USP College Corporation
Quality Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 4 October 2022
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Meeting commenced: 16.00hrs
Meeting ended: 17.15hrs

Present
Ian Hockey	Independent Member	Chair
Vikki Liogier	Independent Member	
Nicola Curtis	Independent Member	
Dan Pearson	Principal and Chief Executive	
Harvey Wayland	Student Member	
Maisie Cosby	Student Member	
Trevor Hutchinson	Co-opted Member	

Apologies for Absence
Donna Williams	Staff Member
Clare Smith	Staff Member

In attendance
Clare White	Deputy Principal Corporate & Student Services
Jon Briggs	Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum
Luke Brewster	Head of Higher Education
James Parker	Assistant Principal Quality, Performance & Innovation
Andy Shepherd	Head of Student Services (item 9 only)

Clerk
Sue Glover	Clerk to the Corporation

QC.33.22 **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.

There were no declarations of interest.

QC.34.22 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from

- Donna Williams
- Clare Smith

The Quality Committee agreed to accept the apologies for absence.

QC.35.22 **Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022**
The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

QC.36.22 **Matters arising and action points from the minutes of the previous meeting**
Members reviewed the action points arising from the meeting, noting those that will be picked up at this meeting and that the Head of Student Services will update the Committee on feedback from the safeguarding audit conducted by Thurrock under the safeguarding item on the agenda.

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

Higher Education

QC.37.22 **Docklands Academy London**
The Head of HE presented a report, which provided an update on the current performance of Docklands Academy London (DAL).

Members were advised that
- DAL have finished their teaching out of their programmes in partnership with the College
- there has been no further update from Pearsons with regard to the partnership working for Travel & Tourism and for Business as reported at the previous meeting
- DAL have been in contact with regard to commencing a new arrangement in Hospitality Management, noting that
  - this is currently the only programme the College is permitted to deliver as partners and the approval of which will cease in August 2023
  - there are 30 students who have satisfied their entry requirements and there could be up to 75 students. The SLC portal has been set up and shared with DAL to provide students with the facility for applying for a loan before teaching starts

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

- the Hospitality students will be eligible for SLC funding
- Business programmes in general are not receiving validation due to too many students nationally and an oversaturated market

It was agreed that the Committee would be kept informed of the outcome of the appeal with Pearsons when received.

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

QC.38.22 **Oxford Business College**
The Head of HE presented a report, which provided an update on the current performance of Oxford Business College (OBC).

Members were reminded that OBC have requested to enter 'teach out' of its HND programmes with the College, which means the current contract will now terminate in July 2023.

The Committee was advised that
- the College is in the middle of the teach out process
- Student numbers total 401
- 83% of learners have passed and progressed from the February 2021 and May 2021 cohorts
- Submission and pass rates remain high at 85%

The Committee was pleased to note the satisfactory progress of the teach-out process and that a further update will be given at each meeting until the partnership is concluded.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.39.22   **Development of Pearsons HND Business Course**
The Head of HE presented a report providing an update on the current performance of the recent introduction of the HND business weekend provision at the Palmers Campus.

Members were advised that
- despite strong demand for the programme and the utilisation of new recruitment methods through an external agent, there are 18 students left on the programme
- there have been significant issues with the level and calibre of students recruited to the programme, a number travel from a long distance, English is their second language and their academic skills were not accurately assessed
- IAG was not sufficiently robust
- the Resourcing Plan has been updated with learners being taught more content, study skills and support through 'one to one' tutorials

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that
- the current staffing model is delivery on Saturdays with 'one to one' tutorials mid-week
- moving forward, an ESOL teacher will be required to aid students with writing skills
- attendance to these sessions has largely been good, and has moved to a blended model
- this model of recruitment is unsustainable for a future cohort and recruitment has been halted. The process for creating a more robust version with existing staff is due to take place in winter 2023

The Committee agreed that, despite the issues that have arisen, there is currently a good, robust system in place in order to meet our commitment to the students to achieve.

Agreed
The Committee agreed to receive and note the report

QC.40.22 **Year-end Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**
The Director of Quality, Performance and Innovation presented a report and gave a presentation detailing the KPIs for achievement, progression and attendance in 2021/22.

Members were advised that KPIs have been compared to 2018/19 as this was the last non Covid year
- achievement, retention, pass rate and attendance have shown a decrease
- the biggest impact on overall achievement is the decline in pass rates by 6%
  - ➢ Achievement – 80.4%
  - ➢ Progression L1 to L2 – 64.6% and L3 to L4 – 65.8%
  - ➢ Attendance 88.3%
- there were no significant differences in relation to ethnicity
- female students had a 3% higher achievement than male students
- high needs were 3% higher achievement than the average, Education Health and Care Plans and Free School Meals – no difference

The Committee considered the detail of the report, noting that
- Level 3 A levels are higher than 2018/19, but Vocational results are lower
- Level 1 is higher than national average, but Levels 2 and 3 are below national average
- Level 1 to 2 Progression is 8.2% below the previous year
- Level 2 to 3 Progression is 11.1% below the previous year

Members discussed the issues raised and, in response to questions, were advised that
- the college put a new management structure in place for Level 1, which had a positive impact on overall achievement, an increase of 12% on previous year
- the largest decline from the previous year, with 2% lower retention, 6% lower pass rate resulting in an overall achievement of 8% below previous year
- Level 2 vocational qualification achievement at both campuses was the same at 70%
- GCSE achievement at Palmers was 14% higher than at Seevic
- on Level 3 courses
  - ➢ retention was 1% higher than previous year
  - ➢ pass rate had the largest impact on achievement with a 7% lower pass rather than previous year resulting in a 5% lower achievement
  - ➢ for the first year, most Level 3 vocational course (including academic vocational qualifications) had at least 2 external units (one of which was an exam) which resulted in the reduction in pass rate
  - ➢ A level qualifications had an 8% increase in achievement from previous year
- Overall Attendance is 83.3%, against pre-Covid year 2018/19 of 86%

Members agreed that the report and presentation had given a clear summary of the achievement, progression and attendance of students. It was disappointing to note the declining areas, but acknowledged that some results were still awaited and that an update would be given at the next meeting. It was pleasing to note that there is already an action plan in the Quality Improvement Plan to address the issues.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed to receive and note the report and that an update on the KPIs would be given at the next meeting.

QC.41.22 **Teaching and Learning 2021/22 and focus for 2022/23**
The Director of Quality, Performance and Innovation presented a report and gave a presentation detailing Teaching and Learning in 2021/22 and the focus for the 2022/23 academic year.

Members were advised that
- all teaching staff are given a red, amber or green (RAG) rating which is used to identify where additional support was required – there was an overall shift towards green and blue (83%) from red and amber
- a blue rating was introduced in 2021/22 to better enable the identification and sharing of best practice
- the key determining factors for RAG ratings is through
  - Learning Walks feedback
    internal quality reviews – classroom visits
  - feedback from student voice (questionnaires and focus groups)
- 559 learning walks in 2021/22 reviewed the college's 3 keys to teaching and learning to better provide a focus for HoLs and Teaching Improvement Practitioners (TIP) support
- for 2022/23
  - there is a review of the focus on learning walks and support for these
  - the introduction of CollegeiP will bring together reporting and professional development
  - TIP team has been streamlined and given TLA and strategic focus
- as a result of discussion with new teaching staff in 2021/22, a teaching and learning handbook was created, giving all new and existing members of staff a resource to support them in teaching the USP way

The Committee reviewed the detail of the report and handbook, noting that
- 17% of teachers were either amber (16%) or red (1%) in 2021/22 compared to 34% in 2020/21, reflecting the improvement in the level of support for teachers
- of the 6 red/amber rated teachers, 4 have moved on and 2 have shown improvement and progressed
- each TIP has ownership of a teaching and learning and a strategic initiative, which will enable them to deliver support and CPD through the TIP team to the whole college. These initiatives reflect the key areas of focus for teaching and learning in 2022/23 of
  - active learning
  - stretch and challenge
  - the holistic learner
  - skills and careers
  - assessment for learning

The Committee reviewed the detail of the process undertaken for the Learning Walks and commended the robustness of the process, which enables the College's quality team to quickly identify where additional support for teachers is required.

In discussion, the student members suggested that perhaps students might be able to observe lessons to give a different perspective on how teachers might improve. Whilst it was acknowledged that student feedback is taken into account with some observations, it was agreed that this could be a very constructive way to give a different aspect. This would be followed up with the student members outside of the meeting and feedback from observations undertaken by students presented to the Committee in due course.

Members commented on the new teaching and learning handbook as an exceptionally good resource for teaching staff, which would also be helpful for new governors joining the Board.

The Committee agreed that the college has been very proactive in addressing issues with teaching staff. The focus for 2022/23 will be the continuing professional development of teaching staff leading to better outcomes for both staff and students so that college continues to deliver a high quality provision for its students.

Agreed
The Quality Committee agreed
- to receive and note the report
- the Deputy Principal contacts students members outside of the meeting regarding undertaking lesson observations and feedback from outcomes presented to the Committee in due course

QC.42.22 **Complaints Summary for 2021/22**
The Director of Quality, Performance and Innovation presented a report detailing the College's complaints received during 2021/22.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting that
- there were 4 formal complaints compared to 2 in 2020/21
- there were 45 informal complaints received in 2021/22 compared to 60 in 2020/21
- 55% of informal complaints were based around the curriculum, of which 32% were related to STEM
- communication issues accounted for 27% of informal complaint topics
- there were 5 complaints regarding student behaviour outside of the college

In discussion, members were advised that
- there is an action plan in place to address the issues identified in STEM
- the main topics of complaints were around communication issues between the college and students/parents/carers and classroom issues around teaching, such as use of cover teachers or change of teacher
- all Curriculum Directors and Managers have undergone a complaints refresher training and been issued with revised guidance around communication

The Committee agreed that there is a robust process in place to deal with complaints and that everything has been done to address the issues raised in 2021/22

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

QC.43.22 **Quality Strategy**
The Director of Quality, Performance and Innovation presented a report and gave a presentation on the College's Quality Framework Strategy, which set out
- Key Performance Indicator targets
- Key Quality Performance measures of
  - Intent
  - Implementation
  - Who and when
- Key Quality timeline dates

Members were advised that the College's quality strategy is designed to ensure the improvement priorities for student facing services, predominately teaching and learning, are met. It was noted that the document is essentially the same as in the previous year, but has been updated to add Transition 42 (T42), which is the College's strategy to support students during the first half of term.

The Committee reviewed the detail of the document and, in discussion, commented that the top line KPIs were ambitious targets and whether these were reflective of the national averages. Members were advised that once these became available, they can be adjusted if necessary and final KPIs would be reflected in the College Self-assessment and Quality Improvement documents. It was agreed it was a very comprehensive document that clearly sets out the College's strategy for improvement.

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

QC.44.22 **College Improvement Priorities**
The Director of Quality, Performance and Innovation presented a report and gave a presentation to consider for approval the priorities for quality improvement.

Members were advised that the College 2021/22 self-assessment is in process and the Quality Improvement Plan in development. The key priorities for improvement identified at the start of the year are:

- Attendance
- Vocational exam preparation
- A level value added

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the progress made against the previous year's priorities, particularly with regard to restarting students and the implementation of the T42 Plan, which has been effective in increasing retention. However, attendance continues to be an area requiring improvement and will remain one of the key priorities for the coming year.

In discussion, members agreed that the areas for improvement were appropriate, clear and concise and are clearly linked to priorities.

Resolved
The Quality Committee approves and recommends to the Corporation Board for approval the College Improvement Priorities as presented

QC.45.22 **ITEC Learning Technologies – Quality Recovery Action Plan**
The Deputy Principal Corporate & Student Services presented a report, which provided an overview of the current position of apprentices and the plans to quality assess and track progress through the teach-out stage.

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting the
- projected learner volumes by anticipated end point assessment until the planned end in 2023/24
- number of employers ITEC is currently working with
- key issues and actions taken
- areas for development

The Committee agreed that good progress continues to be made through the operational action plan to ensure the needs of the employers and apprentices are being met during the teach-out phase. Members were advised that the last end date for cohort L3 AAT is November 2024, subject to passing the exams. If learners do not pass the exam a contingency plan is in place for USP staff to support learners with revision workshops as necessary to ensure they achieve the re-sit. The College plans to wind down ITEC and close the business in November 2022 and will not be looking for any alternative providers for learners after this date.

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

QC.46.22 **Annual Safeguarding Report for 2021/22**
The Head of Student Services presented, for consideration and acceptance, the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2021/22.

Members were advised that
- the annual safeguarding report reviews the work undertaken in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent throughout the year
- the report provides assurance to the Board that the College is compliant with its responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding including Prevent and that appropriate actions are being taken in relation to safeguarding students, staff and visitors to the College

Members reviewed the detail of the report, noting
- this year, unlike the previous academic year, was not as heavily affected by Covid-19 and figures are comparable to the last pre-Covid affected year
- cases are divided between 'Safeguarding', a student who requires intervention which if not provided could escalate and result in the impairment of their safety, health and development, and 'Wellbeing' intervention to promote a more positive and happy life, these would normally be shorter and deal with issues such as relationship difficulties, stress, low self-esteem
- there has been one referral to Prevent, which related to a student viewing inappropriate content online. The Prevent Team advised a discussion was had with the student and no further action was required
- there is circa 4% difference in the retention rate of students receiving wellbeing support to students that need no support. Achievement rate is much lower at circa 9%. Students that have required wellbeing and mental health support would have been more greatly affected by the disruption caused by Covid
- the single central record has continued to be developed by the HR Team and is considered to be exemplary in its field. Random checks continue to take place by a range of trained staff and the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding
- the level of Safeguarding and Prevent awareness training undertaken by all staff and the additional training undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Leads
- the measures in place for the Corporation Board in relation to its responsibilities for Safeguarding including Prevent

The Head of Student Services took the opportunity to advise members that feedback from the safeguarding audit conducted by Thurrock had still not been received. He had contacted Thurrock who advise that there is no feedback to give from the audit, which indicate that there were no matters to raise from the audit. A similar audit will be undertaken shortly by Essex local authority and the outcome will be reported to the Committee.

Members commended the report, particularly the level of support that is given to students by the Wellbeing Team. The Committee asked that thanks are passed to the Safeguarding team on behalf of the Board for the tireless work they do to ensure the safeguarding of all students.

Resolved
The Quality Committee agreed to accept and recommend to the Corporation Board for acceptance the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2021/22

QC.47.22   **Committee Effectiveness**
The Clerk presented the outcomes from the Committee's self-assessment for 2021/22.

Members were reminded that the Board had conducted its annual self-assessment over the summer, which included a self-assessment of the performance of each of the committees. The Board reviewed the outcomes at the meeting held on 27 September and agreed that each Committee should consider the outcomes of its own self-assessment at the autumn meetings.

The Committee reviewed the outcomes, noting
- the overall assessment of the Committee's performance is Good/Outstanding
- the impact the committee has made in the last twelve months
- the areas suggested of how performance might be improved

In discussion, members concluded that the Committee continues to fulfil its function as a key committee of the governing body – an observation which had been cited by Ofsted during their inspection in November 2021. The Committee will continue to play a proactive role in enhancing the student experience through its oversight of challenging targets for student retention and achievement as well as other appropriate curriculum development and management activities.

QC.48.22   **Any Other Business**
There were no items of any other business

QC.49.22   **Schedule of Quality Committee meetings 2022/23**
Tuesday 6 December 2022
Tuesday 7 March 2023
Tuesday 20 June 2023

All meetings commence at 4pm

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

SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

DATE: 6 December 2022