Capel Manor College

Minutes

Academic Committee	
Minutes	

Meeting Time and Date	**1000 on 8 March 2022**
Meeting Location	**Zoom Online**
Members	Dr Heather Barrett-Mold OBE (Chair) 🖥 Dr Sheila Cunningham Malcolm Goodwin (Principal) 🖥 Heather Marks Sarah Moreland MBE 🖥 Stephen Way Sarah Seery (Staff Governor) 🖥 Rosie Evans (Student Governor) 🖥 Michael Sinnett (Student Governor) Layla Jane Rashid (Student Governor)
Observers	Paulina Balogun Christine Bianchin (Academic) 🖥 James Bryan (HR) 🖥 Denise Cheng-Carter (Finance) 🖥 David Scott (Estates) 🖥
Minute Taker	Joanne Coffey (Clerk)

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	Action
1. Apologies	
1.1. Denise Cheng-Carter (Interim Executive Director of Finance and IT) was welcomed to the Committee.	
1.2. Apologies were received for Sheila Cunningham, Stephen Way, Heather Marks, Michael Sinnett and Layla Jane Rashid.	
2. Declaration of Interests	
2.1. None.	
3. Minutes	
Resolved to	
3.1. **Agree the minutes of the Academic Committee meeting held on 22 November 2021 as a correct record and authorise the Chair to approve them.**	
4. Matters Arising	
Barking Riverside	
4.1. The vision for Barking Riverside had now been updated and will be circulated to the Committee by email.	**Principal (Completed)**

Capel Manor College

4.2.	No timescales have yet been established.
Staff recruitment	
4.3.	Staff turnover and recruitment and student attendance were the main current challenges at the College, as expressed at the Strategy Away Day. As well as gaps the high proportion of staff new to the College is likely to have an impact on effectiveness at least short term.
4.4.	Existing staff were needing to cover unfilled roles which was negatively impacting their primary roles.
4.5.	Although some core roles had been recently appointed for, it would take time for these to come into force.
4.6.	Arboriculture remained a difficult school to recruit staff for, given that it is a small industry and, outside of education, it is well paid which creates a significant income gap for prospective staff. Notwithstanding this, different approaches were being tested to attempt to fill these roles and a generic manager was supporting the School.
4.7.	The overall turnover of staff was also high at 18% and this further impacted team building and in providing a stable culture for new staff to connect with.
4.8.	This had been further impacted by the pandemic where the induction process for academic staff had restricted opportunities for shadowing, thus leaving new joiners feeling somewhat overwhelmed in their new teaching roles.
4.9.	Management is re-evaluating the induction process to provide more support through shadowing opportunities and teacher training improvements.
4.10.	The pandemic has had a significant effect on where and how people want to work. Some have re-evaluated their careers and others preferred a hybrid style of working. It was clear that a root and branch review of staff recruitment at the College was required.
4.11.	On the flip side, some people will be deciding that they want to do their hobby as a job, which would then benefit the College greatly (for staff and adult learners) and these opportunities will be acted on as part of the review.
4.12.	The Committee summarised that it was clear that the offer and benefits needed to be right in order to attract the right people.
5. Report of the Vice Principal (Information)	
Principal / Super SAR	
5.1.	The Super SAR is a framework and analysis of progress focusing primarily on academic areas for improvement, in an attempt to summarise what an outstanding academic offer looks like, and is an honest and reflective evaluation of where Capel is on the axis

to identify and drive key on-going change beyond the annual SAR/QIP cycle.	
5.2. It is hoped the framework will act as key documents to unify the College community in its drive to outstanding and will grow and evolve as the College progresses on this journey.	
5.3. Following discussions in Academic Committee the Vice Principal has developed summary documents for staff and students, 'our vision for outstanding academic provision', and is currently seeking the views of staff and students to inform this vision and help identify potential barriers to achieving the vision.	
5.4. The Super SAR has been seen to be helpful for the Heads of Schools to refocus on their challenges.	
5.5. Governors noted that the Student version of the Super SAR read more succinctly than the Teaching and Learning area, and was not clouded by technical language or too many objectives, that may then not align with actions that can be evidenced.	
5.6. Management agreed that the Student format was more effective and agreed to use this as a template for the Teaching and Learning areas.	**Academic (Completed)**
Teaching and Learning	
Maths and English	
5.7. Traditionally, the College has offered 2 qualifications to students needing to re-sit Maths and English; a) Functional skills for those who have previously attained below a grade 3 at GCSE. b) GCSEs for those who have previously attained a grade 3.	
5.8. Following extensive discussion at Academic Board, the College is looking to move away from this mixed delivery model to enrolling all students required to re-sit maths and English onto GCSE's.	
5.9. National achievement rates for students resitting maths and English both in Functional Skills and GCSE remain very low, in addition to the impact of the pandemic and Calculated Grades.	
5.10. The Committee had a full discussion on the merits of moving to GCSEs to ascertain what the overall effects would be on student outcomes and the following points were noted: a) It would improve student morale considerably as the GCSE model provides a more focused approach on the specific areas that each student may individually struggle with. This leads to an improved outlook rather than repeating what they know has not worked for them in the past. b) GCSEs have wider grading, rather than pass or fail, which provides a more helpful and motivating measure of their achievement, particularly if they do need a further resit. This also reinforces the message that the College will take	

students at any point in their academic journey and support them throughout.

c) Level 2 Functional Skills is more difficult to achieve than GCSEs due to its advanced nature.

d) Class sizes would be more evenly balanced using the GCSE model, and they could also be split between those students who were close to achieving Grade 4 and those who required more attention.

e) It was noted that one of the College's strengths has been with its use of 'real world maths and English', where it is embedded into the curriculum and tutors point out to their students when they have been organically using these skills. GCSEs would provide even more opportunities to make the syllabus vocationally relevant.

5.11. Governors agreed that GCSEs appeared to provide more opportunities for success in maths and English achievement and would improve motivation to succeed.

T Levels

5.12. The College has registered as a T Level provider for the Level 3 landbased T levels in 'Agriculture, Land Management and Production' and 'Animal Care and Management' and is planning for their phased introduction from 2024 onwards. The T Levels will become a direct replacement for the current Level 3 Technical Certificate/ Foundation Diploma/ Extended Diplomas.

5.13. With the development and roll out of T Level qualifications the Government is looking to streamline the number of qualifications on offer to direct students to 'Academic' or 'Technical' routes. The introduction of T Levels will, therefore, see the removal of funding for current Level 3 qualifications where a T level alternative is available.

5.14. More research is needed to establish what the impact will be on Level 1 and Level 2 reforms and how Level 3 adult courses, and its funding, will fit into the structure, given that these would not be appropriate as T Levels.

5.15. The Committee agreed that 2024 was a prudent time to begin the T Level delivery, and highlighted the importance of ensuring that resources and facilities were in place to meet the needs of the new T Levels at all campuses.

5.16. Funding is available but as it requires match funding, this would be unaffordable for the current year but this will be reviewed in 2023.

Mayor's Green Skills Academies

5.17. The London Mayor's Academies Programme (MAP) aims to support Londoners hardest hit by the pandemic into work in sectors (including 'green') that are considered key to London's

recovery and long term economic growth, by coordinating and quality marking training in London.	
5.18. The College is involved in two successful bids under the Mayor's Green Skills Academy Programme:	
a) West London Green Skills Hub, coordinated by West London College with a focus on construction and greenspace.	
b) London Green Space Skills Hub, coordinated by Groundwork with a focus on greenspace.	
5.19. The London Green Space Skills Hub is focused solely on greenspace management and includes collaboration with a number of London's landbased employers: Groundwork, Parks for London, BALI, Landscape Institute, Peabody, London councils, Glendale, Barking Riverside, Groundscape and Idverde.	
5.20. Management are assessing the long term added value versus time investment and any loss of autonomy, to ensure that the strategy is a good economical fit.	
5.21. It was noted for the full Board to be aware of these bids, given that Governors may have existing connections that provide for opportunities to promote the College.	**A: Governing Body (To note)**
Apprenticeships	
5.22. The College is in discussions with The Royal Parks (TRP) around running the new Level 5 Higher Apprenticeship in Horticultural and Landscaping Technician and the new Level 4 Countryside Ranger for TRP staff.	
5.23. Staff are also exploring the introduction of the new Level 5 Higher Apprenticeship in Greenkeeping from September 2022.	
5.24. The College's retention of Apprenticeships has improved but ongoing issues from awaiting for end point assessments to be written has brought achievement levels down.	
Ofsted	
5.25. The College was last inspected in November 2016. Ofsted usually inspect colleges every 3-5 years (or sooner if they suspect there is an issue or something significant changes). However, due to the pandemic this has been extended to up to 7 years for 'Good' providers.	
5.26. Ofsted have stated that they are now back on track with where they were pre-pandemic. Therefore, it is likely Ofsted will arrive this academic year.	
5.27. The Committee received the updated Ofsted Readiness guidance to staff and, to assist further, the Clerk has compiled a list of themes and questions that have been asked of Governors by Ofsted inspectors during 2021. This information would be particularly useful to any Governors who may be invited to be interviewed during an inspection.	**B: Governing Body (To note)**

5.28. As Landex were due to visit the College during March, this provided a good opportunity for staff and students (particularly new staff and temporary managers) to engage in the supportive challenge as a practical exercise. **Rosie Evans left the meeting.**	
6. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2021-22 (Decision) 6.1. The College's Quality Improvement Plan for 2021-22 was progressing and the Committee also received the risk rated Principal QIP. 6.2. Of the 145 individual actions, 46 are complete, 24 in progress and on track, 54 in progress but behind schedule, 17 not started or well behind schedule. 6.3. Staffing shortages at management level had impacted some of the delayed actions, and one of the Curriculum Quality Managers (the Staff Governor) was currently covering a Heads of School role. 6.4. Progress against QIP targets, particularly around learner tracking within the School of Arboriculture, Agriculture and Environmental Conservation, have been hindered by these staffing challenges. External cover is now in place to support with leadership in the School and actions are in place to get back on target. 6.5. Actions within the School of Foundation Learning have been hindered by some individual performance issues with tutors not using the software correctly. Performance management strategies are in place and the School is being supported by the Curriculum Quality Managers to ensure continued improvements in record keeping. 6.6. The College is forming a working group to address the issue of poor student attendance levels, to analyse what may be behind the absences and to find new strategies for improvement. Governors will be invited to join this group to add to some of the excellent suggestions that were made at the Strategy Away Day. 6.7. The Committee had a frank discussion on the usefulness of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and QIP process. 6.8. The full SAR and QIP had high operational value, particularly in monitoring the impact of change. The Super SAR and QIP provided higher level data for Governors, whilst also adding perspective for managers in helping them to focus on strategy. 6.9. It was agreed to retain these documents whilst improving integration, where appropriate. **Resolved to** 6.10. **Accept the updates to the QIP 2021-22 and recommend it to the Governing Body for approval.**	**Academic (21 Nov 2022)** **C: Governing Body (Appendix I)**

7. Learner Satisfaction Induction Survey 2021-22 (Information)

7.1. The 2021-22 Learner Satisfaction Survey has been developed, implemented and deployed solely in-house for the first time, previous surveys were hosted with an external company QDP Services. The benefits of in house delivery allows the College to personalise the question sets for better individualisation, faster access to response data and a greater level of reporting to identify areas of strength and improvements.

7.2. The Learner Satisfaction Survey targeted 2057 students of which 1691 students completed (82.2%). This consisted of both full time and part time students across all centres.

7.3. Feedback on the College's information advice and guidance (IAG) overall remains positive and improved on year:

7.4. 94% of students stated that they are enjoying college (7% increase on year).

Enrolments

7.5. Feedback relating to applying to the College is less positive than normal, with 81% of students saying it was easy to apply to the College (8% decrease on year). This is partly due to disruption caused to some students due to the introduction of online enrolments. For those new enrolling students who are not as technically minded, a paper option is being retained.

7.6. As the College continues to expand, the Director of Student Services is leading a review of the learner journey, and is reviewing roles and tasks within the admissions team in line with a strategy of devolved responsibilities to campuses for the induction and enrolment of their students. These plans will significantly improve the students' experience for the September 2022 intake.

Safeguarding

7.7. Safeguarding remains a key strength for the College with positive student responses regarding safeguarding and wellbeing.

English and maths

7.8. Only 59% of students stated that their teachers were helping them develop skills in English and maths, this has been identified as an area for improvement and included in staff training (CPD) for the current year.

7.9. 80% of students responded that the digital learning materials are well organised and available when needed, this is a slight in year increase of 1% on year.

7.10. The College's digital strategy for teaching and learning is being standardised to ensure that the same platforms are being used.

7.11. To ensure that the right questions are being asked at the right time, the survey can be linked to the Super SAR to keep on top of quality, rather than it being a benefit only to the next cohort.

Subjective data	
7.12. To provide qualitative data, management felt that more in-depth, subjective questions, could also provide a more personalised and relatable context for students. Students could be asked what they thought about their last module, or how they felt that they were progressing and how this might affect their future journey, for example.	
7.13. It was, of course, also important to retain some benchmarking and to ensure that there were not too many questions, which might dissuade students from taking part.	
7.14. Subjective questioning does already take place at mid-term reviews and some tutors carry out end of class reviews which all feeds into the College's SAR and QIP.	
7.15. To ensure that Governors are aware of this learner feedback, suggestions were made to have the Student Representatives compile this data and present to Academic Board, for Governors to read in their minutes. This would also reduce the burden on staff time and ensure that Governors are regularly reviewing the student voice. This will be considered by the Vice Principal and reported back.	**Academic (21 Jun 2022)**
Comparative data	
7.16. Analysis and comparison to previous years' data to compare 3 year trends will continue along with benchmarking against other colleges when possible. The Curriculum Quality Manager is currently working with other colleges to look at how best to compare and share data.	
8. Academic Performance 2020-21 and KPIs (Information) **Retention** 8.1. Overall College retention has been consistently outstanding for the last 3 years at 98%, currently 98.1&, which is 3.6% above the national average. **Attendance** 8.2. Overall College attendance stands at 81.6% (range 76.6% – 91.2%). 76.9% in Foundation Learning is due to small cohorts and identified individual circumstances. 2.6% below attendance at the same time last year. 8.3. All other Schools are greater than 81% attendance, with a range of 81-84% with the exception of Garden Design at 91.2%. 8.4. Overall attendance in maths and English continues to be a challenge at 62.6% and is 0.7% below the same time last year. However, there had been a recent improvement due to new measures being tested. 8.5. The Skills Development team work with vocational teams to discuss high risk students, support and target setting to improve and increase attendance.	

8.6. The Vice Principal is forming a working party to review current approaches to managing attendance and to collate a renewed academic strategy, to focus on and materially improve attendance. Governors are invited to join this working group by contacting the Vice Principal.	
8.7. Ideas for improving attendance, captured at the Strategy Away Day, will be assessed by the new working group.	
8.8. College data will provide insight into whether attendance always correlates with results, to ensure that course hours are a correct match for the type of course and the age of the cohort.	
8.9. Some initiatives have already had a positive impact, including a maths and English attendance monitor who follows up with absent students on a daily basis.	
Staffing issues	
8.10. Staffing issues (currently at 73% as percentage of income) are also impacting on how much time tutors have to follow up on attendance. Replenishing staff will provide more opportunities to address robust attendance strategies, where students feel fully supported and motivated, even before their course begins.	
8.11. The Committee affirmed the importance of re-assessing posts, following resignations, to effect improvements and to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.	
Early student withdrawal	
8.12. Strategies to improve levels of early student withdrawal are being assessed. The main reasons that students withdraw early are:	
a) New opportunities for paid work.	
b) Post-pandemic work commitments suddenly increasing.	
c) Mental health struggles for self, or others who they may care for.	
d) Struggling to keep up with the level of coursework required - particularly where online enrolment has not provided human conversations to fully understand the commitments involved.	
e) Adult students signing up for multiple courses prior to a last minute decision on which to enrol on. This is a risk to the College as over £100k of adult funding was rolled over from last year.	
9. Higher Education (HE) (Information)	
9.1. The total number of students on Level 4, Level 5, Foundation Degrees (FdSc) and Bachelor Degrees (BSc) for 2021-22 is 68.	
Royal Agricultural University (RAU)	
9.2. The College has introduced a new BSc (top-up) in Animal Biodiversity and Conservation for 2021 in liaison with the RAU,	

running alongside the established BSc (top-up) Animal Management and Applied Zoology.

9.3. Staff are working closely with the RAU and employers to evaluate the content and delivery method for two Foundation Degrees (Urban Green Space Management and Garden Design and Plantsmanship). Unfortunately, this has been delayed due to staffing absences and revalidation will aim for Sept 2024.

9.4. The College is also exploring the development of an Organic Urban Agriculture degree in liaison with the RAU and the Organic Research Centre (based at the RAU), as well as a Foundation Degree (FdSc) in Environmental Science.

9.5. A partnership review meeting between the RAU and the College is due in March 2022.

9.6. HE students have a good continuation pathway at Capel. However, as recruitment is just recovering from the impact of the pandemic, the numbers of HE students had fallen.

9.7. The College is liaising with the HE students who have enrolled as second choice (from UCAS), to ensure that their chosen course is right for them.

Achievement

9.8. Achievement on Animal Management and Zoology HE courses for 2020-21 has been good, with overall achievement at 89% (consistent on year) with 91% for the Foundation Degree (13% increase on year), and 83% for the BSc (17% decrease on year).

9.9. The National Student Survey (NSS) is an annual survey of 4.5million HE students. Overall student satisfaction is at national benchmark for 2020-21 at 75% but with an 18% decrease on year. This comparison data will be included in future HE papers.

Student feedback

9.10. Student feedback relating to induction was mostly positive but there was significantly less satisfaction from the timing of marking of assignments and coursework. This is, again, likely to have been impacted by HE staff turnover.

Sarah Moreland left the meeting.

10. Curriculum Planning 2022-25 (Information)

10.1. Further adult courses being planned up to July 2022 will increase the adult headcount outcomes for 2021-22, which stand at 1,879.

10.2. The targets for 2022-23 are 1,225 16-18 year olds, 2,000 adults, 155 HE, 280 Apprenticeships and 180 for Professional Short Courses.

10.3. The funded study programme hours for 2022-23 are 580, this is less than the 600 national benchmark for land-based students where study programmes require more delivery hours. The College is moving towards study programmes of 600 hours based on staffing resources with an aspiration to raise this without the

need for additional staff hours. This can be achieved using smart solutions like flipped learning, where students pro-actively study modules in their individual learning spaces, rather than passively in a tutor-led group.	
10.4. The Committee discussed reducing some course hours, which may also increase attendance levels as well as improve staff requirements.	
10.5. The College receives land-based weighting funding, which takes into consideration higher costs for specialist colleges, which could be impacted if funded hours are reduced.	
10.6. It was essential to maintain a balance between necessary hours and enrichment time, whilst also maintaining enough teaching staff for courses that require smaller group activities, like arboriculture, to ensure safety with dangerous equipment like chainsaws.	
11. Academic Board Minutes (Information)	
11.1. The Academic Board meetings continued to demonstrate good discussion and challenge.	
11.2. The Committee discussed the challenges of ensuring that maths and English diagnostic assessments were taken by all new students, to ensure that the starting point was evidenced.	
11.3. Although only 30% of students had appeared to have completed them, there had been a technical issue where not all completions had been picked up by ProMonitor. As well as resolving the technical side, staff were working to ensure that all remaining students were assessed.	
12. Student Disciplinary Report (Information)	
12.1. There were 6 resolved Gross Misconduct Disciplinary Hearings for the year so far.	
12.2. The 6 Disciplinary Hearings accounted for 5 separate incidents compared to 2 incidents in the same time last academic year.	
12.3. It was noted that students at the College were not demonstrating low social skills and that Capel was good at supporting students to establish professional behaviours.	
13. Student Complaints Report (Information)	
13.1. There had been 3 resolved complaints and no pending complaints.	
13.2. Autistic student support was being reinforced during the on boarding of students and the induction of new teachers.	
14. AOB	
14.1. None.	

Capel Manor College

15. Date of next meeting	
15.1. The next Academic Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 21 June, 2022 at 1000.	

APPROVED MINUTES			
CHAIR:	Heather Barrett-Mold	**DATE:**	21 June 2022
APPROVAL:	**Remote confirmation:** Approved. **Or signed:**		