

**CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE**  
**ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**  
**PART I**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2016**

Governors: James Wisdom (Chair)  
Heather Barrett-Mold  
John Bennett  
Joy Hillyer  
Tony Leach  
Stephen Dowbiggin OBE (Principal)

In attendance: Malcolm Goodwin, Deputy Principal  
Joanne Coffey, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Damien Fallon, Director of Finance  
Paul Goddard - (Scrutton Bland)  
Mechelle Hemley-Francis – Student Governor  
Simon O'Hear, Director of Human Resources  
Richard Prowse, Assistant Principal Facilities, Health and Safety

Observing: Sir William Stubbs

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence was received from Mechelle Hemley-Francis.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations raised in relation to this meeting.

**3. MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JUNE 2016**

RECEIVED: Paper 3 – Minutes of the Academic Committee held on 30 June 2016, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. Full details reflecting all the opinions expressed regarding the implications of removing the word 'Quality' from the title of the committee had not been recorded.
- ii. A view that the quality role and responsibilities (which were cross college and not restricted to academic matters) of the committee were not adequately reflected in the current title
- iii. that the Strategy Committee had expressed a view that it was the Terms of reference that was important and the new title would help emphasise the importance of the college's core activities
- iv. The minutes will be amended to reflect this change *(N.B. When checked it was found that the minute did note this discussion. Where confusion arose was whether the change in name had been agreed or whether it had been referred for further discussion).*

## **RESOLVED:**

- i. to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 June 2016, with this amendment, as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

## **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 30 JUNE 2016**

There were no matters arising.

## **5. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

RECEIVED: Paper 5 – Review of the Clerk, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. The Terms of Reference had been amended to reflect the new title of Academic Committee.

### **RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY that:**

- i. the Terms of Reference be adopted with the amendment to the title of the committee.**

## **6. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2016**

RECEIVED: Paper 6 – Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 2 November 2016, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The FdSc Urban Greenspace Management course, which is being offered from September 2017, is more likely to be supported by employers wishing to develop their staff and, therefore, may recruit better on a part-time delivery route (Page 3)
- ii. There has been substantial early interest from employers,
- iii. The long lead in time to recruiting to this exciting programme may reflect the need for the costs to be included in next year's local authority budgets
- iv. the use of the term 'benchmark' is potentially misleading or erroneous as the comparative figures are National Averages. It is also potentially limiting as the college aspires to be better than average and College targets are set so that all staff aim for Outstanding levels of achievement
- v. achieving the National average needs to be seen as a stage on the journey to excellence (not a destination)
- vi. that the performance of the academic board during in 2015-16 reflected great care and pertinence and that this was appreciated and valued by the Governors (Page 4).

## **7. LANDEX LETTERS**

RECEIVED: Paper 7 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The Landex review in 2015-16, reflecting on 2014-15, took a more inspection-style approach which led to more critical tone and language being used, prompting self-examination and much ensuing re-analysis correspondence
- ii. Aggregation of data clouded the picture, where high achievements were cancelled out by curriculum changes that had lowered results in other areas
- iii. The aggregated data does not reflect the distance travelled as it assumes a common starting point for 'the average' student. In Capel Manor College's case, where only 26% start their course with a Grade A\*-C in English or Maths compared to the national average of 59% and a London average of 60% such 'benchmarking' is not likely to be representative. It is good to see the AOC is helping to focus on this area, as the College has felt for some time that the use of aggregated data can be misleading.
- iv. Attracting the higher achieving students is difficult as the college has to compete with land based colleges with residential facilities who can offer bursaries as an incentive to recruitment
- v. The College's marketing strategy to attract a higher academic level of students is ongoing with presence at external events and the acquisition of more resources to the College's Open Day this year
- vi. the value of the critical friend process and suggested the College could, in the future, be a critical friend to other institutions
- vii. The Letters do not reflect a fundamental shift in how Landex operates and overall this has been a useful exercise with improved relationships now between the College and Landex
- viii. The need for the Chair of Governors to now respond on behalf of the Governing Body.

## **8. OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE 2015-16**

RECEIVED: Paper 8 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The College's overall achievement is above the national average but the college has set targets which are challenging and aspires to be outstanding. The college is also introducing SMART retargets and seeking to ensure current outstanding performance is sustained
- ii. Special measures for low performing courses which will improve performance and ensure students are not disadvantaged. The College have identified and prioritised courses where improvements would have the maximum benefit to students and to the College and are focusing on improving these and carefully monitoring their performance
- iii. Governors expressed the need to ensure focus is not deflected by these singular focal points and that a wider view should be taken when assessing curriculum improvements
- iv. Pre-emptive systems are in place to identify key changes that will have far reaching impact. The College used predictive grades last year to identify any potential challenges and Heads of School have refined this process this
- v. Progression is one key factor to the academic success of the College including adequately preparing students for higher level study and focussing on higher/stretching achievement rates.

## **9. LEARNER SATISFACTION EXIT SURVEY 2015-16**

RECEIVED: Paper 9 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The exit survey reflects feedback for a full academic year. The high return rate, compared to the last 4 years, adds credibility to learner satisfaction being voiced
- ii. A very slight depression was found in the results for 'overall satisfaction' compared to last year and this was corroborated by the combined year-on-year increase in 'areas for improvement' and the decrease in the number of clear 'strengths'. However, overall the results are very good
- iii. Serious consideration is being given to any areas which has arisen again this year from last year as the College's failure to adequately resolve these issues could reflect on the College's capacity to improve and its reputation with students
- iv. The survey feeds into the SAR system, which Heads of Schools use for academic analyses, and headlines were aligned to facilitate this
- v. ensuring use of systems in place, such as the Course Manager's Handbook, will improve learner satisfaction
- vi. Focus groups are formed to promptly and thoroughly deal with any serious matters.

## **10. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2015-16 – FINAL UPDATE**

RECEIVED: Paper 10 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. As '2015-16' refer to the academic year from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July, This was requested to be clarified in the document or amended to match the Terms of Reference
- ii. The QIP has been broken down into component actions and will need frequent reviewing. The action list will be reviewed for the next Academic Committee meeting
- iii. Two specific actions were not achieved and these were risk assessed to estimate their impact. As this was deemed very low, it was decided not to carry outstanding steps forward
- iv. Actions identified are difficult to test against impact at this early stage but the positive trends in performance suggests the College is on the right path.
- v. A discussion arose around documenting more detailed actions to avoid any risks of negative impact on learners, particularly in terms of progression to jobs.

### **RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY that:**

- i. they receive the final update of the QIP 2015-16 (as in Appendix I);**
- ii. the risk assessment of the two outstanding actions are received and these actions are not carried forward.**

## **11.SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2015-16**

RECEIVED: Paper 11 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. An updated centrally produced matrix, to align with OFSTED framework, has sped up the production process. The grading is now based on a triangulated perspective
- ii. The addition of the 'What the Students Say' and 'What Employers Say' sections is of upmost importance in bringing the learning experience into commercial context (Appendix I, Page 10)
- iii. The SAR and QIP processes are working well and have been complimented by the internal auditors and the FE Commissioners
- iv. The overall assessment of 16-18 performance is 0.3% above the national average for land based colleges
- v. The College's overall self-assessment grade is Good with improvements expected from future strengthening from the QIP and SAR processes
- vi. Early identification of emerging issues for each School have further strengthened the process moving forwards
- vii. Horticulture and Landscaping, which rose from Good to Outstanding in 2014-15, has been maintained at this grade for a further year (demonstrating a successful outcome) although this was debated as the results for 16-18 Apprentices were disappointing
- viii. Floristry and Balloon Artistry is a difficult sector to upgrade due to the market limitations of the career changers' sector. Volume has fallen but the College is putting in place bespoke parameters to re-establish vibrancy in this specialist sector
- ix. Arboriculture has shown some disappointing results in overall performance of the School and in particular English and maths and the Outdoor Adventure course. New management and robust plans are in place and the School should return to be at least 'Good' next year
- x. Animal Management is expected to achieve Outstanding within the next two years.

**RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY that:**

- i. the Self-Assessment Report 2015-16 is accepted;**
- ii. the overall grade of Good is accepted for the College;**
- iii. individual grades for each School are accepted;**
- iv. the College continues to further validate the SAR through Landex Peer Review.**

## **12.QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016-17**

RECEIVED: Paper 12 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. The last column has been amended to include a Final Impact Statement to ascertain how effective actions have been for future target setting
- ii. Governor's challenged the 'smartness' of some of the targets and noted the need to careful attention to the language used and the need for absolute attention to detail
- iii. Assessing impact is both advantageous to students and appropriate for any future OFSTED analyses.
- iv. The College will look to improve the targets and descriptions in the QIP

**RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNING BODY that:**

- i. They accept and adopt the Quality Improvement Plan.**

### **13.HIGHER EDUCATION 2016-17**

RECEIVED: Paper 13 – Report of the Deputy Principal, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The College is now providing two Foundation Degrees (FdSc) in Animal Management and Garden Design (in partnership with the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cirencester) and a City and Guilds (C&G) Level 4 in Floristry
- ii. Close monitoring of the student experience and achievements are essential in this first year
- iii. Processes are ongoing including:
  - a. specific College Partnership and School Board meetings;
  - b. early assessment of likes and dislikes to ensure the programme is on the right path;
  - c. a checklist with the RAU to ensure their documentation is in process
- iv. As these courses are resource intensive it is imperative to ensure ample student recruitment and retention to establish a scale of economy going forward.
- v. As the volume of Higher Education is smaller than in Further Education, staff numbers and deployment are being more closely monitored and managed against overall resource needs
- vi. Further interest in the Animal Management course has been very high and early feedback from students is very encouraging.

### **14.SAFEGUARDING POLICY ANNUAL REVIEW**

RECEIVED: Paper 14 – Report of the Director of Human Resources, for decision.

NOTED:

- i. Documentation compliance is essential in adhering to the Safeguarding Policy
- ii. The College carries out Safeguarding pre-employment checks, induction and e-learning for existing staff
- iii. The policies have been substantially improved to be clear, concise and in line with current legislation
- iv. Amalgamating adults and children into a single policy has not created any difficulties as the framework is broad but clear on what is deemed inappropriate
- v. The lanyard system has been successful in providing visual clarity of visitors to the College.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. to adopt the Safeguarding Policy.**

## **15.SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-16:**

RECEIVED: Paper 15 – Report of the Director of Human Resources, for information.

NOTED:

- i. The report summarises the range of Safeguarding activity during the 2015-16 academic year.
- ii. A general discussion seeking some clarification

**RESOLVED:**

- i. to receive and note the Report.**

## **16.ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

**17.DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 1 March 2016 at 1.30pm.**