## MEETING OF THE HE COMMITTEE

**TIME/DATE 9.00am 11th March 2021**

**VENUE Remote by Microsoft Teams due to the Coronavirus pandemic**

**Present**

**Name**

Dr. D Balsamo (Chair)

Mrs. E. Brocklehurst

***Mr. B. Bennett-Stanley***

***Mr. J. Heritage***

Mr. N Shore

**In attendance:**

Mr. M. Doyle, Deputy Principal

Mrs. S. Dickinson, HE Quality Manager

Mrs. L Lloyd-Williams Governance Director

Mrs. J Hayes \_ Director of Adult & HE provision

Mrs. Callaghan Director for Marketing, Commercial & Customer Relations

***Italics denotes absence* MINUTES**

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|  | **The meeting opened at 9 .00am and was quorate with at least 3 Governors present the majority of whom were external** |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that the Chair of the committee works for a partner university, Chester University. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Heritage who was absent due to work commitments and from Mr Bennett-Stanley. |
|  | **NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS**  There was no urgent business. |
|  | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON THE 21st October 2020 FOR APPROVAL**  The minutes of the meeting on the 21st October were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and authorised for signature by the Committee Chair. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  The Director of Adult & HE gave a verbal update on the timing of withdrawals. She explained that the reasons for withdrawals had been examined and whether there were any significant differences between subgroups. The committee were advised that half of withdrawals had occurred in the first lockdown and the next largest amount had occurred in the first term. The Director advised that she was looking at the IAG and the enrolment process. It was noted that there were no significant differences in terms of protected characteristics. Reasons were outlined to the committee with Governors being informed that there were several unknown reasons and so the College were introducing measures to address this. |
|  | **SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT**  Termly report (new HE incidents only)  The Governance Director advised there had been no safeguarding or prevent incidents involving HE students since the last report to the committee in October. |
|  | **HE PROVISION** – Quality Report  The Director of Adult & HE spoke to the report and it was noted that retention and overall achievement rates, 85.6% and 78% respectively would be higher than in 2019-20 (73.2% and 67.9%). Attendance and engagement levels were noted to be in line with the college target of 90%. The committee were advised that although retention rates were higher there are some areas under benchmark from last year. Attendance was noted to be difficult to compare to previous years because of the pandemic.  Governors asked whether historically there was a drop off in the last term. The committee were advised there was a large drop of last year in the last term but this was due to the pandemic. Governors asked about the variation between programmes and the reasons for this. Regarding criminal justice the Director advised this had been discussed with programme leaders and there was no pattern as to the reason for this. Governors questioned whether there was a misunderstanding by students of what the course entailed.  The committee were taken through the adaptations that had been made in relation to courses because of Covid particularly with practical assignments. The committee noted that it was anticipated that there would be further changes because of Covid. The committee were also advised of the arrangements for the return to campus of HE students.  In relation to the National Student Survey, response rates were noted to be higher than at the same point last year but were still below the 80% target. All courses had successfully taken part in staff student liaison meetings (SSLMs) and whilst one emerging theme was that students had felt that the remote provision had been an area of strength, they had suggested areas for investment including expanding online resources and HE specific study spaces which would be reviewed during business planning.  In relation to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the results from observation showed 27% of criteria were awarded best practice, 64% effective practice and only 8% of criteria identified as areas for development. It was confirmed to the committee that action was being taken with staff receiving CPD. Governors asked about the return of HE students and whether there would be remote learning built into the courses in the future. The Director advised this was being looked at as part of the current business planning process. Governors also asked how staff felt about online delivery and were advised that this was very individual and dependent to some extent upon staff’s comfortableness with technology. The Director advised that there was a desire that there should be some continuing flexibility in learning.  The committee commended the report. |
|  | **SHAPING FUTURES**  The HE Committee were advised that it was likely that there would be an underspend of this project funding primarily because delivery of funding had been interrupted by the lockdown. The Director of Marketing updated the committee on activity that was being taken.  **9.35 the Director of Marketing left the meeting.** |
|  | **ACCESS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION PLAN**  The Director of Adult & HE spoke to the report and advised that the financial return had been made and it was noted that the 2020-2025 investment plan remained the same with minor adjustment expected to fees, to support the additional capital cost of Graphic Design and Game Art courses, which would be submitted to the OfS for review. All APP targets had identified actions and teams were noted to be working together to strengthen qualitative reporting against targets.  The committee were advised that BAME figures were not very good at the moment and received assurance that all marketing activities were BAME inclusive. The Director advised the College was looking at how it can engage with community groups. The Deputy Principal advised that there was a very small number of individuals from a BAME background which needed to be born in mind for context.  The Director advised that there is expected to be a significant impact due to COVID on how funds are spent to meet APP targets. The OfS had discussed this with providers which has enabled the college to target funds as required. The committee were advised of the changes that had been made. This had included the Student Opportunity Fund (SOF) which had replaced previous iterations of the hardship fund to ensure wider access and simplified monitoring and accounting. All applications to date to the SOF have resulted in awards, totaling £3528.There had also been changes to the student enhancement gift.  The Deputy Principal in summary added that the College had been developing the action plan and were able to track more closely both the actions and the impact of these. |
|  | **HE COMPLIANCE**  OfS compliance- ongoing conditions of registration action plan **Summary update report**  The HE Quality Manager spoke to her report which was a summary of compliance activity since the last report to the Committee. The committee were taken through the key updates of activity.  **9.59 Mr Shore left the meeting and it became inquorate.**  The Quality Manager was thanked for her comprehensive report and the assurance to the committee. |
|  | **DESTINATIONS**  The Quality Manager spoke on the paper which contained details of the Graduate Outcomes Survey which is a statistical survey of graduates from higher education courses in the UK and is undertaken 5 months after graduation. The key comparators for the College’s available published data with the national figures were as follows:   * There were 120 graduates who responded to the Graduate Outcomes 2017/18 survey from the target population of 330, a rate of 36.4%, this is lower than the national rate of 47%. * 83.3% (110/120) of our graduates were in employment or unpaid work. This is 2.3 percentage points above the national rate. * 12.5% of the College’s graduates were engaged in further study 15 months after completing their course compared with the national figure of 18%. * For both of the reportable courses, BA (Hons) Graphic Design and BA (Hons) Fine Art Painting, 90% of graduates working in the UK were in high skilled occupations compared with a national figure of 76%.   The committee were also advised of the national Graduate Outcomes (Longitudinal Educational Outcomes; LEO) data which identifies average earnings in 2017/18, ten years after graduation being £31,000, compared to £23,700 three years after and £20,400 one year after. All of the reportable college course median earnings figures for 3 years and 5 years after the course were below national medians but the Quality Manager advised that it was felt there was some underreporting and that there should be caution exercised regarding its interpretation. |
| **12** | **GOVERNANCE**  Compliance with the Higher Education Code of Good Governance  The Governance Director advised that the College had adopted the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges which was therefore the governance code which it needed to demonstrate compliance against. However, as the College has HE provision a compliance check has been undertaken against the HE Code of Governance to help inform any areas of governance improvement or key non-compliance. The following were highlighted:   * Sustainability-it was explained that this was an area of increased focus for the College. It would also be an area that would be further considered by the Search and Governance Committee with impending changes to the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges. * Engagement- the committee were advised that the College is in the process of working on its social value policy and the concept of the civic university. * Effectiveness- The Governance Director advised the College was largely compliant save for the requirement for external review of the Board performance. Governors were informed that external reviews were also one of the recommendations contained in the White Paper and that the possibility of peer-to-peer review had been discussed at the recent meeting of North West Governance Professionals. The committee were informed that this matter would be directed to the Search and Governance Committee. * Inclusivity and Diversity- it was explained that non-compliance regarding Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity and the Colleges duties under the Public Equality Duty would shortly be rectified with a report and equality objectives going to the Quality and Outcomes Committee and thereafter the Board. It was noted that this was an area which the College was working on improving and was an area of increased focus in the FE sector also with impending changes to the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges.   The committee noted the report. |
| **13** | **URGENT BUSINESS**  There was no urgent business. |
| **14** | **Date of next meeting** 9.00am 24th June |
|  | **The meeting closed at 10.24** |