

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 June 2018 at 2.00pm
Committee Room, Reaseheath Hall

Present: Meredydd David (principal)
 Francesca Francis (co-opted)
 Dr Ian Graham (independent) (Chair)
 Anne McKay (staff)
 Eleanor Thomas (student)
 Dr Karen Willis (co-opted)

Attending: Marcus Clinton (principal designate)
 Dave Kynaston (vice principal)
 Shaun Williams (HE quality enhancement manager)
 Shane Wild (HE student data and records officer)
 Don Clarke (HE academic services officer)
 Jackie Schillinger (clerk)

Item	Content
1.	<p>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Professor Chris Gaskell and Richard Ratcliffe. Attendee Jane Richardson also sent her apologies. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The following interests were noted: Meredydd David – Director DART Limited, University of Chester Council member Dr Ian Graham – University of Chester Council member Dr Karen Willis – University of Chester employee.</p>
3.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>3.1 The Committee received and approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2018.</p> <p>3.2 In terms of matters arising, the data reporting discussed in item 6.2 now included progression from foundation degree to top up, as requested. The Academic Services Officer provided members with an update on the focus group work referred to in item 6.2. He reported that this work is ongoing and the Committee requested that it receive a copy of the report once it has been presented to the HE Senior Team Meeting in July rather than wait until the next HE Committee meeting.</p> <p>Action – Clerk to send to Committee by email The action in relation to item 10 had been completed, with the full risk report and heat map on the agenda at this meeting.</p>

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p>	<p>UNIVERSITY CENTRE REASEHEATH STRATEGIC UPDATE</p> <p>The HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the Office for Students Registration and Widening Participation Update, including the Access and Participation Plan. He noted that the Committee has already received the documentation by email prior to its submission on 10 May 2018 and therefore the opportunity in this meeting was for further questions and discussion. He informed the Committee that the Office for Students had acknowledged the submission as correctly made and had no further questions at this time, and that UCR would expect to hear around the end of July. He thanked Francesca Francis and the clerk for their input into the preparation of the documentation for submission. Discussion turned to the Access and Participation plan. The HE Academic Services Officer took the Committee through the key findings of UCR’s current position with regard key characteristics, benchmarked against national averages, as well as against similar colleges. Completion and progression across characteristics were comparable with benchmark, with continuation rate slightly below the national average. He explained that the action plan is split into three main categories: Access; Success; and Progression. In addition to the plan he explained that two annexes were submitted: Targets and actions by under-represented group; and the same targets but this time presented across the student lifecycle.</p> <p>In questions and discussion, the Committee welcomed the well-articulated and detailed plan but also questioned whether there is a risk that UCR would be committing to some of the detailed actions in the annexes. The Quality Enhancement Manager provided assurance that the annexes are supporting information and so it is only going to be the plan itself that will be published by the OfS and on UCR’s website. The Principal confirmed that the annexes are working documents that management will need to monitor and report back to the Committee to ensure that UCR is meeting its plan outcomes.</p> <p>The Student Data and Records Officer summarised the Resources plan within the Access and Participation Plan. The Committee asked if impact is monitored. It was confirmed that this work needs to take place as well as evidencing spend on the plan by utilising the financial systems in college, working with the Chief Finance Officer and Director of Resources. The Committee questioned whether the spend needs to be ring fenced into different pots and it was confirmed that there is flexibility to move the resource around if need be. In relation to the attendance initiative, a member asked what was being done to ensure students take up the support on offer. Managers confirmed that students are contacted by student finance and encouraged to do so if they are not meeting the attendance criteria. In discussion, it was agreed that additional contact by the academic support team can really help as those students not meeting the attendance criteria could now be quite vulnerable and may withdraw. The relatively small number of students, about 30, could be contacted personally by the HE team and the Academic Services team would ensure that this happens.</p> <p>Action – HE Quality Enhancement Manager to ensure the 30 students are contacted by the HE team.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the recent change in HE leadership would need to be communicated to the OfS.</p> <p>Action – notify change of lead – HE Quality Enhancement Manager/Clerk</p> <p>The Committee Chair thanked the HE team and Francesca Francis and the clerk for their work on the documents, which he said brought home the amount that UCR does for access and participation.</p>
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4.6	<p>The Principal updated the Committee on HE curriculum development and staffing matters. Members welcomed the New HND/HNC in public services coming online this September with site validation with Pearson at the end of the month and good numbers coming on board. Discussion then focused on the unsuccessful Veterinary Nursing validation outcome. Feedback from the recent HE team meeting on the way forward was shared, including assurance that continuing with the validation has been tested and challenged. The executive team are satisfied that there is a good level of interest and purpose for developing the provision. Management confirmed that there is scope in the budget to take the validation forward, with the opportunity now to look at the model again and the flagged areas from the first validation attempt. Due to the tight timescale and specific nature of the project, the HE Team intend to use a consultant with this particular expertise on a fixed term basis to complete the work. The Committee confirmed their support for this approach. Other key areas were discussed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new University of Chester validated foundation degree in natural flood management (title tba) with HEFCE funding progressing with industry research which is planned to run from September 2019 • A review is underway of some of the equine provision to simplify the offer and this will be marketed from the autumn to commence in September 2019 • The HE workload modelling project is having positive impact on capacity and should support the team, improve the student experience, and create more capacity for scholarly activity • The new Dean, Peter Greenall will join the team in August • In response to questioning, management confirmed that the interface with higher level apprenticeships and foundation degrees is on the agenda at next executive strategy day to ensure that there is a joined up approach in these two areas.
5.	<p>HE PERFORMANCE TARGETS MONITORING</p> <p>5.1 The HE Student Data and Records Officer presented the Student Numbers Report, covering retention, applications and conversions. He confirmed that progression is still looking strong on paper, with around twenty less students seen as ‘at risk’ than last year, which is very positive, but with more work to do to support these students over the summer. Applications are also still looking positive. The unsuccessful veterinary nursing validation for this year has impacted on the expected student numbers, however, numbers are still in line with last year, which is a good result especially benchmarked against the sector. He reported that conversions are slowing down at the moment compared to last year and so actions are in place to focus on converting as many applications as possible.</p> <p>5.2 In questioning and discussion, the Committee focused on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘at risk’ courses due to low numbers and the actions in place to inform students and offer alternatives, as appropriate; • The progression from Foundation degree to top up of 50% is positive • Part-time has seen a decline and whilst there is a new Cert Ed programme and Eden programme, the other areas are not as strong and some further work needs to be done on

	<p>the part-time offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Offer holder days, introduced last year are proving to be a very positive story again this year • In terms of reporting, the Committee requested the data show how many places there are for each course in future and also the internal conversion percentage, as well as the numbers. • In terms of improving internal progression for next year, the Committee asked how the team would work on this. A range of strategies was discussed, including working with the staff on marketing internal progression more effectively, increasing the level of activity around progression events, bringing through a programme earlier for level 3 students from the summer term of their first year, and considering financial support options. Planned actions for next year will be reported through to the Committee at its next meeting <p>Action: Data Report to show: total number of places on courses: conversion % - Shane Wild</p> <p>Action: internal progression improvement plans to be reported to the Committee in the Autumn term – Clerk for agenda</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>QUALITY MONITORING REPORTS</p> <p>The HE Quality Enhancement Manager presented the Student Pulse Survey Semester 2 Overview Report. He clarified the information that the different surveys capture. The Pulse 2 is an internal UCR survey completed by all HE students (mid-year) and follows the National Student Survey (NSS) questions. The NSS is only for final year students completing and is carried out at the end of the year. There is also an end of year survey on the student experience for all first and second years. The Committee questioned whether there could be an element of survey fatigue and welcomed the confirmation that the surveys had been reviewed for 2018-19 so that there will only be one at the end of the year, with modular evaluations in year. The Committee also supported the suggestion that more work be done on feedback to students so that they can see the impact of their views being taken into account and well as more feedback generally, such as for example showing how their money is spent by UCR on their education.</p> <p>Discussion then turned to the survey data. A number of points were discussed around data presentation for clarity to ensure that the Committee understood the comparisons that it could draw from the reporting. The key areas of improvement seen in the data were welcomed, including a rise in satisfaction with course management. However, the dip in satisfaction with teaching and learning was a concern and could impact on UCR’s Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Metrics. The Committee requested sight of an action plan for 2018-19 on improving teaching and learning. It was agreed that this would be developed by the summer so that it could be in place for the new academic year, with sight of the plan by the Committee as soon as it is available rather than waiting until the next Committee meeting. The Committee shared its expectation that a longer term UCR teaching and learning quality strategy ought to be developed setting out what UCR expects and targets for each of the course teams, developed with them, that are above benchmarks and ambitious with achievements set and monitored over a three year period. Assurance was provided that the team is now looking at this, with initially setting a manageable number of actions, which can be explicit targets within this strategy. This will be a priority for the team when the new Dean starts and the Committee will receive a report on progress in the Autumn term.</p> <p>ACTION circulate the action plan to this Committee before the next meeting – Shaun Williams ACTION report on development of teaching and learning quality strategy to Autumn Term</p>

<p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p>	<p>meeting – HE team/clerk for agenda</p> <p>An update on the Landex Peer Review Report was received. The outcome was positive on a number of strengths including the governance arrangements and structure that has prepared UCR well for the Office for Students regulation and UCR’s facilities, ethos and culture. Awareness was drawn to the challenge in the new regime on the quality data management systems and the impact on capacity of HE team, but Landex also recognised the recent investment in staff resource in the team.</p> <p>The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Annual Statement 2017 was received for assurance, with one complaint deemed non-eligible, resulting in a 100% record and a good outcome.</p> <p>The Complaints and appeals monitoring report was received for information, with no concerns raised.</p> <p>The HE Academic Board Minutes were not available as yet and would be forwarded to the Committee for information by email following the meeting.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>RISK MONITORING REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE</p> <p>The clerk presented the Higher Education risks review report and the Committee discussed the impact of the reporting it had received in the meeting. It was agreed to highlight the risk to teaching and learning student satisfaction emerging from the student survey report and to amend the risk score for ‘failure to maintain a good and outstanding student experience’ and to ensure the action plan is monitored on the risk register.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>SELF ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee had considered its performance against its terms of reference and considered that it remained fit for purpose. However it was recommended that the student focus of the reporting could be improved by ensuring that reports always considered the impact on students and that the HE student governor provides a report to each meeting.</p> <p>ACTION Review student focus on reports and include a student report at each meeting – HE student governor/chair/clerk</p> <p>It also reviewed its Terms of reference for the coming 2018-19 year and recommended that specific safeguarding be brought within its remit, as currently the main safeguarding report is made to the Quality and Standards Committee.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE BOARD</p> <p>The key areas to highlight to the Board were agreed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office for Student Application is complete, with the outcome expected later in the summer • Student numbers are still looking strong but have reduced due to the unsuccessful Veterinary nursing validation and a recent slow down on conversions, however they are still looking in line with last year’s numbers and strong compared to the sector • The Student Pulse survey and the dip in satisfaction with teaching and learning, with the improvement action plan to be reported to the Committee in the summer. • The academic risk review and highlighting on the risk register of the concern on student

	<p>satisfaction with teaching and learning, to ensure improvement action is monitored at Committee and Board level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommended approval of the amended TOR for 2018-19 to include specific HE safeguarding reporting in future.
10.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS There was no other business to report.</p>
11.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 27 November 2018 at 2pm.</p>

The meeting closed at 4.30pm

Signed:

Dated: