



**USP College Corporation
Quality Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 December 2020
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 18.00hrs**

Present

Ian Hockey	Independent Member	Chair
Ralph Henderson	Independent Member	
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member	
Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member	
Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive	
Julie Snelling	Staff Member	
David O'Donovan	Staff Member	
Cameron Root	Student Member	
Success Popoola	Student Member	

In attendance

Gordon Haines	Chair of the Corporation
John Revill	Vice Principal Partnerships, Funding & Business Planning
Clare White	Deputy Principal Corporate & Student Services
Mark Silverman	Interim Quality Consultant
Stuart Coussins	Head of Higher Education
James Parker	Director of Education Improvement

Clerk

Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation
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QC.53.20 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.54.20 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

QC.55.20 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.56.20 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.

QC.57.20 Learner Satisfaction Induction Survey 2020
The Director of Education Improvement presented for consideration the outcome of the Learner Satisfaction Induction Survey 2020.

Members were advised that

- there has been an increase in positive learner responses from previous year
- there is a positive response to the College's covid-19 safety implementations
- the live streaming/online lessons review indicates around 75% learner satisfaction with active learning being an area for improvement

In discussion, members agreed it was pleasing to note the great improvement over last year's outcome and were advised that there had been a better summary of answers with a higher number of responses compared to the previous year.

The student governors commented that it might be more appropriate for the survey to be carried out later in the term as the beginning of term is a time of 'settling in' for students who are more focused on the start of their courses. Members were advised that students receive feedback from the survey through their student conference and the student newsletter.

Members agreed that the survey presented a good overview.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

Higher Education

QC.58.20 Partnership arrangements with Oxford Business College (OBC)
The Head of HE presented a report to demonstrate the effective quality and oversight of OBC.

Members were reminded that, at the previous meeting, it was agreed details of the quality assurance mapping in place with OBC would be presented to the Committee at this meeting.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report, noting the

- key areas included in the ongoing monitoring of quality
- planned staff development activities
- programme delivery/Learning Infrastructure
- process for assessment

In discussion, members were advised that appropriate arrangements are in place with IT to ensure that there are no issues with the enrolment process and the start of term in January.

It was agreed that the document in place gave a good oversight of the measures in place to ensure the quality of provision with OBC. It was suggested that the document, if required, could be presented to the Office for Students, to demonstrate the enhanced quality provided when working with USP.

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.59.20

Higher Education self-evaluation document and action plan

The Head of HE presented a self-evaluation document (SED) and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the HE student academic experience, HE student outcomes and the standards of the HE awards for which the College is responsible.

Members were advised that there is no requirement by the Office for Students (OfS) for providers to submit an Annual Quality Assurance Assurance Statement as had previously been required. However, the Corporation Board should continue to receive appropriate assurance and the self-evaluation document and action plan are presented to provide a clear statement on the quality of the College's higher education provision and to set appropriate actions at a provider and where appropriate, programme level.

Members reviewed the detail of the SED on the Higher Education provision at USP College in 2019/20, noting the key areas:

- Student experience is lower than 2018/19, although still considered high and in line or above with sector benchmarks for core metrics including overall satisfaction
- The addition of Oxford Business College as a new collaborative partner has the potential to realise significant growth in learner volumes
- The impact of the HE Partnership Coordinator has seen an improvement in achievement and continuation rates at Docklands Academy London, although it is still not meeting the college or sector benchmarks
- Level 4 performance (achievement and continuation) is declining with the biggest threat to non-continuation institutionally is the identification of students at risk and meaningful intervention and skills development of learners in the first semester

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that

- A new franchise agreement has been agreed and entered into with University of Hertfordshire for 5 years. However, there is still outstanding negotiation work to be conducted to ensure the contract matches operational processes and it is anticipated this will be completed by February 2021
- To mitigate the risk of further decline of level 4 performance, the college will look to implement a new Higher Education teaching and learning framework that builds on the strong work of the three keys strategy, with impact demonstrated when the college has robust quality assurance intelligence that not only measures student experience but also judges the effectiveness of bridging the academic skills gap between level 3 and level 4

The Committee reviewed the action plan, noting the action taken against each of the areas identified for improvement and agreed that good progress is being made.

In discussion, the Committee considered that it could be beneficial for the Board to be better engaged with the College's higher education provision by way of a Link Governor for HE who could offer relevant support to the Head of HE. It was agreed that the Clerk would follow up with the Chair of the Corporation outside of the meeting.

Resolved

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the SED and action plan and to recommend to the Corporation Board for acceptance as assurance on the quality of the College's HE provision

QC.60.20

Safeguarding

The Chair of the Quality Committee gave a verbal update on the outcome of the recent audit he undertook of the College's safeguarding processes and procedures as the Link Governor for Safeguarding.

Members were advised that

- A full review of the College's safeguarding processes and procedures was carried out
- The College offers an incredible amount of support for students with mental health issues
- An audit of training logs was carried out and all records were found to be in good order
- Ofsted has given a 'clean bill of health' for safeguarding during their recent visit to the College
- Accidents in the College have reduced for the same period last year

The Committee thanked the Chair for taking the time to carry out the safeguarding check and it was agreed that there is a real strength with the College's safeguarding arrangements and that students are well supported, particularly through Covid.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair of the Corporation took the opportunity to thank the Chair of the Committee for his contribution as the Link Governor for Safeguarding

Agreed

The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.61.20

Single Equality Scheme/Equality & Diversity Action Plan

The Interim Quality Consultant presented, for consideration and approval, the Single Equality Scheme and Equality & Diversity Action Plan.

Members were advised that the policy has been updated and approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee

Members reviewed the detail of the policy and the action plan, noting that the Single Equality Scheme meets the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, which replaced all previous equality legislation.

In discussion, members commented that the scheme would need to cover the new Accessibility Regulations that came into force in September. Members were advised that the college is working to put in place the appropriate statement on the website. Members made some suggestions with regard to more appropriate wording in parts of the document.

It was agreed that the Interim Quality Consultant would update the policy and a final version would be presented to the Board on 15 December.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Single Equality Scheme/Equality & Diversity Action Plan, subject to amendments as discussed

QC.62.20 College Self-assessment report (SAR) for 2019/20 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The Director of Education Improvement and the Interim Quality Consultant presented, for consideration and approval, the College SAR and QIP.

Members were advised that

- the SAR sets out a review of College performance in 2019/20, based on the Education Inspection Framework
- the QIP sets out the key improvement priorities, planned actions and targets for this year

Members reviewed the detail of both documents, noting

- performance against previous year's targets
- proposed targets for 2020/21
- overall effectiveness, key strengths and improvement priorities for the following areas:
 - Quality of Education
 - Behaviour and Attitudes
 - Personal Development
 - Leadership and Management
 - Provision for learners with high needs
 - Impact of Covid-19 – Distance Learning and Digital Innovation

Members were advised that at this time, provisional grading is 'Good' for all areas with the exception for the Provision for learners with high needs which is judged to be 'Outstanding'.

In discussion, it was agreed that Value Added will be the biggest challenge for the College together with the developing and embedding pedagogical upskilling at all levels across the curriculum to drive up standards in the appropriate use of Digital learning. Members were advised that appropriate upskilling is included during staff CPD days.

The student members commented on the student reaction to CPD days, advising that some of the vocational students felt there could be more choice as those being offered seemed to be more suitable for those students intending to progress to university. The Director of Education Improvement agreed to consider the range of initiatives with the student members outside of the meeting.

In discussion, it was agreed that the provisional grading for each of the areas was appropriate. The focus would be on the areas of improvement set out in the QIP, which, once approved by the Board, would continue to be monitored by the Committee at each meeting during the year.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the College self-assessment report for 2019/20 and Quality Improvement Plan

QC.63.20

Quality Strategy

The Director of Education Improvement presented, for consideration and approval, the final version of the Quality Strategy.

Members were reminded that the Quality Strategy had been presented to the previous meeting when it had been reviewed and approved, subject to any further comments from members outside of the meeting and the completion of the targets.

The Committee reviewed the document, noting the targets that have been completed.

Resolved

The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the Quality Strategy

QC.64.20

Any Other Business

The Principal advised that the report from Ofsted following their recent visit was now available and it was agreed this would be circulated to the Board for reference.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair of the Corporation took the opportunity to thank the committee for their robust level of oversight to ensure the quality of provision for the College.

There were no other items of any other business

QC.65.20

Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2020/21

Tuesday 23 February 2021

Tuesday 15 June 2021

All meetings commence at 4pm

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

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Smith', written over a faint circular stamp.

DATE: 23 February 2021