluding that there was clear evidence that the first term was delivered in line with expectations. The Committee were assured that the College are scenario planning for the summer term whilst awaiting government guidance, due to Covid.</p> <p>In response to a Committee member question, HE student feedback has been received as part of the induction survey. The College are reluctant to survey further due to already undertaking the National Student Survey (NSS) and Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ), instead opting to use student rep meetings to collate feedback. Where students have expressed concern the HE team have been able to provide support directly; concerns had been primarily linked to exams.</p> <p>Although there is no requirement to submit the results of the OFS review, a report will be written and presented at the next Committee meeting.</p>	<b>RA</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Conditions of registration</b> It was reported that the College have no concerns linked to the conditions of registration. The College are required to feedback to OfS on the impact of Covid in the 19/20 academic year and the work completed in preparation for the new academic year.</p>	
<b>6.3</b>	<p><b>Quality and standards consultation</b> The Committee received the College’s submission on the first phase of the OfS consultation linked to the ‘B’ conditions that opened towards the end of 2020. This covered, among other things, proposed definitions of “quality” and “standards” (which did not appear to relate to the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code for HE) and the setting of baseline numerical data for use in judging student outcomes. Of concern to the College and the Committee was that the latter, as yet, did not appear to make any reference to the institutional context such as local economic conditions and recognition of the mission, challenges and achievements of FE in HE.</p> <p>However, the consultation would enter a second phase later in 2021, when it was anticipated that consultation on such contextual factors would occur. At this stage, the College would be able to submit a formal response which the Committee would wish to see at its next meeting.</p> <p>Given the HE in FE aspects, the Committee were keen to learn if the AoC would be responding to the consultation. It was suggested that the College raise concerns regarding the inclusion of contextual aspects in judgements with local MPs, possibly in liaison with Truro and Penwith College.</p>	<b>RA/ KW</b>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>In year quality monitoring</b></p>	
<b>7.1</b>	<p><b>Data update: attendance, retention, recruitment, withdrawal and suspension</b> A report had been circulated prior to the meeting, it was noted that recent data indicated that recruitment was in line with last year’s position.</p>	<b>KW</b>

<p><b>7.2</b></p>	<p>A discussion took place on the data variations across the campuses, the College recognise that further work is required on the customer needs on some campuses, whilst ensuring the programme leads understand the priority for data. It was noted that the number of suspensions has been reviewed.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the presentation of the data to enable improved Committee understanding; the use of tables and commentary will be considered. The Committee were keen to be able to unpick the data for ethnic minority groups and disabled learners, suggesting this could be part of a larger role for the EDI committee in gathering a bigger picture across the College.</p> <p><b>Course review meeting dates</b></p> <p>Some Committee members were planning to attend FE/Apprenticeship course reviews taking place during the last two weeks of March; further details will be shared with the Committee once prepared. It is intended that, going forward, HE provision undertake specific Course Reviews in order to apply the same level of scrutiny as currently in further Education provision.</p>	<p>RA</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Follow up from the Board Strategy Day and next steps</b></p> <p>At the Board Strategy Day there had been a presentation on the HE Strategy. As the College continues to develop use of its Foundation Degree Awarding Powers and associated College-specific quality procedures, there will be a focus on two strands; quality and revitalising provision.</p> <p>An overarching strategy is required, focussing on campus identity and considering what the offer will look like both for local students and those being recruited from across the UK. The College will prepare a three to five year plan and develop partnerships to support its delivery, this will be driven through the assistant principals and CAMS. Full integration of HE provision will support learner progression from level 3 upwards and will link with employability.</p> <p>The Committee reflected on the impact of Covid, specifically on the online delivery of HE and how the experience gained can be integrated moving forward post-pandemic. The Committee noted the improved attendance at virtual lessons.</p>	
<p><b>9</b> <b>9.1</b></p>	<p><b>Learner voice</b></p> <p><b>How learner voice is captured, used to enhance learner experience and fed back to learners</b></p> <p>At the previous meeting the Committee had expressed a need to focus more on how learner voice is captured. The College use the following tools; the induction survey, NSS and SPQ which run in tandem and provide valuable qualitative data. The Director of Student Experiences has concentrated on the course rep meetings and how information from these meetings is collated into a HE overview at programme level. ‘Campus Life’ meetings take place across campuses providing a broad range of opportunities for students to get involved. The College are now focussing on ways to include more students in the learner voice.</p> <p>The Committee noted the need for the College to be able to demonstrate that students know where to go with their concerns, suggesting a one side document containing clear detail and visibly displayed. The College are keen to establish a tone within the College so that students feel able to talk to the College. The Committee were keen to know what a good learner experience is and how this can shared across other campuses.</p>	<p>RA</p>

9.2	<p><b>Opportunities for Beyond the Boardroom (BTB)</b>                  The aim of BTB is to increase Governor engagement with staff and students and triangulate information received at Board meetings. The opportunities for this Committee will include attending HE Programme course reviews and student meetings such as ‘Have your say’ meeting. When Committee members complete BTB activities they will need to complete a short report to share with the Board. Further information is contained in the TEAMS channel.</p>	
10	<p><b>Summary of HEAB minutes</b>                  There had not been a HEAB meeting since the last HE Committee meeting. The next HEAB meeting minutes will be considered at the next HE Committee meeting.</p>	
11	<p><b>Access and participation plan – implementation, monitoring and evaluation</b>                  The College was required to undertake a review of the impact of actions identified in the APP: this was currently underway and the Committee asked to see the review report at its next meeting.</p>	RA/ KW
12	<p><b>HE Committee Teams channel</b>                  The Committee were informed that the Teams Chanel for the HE Committee is now in place. Should anyone require support accessing this they are encouraged to contact the Clerk to the Corporation.</p>	
13	<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>▪ 24 June 2021, 11:30am</li> </ul>	