

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 November 2018 at 2.00pm
Committee Room, Reaseheath Hall

- Present: Marcus Clinton (principal) MC (*items 8 -18 incl*)
 Francesca Francis (independent) (Chair) FF
 Dr Chris Haslam (co-opted) CH (*items 8 -18 incl*)
 Anne McKay (staff) AM
 Luci Newell (student) LN
 Richard Ratcliffe (independent) RR
- Attending: David Pearson (independent) DP
 Dave Kynaston (vice principal) DPK (*items 1 – 8 incl*)
 Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) PG
 Dr Jane Richardson (HE curriculum area manager) JR
 Shaun Williams (HE quality enhancement manager) SWilliams
 Shane Wild (HE student data and records officer) SWild
 Jackie Schillinger (clerk) JS

Item	Content
1.	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR
1.1	The meeting was declared quorate.
1.2	RESOLVED: Francesca Francis appointed as chair of the committee for the 2018-19 academic year.
2.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Professor Chris Gaskell.
3.	APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED COMMITTEE MEMBER
3.1	RESOLVED: Dr Chris Haslam appointed as a co-opted member of the committee for a period of three academic years.
4.	APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR
4.1	RESOLVED: Approve the nomination of Professor Chris Gaskell as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2018-19 academic year, subject to his confirmation of acceptance of the role, following the meeting.

5.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The declaration of interests form was circulated. There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.</p>
6.	<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FORWARD PLAN OF BUSINESS 2018-19</p> <p>6.1 The Committee Terms of Reference were received, for information.</p> <p>6.2 The Forward Plan of Committee Business was received, for information.</p>
7.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>7.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, FF.</p> <p>7.2 FF confirmed that all matters arising were covered in the agenda for the present meeting.</p>
8.	<p>SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT UPDATE REPORTING</p> <p>8.1 The Vice Principal, DPK presented the safeguarding update report, including the wellbeing and safeguarding dashboard. He explained that this was the first HE specific report as, following a request by the committee, an update on safeguarding as it impacts on HE students will be provided to each meeting from now on. He provided an update on sexual consent issues which the board had discussed at its July meeting. He provided anonymised information on two reported incidents, one of which had been investigated by the Police with no further action required and the other, which is currently under investigation. He explained the agreed actions put in place following on from the summer board meeting and the positive impact of these actions in managing this area of safeguarding, with a decline in reporting from five to two reported incidents on last year. He noted that the area of most concern so far this year for HE student welfare is poor mental health and mental health conditions, resulting in incidents such as self-harm and the need for significant support from the college student support services and wellbeing team. Questions and discussion followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FF queried some of the detail of the data as some areas seemed to conflict. DPK agreed to double check the data and provide an update outside the meeting. <i>ACTION: SEND report on to committee once corrected;</i> • AM asked about the similarities between FE and HE students in respect of the data and DPK confirmed that the college sees similar spikes across both groups. DPK noted that the Quality and Standards Committee meeting discussed the mental health app project that the University of Chester and the college are jointly working on. CH confirmed that as the leadership team member at Chester responsible for this area, he has seen a huge increase in support needs for students with mental health issues this year; • FF expressed her thanks on behalf of the committee for the enormous amount of care that is given to the students and also noted that the staff need to be appropriately supported. DPK confirmed that all staff in the college wide wellbeing team have their own supervision and support. JR also noted that the HE students can access support through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and that the HE support team (HEST) work closely with the student services and wellbeing team on delivering this support; • DP noted the green paper on mental health in schools and colleges, with the key to success being effective linking with mainstream mental health providers; • RR asked whether there is any link between preventing students leaving early and interaction

8.2	<p>with the wellbeing team. DPK confirmed that there are a range of reasons for leaving early and you would expect to find various reasons but there will be cases where the college has not known about a problem very early on and has not been able to provide support quickly enough in the first year. PG also noted the use of the college's fitness to study policy to support students struggling with health issues.</p> <p>FF thanked DPK for his report and all members for the questions and discussion that followed. DP confirmed that, as a key area for governors to seek assurance that all is being done that can be, an in-depth session to consider the college context in more detail and how the college is managing this safeguarding risk will take place at the board meeting on 13 December 2018, with staff members from the wellbeing team joining for the discussion.</p>
9.	<p>STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORTS</p> <p>9.1 The student governor, LN provided the meeting with her feedback on the start of the academic year. She gave her view that the induction week is effective in helping students settle in and make friends. She said that the lecturers are very approachable and make themselves available. She added some feedback on structure and content of the induction sessions to make them more effective, for example, she suggested that the academic misconduct lecture could be given a little later on in the process as it could be intimidating so early on, when students are making a big step up from FE to HE. She noted that it would have been useful to have had more help on academic referencing early on as the first tutorial set a formative assessment but students were unsure about referencing and so this was a bit demotivating when poor marks came back, even though there was also positive feedback. She also noted that the need to swap between two Moodle sites to find resources is confusing to get used to at first. FF thanked LN for her valuable feedback and being honest about her real life experience, which can be used to make things better. Assistant Principal and Dean of HE, PG also thanked LN for her very helpful feedback and said that the team is carrying out the induction survey with students at the moment and so they will be using this feedback and data to focus on improving induction in partnership with students this year, with the aim to develop it more in line with the structure of the BeReady programme but specifically for HE. He noted her particular comments and said he would ensure that these were looked at as part of these improvements and that the team would look at what could be done in the short term for example he noted that the Moodle issue should be resolved this year and he would look at some shorter term tweaks to improve things in the meantime.</p> <p>9.2 Student experience case study: The Curriculum Area Manager presented an anonymised student case study of a new student who needed support from the HE student support team (HEST). She explained that the HEST team contacts every student who has declared a problem on their application and is proactive in putting support in place for starting at University Centre Reaseheath. The student story highlighted the support over and above the DSA funded support that the student needed to stay in and succeed in higher education in her first year, as she was really struggling. Now into the start of her second year, she is doing much better and is much more resilient, independent, confident and organised – a real success story. DP thanked JR for sharing this story, which he said brings the numbers on the reports to life. He noted that it was good to see through the story how the student was helped and supported but remained in control and developed her independence and resilience. AM welcomed the story as an example of best practice sharing and noted that the Student Association is publishing some good practice case studies as well and this might be a good thing to share with governors more widely. <i>ACTION – student case studies – share with governors.</i> FF thanked LN and JR on behalf of the meeting and the meeting received the student experience reports.</p>

<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>STRATEGIC UPDATE</p> <p>The Assistant Principal and Dean of HE, PG, provided his update on the latest developments at UCR, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful registration with the Office for Students, with no conditions attached; • Initial analysis of the data for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) year four suggests that UCR is on the cusp of silver and work is now underway to make a submission for silver in early 2019; • Curriculum development, with two programmes going through validation for a September 2019 start 2019 and progressing well (veterinary nursing; natural resource management). Also, looking at the equine provision structure in terms of a clearer and more efficient structure and generally looking at how we can gain efficiencies on common modules across different programmes. <p>CH expressed his support for the ongoing curriculum development, working in partnership, and he also offered critical friend input into the TEF submission, as he noted that the case around the metrics will be crucial. FF thanked CH for his input and offer of support and PG confirmed that he would be delighted to take up the offer. The meeting received the strategic update report, with thanks.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND KPIS</p> <p>The Principal, MC introduced the risk register report and noted that the team are in the process of developing the KPIS this term. He referenced the HE specific KPIS that have been added since the board meeting on 8 November. FF welcomed the report, noting that it is a work in progress this term and that it will be provided with an updated front sheet at each meeting, in order to help the committee to monitor HE related risks. FF noted that the continuation data will be added. CH asked about the likelihood and impact scales and it was agreed to provide these outside the meeting, for information. He also suggested including all five National Student Survey (NSS) metrics going forwards as well as providing a visual matrix on which the risks and any movement in scoring can be easily shown. The meeting received the risk register and KPI report with thanks. <i>ACTION: Risk scoring criteria added to report, use all five NSS metrics, provide visual risk matrix.</i></p>
<p>12.</p> <p>12.1</p> <p>12.2</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</p> <p>FF introduced the performance monitoring set of reports and noted that the reporting enables the committee to triangulate the data from the different reports, which is helpful assurance and especially the self-evaluation document (SED) which brings everything together and is a very helpful document and to be commended.</p> <p>SWild presented the student data report, which he explained showed the distance travelled from the last report in June to end of the academic year and then provides an initial snapshot of this year so far in terms of recruitment. Overall, he presented a similar picture to the previous year's data, though academic failure has reduced slightly, which is positive. He noted there is still work to do to reduce the rate of academic failure. FF expressed her view that the report was helpfully presented and questioned the rate of academic failure and what can be done to improve this data. Discussion focused on the need to look at support, tracking mechanisms and strengthening the tutorial processes, which the team has as a priority for this year. Members noted that the effort put in on preparing students for reassessment did have an impact but that it will always be a struggle with these students at higher risk of failure and this year the team is aiming to reduce the size of that reassessment cohort. The committee welcomed the change to the Chester academic regulations that do now allow a third chance for students after reassessment, as long as a student is prepared to engage and submits a piece of work. CH explained that</p>

he has reviewed the university's assessment practice and found that in certain areas it was perhaps too robust and so there will be an impact of this work to modify in certain areas, which will not be seen until the 2019-20 academic year. PG agreed that UCR had also seen this in its own assessment practice and was undertaking similar work. PG and CH agreed to liaise on this work later on in the year. AM commented that this work could also link back to the discussion on reviewing and redesigning the induction process. The meeting received the student data report, with thanks.

12.3 SWilliams presented an overview of the 2017-2018 National Student Survey (NSS) Results. He noted that overall satisfaction was now at 80%, a 3% increase and now close to the sector benchmark of 83%. He considered this a very encouraging result though with work still to be done. He highlighted other areas that had improved and noted the particular success of student engagement, showing as a strength. In questions and discussion, the following points were made:

- MC agreed that it was good to see UCR nudging up but that student satisfaction needs to be higher. He noted the drop in relation to satisfaction with learning resources and noted that these aspects, such as specialist resources for practical lessons, ICT Wifi journal access and library access to resources were fundamental to student satisfaction. PG noted that a wide range of issues impact this category - the heating system in lecture theatres or the HE Café being overcrowded, for example and other wide ranging issues. He agreed that a plan of action in the QIP this year will be important to resolve any resource issues. SWilliams noted that there is quite a polarity of satisfaction across different programmes on this question. CH added that the university had previously had quite a lot of issues with resources and student satisfaction and put a significant investment into improving them and this is not such a problem now. Student governor LN commented that she felt the ICT and Wifi was much improved and quite well covered now but that she could recognise some of the other issues such as the Café and lecture theatre. MC noted that when chatting to the HE students he had also gained the impression that the Wifi experience had improved. PG agreed that the practical issues needed to be resolved swiftly.
- PG highlighted the focus group work with students to address the bugbear of course organisation and management, to work with the students in suggestions to improve this area. In general all agreed that it is important to communicate with the students, let them know what the college is trying to do to improve things and why some things will take time and involved students in the solutions.
- CH expressed his view that overall these are a good set of NSS results. FF agreed and noted that you can see a real improving trend in the data since 2012.
- FF asked about part time student satisfaction, which is still lower than full time. PG commented that it is communication that is key with part time students and often quite small things can make a big difference. PG offered for FF to meet with a group of part-time students in a focus group and FF welcomed the opportunity. *ACTION: FF attend part time students focus group – spring term*

12.4 PG presented the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategy and TLA Quality Improvement Plan, created in response to the request from the previous meeting of the committee. He said that it is still a working draft, but that it has been through the internal committees and will be in place for the new calendar year. DP welcomed the strategy and plan and asked if it will be published and linked to the strategic plan. PG and MC confirmed that it can be published and will feed in to the strategic plan. Student governor LN agreed that the strategy was clear and easy to follow and would benefit being published to a wider audience. FF considered the plan an excellent document and thanked PG. *ACTION: Consider publication of strategy and linking to strategic planning.*

12.5	<p>JR presented the Internal Progression Improvement Action Plan, created in response to a request from the previous meeting of the committee. She noted that the plan incorporates the work of the student focus groups and is also now reflected in the overall QIP. She highlighted the main reasons given that FE students do not progress to HE with UCR are that UCR does not offer the curriculum at HE level that they want or that they do not feel that HE would be a different experience. She explained that most of the current activities are based on making that experience different, providing taster days to showcase this and involving parents. MC also noted that actions in the QIP are about winning hearts and minds of FE staff and deepen their understanding of the HE offer and how it differs from FE. He emphasised the work that is also going on in validating new programmes and updating the HE offer, with the support of the Chester colleagues. CH agreed that this progression package from level 2, 3 and up through HE will be very beneficial through our partnership working. PG and CH agreed to move forward on this work to look at curriculum gaps and planning. AM asked how the college compared to other Landex colleges on internal progression and MC confirmed that anecdotally he considered that the college is lower on internal progression and so this suggests we can improve. PG noted that the team are also considering marketing to those that have gone elsewhere in the event that it is not working out and they may decide to come back. AM noted that this continued contact with alumni also helps future staff recruitment. FF thanked JR for her report and the meeting received the report for assurance on the actions to improve internal progression.</p>
13.	<p>OFFICE FOR STUDENTS ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2018</p> <p>13.1 PG presented the Self-Evaluation Document 2017-18 for scrutiny in advance of considering the annual assurance statement. The report provided a holistic evaluation of quality of the academic experience and outcomes for students across UCR from various stakeholders including students, using five years of data where possible and providing an action plan for continued improvement. PG explained that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2018-19 provides one overall QIP for UCR, weaving in quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPIs). Questions and discussion followed. FF commented on the excellent document and the really good position statements. She questioned some of the detail, including the modest spending so far on the research and scholarship funding. PG explained the context and assured FF that spending will be better this year. She also commented that UCR could consider what more it could do in relation to the cohort analysis on ethnicity. MC and DP welcomed the report, noting that it is very clear, a good read and that it will be a key document in internal meetings this year, driving improvements, with the QIP being monitored at HE Committee throughout the year. PG noted that the report will need to include anonymised data on wellbeing referrals going forwards and that the team has developed better links with the wellbeing team to enable this data to be shared appropriately. <i>ACTION: circulate to full board.</i></p> <p>13.2 PG presented the Office for Students Annual Assurance Statement for approval. He provided an executive summary in relation to the three main statements of assurance required. Based on the HE Committee performance monitoring over the previous academic year and the scrutiny of reports including the UCR SED 2017-18 and QIP 2018-19, he recommended approval of the assurance statements. FF and all members of the committee supported the recommendation and approved the assurance statement, in line with the committee's delegated authority from the Board in its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>13.3 RESOLVED: Approve the Principal and Chief Executive as accounting officer on behalf of the governing body to sign and submit the annual assurance statement to the Office for Students confirming that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the provider's own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate; • The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately maintained.
14.	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/RATIFICATION
14.1	<p>RESOVED: Approve and ratify the Higher Education Complaints Policy and the Higher Education Admissions Policy</p> <p><i>ACTION: complaints policy clarify escalation to partner - 3.1 do you have to be registered or not and amend flowchart re collaborative programmes. Consider separate compliments process. Admissions policy include Chester's website on page 3 on RCH programmes and update to UCR. Brief explanation of the courses outside policy and remove them.</i></p>
15.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ASSURANCE
15.1	<p>The following items were received for information and assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Policy framework overview HE Academic Board meeting minutes • HE Student Complaints Monitoring Report • Tier 4 Sponsor Status - UKVI Basic Compliance Assessment • HEIFES 18: Higher Education in FE <p><i>ACTION: Suggest a rolling year for the complaints report.</i></p>
16.	MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE BOARD
16.1	<p>The meeting confirmed the following to be reported to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of the Chair and Vice Chair appointments • Approval of the Office for Students Annual Assurance Statement
17.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
17.1	<p>JS informed the committee that the Quality and Standards Committee had suggested a cross over meeting/event in terms of ensuring the committees have an overview of quality and any key themes for each and the committee supported the idea of an optional joint workshop/update event around April time, to be considered going forwards. MC also wondered if a Dean's report to the Board would be a useful addition. <i>ACTION: JS/Chairs and Search and Governance to consider in meetings calendar</i></p>
18.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 27 February 2019 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 4.05pm.

Signed:

Dated: