USP College Corporation
Quality Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2020
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.15hrs

Present

Ian Hockey	Independent Member	Chair
Ralph Henderson	Independent Member	
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member	
Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive	
Julie Snelling	Staff Member	
David O'Donovan	Staff Member	

Apologies for absence

Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member
Ruta Dubinskas	Student Member
Emily Riseborough	Student Member

In attendance

Gordon Haines	Chair of the Corporation
John Revill	Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning (VP P,F&BP)
Mark Silverman	Interim Quality Consultant
Stuart Coussins	Head of Higher Education (item 5 only)
James Parker	Director of Education Improvement (item 7 only)
Hannah Austin	Head of Teaching and Learning (item 7 only)
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services (item 10 only)
Murray Cooper	Head of Academics, Oxford Business College (item 5.2 only)

Clerk

Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation

QC.18.20 **Declaration of Interest**

Members and officers were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any item to be considered during the meeting.

Ralph Henderson advised that he is a Director of Rugby at Thurrock Rugby Club, President of William Edwards' Alumni and a member of the William Edwards' Trust.

There were no other declarations of interest.

QC.19.20 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from

- Trevor Hutchinson
- Ruta Dubinskas
- Emily Riseborough

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.20.20 **Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020**
The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.21.20 **Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting**
Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting the items that would be picked up under this agenda and those that would remain on the schedule as ongoing.

Members agreed there were no other matters arising from the previous meeting.

Higher Education

QC.22.20 **Docklands Academy**
The VP P,F&BP presented a report to update on the outcomes for the provision for the Docklands Academy (DAL) in 2018/19.

Members were advised that this is the first year of outcomes from DAL. There had been significant staffing changes during the year, which had resulted in a new Principal of Academics and consequently this had an impact on the quality of provision.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting that DAL's performance for 2018/19 is below internal college benchmark performance. In discussion, members were advised that a dedicated HE co-ordinator has been recruited to monitor the quality of DAL's provision and the initial 2019/20 data shows improvements to date in the quality of recruited learners through a stronger retention. The progress against the quality action plan is good, although there are still some operational difficulties relating to compliance to USP quality tracking and monitoring systems during the current Pandemic situation.

Members were advised that it is the College's intention to grow its HE provision and other options have been explored with a partnership arrangement with Oxford Business College, which is to be discussed at this meeting. The intention with regard to DAL is keep the provision small and to limit any further growth with them.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report, and asked to be kept advised of any significant changes relating to the provision with DAL

QC.23.20 **Partnership arrangements with Oxford Business College**
The Head of HE presented, for consideration and approval, a report detailing a partnership arrangement with Oxford Business College (OBS).

Members were advised that, in line with the College's strategy of developing growth in Higher Education, an academic partnership with OBS is proposed to deliver Pearson Higher National qualifications in business.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting that
- due diligence has been conducted, which included a review of quality and financial information, in line with the USP collaboration policy and found to be a medium low risk
- the validation of HND business was conducted in March and the panel approved the programme with six conditions, which have now been met

In discussion, members agreed this presented an excellent opportunity to grow the College's HE provision, particularly in the light of the previous discussion relating to DAL and the reputational risk that this could potentially present and it would be sensible to gradually limit growth with DAL and increase provision to OBS.

Resolved
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board that the College enters into a partnership arrangement with the Oxford Business College to deliver Pearson Higher National qualifications in business

Murray Cooper, Head of Academics at Oxford Business College joined the meeting

Mr Cooper answered a range of questions from the Committee and advised that the OBC is looking forward to working with the College and building the partnership between the two organisations.

Murray Cooper left the meeting

QC.24.20   **Impact of capped HE growth**
The VP P,F&BP presented for consideration a report detailing the impact of the Student Number Cap (SNC) for HE recruitment for 2020/21.

Members reviewed the report, noting that the
- Department for Education (DfE) have announced a cap on HE growth for all providers (HE and FE)
- maximum number of new HE learners that the College can recruit is 298, this does not include second or third year students
- College is looking to recruit approximately 470 new students, therefore there would be a deficit of 172
- number of 470 contains approximately 140 learners who would progress from HNC to HND which, under the new Covid-19 guidelines, can be transferred from a one year HNC to a two year HND
- majority of the provision is delivered through the current subcontractor, Docklands Academy, and proposed subcontract with Oxford Business College

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that
- the net impact of doing nothing would result in approximately £123,000 for 2020/21
- in accordance with Covid-19 rules, the College is allowed to move the current HNC learners onto a two year HND programme during their programme of study to ensure that they are not negatively impacted on by Covid-19. This would remove approximately 140 learners from the SNC, leaving the college approximately 32 above the cap which, it is proposed, could be taken from DAL
- the risk is a potential impact on quality with recruiting learners over a two-year programme rather than two single years

The Committee agreed that it would be prudent to move all HNC learners to a two year HND and, particularly in the light of the previous discussion relating to DAL, to reduce new learner recruitment with them.

Resolved
The Quality Committee approved and recommends to the Corporation Board that the College should move all HNC learners onto a two year HND and reduce new learner recruitment at DAL by approximately 32 learners

QC.25.20 **Minimum Standards for 2918/19 Apprenticeship Provision**
The VP P F&BP presented a letter received from the ESFA relating to the minimum standard for 2018 to 2019 all age apprenticeship provision.

Members were advised that
- this relates to USP College, not ITEC provision
- 52.9% of the College provision has fallen below the 40% threshold for Minimum Levels of Performance
- this is primarily due to a technicality of not being able to novate any learners that had withdrawn in year over to ITEC
- Apprentices due to complete in 2018/19 that were still in learning were novated over, impacting on the positive achievement in 2018/19 for USP College. This artificially reduced the leaver number in 2018/19 and exacerbated the impact of outcomes for USP College apprenticeship provision in 2018/19, these are 'lost learners' to USP College but will be included in ITEC
- the areas impacted are AAT, Early Years and Sport

Members reviewed the detail of the letter from the ESFA, noting they have acknowledged that '*we have taken into account that you have novated all Apprenticeship delivery to ITEC, therefore no longer delivery any Apprenticeship provision and as a result of reviewing this we will not be taking any further action in respect to this failure'.*

It was noted that there will be a different methodology for 2019/20 outcomes, which has yet to be agreed.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

Quality Performance

QC.26.20 **Retention and student engagement with distance learning**
The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration a report detailing student retention and distance learning.

Members reviewed the report, noting
- retention by level and A level retention
- engagement with distance learning
- non engaging student action flowchart
- weekly engagement with distance learning by level

In discussion, members were advised that
- retention remains static with 91.2% for completing students this year and 95.2% for students in the first year of a 2 year course
- A level year 2 retention is low at 82% but year 1 is high at 95%
- engagement with distance learning is monitored weekly and remains high with 89% of students engaging

The Committee acknowledged that, whilst the A level retention is low, it is a reflection of the issues that had been previously identified, the level is now increasing which is evidencing that the steps taken to address the issues are having an impact.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.27.20 **Predicted Outcomes**
The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration a report detailing the assessment grades, quality assurance and predicated outcomes for 2019/20.

The Committee was advised that
- all courses followed a set process directly by Exams, MIS and the Quality team to ensure that Centre Assessment Grades (CAG) were entered on time and no student was disadvantaged
- OFQAL and exam board guidance was followed to ensure quality of CAGs and information and processes shared with Heads of Learning and disseminated to course leaders and subject tutors
- all CAGs are subject to exam board statistical modelling and calculations and will therefore change from what staff provided

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting
- Predicted outcomes
  - GCSE: English 35%, Maths 22%
  - A level: 81.9%
  - Vocational: ranks still being completed
- Quality Assurance: a 4-step process was followed by course leaders for calculation and input of grades followed by a 3-step quality check and report analysis

Members were impressed with the rigor of the quality assurance process of generated grades to ensure a fair and robust process.

It was noted that Maths outcomes are low and were advised that this is above the national average and results are often much lower in Colleges. The Committee accepted the drop in A level outcomes was a reflection of the low retention from year 1 to year 2, but agreed that, overall, the predicted outcomes is a positive position.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.28.20   **Progression and Intended Destinations**

The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration a report detailing the current data and trends in progression from levels 1-2 and 2-3 and intended destinations of students.

Members were advised that
- all course tutors and progress coaches discussed progression options and intended destinations after students completed their courses this year
- intended destination data was collected throughout May and a final collection of data will be conducted through the leaver's questionnaire at the end of June
- sustained destinations will be collected in January/February for more detailed reporting

It was noted that
- overall progression is 76%
- positive intended destinations 84%
- over 40% intended progression is to University
- 16% intended progression is to Apprenticeships

In discussion, it was agreed students may find it difficult in the current climate to find employment, particularly for level 2 who would normally go into employment or an apprenticeship, so it was important for the college to find provision for all students.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.29.20   **Continuity of Education**

The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration a report detailing the continuity of education.

Members were advised that the document sets out the process put in place from 15 June, in the light of recent government advice, to enable students with exams next year to have greater engagement and how the College is going to consistently bring this year to a conclusion for the first year A level and vocational students.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting
- Overview of
  - ➢ Directed Online/Distance Learning
  - ➢ Progress review
  - ➢ Live Lessons
- Detailed Timeline
- Student/Parent/Carer Timeline

In discussion, members commented on the feeling among students during lockdown and the engagement with remote learning and were advised that engagement has been good and the majority of students have embraced remote learning. The College has worked to ensure that all students are able to access remote learning by the loan of in excess of 200 laptops to students who do not have access to their own at home.

The platform used is Microsoft Teams and a number of students use this to communicate with each other.

It was agreed that the College has done an excellent job to ensure the engagement of students with remote learning and the measures put in place ensures the College is well prepared for remote learning in the future.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.30.20   **Quality of Teaching and Learning**
The Head of Teaching and Learning presented a report, which provided an update on the quality of teaching and learning.

Members were advised that
- since the start of the lockdown, the quality of teaching and learning, the professionalism and resilience shown by the teaching staff has been of a very high level
- a number of measures put in place to ensure standards remain high with the Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIP) team being instrumental throughout the period
- 70 teaching staff have accessed the Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIP) team for regular one to one support since September 2019, with the impact of
  - 11 staff who accessed support have made significant improvement on their practice based on comments from HOLs
  - 2 staff moved from 'green' to 'blue' and 17 from 'amber' to 'green'
  - leading teachers through the changes required to online learning during lockdown
  - supporting all new staff with weekly meetings and training sessions
- prior to teaching practices moving to distance learning, five teaching staff were RAG rated as 'red' and on performance improvement plans with HR, the action plans have been postponed with the practices being monitored by the Head of Teaching and Learning and the TIP team. None of the five staff have been raised as a concern.   The process will be reviewed to determine the best approach when more 'valid' practice is in place

In discussion, the committee asked if consideration had been given to 'blue' rated teaching staff being recognised and rewarded financially and were advised that due to the current circumstances this has not been actualised and will be followed up with HR when possible

Members were advised that to enhance distance learning best practice a range of online learning methods have been used with some excellent practice identified. A number of virtual learning walks have taken place to observe 'live lessons' and committee members were invited to attend these if they wish.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

Hannah Austin left the meeting
Stuart Coussins left the meeting

QC32.20   **College Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20**
The Quality Improvement Consultant presented the College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), detailing the progress made on the key areas for improvement.

Members were reminded that the Corporation approved the College self-assessment report (SAR) and the QIP at the meeting held in December 2019. The top level SAR set the key areas for improvement in the QIP as:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour & Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership & Management

Members were advised that the impact of Covid-19 has been added to the QIP. All Head of Learning Area QIPs are reviewed in Performance Panels

Members reviewed the detail of the document and agreed that good progress continues to be made against the key areas for improvement with a focus remaining on the achievement of A levels.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report.

QC.33.20   **College Self-Assessment for 2019/20**
The Interim Quality Consultant presented, for consideration and approval, a report giving an overview of the initial outline and timeline for the College self-assessment report 2019/20 and governor involvement.

Members were advised that the process in place for 2019/20 is designed to

- ensure ownership of standards and improvement requirements by all staff at all levels
- ensure department and whole College priorities are aligned
- allow governors to be complicit in the process and be able to monitor and challenge progress
- ensure the final SAR report is focused on improvement needs without too much distracting detail

Members reviewed the projected timeline, noting governor involvement to ensure sign off by the Board in December.

Resolved
The Quality Committee
- agreed to receive and note the report
- approved and recommends to the Corporation Board the process and initial timeline for the College SAR

QC.34.20   **Termly Safeguarding Report**
The Head of Student Services presented a report detailing Safeguarding and Prevent related activities during the Spring term 2020.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the
- Summary of wellbeing activity and support
  - the number of monthly wellbeing interventions compared to previous year
  - gender split
  - interventions by mental health category and campus
  - interventions by campus
- Looked After Children
- Training status update

In discussion, members were advised that the safeguarding team had done an excellent job in helping to prepare staff and students for remote working and would continue to provide support as required.

Members commented on the Channel panel meeting and were advised that no further action had been required.

It was agreed that there continues to be a real strength with the safeguarding arrangements in place at the College and asked that thanks, on behalf of the Board, are passed on to the Safeguarding team for all their support.

Addendum to Safeguarding Policy
The Head of Student Services presented, for consideration and approval, the addendum to the Safeguarding policy.

Members were advised that the addendum has been put in place in the light of Covid-19 and has been reviewed and approved by the College's Policies & Procedures Committee.

Members reviewed the content of policy and agreed that this was appropriate.

Resolved
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Addendum to the Safeguarding Policy

QC.35.20   **Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee for 2020/21**
The Clerk presented a report, which outlined the need to review on an annual basis, the Committee's Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business.

Members reviewed the highlighted changes to both documents, which reflected the business conducted during the year and agreed to the proposed amendments.

Resolved
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Terms of Reference and Annual Schedule of Business for the Quality Committee for 2020/21

QC.36.20   **Any Other Business**
There were no items of any other business

QC.37.20   **Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2020/21**
Tuesday 6 October 2020
Tuesday 17 November 2020
Tuesday 23 February 2021
Tuesday 15 June 2021

All meetings commence at 4pm at the Seevic campus

As there was no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

DATE: 6 October 2020