

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 March 2017 at 2.00pm
Committee Room, Reaseheath Hall

Present: Dr Ian Graham (independent, Chair)
 Francesca Francis (independent, co-opted)
 Hannah Holwell (HE Student)
 Richard Ratcliffe (independent)
 Emily Thrane (independent)
 Karen Willis (independent, co-opted)

In attendance: Rachel Ellis-Jones, Assistant Principal and Dean of HE
 Dave Kynaston, Vice Principal
 Shaun Williams (HE Quality Enhancement Manager)
 Dr Jane Richardson (Curriculum Area Manager, HE)
 Jackie Schillinger, Clerk.

Item	Content	Action
1.	<p>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Meredydd David and Anne McKay.</p> <p><i>Francesca Francis left the meeting.</i></p> <p>The Chair proposed the appointment of Francesca Francis as a co-opted member of the committee for a period of three years. The proposal was seconded and all were in favour.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Francesca Francis is appointed as a co-opted member of the committee for a period of three years.</p> <p><i>Francesca Francis returned to the meeting.</i></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Francesca Francis to the committee.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The following interests were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Ratcliffe, director of DART limited • Emily Thrane, director of DART limited and member of the University Council, University of Chester • Karen Willis, employee of University of Chester. <p>No specific agenda items were identified as giving rise to a conflict of interest.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. Members confirmed the name of the committee as the Higher Education Committee. The Dean of HE updated members on progress on the HE strategy, which would be considered in detail at the next meeting.</p>	<p>JS add FF to committee TOR.</p> <p>HE strategy at next meeting.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>HE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2 submission: the HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the college’s TEF submission, explaining the rationale behind the proposed bronze grading, with a number of elements considered as warranting a silver grading within the overall rating. The committee tested and challenged the rationale and, following discussion, supported the college’s proposed rating. The committee supported the college in its drive to achieve silver and emphasised the importance for planning straight away for the next assessment.</p> <p>In principle approach to tuition fees for 2018/19: The Dean of HE explained the impact of a bronze grading on a provider’s ability to increase fees, which will be limited to half the rate of inflation rather than the full rate. If the outcome is bronze (outcome expected in May), the college intends to increase fees by the amount allowed under the TEF. She explained that the college’s partner university, the University of Chester is likely to increase fees by the rate of inflation, so a small differential in fees will result. The committee agreed that it is important for the college to achieve silver as soon as it can and to maintain fees in line with its partner university as far as possible. The committee recommended that the board consider and approve an approach to tuition fees at its forthcoming meeting.</p>	<p>Tuition fees on board agenda</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>HE PERFORMANCE TARGETS MONITORING</p> <p>In year retention, attendance and applications report: The Dean of HE reported that applications and definite acceptances were looking strong, with the caveat that each year can be different and the college is cautiously optimistic on numbers for 2017/18. Discussion focused on actions the college is taking to convert applicants, including the very positive ‘applicant’ days introduced this year, following good practice at the University of Chester. More detail was provided in the marketing report included in the papers. The committee discussed steps taken to improve retention and attendance, with anecdotal evidence from exam boards and the changes to the way students are supported with their learning, looking promising. Discussion turned to internal progression, with recognition that this remains a challenge in terms of culture change to encourage an earlier and more proactive approach across college to internal progression. The work on developing a HE specific website was also seen as a key element.</p> <p>Marketing report: The marketing report was received for information.</p>	

<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p>	<p>QUALITY MONITORING REPORTS</p> <p>HEFCE Annual Provider Review preliminary assessment: The Dean of HE presented the results of the HEFCE preliminary assessment and explained the college's response, due to be sent off by 9 March 2017. She confirmed that the response would be circulated to governors. The committee highlighted the part-time student satisfaction as a risk factor and discussion focused on the reasons for the dissatisfaction during the period of time covered by the assessment. The committee took assurance from the actions now in place as a result of focus groups and student feedback that have started to see positive change, evidenced by the Pulse survey results. However, the committee noted that as student satisfaction was such an important metric, this area needed to remain a risk to be monitored closely.</p> <p>ACMR Overview report: the HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the overview report of the collated action plans arising from the last round of annual course reports for courses leading to both Harper Adams and University of Chester awards. Progress on action plans was discussed, with the committee requesting more information on how course management feedback has moved over time. The Dean recognised this is a difficult area to turn around, with the Executive team currently looking in depth at root causes, including timetabling, remission, workload, student feedback and the impact of some provision remaining outside the Faculty.</p> <p>Pulse Survey: The HE Quality Enhancement Manager reported on the positive student survey results, which also show an improvement in satisfaction of part-time students.</p> <p>External Examiner Overview Report: The HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the report. The committee noted the unusual issue this year with a substitute and a new external examiner that had resulted in a couple of missing reports. Members stressed the importance of getting the most out of external examiners and the need to continually remind them that only very specific feedback is of benefit to the college in being able to act upon it and therefore make improvement. Overall, the report showed a pleasing result. The student governor gave her view that the level of feedback received on work was about right and the Dean confirmed that they are working with students to respond to feedback and manage student expectations.</p> <p>Annual Academic Overview report: The HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the report, which summarises recommendations from the HE Self Evaluation Report from 2015/16. The committee welcomed the report as it provided helpful assurance on quality and standards cross-referenced to the specific sections of the QAA quality code. Members suggested that the report could be utilised as part of the HEFCE governor assurance reporting requirement to avoid duplication and too much extra work for the Faculty.</p> <p>Complaints and appeals monitoring: The Dean of HE presented the termly report, noting from now on the report will provide details of any complaints that have been made to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator. Members discussed the two complaints that had progressed that far and the review of</p>	
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6.7	<p>internal procedures that is currently taking place to manage this risk effectively going forwards. The committee gave its support to this review of procedures and offered help in looking over policies and procedures.</p> <p>HE Academic Board Minutes: The Dean of HE confirmed the minutes would be emailed to committee members following the meeting, for information.</p>	
7.	<p>COMMITTEE CYCLE OF BUSINESS</p> <p>The Clerk presented the cycle of business as a working document. Members made a couple of suggestions and would provide any further feedback to the Clerk directly.</p> <p>The committee approved the cycle of business.</p>	
8.	<p>MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE BOARD</p> <p>The committee agreed to report the following to the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Francesca Francis as a co-opted member of the committee for three years; • The requirement for the board to approve the approach to tuition fees at its meeting on 23 March and the impact of a TEF bronze rating; • The risk factor on the HEFCE preliminary assessment due to the metric on part-time student satisfaction, with the response letter provided to the board on 23 March; • The committee has asked to consider reporting on course management to be able to look at the direction and speed of travel of improvement in student satisfaction over a period of time; • Approval of its cycle of business. 	
9.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>No other business was reported.</p>	
10.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 2pm.</p>	

The meeting closed at 4.00pm.

Signed:

Dated: