REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 at 2.00pm
Via MS Teams

Present: Prof Chris Gaskell (independent, Chair) CG
              Ian Britton (external co-opted)
              Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
              Gary Crowe (independent) GC
              Kalliopi Angelakopoulos (student) KA
              Liz Watts (staff) LW
Attending: Yvette Foulds-Davis (HE academic registrar) YFD
              Sarah Hopkinson (assistant dean) SH
              Debra Swift (HE curriculum development manager) DS
              Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean) PG
              Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

Part A unless stated

Item	Content
1.	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.
1.2	The meeting was declared quorate and remained quorate throughout.
2.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
2.1	There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.
3.	**TERMS OF REFERENCE/FORWARD PLAN OF BUSINESS 2021-22**
3.1	The Committee Terms of Reference were received for information
3.2	The Forward Plan of Committee Business was received for information.
4.	**MINUTES**
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.
4.2	The minutes of the special meeting held on 28 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.
4.3	The rolling action log was reviewed for any matters arising and assurance taken those actions were on track and any matters arising had been picked up as agenda items in the current meeting.
5.	**STUDENT EXPERIENCE FOCUS**
5.1	Student governor update: KA provided an update on student voice since the previous meeting and Student Association activates and developments. She highlighted the new zoo kitchen garden initiative, RAG events and progress with fundraising, social events this year including new Monday live events, involving local artists and tribute bands. She noted the students had been involved in helping at the recent lambing weekend. She explained that the focus on improving parts of the campus now is on trying to raise funds to refresh the décor and amenities in the bar area and under 18 common room. CG noted this sounded very encouraging, with thanks for the update.
5.2	Student Experience Survey Results 2021-22: YFD provided her report on the University Centre Reaseheath (UCR) internal student survey results for the first semester 2021-22. She explained that the

	survey questions remain based around the wording of key questions within the National Student Survey (NSS). Additional questions around social opportunities and online learning were also included due to continued impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Her report provided an overview of the different question scores overall and scores by subject area of provision. Her report pulled out those high performing question areas that are in line with or above the NSS average and those question areas falling below, as well as those subject courses scoring lower than NSS averages. She summarised that the results indicate that teaching standards have been maintained well and the student voice has continued to improve. However, perceptions of course organisation and students feeling part of a learning community have seen a negative impact in the first semester of 21-22. In terms of actions to be taken from the results, she explained that results have been provided to UCR Senior Leadership, UCR Academic Management Team and the Staff-Student Partnership Forum, which will enable targeted focus groups and course management actions and to address or further investigate the areas of lower satisfaction.
5.3	From the discussion that followed: - CG summarised that the student voice and student body involvement seem very strong but that the library resources area could benefit by looking elsewhere for good practice and finding out what it is that students need from this service that may be different to a further education college service. -IB asked about confidence that action plans at programme level reflect the feedback from this survey and YFD explained the current structure that enables this to happen and noted that the bespoke meetings with programme leaders are used to feed through to action plans. IB further queried how any enhancement or actions on cross college issues are captured and communicated and YFD explained that these are fed through the Board of Studies and at UCR Academic Board and the UCR Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is updated as a live document. -PG explained that the module evaluation results will further inform actions that will support improvement and he noted that the team is looking at the structure of feedback and assessment over the academic year, which is an action seen in the QIP. He added that Digital and IT resource responses have been impacted by some Wi-Fi issues seen earlier in the year. -LW queried the term 'being part of learning community' in the survey and YFD explained that in NSS wording this essentially means the opportunity to work with other students and working with staff and students. IB highlighted wording as one of the issues with the NSS and it is important to carefully try and explain this a bit more for students within the limits and guidance of what providers are allowed to do. CG suggested that using this language in context from an early stage with students could help in their understanding. -LW noted on student life survey response some courses engaged very well with others less so and she suggested that the Student Association (SA) could perhaps target their engagement activity in these areas. KA agreed to take this suggestion back to the next meeting of the SA.
6.	**PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
6.1	Student data report and dashboard: YFD provided the data reporting on the key indicators for UCR so far this year. This included retention, which remains steady, and reasons for leaving, which are varied by with the main issue being personal/family issues. Recruitment and applications were considered, with current reporting indicating UCAS applications are slightly down when compared to this time last year, with a possibility of applicants applying later this year. Courses with an increase in applications and those down on applications were highlighted. Information on numbers of and resourcing for students with a declared need was also provided. Members noted an increase in declared need has been seen more widely across the sector. Discussion followed. CG asked about any sense of internal progression for next year. PG explained what the team has been doing to work with further education colleagues to promote the UCR offer. CG noted that there is more to do, and the committee will be interested to know more when it can. IB observed that some areas seeing growth have received lower scores from the student survey and so this needs to be triangulated to ensure any potential problems are resolved for new students.
6.2	UCR Quality Improvement Plan monitoring: SH presented the RAG rated quality improvement monitoring report for assurance, evidencing good progress on most actions. She provided further

	information on progress on those rated Amber. She highlighted area rated Red and explained the context to this rating and the actions planned to address the delay. The committee took good assurance from the clear progress being made.
7.	**STRATEGIC UPDATE**
7.1	Dean's Report: PG presented his Dean's Report providing an overview of internal and external strategic drivers and key risk areas for UCR, including:
	-OfS Consultations – three significant consultations currently live focusing on condition B3, TEF and the definition of quality indicators.
	-Government response to the Augar Review – recently published alongside two DfE consultations closing in April 2022. A summary of key proposals is indicated following an initial top-level review of the consultation documents.
	-2022-23 Curriculum Planning – Focusing largely on reshaping module delivery and adopting a semesterised programme structure.
	-UCR Faculty Staffing – Staffing vacancies are largely filled except for one canine post and one food science post. New recruits are both sufficiently qualified and largely experienced teaching and professional practitioners.
	-NSS Participation – trailing behind the same response last year with the gap narrowing. This is not considered as a concern at this stage.
	-Module Evaluation Survey – Launched 1st March and running throughout the month.
	-Institute of Sustainability and Food Innovation – New staff taking up post in March, focusing on establishing the Food Innovation Lab, normal operations within the glasshouse and vertical farm facility, and institutional registration with JE-S.
	-Mitigating Circumstances and Deferrals – significant increase in the number of student requests for deadline extensions and assessment deferrals. Support mechanisms are in place, and discussions underway with colleagues at University of Chester (UoC) to contribute views to future adjustments to policy/regulation.
	-Safer Streets – Collaborative project with UoC and Cheshire Constabulary which provides further assurance against the OfS expectations on tackling sexual misconduct and harassment.
7.2	UCR Strategy Monitoring: PG provided an update on progress against the UCR strategy, received for information and assurance. CG noted good progress evidenced. IB asked how the new branding is being received by staff and others. PG confirmed it is very positive and LW confirmed that from her team's experience at UCAS fairs and on social media it has been well received and does set UCR apart from other HE in FE providers.
7.3	Higher Education Tuition Fees 2023-24: Members received the report and recommendations and agreed with the recommendations made.
7.4	**RESOLVED: To recommend the UCR Tuition Fees 2023-24 are maintained at current fee levels for the 2023/24 academic year for home and international students.**
7.5	Scholarly Activity Update: DS provided an update for information and assurance. Members welcomed the comprehensive update and the traction in this area. The meeting noted that linking to the business hub and working with key employers would be very beneficial, with the overall aim being to enhance the student experience.
7.6	Curriculum Development Update: The report was received for information and assurance continued good progress welcomed.
7.7	Access and Participation Plan Update: The update was received for information. Members took good assurance on current progress.
7.8	Strategic Risk Report: The strategic risk review report was received for information and assurance.
8	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ASSURANCE**
8.1	The UCR Academic Board meeting minutes were in the process of being finalised and JS confirmed that she would circulate by email following the meeting, for information.
8.2	The UCR Board of Studies meeting minutes were received for information

8.3	The Student Complaints Monitoring Report was received for information and assurance.
8.4	The HESES Return was received for information and compliance assurance.
9.	**MATTERS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/REPORT**
9.1	The meeting noted that the unconfirmed minutes would be provided to the forthcoming Board meeting for information and agreed to highlight the following key points: - The UCR internal student survey results and that two areas of focus for students were the library service and Wi-Fi issues that had impacted on lower scores - The student governor update on SA activities and student voice gave assurance that student voice and student body involvement is very proactive with lots going on - The Dean's report provided a comprehensive overview of internal and external strategic drivers and key risk areas for UCR, including three key Office for Students consultations. Also considered were the potential impacts of the Augar review - The wider Board might consider at strategic level the benefits of being an FE and HE institution in the changing policy environment to inform strategic planning - Performance data reporting indicated that retention remains steady, and reasons for leaving are varied with the main issue being personal/family issues. Recruitment and applications were considered, with current reporting indicating UCAS applications are slightly down when compared to this time last year - UCR Quality Improvement Plan progress was monitored with good assurance taken on clear progress being made - Scholarly Activity, Curriculum Development and Access and Participation Plan updates were received for information and good assurance was taken on current progress - Recommendation to approve the UCR Tuition Fees 2023-24
10.	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
10.1	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16 June 2022 at 2pm.
11.	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
11.1	There was no other business reported to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm

Confirmed as a correct record: 16 June 2022.