



TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE CORPORATION



Employment and Business Policy Committee

Minutes of the Employment and Business Policy Committee held at Truro College, College Road, Truro on Monday 10 February 2020.

Present: Mrs K Ashworth, Mrs L Batchelor, Mr K Conchie, Mr R Crossland (Chair) and Mr D Walrond

Also Present: Mrs L Bradley (Director of Quality), Ms J Cashmore (Director of Operations), Mr S Cryer (Director of Finance), Mr T James (Personnel Officer), Mrs C Mewton (Director of Studies), Mrs E Seward-Adams (Head of Student Services – for item 20/01), Mr M Tucker (Director of Penwith College) and Mrs A Winter (Clerk to the Corporation)

Apologies: Ms D Skinnard
Also, Mr A Stittle (Director of Partnerships)

Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
20/01	<p>Briefing on Gatsby Benchmarks</p> <p>The Head of Student Services provided a briefing on the new careers framework and eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The framework had been developed following a review of careers education by the Gatsby Foundation, commissioned by the Government. Statutory guidance was published in February 2018 and schools and colleges were expected to achieve the following benchmarks by the end of 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stable careers programme • learning from careers and labour market information • addressing the needs of each student • linking the curriculum to careers • encounters with employers • experiences of workplace • encounters with further and higher education • personal guidance. <p>The Head of Student Services explained the implementation of the benchmarks and the progress made by the College. Whilst much of the good practice was already in place, a number of areas for further work had been identified.</p> <p>Governors noted that a new, full-time Careers Advisor would be in post from February 2020 to take forward the careers strategy. The College was hosting an apprenticeship and employment fair in the summer term, with more than sixty employers participating. Additional activities were being arranged to increase parental engagement, recognise and develop workplace skills gained through part time jobs and to increase encounters with employers as well as work placements.</p>	

	<p>During discussion the Committee expressed support for the new framework and emphasised the value of workplace experience to develop generic, transferable skills such as team working. Governors also explored the impact of Brexit on the local employment market.</p> <p>Governors asked about progress towards the eight benchmarks and noted the range of careers advice, information, education and guidance that was already in place. The Committee was assured that the College was well on track to be fully compliant with the Gatsby benchmarks by the end of the year.</p>	
20/02	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 were APPROVED and signed as a correct record.</p>	
20/03	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>03.01 Nursing Apprenticeships (Minute 19/31.02)</p> <p>The Committee noted that the College was working closely with the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust on the validation process for the new Nursing degree apprenticeship. A visit from the University of Greenwich (the awarding body) was expected shortly.</p> <p>03.02 Institute of Technology (Minute 19/36)</p> <p>The Committee noted that details for the Valency building were being finalised with the contractor, MIDAS, for work to begin on site at the end of February. The Project Manager was monitoring the project closely to ensure the work remained on schedule.</p>	
20/04	<p>Staff Absence Data and Analysis for 2019</p> <p>The Committee received staff absence data for 2019 which indicated a continuing low overall absence rate of 2.54% (a slight increase on the 2018 rate of 2.24%). This compared favourably to national benchmarks for colleges in the south west and other sectors, suggesting a resilient, committed workforce. Governors noted that the average number of days lost per employee was 4.92 and the number of multiple absences of five or more occasions during the year had increased slightly.</p> <p>A fall in the number of short term absences (1-3 days) was likely to be linked to intervention, in line with the absence management policy. An extensive programme of Health, Wellbeing and Sport (HWS) activities, promotion of a healthy lifestyle as well as support from occupational health, counselling and phased returns to work were also thought to be having a positive impact.</p> <p>During discussion the reasons for the higher absence rates in the Foundation Studies department, the specific factors affecting this staff team as well as the measures to monitor and improve attendance rates were explained.</p> <p>Governors NOTED that absence rates overall remained low, particularly in the context of increasing demands and pressures.</p>	

<p>20/05</p>	<p>Staff Workforce Analysis 2019</p> <p>The Committee considered data on staff turnover, age profile and a breakdown of full and part time staff numbers.</p> <p>The College's turnover rate for full time staff had risen slightly to 13.9% (from 11.6% in 2018) although the rate for all staff (including part-time) had fallen this year and was below the AoC average of 18.2%. The voluntary redundancy and compulsory redundancy schemes in 2019 were also reflected in the data.</p> <p>Members discussed the key reasons for leaving and noted that in many cases this was due to the end of a fixed term contract (e.g. Learning Support Assistants employed to support a specific learner, summer estates staff, apprentices, maternity cover and EU- funded projects).</p> <p>The Committee discussed the higher turnover rates amongst LSAs and recognised that as well as short contracts, the nature of the work and low pay rates were also factors potentially contributing to turnover.</p> <p>Governors NOTED that staff pay was a concern more widely in the FE sector and attracting new staff to some curriculum areas, particularly occupational and vocational teaching roles was difficult. Future increases to the national living wage would reduce pay differentiation across the workforce and potentially increase recruitment challenges.</p>	
<p>20/06</p>	<p>Student Progression and Destinations 2018/19</p> <p>The Committee considered a report on the 2471 leavers in 2019 and Governors were pleased to note that 81% had achieved the DfE measure of a 'sustained' destination in education, employment or further training, against a national average rate of 77%.</p> <p>1176 (48%) of leavers had progressed into HE with 303 starting courses at Russell Group universities. 87% had successfully gained places at their first choice institution and 16 students had accepted places at Oxford/Cambridge. As previously, a large proportion of students had chosen institutions within the South West (particularly, the University of the West of England, Plymouth University, Truro and Penwith College, Exeter, Falmouth and Cardiff universities). 8% of leavers had deferred entry to take a gap year before university.</p> <p>Around 10% of leavers had progressed into full time employment and 4% into part time employment.</p> <p>A further 361 students had successfully completed an apprenticeship programme and progressed into paid employment, self-employment, voluntary work, further or higher education. Overall, the 'sustained' destination rate for all apprentices leaving in 2019 matched the national rate of 89%.</p> <p>Governors asked about the future of the European Social Fund and noted that this source of funding would continue for another three years, after which the future was uncertain. ESF funding had made a significant impact on supporting adults into work and the College would be working hard to ensure the relationships developed with employers through ESF projects would be maintained.</p>	

	<p>In response to questions, governors noted that a large proportion of students had received unconditional university offers again this year which were often detrimental to their motivation.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the data and acknowledged that excellent outcomes and successful progression had been achieved by a very large number of learners.</p>	
20/07	<p>Student Employability Update</p> <p>The Director of Penwith College provided an update on employability activities and developments which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over 1000 work placements completed in 2018/19 • an additional 300, substantial, 45-day work placements in 2018/19 • the aim to increase the number of placements by 20% this year • the promotion of employability through the Job Shop and expansion of a service to both the Truro and Penwith campuses • an increase in work-related skills within Level 2 programmes • EU funding secured to increase careers guidance staffing and promote apprenticeship opportunities • approval of a new Level 4/5 HNC in Mechanical Engineering • achievement of the year 1 IoT targets • targeted support for students considering leaving College <p>Governors asked how travel difficulties for students to reach their work placements were being overcome and noted the ways in which the College was assisting individual trainees as well as working with the bus company and Council and also lobbying nationally on rurality and transport issues. Travel to work placements remained a key concern.</p> <p>The Committee SUPPORTED the new developments and initiatives to promote employability.</p>	
20/08	<p>Analysis of Apprenticeship Success Rates for 2018/19</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Overall Achievement Rates and Timely Achievement Rates for 2018/19 compared to the previous 2 years and national benchmarks. The data showed a continuing, positive trend and a good overall achievement rate of 81%, much higher than the national average of 67%. The timely achievement rate of 74% was also significantly above the national rate of 59%.</p> <p>At this mid-year stage, the data indicated that improvements would be maintained in 2019/20 however, the data was likely to be less favourable due to the move from Frameworks to Standards and new emphasis on end point assessments.</p> <p>In response to questions about sector areas that had performed less well, the Director of Quality explained specific issues and how these had been addressed. The proportion of provision below minimum standards was 15% well below the threshold of 40%. The Director also highlighted the large number of assessment appeals submitted nationally, many of which had been successful, and the rigorous evaluation and selection of external assessment organisations by the College.</p>	

20/09	<p>Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement</p> <p>The Committee noted that no issues or concerns had been identified with regard to slavery or human trafficking in the College's supply chain. Wherever possible the College used the Crescent Purchasing Consortium for FE to find approved suppliers. The current approach remained appropriate and no changes to the Statement were proposed.</p>	
20/10	<p>Review of Personnel Policies</p> <p>The Personnel Officer reported that all policies were kept under review and that no changes were currently required.</p> <p>A review of the College's Application for Employment Form and change to the layout would enable the first page containing personal details to be detached for shortlisting purposes to reduce potential bias. Also, a request for candidates to provide reasons for leaving previous roles and a cross reference to the Privacy Statement would be added.</p> <p>The Committee ENDORSED the proposed revisions.</p>	
20/11	<p>College Social Committee</p> <p>The Director of Studies reported on recent activities including a Christmas social event, an annual bowling tournament with fifteen teams from across the College taking part and the plans for additional events this term. The Committee was continuing to promote opportunities for staff throughout the College to socialise together.</p>	
20/12	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>12.01 T Levels</p> <p>The CEO of Cornwall Chamber of Commerce welcomed the potential opportunities offered by new T Levels and highlighted the importance and challenges of informing SMEs about the new qualifications.</p> <p>The College recognised its crucial role in raising awareness of T Levels and was already working with businesses to disseminate information.</p>	
20/13	<p>Dates of Meetings in 2020/21</p> <p>Dates of meetings in 2020/21 were confirmed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 21 September 2020 • Monday 8 February 2021 • Monday 14 June 2021. 	ALL to note
20/14	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The Committee would meet at 5.00 pm on Monday 8 June 2020.</p>	ALL to note