



**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting  
held on 7 February 2024 at St Austell and on MS Teams**

<b>Committee members</b>	Pat Wilde	PW	Committee Chair
	Lee Charnock	LC	
	Wilf Hudson	WH	
	Ian Tunbridge	IT	
	Sarah Watts	SW	
	John Evans	JE	
<b>In attendance</b>	Kate Wills	KW	Deputy Principal for Growth
	Jennie Jordan	JJ	Group Lead for HE
	Mark Wardle	MW	Group Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality (DP C&Q)
	Tian Bersey	TB	Clerk to the Governors

		Action
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Nik Ramsay Trease.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed no further or additional interests to those already declared.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>2.2 Matters arising</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed the matters arising report circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chair noted that most actions were complete or on the agenda for this meeting. Some actions are proposed for closure.</p> <p>Vet Nursing – The Deputy Principal for Growth reported that a level 3 qualification, including through apprenticeship delivery, offers what employers need. Training at a higher level could support CPD and specialisms. This action will now be closed.</p> <p>A governor asked if a Foundation Degree was needed for IT and it is not.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee will be reviewed alongside the ToR for the Curriculum and Quality Committee and with the new Director of HE at the back end of next term.</p>	
<b>STRATEGY AND RISK</b>		
<b>3</b>	<p><b>HE related risks on the Risk Register and assurance needed</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed the HE related risks on the risk register.</p>	

	<p>The Deputy Principal for Growth reported that applications are being closely monitored to manage the risk relating to HE student numbers with more attention being paid to the relative numbers of full time and part students and the consequent impact on fee income in order to learn from 2022/2023.</p> <p>There is a longer-term risk in accommodation. Current students are happy with their accommodation but the impact of using private houses/local landlords rather than student halls of residence on student choice is unknown. A governor asked if accommodation was part of the package for international students. International Students would need to work with the accommodation officer to identify accommodation through private rental or host families with the exception of Campuses where we have accommodation in place. A governor raised the possibility of building accommodation for the College but no funds are currently available.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted discussions at the recent AOC Principals’ event on the future of student loans and the likelihood of numbers being capped. There is concern that Colleges will be cut first because of a lack of recognition of the key role Colleges play in allowing access to HE. This risk should be added to the risk register with a watching brief. The committee discussed the uncertainty of the current political environment.</p> <p>Documentation has been submitted for the FDAP revalidation and to apply for degree awarding powers. This remains a desk top exercise at present.</p>	KW
<p><b>4</b> <b>4.1</b></p>	<p><b>HE Strategy 2021 -2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Written report reviewing progress against action plan</b></li> </ul> <p>The Committee reviewed the written report reviewing progress against the action plan which had been developed out of the HE strategy. The Group Lead for HE highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Director of HE and International will be starting in April.</li> <li>• Progress has been made in all areas.</li> <li>• A more effective way of communicating across the group and particularly to programme managers is needed.</li> <li>• The student voice/feedback model has been redeveloped and work to improve feedback to students is underway. There is a lack of consistency in module feedback.</li> <li>• Access to HE has improved.</li> </ul> <p>A committee member noted that Land based activities were rated as red in the Operating Statement but not in the action plan. The Deputy Principal explained that new land based provision and curriculum is being developed but the low number of FE students progressing into HE is the primary concern. Work is being undertaken to understand the barriers to participation and trends for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agriculture and horticulture can be very seasonal and more flexibility is needed, a modular or block approach may be more successful.</li> <li>• students are looking for live learning online rather than downloadable resources, and shorter pieces of HE study and professional accreditation.</li> <li>• more younger students are looking to progress to Masters study straight after completing their first degree.</li> <li>• more applications are received from out of County.</li> <li>• land-based programmes are being closed down elsewhere.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee discussed the plans for the HE Conference on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 at Newquay. The programme will include speakers from across HE delivery and include input from research scholarship recipients and best practice in working with employers. The Committee welcomed the conference as a vehicle to drive</p>	

	<p>consistency, eliminate silos and create a dynamic for interdisciplinary research. Committee members suggested other content. A staff governor suggested that the conference should also be available for FE staff.</p> <p>The Chair advocated for research activity to be recognised and publicised on the College website and more widely to demonstrate impact. It was agreed that this should be a standing item on the Committee agenda going forward.</p> <p><b>4.2 Higher Degree Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>The Committee discussed the potential for creating additional Higher Degree Apprenticeships. It noted that the University of Exeter, for example, has 3,000 degree level apprenticeships, the majority of which are with large scale employers such as Amazon and JP Morgan. It will be important for the College to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on its niche areas;</li> <li>• integrate with the degree courses offered;</li> <li>• find the right partnerships to drive growth and</li> <li>• learn from others.</li> </ul> <p>A committee member asked if there was any possibility of joint ventures with other colleges / universities, where Cornwall College could focus on its niche areas / where partners are not engaged and partners could deliver the common elements.</p> <p>The Committee discussed hospitality, renewable energy, health and land based activities as niche areas. The Committee also discussed funding, marketing and the tension between employers wanting to focus on broad based skills and students wanting to specialise. Discussions are due to take place with DEFRA at Eden and the College would like to reach out to companies/organisations such as the Environment Agency.</p> <p><b>4.3 Update on International</b></p> <p>The Deputy Principal for Growth reported that 12 international applications had been received with two withdrawals. The Home Office Sponsor Licence Status does not currently extend to the sites associated with golf (St Mellion and Lindfield). The focus is currently on internal infrastructure and compliance. New appointments will only be made when the revenue is received.</p> <p>Marketing activities have been low cost and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of strong adverts that can be used again;</li> <li>• tapping into Eden’s international marketing and the popularity of Newquay’s surf science social media;</li> <li>• researching keys words and searches;</li> <li>• a sponsored search for golf on UCAS.</li> </ul> <p>A governor suggested researching vocational schools that don’t offer progression, giving the students picked up from Dartington as an example.</p>	<p>PW/ KW</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Operating Statement – strategic aims linked to HE focus areas</b></p> <p>The actions/developments that are rated red have been discussed earlier in the agenda. The Deputy Principal for Growth indicated that she needs to review student numbers.</p>	

<b>Operational Updates</b>		
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Balance Scorecard/ KPIs</b></p>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>Report including a data update: enrolments and impact on finances, attendance, retention, suspension and withdrawal, continuation, success and progression.</b></p> <p>The Deputy Principal for Growth reported to the Board on the data position against KPIs. The Committee discussed attendance and retention figures, noting a drop in both since the last reporting period. Some students are struggling with costs and/or balancing work / family commitments and the College is supporting with bursaries where it can and has restructured the FE support team to increase time available to intervene and support HE students. The Committee also noted that work continues to bottom out group sizes.</p> <p>A governor suggested using national data if it was available to benchmark the College’s data in order to provide context. Another governor asked if the College’s data systems were able to generate data which correlated with that used by the OfS, thus allowing the College to monitor effectively that threshold standards were being met. This will be explored.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the application data by Campus and discussed application processes including increasing the information and guidance available to applicants and using interviews to sell the College and the course. This is also important to secure future retention. Application numbers are up on the previous year and being tracked in order to understand what is making an impact.</p>	
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Presentation on resetting KPIs to align with OfS quality procedures.</b></p> <p>The Deputy Principal for Growth presented initial themes to support the development of a more rigorous set of KPIs for HE at the College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Access, Enrolment and Retention</li> <li>• Graduation Rate</li> <li>• Student Satisfaction</li> <li>• Staff Qualifications and Performance</li> <li>• Research Output</li> <li>• Employability and Alumni Success</li> <li>• Financial Performance</li> <li>• Infrastructure and Facilities</li> <li>• Community Engagement and Outreach</li> </ul> <p>Unfortunately, these themes were missing from the paper distributed in advance of the meeting. The correct paper will be uploaded to Teams.</p> <p>A Committee Member welcomed the discussion on staff research and scholarly activity; emphasised that second year students should be involved in scholarly activity and in the final year starting their journey into a research facing environment. These principles need to be established.</p> <p>The Committee discussed how to measure and manage staff performance, scholarly activity, keeping knowledge up to date and research output. Staff appraisal, systematic and target- driven assessment, lesson observations and a separate panel looking at research were all discussed.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal for Growth will continue the work to develop a new set of KPIs and report back to the next meeting.</p>	<p>TB</p> <p>KW</p>

7	<p><b>Student Voice</b>  <b>Understanding student voice – update on compliance with student feedback processes.</b>                  The Group Lead for HE reported that all student feedback processes are now in place.</p>	
8	<p><b>HEAB minutes</b>                  The Committee noted the minutes from the HE Academic Board on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Following committee feedback it was agreed that key points from each meeting will be pulled out and presented to the Committee going forward.</p>	KW
<b>Compliance, Policy &amp; Governance</b>		
9	<p><b>Environmental Sustainability HE Committee KPIs</b>                  The Group Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality reported that a first draft of sustainability KPIs has been developed with the Group Deputy Principal Group Operations and Deputy Head of Estates and will be discussed further and then brought to the June Committee meeting.</p>	MW
10	<p><b>Office for Students</b>                  ▪ <b>FDAP revaluation</b>                  Discussed in item 3.</p>	
11	<p><b>Student Complaints Report</b>                  The Deputy Principal for Growth presented an oversight of complaints for the last 3 years as provided to the Office for Students for the FDAP revaluation. The Committee noted that all key complaints had been closed. The Deputy Principal thanked the Head of Regulatory Compliance for her support in managing complaints.</p>	
12	<p><b>Fee Policy 2025/2026</b>                  The Committee considered the proposal for HE fees for 2025/26 and noted the benchmarking against other FE colleges. The proposal had been developed with the Finance Controller and been endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team. The Committee approved the proposal for recommendation to the Finance and Resources Committee and Board as appropriate.</p>	
13	<p><b>Communication between Committee/Board</b>                  Fee Policy 2025/2026</p>	
14	<p><b>Any Other Business</b>                  A visit to the Eden Science Labs is being organised.                  The Principal reported on the visit to Eden of Robert Halfon, Minister of State for the Department of Education.</p> <p><b>Dates of next meeting</b>                  13/06/2024, 10am</p>	