



**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting  
held on 16 June 2022 at 11:30am at St Austell Campus and virtually on MS Teams**

<b>Committee members</b>	Pat Wilde	PW	Committee Chair
	Ellie Burridge	EB	
	Lee Charnock	LC	
	John Chudley	JC	
	Ian Tunbridge	IT	
<b>In attendance</b>	Ryan Thomas	RT	Head of Higher Education
	Wendy Randle	WR	Director of Governance
	Kate Wills	KW	Group Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality (DP C&Q)

		Action
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Jane Warren and Wilf Hudson. John Evans would join the meeting late. The meeting was quorate.  There were no further interests to declare than those previously disclosed on the register of interests.	
<b>2</b>	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2022</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b> An actions update had been circulated prior to the meeting. Following a Committee member’s request, it was agreed that an update on Association of College’s (AoC) HE movements would be a regular agenda item.	WR
	<b>STRATEGY AND RISK</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>OPERATING STATEMENT – STRATEGIC AIMS LINKED TO HE FOCUS AREAS</b>	
	The Deputy Principal Group Curriculum and Quality (DPG C&Q) reported on the paper shared in advance of the meeting, highlighting the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The completion of the Access and Participation Plan identified that the College are not gathering enough modular level feedback from students.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The College have appointed a Group Lead for Progression into HE, this role will centrally coordinate activities to promote internal progression, develop KPIs and collate data on why students leave the College.</li> <li>▪ The College are keen to understand where the growth is needed and adopt a cautious response to this.</li> <li>▪ A TLA Lead and Coach with HE expertise has been appointed and will lead on further developments in HE specific delivery.</li> </ul> <p>In response to a Committee member question, for those staff delivering in both HE and FE provision, staff would likely receive teaching observations for both, yet generally there will be more of a focus on HE.</p> <p>A Committee member reflected on the PCMs, noting that a consistent structure to these sessions could enhance impact and that the additional link for communication is beneficial. Following discussion, the College will include an agenda item for ‘you said we did’ at the start of meetings, to update on actions from the previous meeting.</p>	
<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>UPDATE ON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS</b> The Head of HE updated on the following:</p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> Details of the programmes approved at the recent HEAB Committee meeting were shared; there are three programmes in development, six new programmes starting at Newquay in September and a Masters degree has been validated through Plymouth Marjon University. In response to a Committee member’s question these are refreshers of existing programmes resulting in a positive impact on applications. There are further programmes planned for 2023.</p> <p><b>Partnerships</b> It was reported that the College have secured a new partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan to deliver sports programmes in Camborne, the only provision in England. The Committee were pleased to hear of this partnership and planned media.</p> <p>The College recently presented at an event on the Higher Apprenticeship: Healthcare Assistant Practitioner programme; conversations continue regarding this online programme and the potential for national expansion.</p> <p>The College recently attended a UCAS fair, the first for a number of years. The impact of attendance will be reviewed yet initial positive responses have resulted in the College planning to attend three events next year.</p> <p>In response to a Committee member question, relationships with Truro and Penwith College remain positive and effective and shared resources between the two organisations have been considered, specifically regarding the student protection plan.</p> <p><b>Research and scholarly activity</b> A slight overspend against budget was reported, with the majority of applications supported. The College plan to develop the reporting of the impact of scholarly activity and to consider how the budget will be allocated moving forward; noting the research budget is allocated via a per student levy at another College.</p>	

	<p>The incorporation of ethics oversight into HEAB is being considered; College staff have already expressed an interest in joining. A Committee noted the potential for a regional ethics advisory committee which would present minimal competition risks.</p> <p>A Committee member noted the need to capture research and scholarly activity in order to raise the profile both internally and externally.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>HE STRATEGY 2022 -2026</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Committee have been extensively involved in the development of the HE Strategy and that Board recently considered a draft at the May Board Strategy Day. The Committee expressed thanks to the College team for the quality of the final draft presented which is significant for the College.</p> <p>A lengthy discussion took place on the need for a high level marketing strategy, tailored to HE, to include consideration of local markets and to be embraced and led by the appropriate levels within the College. The power of the influencer and drip feed marketing styles were noted, specifically by Level 3 lecturers for internal progression to HE. The Committee requested an update on progress made within marketing and future marketing plans at the Autumn Committee meeting.</p> <p>Committee feedback on the HE Strategy included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Committee were pleased to see the recognition of the importance of practical skills tickets.</li> <li>▪ Increased evidence of more student consultation to inform future decision making.</li> <li>▪ Further thought on how to enable students to develop direct links with industry partners and to improve knowledge of the industries students will join.</li> <li>▪ Queried why the new relationship with Cardiff Metropolitan could not be implemented sooner than 2023.</li> <li>▪ Would like to see the College consider how they can be braver and work differently – a possible area for a HE away day.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to recommend the HE strategy to Board for approval and suggested a short bullet point presentation at Board.</p>	<p>RT</p> <p>PW/ RT</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>HE ACADEMIC WORKLOAD ALLOCATION MODEL</b></p> <p>This agenda item was in response to discussions held at both Committee and during Beyond the Boardroom visits, and addressed the impact of staff workload on the delivery of the HE strategy.</p> <p>The Head of HE stated that HE staff require sufficient time to engage in regular scholarly activity in order to deliver high quality teaching and comply with the Office for Students (OfS) B conditions. A proposal to reduce HE staff teaching hours to enable regular scholarly activity had been agreed by ELT and will be implemented in time for the new academic year. In response to a Committee members’ question it was understood that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementation in time for the new academic year presented some challenges.</li> <li>▪ That HR had been involved in discussions.</li> <li>▪ Some economies of scale of some small groups will need to be reviewed.</li> <li>▪ There would not be a deficit of teaching cover for HE students; there would be no impact on students.</li> </ul> <p>The College intend to monitor and review the impact of the proposal.</p>	

7	<p><b>ACCOMMODATION UPDATE</b> Covered after agenda item 9.</p>	
8	<p><b>RISK REGISTER – HE RELATED RISK</b> The risks linked to HE were shared in advance of the meeting and presented as previously requested by Committee. The three risks highlighted were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HE workload model and retention – the risk rag rating will be reduced in light of measures presented under agenda item 6.</li> <li>▪ Student numbers – the College remain concerned about student numbers for the next academic year and note the need to model the College around the predicted numbers which could result in some course closure. The Committee reflected on the impact of low programme numbers on group dynamics.</li> <li>▪ Estates, to include resources – the College need to ensure adequate facilities are in place to support students and are developing three grant applications; one to develop teaching space at Newquay, the second to secure equipment at Camborne for health care and counselling and the third for HE specific teaching accommodation at Bicton.</li> </ul> <p>The College are exploring how to fund sustainable HE student spaces including identifying potential partners to support the creation of these spaces; a contact shared by a Committee member will be explored. A Committee member noted that student feedback demonstrates the need for student spaces, specifically for HE. Additionally, an improved Student Union experience would match HE student expectations.</p> <p>In response to a Committee question the College are satisfied that the risks remain accurate.</p>	KW
<b>Operational Updates</b>		
9	<p><b>UPDATE ON OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS</b> The Head of HE updated on the following agenda items:</p> <p><b>9.1 Graduation robe colours</b> Following a consultation process conducted by the College working group, the College robe colours will be black, gold and white.</p> <p><b>9.2 University centre status</b> The College have been awarded University Centre status. In response to a Governor question the College will explore registering the trade name.</p> <p><b>9.3 Tier 4</b> The College are exploring making an application for Tier 4 status, which will enable the recruitment of international students in three niche areas of provision; there are already four students who wish to join the College.</p> <p><b>9.4 VIPs for Graduation 04/11/2022</b> VIPs have been invited. In response to a Committee member question, the College will explore the process for awarding honorary degrees which could be supported by Plymouth University.</p>	RT
7	<p><b>HE accommodation</b> The Group Deputy Principal Group Operations and Head of Projects joined the meeting to present on the paper circulated in advance. Progress has been impacted by the current housing crisis in Cornwall. A summary of campus accommodation provision and needs was provided;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bicton - existing provision will meet the immediate growth.</li> <li>▪ Stoke - at capacity. The College own the student accommodation and are revisiting a previous planning proposal to extend the accommodation by a further 60 beds; an increase of 25%.</li> <li>▪ Newquay - Treveth plan to build 100 bed spaces, with a proposed lease arrangement of £650k a year. The College accommodation needs, timing of this planned build and the longer term ownership of the building require further investigation.</li> <li>▪ Eden - a longer term structured partnership is required in order to guide any College accommodation commitment. There is a potential site, approximately one mile from Eden which would provide suitable accommodation and the desired student experience.</li> </ul> <p>In was reported that conversations with caravan parks had been limited, there has been some, though minimal, improvement with hotels providing seasonal accommodation and Cornwall Council have no spare temporary accommodation or land to develop temporary accommodation due to the current housing crisis in Cornwall.</p> <p>Details of immediate measures put in place by the College to support students joining in September were shared. The College will trial two new packages; a HE bursary specifically to support first year HE students; £1000k for 50 students towards accommodation costs, and a landlord reservation scheme whereby accommodation will be held by the College and then reimbursed if the student takes up the tenancy. If successful these schemes will be rolled out further. Processes to supporting students finding accommodation are also being reviewed.</p> <p>A Committee member expressed concerns of the increased cost of living on student retention, noting that the new initiatives focus on supporting new students; it was noted that existing students are able to access hardship funds for additional support.</p> <p>The Committee requested an update to Board on HE accommodation.</p>	
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>BALANCE SCORECARD/ KPIs</b></p> <p><b>To include a data update: recruitment, attendance, withdrawal and suspension</b></p> <p>The Deputy Principal Group Curriculum and Quality highlighted the following from the paper circulated in advance of the meeting, with a focus on retention and applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current retention is higher when compared to the same period last year. There are 32 students with suspended studies which could impact this position; data has been analysed with no trends identified and support networks remain in place.</li> <li>▪ Applications are down, specifically at Rosewarne; there will be a gap of a year between discontinuing the current veterinary nursing programme and replacing it with one approved via FDAP; the veterinary nurse apprenticeship offer remains and is the preferred option for industry at present.</li> <li>▪ The College hold regular meetings to develop and monitor the impact of ‘keeping warm’ activities on conversions.</li> <li>▪ The College remain nervous about student numbers for 2022/23 and will take remedial action in year; this is contained on the risk register and will have an in year impact on group finances.</li> <li>▪ Engagement with students after application is being reviewed.</li> </ul> <p>In response to a Governor question on trends across the sector regarding applications, it was reported that other south west colleges are reporting similar positions.</p>	

	<p>A lengthy discussion took place on the application processes to include interviews and skills testing, and the retention strategy. Following Committee member challenge, the lack of consistency in following these processes in HE on some campuses was identified; concern for the negative impact on retention was expressed.</p> <p>In addition to College communication, a Committee member noted the benefit of communication with the Student Union in advance of joining the College.</p> <p>As a result of discussions, the College will review the implementation of the retention strategy on some campuses and explore the involvement of the Student Union prior to students arriving in September.</p>	<b>KW/ RT</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>STUDENT UPDATES</b>	
<b>11.1</b>	<p><b>Student Complaints</b></p> <p>It was reported that there are three active complaints at different stages of the complaints process. One is currently under investigation, a second has been resolved prior to becoming a formal complaint and a third complainant has been advised to follow the University of Plymouth’s complaints process.</p>	
<b>11.2</b>	<p><b>Resource needs for students</b></p> <p>The ELT will consider a paper on 21/06/22 outlining plans to resource the FDAP programmes effectively.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<p><b>SUMMARY OF HEAB MINUTES</b></p> <p>Circulated in advance of the meeting, it was noted that the key points had been considered during the meeting agenda items.</p>	
<b>COMPLIANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE</b>		
<b>13</b>	<p><b>ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (APP) 2022/26 – OFS FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>The Head of HE reported that the College have amended the APP in response to OfS feedback as detailed below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targets – although the College continue to predict prudently around growth, in response to OFS feedback, year on year improvement has been included.</li> <li>▪ Evaluation tools – the College do not sufficiently consult with students; this has been developed.</li> </ul> <p>The APP has been resubmitted.</p>	
<b>14</b>	<p><b>TASK AND FINISH GROUP to review College student support systems</b></p> <p>A website link regarding a University’s handling of a student’s disability and the following tragic consequences, had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to put in place a task and finish group to meet in the Autumn term and walk through a related scenario in order to assure the Committee and Board of the College student support processes in place.</p>	<b>WR</b>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>BEYOND THE BOARDROOM</b></p> <p><b>Visits completed and potential for further visits</b></p> <p>A Committee member reflected on their recent attendance at three Student Voice forums noting the small sample size at two locations and the large attendance at the Falmouth session. The College noted the need to review the structure and delivery of the Student Voice forums for the next academic year.</p> <p>A Committee member commented on the quality of the College stands at the recent Royal Cornwall Show, highlighting that the stands were very busy and staff were very welcoming.</p>	

	<p><b>Future visits</b></p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that future visits be arranged for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Golf at St Mellion</li> <li>▪ Counselling, with the Cornwall Counselling Institute</li> <li>▪ Equine at Bicton</li> <li>▪ Residential accommodation at Bicton</li> </ul>	<b>WR</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR 2021/2022</b>	
<b>16.1</b>	<p><b>Co-opted Committee members update</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Committee hold one co-opted Committee vacancy in light of a previous member stepping down due to personal reasons.</p>	
<b>16.2</b>	<p><b>Committee Chair recommendation to Board</b></p> <p>The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board the reappointment of Pat Wilde to the role of HE Committee Chair for one year.</p>	<b>WR</b>
<b>17</b>	<p><b>IMPACT OF THE MEETING</b></p> <p>The Committee reflected on the content covered by the Committee over this academic the year, the significant growth of the HE’s profile across the College and the development of the HE Strategy.</p>	
<b>18</b>	<p><b>DATES OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p><b>2022/2023 dates and location</b></p> <p>The 2022/2023 dates have been circulated. The Committee agreed to hold the November meeting at the Eden campus and requested a presentation from the Eden campus team. The Committee plan to complete Beyond the Boardroom activities whilst at Eden to include meeting students.</p>	<b>KW/ WR</b>