

The Henley College Corporation

**MINUTES of the Corporation Meeting (Strategy, Students and Curriculum)**

**held on Monday 23 February 2015 at 6:00pm**

**Members present:**

Louise Adams (LA) Vice Chair

Jayne Davis (JDav)

Stephen Forward (SF)

Keith Heron (KH)

Rick Holroyd (RH)

Sam Juthani (SJ)

Peter Le Conte (PLC)

Ian McGaw (IMG)

Tony Sanderson (TS)

Simon White (SW)

Jeni Wood (JWo)

**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from:

Jasminder Love, Nic Saunders, Mia Tritton, Marcus Woodgate.

**In attendance:**

Sue Bishop (SBis), Director of Finance

Julian Brinsford (JBri), Quality Manager

Simon Cuthbert (SCut), Deputy Principal

Beryl Richardson (BRic), Director of HR & Professional Development (HR&PD)

Robyn Vitty (RVit)

Claire Harris (CHar) Corporation Secretary

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| **Agenda item** | **Minute** | **Action by:** |
| **1.1 14/15** | **OPENING OF MEETING – 6.00 pm** |  |
|  | The meeting opened at 6:00pm. Louise Adams as Vice-Chair led the meeting. LA welcomed Claire Harris, Corporation Secretary. |  |
| **1.2 14/15** | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from: Jasminder Love, Nic Saunders, Mia Tritton and Marcus Woodgate. |  |
| ***1.3 14/15*** | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** |  |
|  | No interests were declared. |  |
| ***1.4* 14/15** | **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** |  |
| **14/15** | **Minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2014** |  |
|  | Members agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting of 19th May 2014 and the minutes were signed by the Vice-Chair. |  |
| ***1.5* 14/15** | **MATTERS ARISING**  1.5 (a) Strategic Overview - circulated and noted.  1.5(b) Vision and Mission Document – circulated and noted.  Previous Minutes:  Page 2: The previous Principal had agreed to find out what arrangements are in place at other colleges, with regard to vetting student accommodation. This has been referred to Health and Safety Committee.  The previous Principal visited Itchen College to learn how the College deals with student mental health problems. The feedback from this visit to be found and forwarded to committee.  The Director of HR &PD had subsequently met with SJ and SW to discuss action points for cyberbullying and salient points had been included and adopted through the relevant committees.  Page 4: The Principal informed the meeting that detailed information on enrolment would follow later in the agenda.  Page 5: The Strategic Plan had subsequently been adopted.  Page 9: As a briefing paper from the previous Head of Student Services was still outstanding, the item will be brought forward for the new Head of Student Services’ attention.  An invitation to the Mayor and Town Councillors had been made to visit the college. JWo reported that several had attended and felt that useful contacts had been made between the College and Town Council. | **Health & Safety Committee**  **Principal**  **Head of Student Services** |
| ***1.6***  ***1.7***  ***1.8***  ***1.9***  ***1.10***    ***1.11*** | **OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE COLLEGE**   1. ‘A’ Level Reform: JDav drew attention to a table demonstrating the new linear structure of A-Levels, commencing with 13 subjects in September 2015. The remaining subjects to follow in 2016 and 2017. AS levels will exist as stand-alone qualifications ie will not contribute to the final A-Level mark. Students will be asked to start with four AS subjects. This would have several advantages, as it would continue to give pupils a breadth of subjects and also experience of sitting an external exam. LA asked if AS exams would match up with the A-Level syllabus. JDav confirmed that this would be the case, with the exception of Art. Universities seem supportive of the change and RH expressed support for the decision to continue with AS levels, as it prepares students for the large gap between GCSE and A-Levels. A hybrid timetable between modular and linear qualifications will need to be created. 2. Better inspections for all: Ofsted inspections are being reformed, which should mean shorter, more frequent inspections. JDav mentioned a college that had been graded at Level 4, due to its poor financial status, despite having a ‘Good’ grade for teaching. 3. Prevent Duty: Draft guidance has been published on preventing people from being drawn in to terrorism. It is planned to appoint an external trainer to run training for staff and students. 4. The Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) is currently leading a campaign to have VAT refunded to colleges in England. JDav commented that the College would be due a refund of around £200,000, but was unsure how successful the campaign would be. 5. A summary of the three main political parties’ education proposals was provided, with regard to the upcoming general election.   **OVERVIEW ON APPLICATIONS**  JDav presented a chart demonstrating comparative figures for the current and preceding two years. 2014 had been a “bumper” year for applications but the numbers were currently lower. The number of acceptances are currently at the same level as 2013. A discussion followed on what the contributing factors may be, including Icknield setting up its own sixth form, schools being protective of their own sixth form and perceptions of how students perform academically at the College. JDav is currently working with RV on a new marketing campaign, with the aim of increasing application numbers.  **REPORT ON SAFEGUARDING (STAFF AND STUDENTS)**  BRic spoke to her report, highlighting several points. Firstly, Kathryn Caulfield (KCau) has taken on the role of Designated Safeguarding Person.  SW has met with BRic and KCau and the first At Risk Register meeting has been held. Some students remain on the list but there are no new cases and no students this academic year have been referred to Social Services.  15 staff have now received Safeguarding Children Level 3 training, guidance sessions are being provided for all new staff and update sessions are planned for current staff.  Governor training is still be carried out with some Governors.  JWo asked how those on the At Risk list were supervised. BR explained that there is regular monitoring, interviews and referrals to other agencies such as CAMHS (mental health team). Lead tutors and KC will intervene, if issues become apparent. SW commented that in addition, there is now a College Nurse on site, three days a week. This is provided at no cost to the College by the NHS.  **REPORT ON EQUALITY & DIVERSITY(STAFF AND STUDENTS)**  BRic circulated a detailed report containing data collection from 2008 to 2014. LA began by reminding the meeting that the College had been awarded the Stage 3 Leaders in Diversity standard. This had been a huge achievement by Beryl and the team and particularly relevant as this had previously been identified as a weakness by Ofsted.  BRic then selected several aspects of the report to discuss further.  The report listed multiple comparison data on gender, ethnicity, attendance and retention, success rates, under performance and high performance and individual case studies.  SF queried the ‘Total Students’ in the tables. Bric explained that it did not reflect total numbers of students, rather total numbers of individual courses started, eg, a student doing three A-Levels would be starting three courses. It was confirmed that there are around 1800 students during the day, which generate about 5000 results; each qualification is included, plus part time and adult course.  Three areas for intervention had been identified: where male students were performing below the national benchmark, the performance gap between male and female students and retention of Indian, Pakistani, White/Black African and White/Black Caribbean students.  Staff training had been given to promote and encourage the learning of male students and BR gave examples of how teaching strategies had been adapted to suit all learners, for example boys are more visual and like to “chunk learn”, whereas girls are better at sequential and overview learning. Improvement strategies have been discussed and implemented and Indian and White/Black African students will form the basis of continued case studies.  In November 2014, the College achieved the Leaders in Diversity standard which demonstrates how the culture of the college has moved forward. Several examples of events, visits and regular meetings of student groups concerned with equality and current affairs were given. BRic is now in a position to step back and allow students to take a lead, as there are many student ambassadors, and leaders committed to promoting equality, diversity and international relations.  BRic was congratulated on the progress made in this area and for producing such a comprehensive report.  **SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2013-2014**  SCut began by drawing attention to a key to abbreviations used in the report.  *(1)Recruitment by postcode and study programme: Page 3-5*  Referring to a map and table of daytime study programmes, SCut noted that the more sparsely populated areas make it more difficult for the College to recruit from the West; if students are coming from Reading or Buckinghamshire there is no subsidy for transport and they pay up to £1000 per year. The figures have been fairly constant until 2013/14 when there was a drop in the conversion rate from application to enrolment in year one, mainly impacting vocational and basic skills students and second year A-Level students. The International Baccalaureate course and the BTEC in Music Performance had been closed and the decision not to recruit underqualified students from other schools, or to allow AS students on to A2 programmes without 2 grade D at AS had been made. TS queried why the decision not to recruit underqualified students had been made. SCut explained there was a pattern that they would continue to under-perform and the College should provide these students with appropriate qualifications, which JB concurred with.  *(2)Outcome for learners:*  Tables of information were reviewed on age of level of learners, both full time and apprenticeship. More detailed information on strengths and areas for development were also considered.  JDav commented that core progression is good. SCut explained that there are around 100 students on one-year courses (mostly BTEC First diplomas), Maths and English GCSE are available to re-sit but the College doesn’t offer a full GCSE resit programme.  SF asked if students were deterred by a lack of high grades. It was acknowledged that this was an issue for the College, though comparisons with many sixth forms is not useful due to the often selective intake.  SCut pointed out that there are lots of good vocational courses and lots of students move to these and perform very well (including achieving a high proportion of high grades) These are a very good option and need selling better, as they are the best option for many. RH agreed that it is a national problem that vocational courses are difficult to sell. JBri said it was worth noting that a previous student had come back and reported that he was achieving the highest marks in his engineering classes, having done a vocational course. SCut is expecting apprenticeship number to rise over the medium term.  Each section heading relates to specific Ofsted questions and highlights good areas, but also areas that need improvement. Broadly speaking, the value added score forA2 is not good enough. Overall AS level value added is high, but too variable between subjects. Functional skills are not as good, especially when delivered within a course team and need to be reviewed.  *(3)Student destinations 2013/2014*  A breakdown of student destinations after leaving college was given. It was worth noting that 93% of students were continuing in education, on a gap year or in gainful employment.  (4) Overall success rates  SF noted that the College is slightly below the sixth form benchmark. SCut agreed and that this was a priority to be improved on. Henley College has a mixture of students, with far more vocational courses and apprenticeships than a traditional sixth form and would be comfortably above the GFE benchmark, but the success rates for AS level and functional skills are a priority for improvement.  (5) Value Added Data  The proportion of “Value Added” is 57% on or above target. Value Added is a measure of the grade a student achieves, compared to the grade they were expected to achieve. Eg, if a student is predicted a B and achieves an A grade this is a positive, a B will be neutral and a C will be a negative.  (6) Teaching and Learning  Good areas and areas for development were highlighted. Teachers do consistently achieve high observation grades and students report that they feel well supported. The staff are caring and students feel safe. Equality in Diversity is actively promoted. However, the student questionnaires revealed that some feel the teaching is too inconsistent with more frequent homework and more individual tracking required.  LA drew attention to the statistic at the top of Page 15: A\* -B at A2 fell in 2013/14 and is below 50%, and stated that it is below all local competitors, who have published statistics, including Wallingford School which has not previously been seen as a competitor.  The percentage may be acceptable if ALPS scores were good, but currently this is not the case. It had been noted by another establishment that Henley College only publish A\*-C grades. JDav commented that the results are more comparable with similar 6th-form colleges, than with selective schools.  SCut finished by drawing attention to some key strengths of the college, including progress made to the strategy and vision, improvements being made by Governors and the good financial state the College is in.  The Self-Assessment Report was approved by RH and seconded by IMG.  **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  SCut introduced the key priorities for 2014-15.  **Outcomes for learners**  *More effective tracking of student progress* - frequent and systematic progress checks are being held and teachers are able to track homework grades, which parents will be able to view. Programme leaders have attended some effective training on homework reporting, which JDav felt they were positive about despite there being more work.  Some subjects were highlighted for more frequent observation and this seems to be having an improvement of results already.  JDav and SCut carry out a curriculum audit and courses are dropped as necessary. JDav and SCut to carry out a curriculum audit and report back in due course.    Staff are finding it easier to use and access the Pro monitor system, which improves the consistency of reporting across the college.  *Improve functional skills results* – students are mostly choosing GCSEs over functional skills. Attendance is much better compared to previous years.  *Information Advice and Guidance* (IAG) SCut commented that it is important that vocational courses are sold properly. It can be difficult to achieve realistic work experience, particularly in the Henley areas but the College is exploring various options to enhance student’s understanding and experience of work.  **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**  *Ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are consistent* – JDav has been dropping in on classes and will be extending observations to gain a wider view of what is happening in class. SCut explained that the College needs to ensure teachers are consistently improving learning.  *Ensure greater conversion of application to enrolments*  KH asked that if word of mouth is so key, how can students be persuaded to recommend the college? JDav is meeting with students next week to discuss marketing. LA felt that word of mouth through parents is also important. SJ felt that the key positive aspect for students seemed to be the range of subjects available – that was the unique selling point for them. JDav is currently working on a marketing “Did You Know?” leaflet.  *Deliver a three-year financial forecast which addresses the forecast shortfall in income for 2015/16* - In addition to increasing enrolments, there is a need to address private study and social space for students and to improve value to students and impact of tutorial. Having a personal tutor is a key part of the message college puts out. JDav is working with a Marketing apprenticeship student to carry out market research on Year 11 students.  LA thanked SCut for a good clear document and confirmed that all Governors should now be clear on the SAR process.  The Quality Improvement Plan was approved by SJ and seconded by SW. | **Principal &Vice Principal** |
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| **1.12** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
|  | PLC commented that there were no student governors present again. It was hoped that there would be better representation next year. JDav is setting up a Student Leadership Group and members may attend future meeting as an alternative to Student Union representatives.  SF asked whether the “A Team” is still in training in preparation for a possible Ofsted inspection. It was confirmed to be the case, and all Governors were encouraged to keep reading the Strategic Plan. |  |
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| **1.13.1**  **14/15** | **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
|  | 1. Corporation Meeting – Monday 23rd March 2015 2. Corporation Meeting (Provisional. Training) – Monday 30th April 2015 3. Corporation Meeting (SSC) – Thursday 21st May 2015 4. Corporation Meeting – Monday 29th June 2015 |  |
| **1.14 14/15** | **CLOSE OF MEETING**  The meeting closed at **22.10pm** |  |
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MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 23rdFebruary were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

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