

Bilborough College

Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Monday, 21st March 2011 at 5.00pm

Present: Mrs Eileen Hartley – Chair
 Mr Christopher Bradford – Principal
 Mr Geoff Gration
 Mrs Jane McGregor
 Mrs Wendy Smith
 Mr Costas Poutziouris
 Mr Michael Jackson
 Mr Tony Horsewill
 Mr Tyehimba Nosakhere (Item 6 onwards)
 Miss Aiesha Chaudhery

In Attendance: Mrs Susan Bolton – Clerk to the Corporation
 Mrs Dorothy Mountford – Deputy Principal
 Mr Fred Ward – Assistant Principal, Curriculum Planning and Performance
 Miss Reyhanna England – Student President
 Mr Aaron Reilly - Student President

There was a target finish time set of 7.15pm.

Minute No		Action
	BUSINESS ITEMS	
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the new Student Presidents to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Mr Nosakhere.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
4.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held of 6th December</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th December 2010 were considered for accuracy and content. Members agreed that the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting held on 6th December 2010 and the Chair signed the minutes.</p>	
5.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>It was agreed that all actions arising from the last meeting were either on the agenda separately or had been completed.</p> <p>HR Current Practice for References – The Principal reported that when the College was asked for a reference regarding a candidate this included whether the candidate had been the subject of any disciplinary action. In</p>	

	<p>terms of giving a reference, the College only gave details of where police had been involved in any issue. The Principal confirmed that the EP&F Committee would look at this issue as part of the Committee's remit in terms of employment policy review.</p> <p>[Mr Nosakhere joined the meeting]</p> <p>Student Admissions & Progression Analysis – The members confirmed that they had read the information and were pleased with the data provided. The appeal procedure was queried as to whether potential candidates were aware of it. The Principal confirmed that there were entry criteria guidelines which were adhered to by the admissions staff and they would be able to clearly demonstrate that the guidelines had been applied. Members noted that the flexibility in the new criteria allowed for discretion based on each individual circumstance and that all students would display different characteristics which could allow for the sensitive approach. It was noted that the flexibility in certain circumstances was not promoted on the website, but the Vice-Principal confirmed that schools, where widening participation was targeted were aware of this.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for his updates.</p>	
6	<p>Planned Response to Reduction in Entitlement Element of YPLA Funding</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</p>	
PERFORMANCE		
7.	<p>Feedback on Student Surveys</p> <p>Mr Ward reported that the Cross College on Entry Report, completed in November had 166 responses from a cohort of 1077 all of whom were AS Level students. The Student Perception of Course, completed in late November, had approximately 750 responses from AS/A Level programmes and the IB course (both years).</p> <p>Cross College – On Entry - Members noted that 30% of the 18 questions indicated improvement in the “Good and Excellent” categories but a 55% increase in areas identified as “Poor”. There was a correlation between the results and those provided under the Student Perception of Course (SPOC) as 92% of students indicated satisfaction with subject induction sessions last year but the figure improving to 94% in the SPOC. Satisfaction with the start of year “Enrolment Days” remained at the same level as last year (99%) with 90% of replies considering this to be “Good or better”. With the changes in the Tutorial system students reported a 90% Good or better level of satisfaction compared with 85% in the previous year. Fewer students found the Student Planner to be useful than in previous years (4% considered this to be poor – the highest figure for 4 years). In terms of subject support 89% of the students found this to be Good or Better compared with 87% last year. The meeting noted that Students had expressed concern over how they were aware of the evacuation procedures with 54% indicating this to be Poor. The Principal confirmed</p>	

	<p>that that the last fire drill was held on a Wednesday morning when fewer students were in college. The tutorial programme has moved to address this concern by including evacuation procedures into the annual programme.</p> <p>SPOC – Mr Ward reported that the SPOC completed last term, indicated that there had been little improvement in relation to how induction prepared students for their individual course. In 2010 76% of students, sample size 2459 responses, found the experience to be Good or Excellent compared with 79%, from 1379 responses, in the previous year. In terms of outlining course requirements to students there was also no significant improvement to the student experience. Members noted that Teaching and Learning Management would indicate that this area of focus was improving with 84% of the students indicating that aims and objects at the start of the lesson are Good or better compared against 79% in 2009 and 45% in 2008. There is no significant improvement in the perceived management of the subjects or in the provision of high quality lessons by the students. Mr Ward commented on student target setting, with 65% of students finding this Good or better compared with 58% in the previous year. The students who had found the experience to be Poor reduced from 14% to 9% in the same period. For the first time the college had enquired about the suitability of teaching and learning styles in terms of Equality and Diversity and it was noted by the Committee that 90% of the students reported this to be Good or better with an additional 9% identifying this area as satisfactory. In terms of overall satisfaction 77% of students indicated this to be Good or better and 96% were satisfied or better compared with 86% Good or better in 2009 (96% satisfied or more) and 48% Good or better in 2008 (96% satisfied or more).</p> <p>The meeting noted that although it was planned for the surveys to be completed on computers in tutor time, this may have not been the case for every tutor group and this would be enforced for future surveys. The student members reported that they were unaware how important the surveys were. After discussions at the meeting they felt that more information should be given to students so that they understood that actually the data was used constructively to benefit the students and what actions arose from the data collection.</p> <p>Mr Ward explained in more detail the breakdown of results and that although the breakdown by Faculty was given in the report, data in relation to each subject was available which was more meaningful for staff. Members asked whether there was a correlation between the survey results, grades and retention. Mr Ward agreed to supply an example for the next meeting for the Committee to review.</p> <p>The report was accepted.</p>	<p>Mr Ward</p> <p>Mr Ward</p>
	QUALITY	
8.	<p>Progress Review – Quality Improvement Plan 2010/11</p> <p>Mr Ward reported to the meeting that the January module results represented a tangible indication of the student attainment in-year giving an impression of the impact of quality improvement measures. He further commented on the module results received in March, relating to the</p>	

	<p>January examinations, which indicated overall levels of improvement for achievement at both AS and A Levels. This was noted to be the highest over the past 3 years. The higher grade figures provided, showed a slightly mixed picture with AS Level having the best performance over 3 years improving by 1.0% against last year whilst A Level performance showed a 3.1% decline on the previous year. Mr Ward highlighted the subjects that had demonstrated improvement in the pass rates at both AS and A2 level, those that just showed improvement at AS or A2 and finally those which showed a decline in both AS & A2.</p> <p>Members confirmed that the data was meaningful although they noted not to compare the data with final results but those at the same last year. The Principal confirmed that where there were any concerns that these were being addressed and also where significantly positive results had been achieved, these students had been written to.</p> <p>Mr Ward confirmed that there were still some concerns over particular subject areas which were under review and also the quality of marking. In this respect he confirmed that areas such as Photography were still not happy with the moderations.</p> <p>The report was accepted.</p>	
	EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	
9.	<p>Single Equality Scheme</p> <p>The report in relation to module results by gender and ethnic origin were noted by the Committee. The Vice-Principal gave an update on the Single Equality Scheme and actions following questions posed at a recent staff INSET day. The Vice-Principal confirmed that more details on 'annotated group dynamics' would be given at the next meeting. She then proceeded to give a presentation on the events that had been carried out by the College in relation to the promotion of equality and diversity and members congratulated the team on such an impressive array of events.</p> <p>The Vice-Principal drew member's attention to the position statement on The Faith Dimension and asked for any comments on this to be directed to her following the meeting.</p> <p>The report was accepted.</p>	<p>Deputy Principal</p> <p>ALL</p>
	STRATEGY	
10.	<p>Strategic Plan Monitoring</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that although there were seven aims and therefore seven priorities for the strategic plan, it was proposed to look at all these in May, but just four at this meeting.</p> <p>The Members confirmed that they had read the report and questions were asked.</p> <p>The significance of Solihull College was explained by the Principal, as members noted they were an outstanding college who had a new tutorial system, whereby Support staff delivered this programme rather than</p>	

	<p>teaching staff. The college senior management team were waiting to find out the impact of this initiative. Members noted that Solihull College also had an IT solution which had a close tracking system, which Bilborough staff were looking into.</p> <p>Priority 2. - With regards to the current numbers of applications, Members noted these were comparable with last year and based on formula would convert into the right number of offers. In respect of start and end of term date changes, the Principal confirmed that currently this had been bought forward by two days. The number of International Student applications of 30, before a visit had taken place by the agent was seen as very positive.</p> <p>Priority 3. - The Principal reported that the College still had an Academic Board who met each term and formalised decisions regarding the curriculum offer. The Principal was asked to circulate the Wolf Report to all Governors.</p> <p>Priority 4. - Mr Ward confirmed that the 'flames' project would see 110 primary school children take part in sport activities at the college.</p> <p>The report was accepted.</p>	Principal
GOVERNANCE ITEMS		
11.	<p>Self-Review of meeting</p> <p>Members congratulated Mrs Hartley on her first meeting as Chair of the Committee. Thanks were given to Mr Ward and Mrs Mountford on the work and quality of the reports given at the meeting.</p>	
12.	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 16th May 2011 at 5.00 p.m. The Clerk reminded the members that the last Standards Committee of the academic year would be held on Monday 4th July.</p>	
13.	<p>Confidentiality of Business</p> <p>Item 6 in relation to YPLA Funding was deemed confidential. It was agreed that the item would remain confidential until such time that staff had been notified of the actions proposed.</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Chair

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION

6	<p>Planned Response to Reduction in Entitlement Element of YPLA Funding</p> <p>The Principal outlined the possibility that the College would receive £700k less funding from the YPLA phased over the next 3 years but for delivering to the same number of students. Members noted that the fact that funding was based on lagged learner numbers would be of advantage to the College because of the slight over-recruitment this year.</p> <p>The Principal highlighted several areas that had been identified by the Senior Management team that would need to be addressed to ensure a positive impact to the reductions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staffing would need to be looked at. Support Staff Profile was currently under review and this would need to have an emphasis on contributing to efficiencies. 2. Teaching staff currently contracted for 24 hours per week which included 20 hours teaching (10 ½ blocks) would need to be increased to 22 hours of teaching for next year. Members noted that tutoring would remain the same, although different ways of delivering this were being explored. The Principal confirmed that this was to be consulted upon with staff and unions. 3. Timetable would remain the same for next year. 4. The IB was in its second year and although expensive to run, the course was very distinctive. The Principal confirmed that it would still run in 2011/12 although the viability would be looked at for subsequent years, following the first set of results in the summer. 5. When International Students were first introduced to the College it was agreed that they should represent no more than 5% of the student population. Due to the additional income and diversity contributions, it was intended to increase numbers. 6. The ALS allocation was unknown for next year, but it was indicated that some economies may have to be made here and to the enrichment programme. 7. Savings would be made from reductions in maintenance, staff development and other areas which could be explored. 8. A review of fourth block proposals. <p>The floor was opened up for questions and the Principal clarified certain points.</p> <p>In respect of the extra teaching requirement, it was noted that staff would need to be more flexible in their approach and that 4 hours would still be dedicated to each subject per week. The Principal reported that he had indicated to staff previously that it was intended that no compulsory redundancies would be made although staff that left through retirement or moving on, would not necessarily be replaced.</p> <p>In terms of the IB, Mr Ward confirmed that although the IB was not aimed at high flyers, the course was not for those that found A levels hard as although results were showing an average of 6.4, those students on the IB were getting higher scores than if they had taken A Levels.</p>
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	<p>In respect of the ALS reduction, the Principal confirmed it would see the College looking at different ways of delivery, so as to make the best possible use of funds.</p> <p>Regarding the Sports Hall, members noted that the College was exploring different ways that the contract may be run so as to avoid charges or potentially making a contribution.</p> <p>Finally, in respect of International Students, the Principal confirmed that following the new entry and progression criteria and a potential gradual reduction in funded students because of demographic downturn, the growth in the International Students may be a way of sustaining overall numbers .</p> <p>The report was accepted.</p>	
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