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**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting
held on 23 November 2022 at 10am at St Austell Campus and virtually on MS Teams**

Committee members	Pat Wilde	PW	Committee Chair
	Lee Charnock	LC	
	John Evans	JE	
	Wilf Hudson	WH	
	Ian Tunbridge	IT	
	Jane Warren	JW	
In attendance	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
1	<p>WELCOME</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from John Chudley.</p> <p>There were no further interests to declare than those previously disclosed on the register of interests.</p>	
2	<p>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2022</p>	
2.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
2.2	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>An actions update had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p>	
2.2.1	<p>Update from the task and finish group to review College student support systems</p> <p>The Committee received the report from the Task and Finish group (T&R) circulated in advance of the meeting. In summary it was reported that the T&F group is confident that procedures and infrastructure is in place yet less assured about the consistency of the student experience across the campuses.</p> <p>An all HE staff meeting had received a demonstration of how Pro can be used to record information about students' particular support needs and interactions with staff in order to enhance communication and support consistency of approach across the campuses. The College also plans to undertake "walk backs" through potential scenarios in order to identify any systemic weaknesses and thus develop preventative practice</p> <p>In response to a Committee member question, programme managers tend to act in a pastoral/support role at present - the College is considering a different approach, for example a personal tutor system. A Committee member challenged the resourcing for tutoring, highlighting the need for students to have a responsible person and fair access to tutors, with tutors having a fair allocation of time to be effective. It</p>	

	<p>was noted that student experience managers and safeguarding teams are in place which complement the tutor offer.</p> <p>The Committee requested the College review the outcomes of the report actions, reconvene the T&F group and report back to the summer 2023 Committee meeting.</p>	PW/ KW
3	<p>Report on HE student numbers</p> <p>The Committee received the paper circulated in advance of the meeting which covered the below bullets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of financial position linked to curriculum planning ▪ Review intelligence to understand HE markets to guide short, medium- and long-term objectives ▪ Progress made in marketing and future marketing plans <p>The Committee stressed the importance of this agenda item for both Committee and Board understanding. The Group Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality set the scene for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the College has an in year budget deficit due to a reduction in HE student numbers, part of which was due to lower recruitment than curriculum plan, but also because the decision had been taken to withdraw some courses after the 2022/23 budget had been set. ▪ The decline in HE enrolments is reflected nationally in FE. ▪ HE provision now represents 9% of the College income compared to 10.6%. ▪ The College is looking at efficiency savings in year in order to mitigate against the financial impact of reduced HE recruitment. ▪ Analysis is also being carried out to determine, as far as is possible, the reasons for reduced enrolment. Proactive approaches to recruitment activity and market analysis are also being pursued. ▪ The College is actively engaged with HE providers (Universities and FE colleges) in both the south west and nationally in order to share intelligence on trends. <p>It is possible that the pandemic has influenced recruitment amongst younger students, with anecdotal evidence that this group are returning to a HE experience away from home. However, the average age of a Cornwall College student is mid-late 20s: such individuals are more likely to want to stay local, but have other factors influencing their decision to undertake HE learning including: financial pressures resulting in the need to work, the desire for a flexible/remote offer and limitations from employers who could be less likely to fund CPD. There are also issues related to the narrative around the value of a degree and, in particular, where this is taken, which are likely to be impacting on HE offers across all FE establishments. The possibility that the College is diluting its offer by duplicating some areas of provision across more than one campus should also be considered.</p> <p>In order to mitigate some of these factors the following actions have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Head of HE will increase their involvement in curriculum planning, so that proposed recruitment targets can be challenged before budgets are set. ▪ The College has appointed a lead on internal progression and a number of progression events are being scheduled. ▪ Increased visibility at UCAS fairs. ▪ Further develop the website areas where HE traffic is driven. ▪ A marketing push on the broad offer and University Centre status. ▪ Exploration of a modular course style to support flexible delivery. ▪ Review the “keep warm” activity around UCAS applications and early engagement of students. 	RT

	<p>A Committee member reflected on their recent review of the website noting that none of the foundation degrees reflected progression to a related top up degree at the College. The College will review this.</p> <p>In response to a Committee member question on land based HE provision, it was reported that the land based strategy needs to be realised to support the development of new provision; staff are in place to both write and teach the degrees with funding to support this.</p> <p>The Committee concluded the need to return to this area for the next two Committee meetings for governance oversight.</p>	WR/ PW/ KW
	STRATEGY AND RISK	
4	<p>HE STRATEGY 2022 -2026</p> <p>HE Strategy and Committee monitoring of progress</p> <p>The Committee received the paper circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the HE Strategy has been cascaded across the College and a monitoring group put in place; the operational plan and responsibilities plan need to be shared more widely. The College's priority is the promotion of internal progression from FE to HE with the first events to promote this already delivered.</p> <p>It was agreed that progress against the action plan will be reviewed at each Committee meeting. A Committee member suggested the College consider the timeline used to rag rate progress over the duration of the strategy.</p>	WR KW
5	<p>Operating Statement – strategic aims linked to HE focus areas</p> <p>The Committee reflected on the areas of the Operating Statement linked to HE, circulated in advance of the meeting. The following highlights were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The completion of the TEF submission is underway. ▪ The delayed progression of the planned sustainability curriculum. ▪ The residential accommodation provision is subject to an Ofsted inspection, the outcome will impact on HE provision. ▪ The development of the business plan to review additional residential student accommodation has not taken place due to the reduction in Higher Education student numbers. 	
6	<p>HE related risks on the Risk Register and assurance required</p> <p>The report circulated in advance of the meeting highlighting the HE risks was received by the Committee. It was noted that the risk register is mapped through to the operating statement.</p> <p>The Committee noted the key risk linked to the in-year and longer-term budgetary impact of student numbers and the measures to mitigate further risk, as considered earlier in the meeting. The Committee also noted the significant time commitment required to fulfil the TEF submission requirements, alongside the reputational risk and impact on student recruitment should the College not maintain their silver grading.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the TEF submission. In response to Committee members' questions it was reported that there is student involvement in the submission, who will provide a briefing at the December Board meeting, and that the AoC have raised the FE TEF compliance issues on behalf of FE colleges with the OfS.</p> <p>In response to a Committee member suggestion, a robust statement on governance oversight of HE will be developed for inclusion in the TEF, to include governance challenge of leaders in terms of the T&F</p>	WR/ RT

	group on student support, the HE Committee experience and skills, Beyond the Boardroom activities, the HEAB Committee and Governor attendance.	
	Operational Updates	
7	Update on Operational developments	
7.1	Home Office Sponsor licence application It was reported that the College await a response to a recent email communication.	
8	Balance Scorecard/ KPIs To include a data update: enrolments, attendance, retention, suspension and withdrawal, continuation, success and progression. The Committee received the report circulated in advance of the meeting, noting the need to maintain student retention and the impact of the drop off of the two year programmes. It was reported that attendance is good in comparison to other institutions and that the College are considering an engagement, rather than attendance, policy to include action to be taken when attendance issues arise, allowing for the differences between FE and HE students. Following a review of the data, a Committee member requested an update on attendance at Bicton which had declined. It was reported that multiple issues had impacted including staff changes and student entrance into the forces.	
9	Review the need for the HE SED The Committee reflected that the need for the SED was no longer an imperative: the Committee's ongoing scrutiny of dashboard data, risk and the monitoring of the HE Strategy and Operating Plan would render a retrospective view of HE activity less useful, especially given the other pressures on the HE team's time. It was therefore agreed that the SED would not be produced going forward.	
10	Student Voice/ Beyond the Boardroom (BTB)	
10.1	Student Complaints The Committee received the report circulated in advance of the meeting. It was reported to the Committee that there are concerns that sit outside of this report which are being managed. The College are improving the clarity of the complaints process and recognition of when a complaint should go through the formal process.	
10.2	National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes The College plan to improve the management of the collation of this survey and the SPQ, which are not working well as identified from feedback from staff and students.	
10.3 & 4	BTB visits completed and potential for further visits Details of visits completed and planned were shared; it was noted that a Committee member planned to attend two programme committee meetings.	
11	SUMMARY OF HEAB MINUTES Circulated in advance of the meeting, it was noted that the key points had been considered during previous agenda items. A Committee member reflected on their recent attendance at a HEAB meeting and the challenging discussions which had taken place around course planning.	

	It was noted that the Committee Chair will attend future meetings as the HEAB Committee Governor representative.	
	COMPLIANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	
12	Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2022/26 – OFS Feedback and reporting to Board It was reported that the APP was approved by OfS and is now on the College website. Feedback from the OfS stated the need to include further engagement of students in the APP's development and monitoring.	
13	Office for Students TEF update In addition to discussions during the meeting the following information was shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and student groups are in place to develop the submission. ▪ A first draft will be prepared by the end of the calendar year. ▪ The draft will be shared with College leaders and representatives from the HE Committee. ▪ Data benchmarks were shared; the strengths and weaknesses and the impact of small cohorts on student survey data were noted. The Committee reflected on the impact of seeking an external TEF consultant and AoC support. The Director of Governance will identify if there are any governance requirements regarding the TEF submission.	WR
14	IMPACT OF THE MEETING The Committee agreed that the HE Committee's role in the scrutiny of recruitment was vital and would be a focus for the rest of the year.	
15	DATES OF NEXT MEETING 8/02/2022 14/06/22	