

4. On the motion of Frances Russell, seconded by David Hett, it was :

Resolved:

That Mr Robert Lapraik be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Quality and Curriculum Committee for 2008-09.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The initial membership of the Committee was noted as follows:

Mr David Galloway	Dr Richard Parker
Ms Karen Gauson (Staff Representative)	Mr Roger Paterson
Mr David Hett (Ex officio)	Miss Frances Russell (Ex officio)
Dr John Jarvis	Mr Toby Salt (External)
Mr Robert Lapraik	Mr Nick Scarfield

TERMS OF REFERENCE

6. The Committee received for consideration its initial terms of reference.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 1 TO THE Minute Book copy)

7. At the suggestion of David Galloway it was:

Resolved:

That the initial Terms of Reference for the Committee be noted and that they be reviewed at the summer term meeting.

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

8. Colin Whitaker circulated notes outlining the current quality management system of the College.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 2 TO THE Minute Book copy)

9. David Galloway stated that he had asked Colin to give a presentation on the quality management system so that all members of the Committee could start from a common knowledge base. Colin outlined the main drivers behind the development of the system, the basis of the standards that had been established, the constituent elements of the quality assurance systems and culture that was being developed to support these.

10. Robert Lapraik suggested that the overall picture appeared rather complicated and questioned whether staff understood it. Karen Gauson suggested that the systems were understood and in operational terms were quite straightforward. Supporting this Colin stated that staff were not expected to have a clear understanding of the underlying elements such as the EFQM standards. These were distilled into the College's policies and procedures. With regard to the potential for confusion, Colin stated that it was an important part of his responsibilities to ensure that the processes and procedures supported rather than impeded quality. In seeking to achieve this he aimed at bringing together the common threads from the various standards adopted by external agencies with a common response. In reply to a question from David Galloway, Colin stated that the biggest improvement that could be made to the quality systems and procedures was to streamline them. He suggested that as the culture of the College developed and the standards became fully embedded the College would not need such a structured quality system and processes could be simplified. Ultimately the development of a fully effective self-evaluation process was the key to success.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

11. The Committee received for consideration the initial Annual Business Plan setting out the items that were expected to come forward at each termly meeting.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 3 to the Minute Book copy)

12. Subject to the inclusion of a review of the annual curriculum strategy and plan at a future meeting it was:

Resolved:

That the Annual Business Plan for the Quality and Curriculum Committee, as set out at APPENDIX 3, be adopted.

STUDENT SUCCESS

13. The Committee received for consideration a copy of the Learner Achievement section from the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) together with a report analysing performance in terms of 'value-added' and a report analysing the 2007-08 AS/A-Level results.

(Copies attached at APPENDICES 4-6 to the Minute Book copy)

14. Colin Whitaker stated that the extract from the SAR showed the progress the College has made over the past year but highlighted areas for improvement. Referring to the value-added analysis he stated that Ofsted was now satisfied that the Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT), developed as part of the New Measures of Success initiative, was robust in its analysis. The data was drawn from across the sector rather than being limited in the way ALIS was and he believed the results would provide a much more meaningful analysis in the future. In response to a question for David Galloway, Richard Parker indicated that the SAR action plan would set out what the College needed to do to improve success rates further. John Bates stated that SMT members would work with CTMs to drill down through the data to identify areas where action was required. Responding to a question from David Galloway, John stated that he was not happy with the value added results. Work would be undertaken with Student Tutors, CTMs and Course Leaders aimed at improving the scores. Richard and Vicki supported these comments suggesting that the value added report indicated how improvements would be sought. Vicki suggested that the focus needed to move away from simply ensuring that students achieved to ensuring that they were helped to achieve higher grades. In response to questions Karen stated that in her area of work, which was outside AS/A-levels, the focus was on ensuring students achieved their qualifications. John suggested that this confirmed the view that the College was good at getting those people who completed a programme a pass rather than ensuring that they achieved if not improved on their potential. Nick Scarfield suggested that while A-Level students understood the concepts of value added it was not something they talked about. He also suggested that more could be done to support students in raising their potential levels of achievement.

LESSON OBSERVATIONS 2007-08

15. The Committee received for information a report on the results of lessons observation for 2007-08.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 7 to the Minute Book copy)

16. John Bates stated that the quality of teaching was reviewed through planned lesson observations and informal drop-ins. Colin suggested that in last year's Ofsted Inspection the inspectors did not question the validity of the judgements of observers based on the results of the paired observations they undertook. They did question however whether the College was too trusting. He suggested that Ofsted's focus was now moving more towards the assessment of the learning experience rather than the teaching. He suggested that there was an obvious question as to why, if the overall level of teaching, as evidenced by observation grades, was so good and improving, that success rates were not improving at least at the same rate. Having

said this he suggested that outstanding teaching was not itself a guarantee of outstanding success as many other factors needed to be taken into account. In response to a question from David Galloway, Karen stated that for teachers lesson observations could be stressful as a lot of emphasis was placed upon them. She suggested that it was important to remember they were only a snapshot. She also suggested the ARA meetings provided an opportunity to verify the results of observations against student performance.

17. Frances questioned how it was possible to ensure that good or outstanding teaching evidenced in lesson observations was produced across the year. John suggested that drop-ins provided the main vehicle for verifying this. Richard emphasised that there were effective support mechanisms in place for those who needed them. He stated that whilst it was important to provide support and to monitor performance it was also important for staff to know they were trusted. John suggested that it was important to ensure that the supporting mechanisms for teaching staff were positive and did not add to the pressures and frustration that they sometimes felt. Colin suggested that, these issues aside, there was a correlation between lesson observation grades and student success. In turn this gave an identification of areas that should be focussed upon to improve performance. In response to a question from David Galloway, Colin stated that while new teachers were observed their lessons were not graded. Richard stated that there was an intensive support system for new teachers. They were expected to achieve a licence to practice through a one week induction course which was followed by more formal qualification based training.

ENROLMENT NUMBERS

18. The Committee received for information a report on enrolments for the current year.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 8 to the Minute Book copy)

19. Shelagh Legrave stated that the LSC had yet to provide colleges with software to evaluate their progress against the student learner number (SLN) targets set for 2008-09 and the related full-time equivalent numbers (FTEs). The general feeling was that the College had improved FE recruitment against the previous year but it was unable to demonstrate this. For work-based learners Shelagh suggested the position already showed an increase over the previous year while the Train to Gain starts were above profile.

DRAFT SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2007-08

20. The Committee received for consideration the 'Leadership & Management' and 'Capacity to Improve' sections of the Self-Assessment Report.

(Copies attached at APPENDICES 9 and 10 to the Minute Book copy)

21. Richard stated that the Leadership and Management section had already been moderated by a group of senior managers together with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body and two external evaluators from other Colleges in the region who were part of a peer reference exercise. He suggested that while increasing numbers of areas were regarded as being good or outstanding the College needed to support a number of others which needed to progress further above the national average. Richard reminded the Committee of Ofsted's concern of what it viewed as 'coasting' colleges and their focus upon improving success rates as the main means for measuring this. In response to a question from Robert, Richard stated that the SAR focussed upon whether or not students achieved a qualification rather than the level of their achievement or the value added position. In response to further questions from Robert on the perception of staff as to how well they were managed Richard suggested that the main source of evidence came from the staff survey. He suggested however that the question posed was open to a wide range of interpretations. He was trying to establish whether staff at all levels felt well managed and supported and questions in the next survey would focus on this.
22. Replying to David Galloway, Colin stated that the College was required to produce a SAR. The two sections now presented could not be completed at an earlier stage because they were based on a collation of the other sections of the report. He indicated that Ofsted would focus on the judgements in the SAR when preparing for their Annual Monitoring Visit (AMV). In response to further questions Colin stated it would be difficult to compare our performance with other colleges because SARs were not regarded as public documents. In addition comparisons might prove difficult because they were not drawn up to a common template. Having said this FE Sussex was looking at the potential to produce information across the Sussex colleges.

23. It was:

Resolved:

That the Committee supports the judgements set out in the Leadership and Management and Capacity to Improve sections as set out at APPENDICES 9 and 10 within the draft SAR.

QAA REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION

24. The Committee received for information a report on the outcome of the recent review of higher education provision within the College by the QAA.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 11 to the Minute Book copy)

25. Colin Whitaker stated that the report of the visit would not be published. The visit was, in effect, part of the consultation process the QAA had engaged in as it developed its quality review arrangements. He suggested that there were no surprises in the report and the College accepted the results of the review. It was particularly pleasing to note that there were no recommendations for essential action. Those of an advisory nature would be responded to. The report identified good practice and noted that the College had identified in advance those action areas which the team also identified. Colin suggested that it was a good outcome. An action plan would be submitted to the QAA.

EVERY STUDENT MATTERS

26. The Committee received for information a summary report on activities related to the Every Student Matters (ESM) initiative.

(Copy attached at APPENDIX 12 to the Minute Book copy)

27. Vicki Illingworth highlighted the wide range of activities that had taken place or were planned in supporting the ESM agenda. She suggested that centralising the student induction activities had been a particular positive, ensuring a much more consistent experience for new students. She highlighted the involvement of the College in a survey undertaken by the PCT. Around 1,600 students from the College aged between 16 and 24 had responded. The results provided a wide range of information on a diverse range of subjects. The results would be benchmarked both against other Sussex institutions and the national results. Over 4,000 students had attended the 'Safe Drive-Stay Alive' sessions which again had a significant impact on

those attending. Vicki stated that her summary report highlighted the direction the College was moving in and it was her intention to support students in promoting discussion on the issues they felt were important within the ESM agenda. John Bates referred to the question of child protection and safeguarding. He reminded the Committee that Frances Russell had been nominated as the Governing Body's 'champion' for child protection matters. He suggested that it might be appropriate for a report to be made to the Committee. There was general support to this proposal. It was also suggested that time should be devoted at one of this year's governor development events to provide an update for all governors. After further discussion it was:

Resolved:

- a. That an annual report be made to the Committee on child protection and safeguarding matters and this be included in the review of the Committee's terms of reference at the end of the year and in its annual business plan and*
- b. That a presentation on child protection and safeguarding be made to governors at one of the forthcoming development events.*

28. David Galloway questioned how much of the work being undertaken in relation to the ESM agenda would be taking place without the ESM initiative. Vicki suggested that while much of the activity would still be undertaken it would not have such a high profile. Nick suggested that from a student perspective there was a high level of participation in events but it was not always apparent that they were part of the ESM agenda. Richard suggested that the ESM initiative provided a framework against which the agenda was being developed. He suggested that its importance was in ensuring students were made aware of a wider range of issues as part of their preparation for life.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29. It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 19 March 2009 at 4.00pm.

FROM GOOD TO OUTSTANDING

30. David Hett reported that, together with the Chairman, he had attended a lot of the SAR validation meetings. While an increasing number of areas were being judged as good he was not clear what was necessary to make the leap to outstanding. He suggested that this might be an interesting topic for discussion at the next meeting

of the Committee. There was general support for this and after a brief discussion it was:

Resolved:

That at its next meeting the Committee should discuss what action is necessary to move the College from one that is good with outstanding features to one that is outstanding.

REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

31. David Galloway invited governors to consider whether any items of business discussed at the meeting might have been dealt with in a different or more appropriate way. He asked that governors contact David Smith or himself if they had any thoughts on this.

Chairman

Date