

WIGAN AND LEIGH COLLEGE: GOVERNING BOARD

MEETING OF CURRICULUM AND STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

TIME/DATE 5.00pm, Tuesday 24th November 2020

VENUE VIRTUAL: MICROSOFT TEAMS

Committee Members

Andrea Ferguson (Chair)
Ann Harrison
Jenny Bullen
Jennifer Cockram (Staff Governor)
Rebecca Armstrong (Staff Governor)
Kodie Anderson (Student Governor)

Principal

Anna Dawe

Clerk

Robert Smith

Vice Principal, Curriculum
Vice Principal, Corporate Services
Assistant Principal, IT, MIS and Sub-Contracting
Assistant Principal, Curriculum
Head of Department (Business & Computing)
Head of Quality
Assistant Principal, Curriculum

Claire Foreman
Louise Brown
Dave Harrison
Paul Heald
Nick Long
Jim Parker
Maxine Mealy

Italics denotes absence

MINUTES

Item	The meeting opened at 5.00pm and was quorate with at least 3 members being present.
1 CSM/20/11/01	APOLOGIES An apology for absence was received from Jenny Bullen. It was also noted that Maxine Mealy would join the meeting later in the agenda in advance of presenting her Annual Safeguarding Report. The Chair also welcomed Jennifer Cockram to her first meeting of this committee having recently transferred from the Resources Committee.
2 CSM/20/11/02	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
3 CSM/20/11/03	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th JUNE 2020 The minutes of the meeting on the 16 th June 2020 were approved as a correct record and authorised for signature by the Chair.
4 CSM/20/11/04	MATTERS ARISING The Clerk advised that all matters on the committee's Action Sheet were complete.
5 CSM/20/11/05	DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATION: BUSINESS & COMPUTING The Chair welcomed the Assistant Principal and Head of Department (Business & Computing) and invited them to provide a presentation to the committee. The Head of Department outlined key staffing changes over the previous year and it was noted that there had been a significant number of staff changes in both areas, with 50% of tutors in Computing being appointed since January 2020 and 100% of tutors in Business being appointed since September 2019. The Head of Department commented that,

whilst significant staff changes can often be a challenge for teams, these changes had brought about fresh ideas, new energy and substantially improved motivation, all of which was helping to deliver significant improvements across the department.

The Head of Department provided a summary of student recruitment, which had increased significantly in 2020/21 with 60 more Business students and 97 more Computing students than in 2019/20. He also outlined student satisfaction rates in relation to perception of course data, which showed 94.7% satisfaction for Business, 93.7% for Computing and 95.5% for Finance & Professional. Members acknowledged that this was a very positive start to 2020/21. Members also discussed the development of a new Digital Skills Academy, which focused on individual laboratories for Robotics & Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and Digital Technologies & Cyber Security. The Head of Department also advised that T Level Digital Design, Development & Production would be delivered in this facility from the start of 2021/22.

Members discussed the key self-assessed strengths for the area, which included good links to industry, good improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, and excellent support for students that had helped them stay engaged and complete their programmes. They also discussed the area's key areas for improvement, including improvements in attendance rates, improved links with employers and better work-related learning experiences, improvements in first time pass rates and higher grades at Level 3, and improved retention and timely completion for Finance and Professional programmes. The Head of Department explained that improvements in attendance would be particularly important for English and Maths. He also explained that significant progress was now being made in improving first time pass rates and that the area had also carried out a lot of preparatory work to deliver solid Centre Assessed Grades should Covid-19 lead to a cancellation of exams in 2021.

The Head of Department drew members' attention to the key actions planned for 2020/21 to deliver the required improvements. These included improving timely intervention to address attendance issues, developing interactive and online learning strategies to increase engagement during the pandemic, and improving the quality of feedback to all students to improve progress towards higher grades.

Members asked for further information in terms of how the department was adapting to the new Education Inspection Framework. The Head of Department explained that all staff had shown a positive response towards the new framework and had worked quickly and effectively to adapt area arrangements to improve focus on the new framework requirements. He outlined the work carried out to identify curriculum intent in the area, which he identified as providing Business and Professional Studies students with challenging programmes that equip them with the right skills and knowledge to make the next step in their educational path or their chosen career. It was noted that this would be achieved by providing knowledge and experiences in areas such as finance, human resource and marketing, with a particular focus on the use of new and emerging digital technologies to ensure students were prepared for changing and wide-ranging employment opportunities. It was also noted that this would require the development of a skill set that prepares students for a competitive job market, with a curriculum that challenges their creativity, ability to problem solve under pressure, ability to think strategically and operationally, and to be adaptable in a range of roles.

The Head of Department outlined the vision for Computing, including embracing the Great Manchester Digital Blueprint and national economic growth areas, supporting residents to improve their basic digital skills, preparing students to have the skills and experiences to enter careers in a rapidly changing sector, and the development of a new Digital Production, Design and Development T Level to begin from September 2021. He added that the long-term ambition was to develop a curriculum offer that was accessible to all sections of the community, with clear progression routes and to be

	<p>able to demonstrate excellence in virtual and augmented reality and gaming to meet the future growth of employment opportunities in these areas.</p> <p>The Head of Department also outlined the vision for Business and commented that the department had the potential to be one of the most exciting curriculum areas in the college due to excellent recruitment of tutors with an energetic and fresh approach to how the curriculum was to be developed. It was noted that the vision also included a priority on integrating new and emerging digital technologies and media into all programmes, and enrichment activities that encouraged creativity, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship. The Head of Department also reported that the area was preparing for a possible T Level in Management and Administration from 2022.</p> <p>The Chair commented that it was very encouraging to see positive data on retention and attendance, following a previously challenging period. She also commented that there appeared to be good clarity in terms of further improvements required in the area. The Chair asked how the new team had coped with the challenges of Covid-19 and, in particular, whether it was an additional challenge to develop strong team working during a period of lockdown, where new team members were unable to meet face to face. The Head of Department responded that this had been challenging but commented that the new team had shown such a positive attitude that virtual meetings had been enough to develop strong team working, including existing staff learning from newly recruited staff in some areas of teaching and learning. He also commented that student engagement with new staff had been a challenge during the lockdown period, but that this had now improved since students had returned to college.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board commented that it was encouraging to hear about the team’s enthusiasm and commitment but asked whether the team was now likely to remain stable in terms of staff turnover. She also asked whether this enthusiasm had been the main factor in delivering recent improvements, or whether it was the availability of new Digital Academy facilities. The Head of Department responded that he was now hopeful that the team would remain stable. He also responded that recent improvements had been brought about by a number of factors, including the new team, new facilities and changes to timetables, which had previously been an issue for students. The Vice Principal, Curriculum commented that the Head of Department had himself made a significant contribution to the improvements, which was a credit to him, especially as he had only joined the college in late January, just before the Covid-19 lockdown. The Support Staff Governor added that this department had previously been a challenging area for student recruitment and engagement, but the new energy in the area and fresh ideas were now making a real difference.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Department for his presentation and commented that it was good to see the ways in which the department had changed focus to developing broad skills to increase employment opportunities for students, whilst also increasing its focus on developing specialist skills in areas where employment growth was expected.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal and Head of Department left the meeting at 5.35pm.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>CSM/20/11/06</p>	<p>QUALITY & CURRICULUM UPDATE REPORT</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum outlined the end of year curriculum data and commented that 2019/20 had been a challenging year, especially with the cancellation of exams. It was noted that this meant that end of year data reflected Centre Assessed Grades in many areas, rather than examination results. She explained that she was disappointed that exams had been cancelled as she had expected to see considerable improvements in many areas, including under the new RQF qualifications and A Levels. She added that the Centre Assessed Grades showed a true picture of</p>

performance as the college had prepared realistic predictions of student achievement, rather than boosting grades through over-stating likely outcomes. It was noted that the predicted outcomes showed a further slight improvement, following a trend of continual improvement over recent years.

However, the Vice Principal also highlighted some areas where results were lower than would normally be expected. In particular, she drew members' attention to the pass rate outcomes for ESOL which had fallen from 94% to 86%. She explained that this was due to a large number of learners who had started in February and did not have enough evidence in place by the time of the lockdown. Members acknowledged that many of these learners would not have had access to technology at home to enable them to continue with learning online. The Vice Principal also described the substantial impacts on apprenticeship provision. It was noted that around 500 learners were put on furlough by their employers and some were placed on a break in learning. She also advised that some apprentices had been made redundant and though many had been found new employment it had not been possible to find new employers for all those affected. It was noted that the number on furlough had now reduced and that the most significant impacts had been in those areas most affected by Covid-19, including hairdressing and hospitality. Members were pleased to learn that there had been some sign of improvements in areas such as construction and engineering but recognised that the impact of Covid-19 would be felt in the apprenticeship area for a significant time ahead. They also recognised that this had impacted on what was otherwise expected to be a significant improvement in apprenticeship data outcomes in 2019/20.

The Vice Principal reported that HE delivery had moved fairly seamlessly into online provision during the lockdown and that attendance had held up well. It was noted that the HE Step-Up campaign launched in May 2019 had improved outcomes for students in the 2019/20 cohort compared to the previous year with retention increasing by 3.9% and pass rates increasing from by 4.4%. It was also noted that there had been a 6.6% improvement in high grades on degree courses.

The Chair asked whether the college expected a high proportion of apprentices on furlough to return from their breaks in learning. The Vice Principal responded that, in addition to redundancies already realised, there was likely to be a high percentage of those still on furlough who may not return to their employment. However, she added that it was difficult to make a realistic estimate for the likely overall impact as it was still too soon. The Chair of the Governing Board asked for more information in relation to HE performance indicators. The Vice Principal responded that some areas, such as Engineering, had improved significantly in terms of retention, attendance and overall outcomes. However, she also reported that the picture was not always consistent, with some areas still facing challenges. She acknowledged that, in some cases, the previous student experience would have led to reduced retention. Members also noted that, as a college focused on widening participation, many learners needed much more support than in other higher education institutions.

The Vice Principal outlined the college's approach to continuing delivery during the pandemic, including timetabling changes and the use of online learning to help reduce college foot-fall. It was noted that attendance had been a challenge in English and Maths, although interventions were in place to deliver improvements. The Vice Principal also outlined the ways in which departments were trying to ensure

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	<p>enrichment activity continued, including the use of online guest speakers. She highlighted work placement opportunities as a particularly challenging area and advised that over 50 employers had cancelled work placements due to the pandemic.</p> <p>The Chair commented that managing Covid-19 impacts was a huge challenge, especially with staff and students needing to self-isolate at short notice. She added that the efforts of all managers and staff were clear to see and demonstrated flexibility, responsiveness and a commitment to continue to provide support to students.</p>
7 CSM/20/11/07	<p>QUALITY & CURRICULUM KPI DASHBOARD</p> <p>It was noted that the current KPI data had been discussed under the previous agenda item, although the Vice Principal highlighted improved internal progression, and better than expected retention at the six-week census date as positive indicators of improvement.</p>
8 CSM/20/11/08	<p>SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)</p> <p>The Chair explained that she and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Board had met with the Vice Principal, Curriculum and the Head of Quality to review the SAR and QIP in detail in advance of this meeting and commented that the documents provided a clear summary of the college's position in terms of curriculum and quality and the actions required to bring about further improvement. The Chair welcomed the Head of Quality to the meeting and invited him to provide a summary of the SAR judgments for discussion.</p> <p>The Head of Quality outlined the main SAR judgments and drew members' attention to the key strengths and areas for improvement. It was noted that the majority of areas were moving upward but this was not consistent across all areas. It was also noted that student feedback was good and improving, but not in every area so again consistency was an issue. The Head of Quality reported that the judgment for "overall effectiveness" was 'good' and had improved since the previous year, but had not yet reached 'outstanding' due to the consistency challenges discussed previously. He also reported that the "quality of education" judgment was 'good' and commented that teaching and learning was strong in the majority of areas. Members were pleased to learn that the judgment for "behaviours and attitudes" was also 'good' and reflected very positive behaviours on the part of students, although attendance still required further improvement. They were also pleased to learn that the judgment for "personal development" was 'outstanding'. The Head of Quality outlined some of the activity at the college that helped promote personal development and members acknowledged that this area was exceptional, with students receiving substantial support in achieving their aims and overcoming challenges they may have. It was also noted that "leadership and management" had been judged as 'good'.</p> <p>The Head of Quality highlighted apprenticeships as having been the most challenging area due to Covid-19. He echoed the Vice Principal's disappointment that Covid-19 had impacted in such a way as to prevent further very clear improvements from being demonstrated through improved learner outcomes data. However, members noted that despite these impacts the judgment for apprenticeship provision had been increased to 'good' to recognise the significant improvements in delivery. It was also noted that high needs provision was judged to be 'good'. The Head of Quality highlighted those curriculum areas that had moved from Grade 3 to Grade 2 and from Grade 2 to Grade 1 and members were pleased to learn that no area had gone backwards in terms of the overall area judgments. However, they also recognised that some areas (2 out of 22) judged as Grade 3 in the previous year remained a Grade 3 under the current self-assessment. The Chair outlined discussions at her earlier</p>

	<p>meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, the Vice Principal and the Head of Quality. She commented that the judgments were clearly evidence-based and avoided exaggeration so that each judgment could be properly supported with evidence. She explained that this meant that there were few examples of huge leaps forward but strong evidence of genuine progress across the college.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board endorsed the Chair's comments about realistic, evidence based judgments. However, she also commented that many areas, such as high needs provision, were very close to 'outstanding' even though judged to be 'good'. She suggested that governors might benefit from an additional document that indicated where areas were close to progressing to the grade above or at risk of falling to the grade below. The Head of Quality responded that a document was already in place that showed arrows as a direction of travel so would show which areas were progressing towards the grade above and which were possibly stagnating and not making the required improvements. The Head of Quality shared the document showing direction of travel and it was noted that most areas were moving in the right direction. The Chair commented that a document showing direction of travel and identifying when close to the higher or lower grade would also be useful in identifying those areas that the committee wished to present at its meetings. It was agreed that a separate report for governors would be produced for the next year's SAR showing departments' positions within each grade and whether the direction of travel was positive.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Vice Principal, Curriculum</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Board be recommended to approve the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2019/20 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2020/21.</p>
<p>9</p> <p>CSM/20/11/09</p>	<p>HE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum explained that this report was in two parts, with the first part acting as a quality assurance report and the second part as an annual monitoring report. She explained that the findings in the quality assurance part of the report were supported by a UCLan Periodic Review, which had been carried out in-year. It was noted that this review had been very positive and helped provide triangulation evidence to support the college's own judgments. The Vice Principal also highlighted the Office for Students' expectation that the Board was satisfied that appropriate arrangements, teaching and learning, and other requirements were in place for HE.</p> <p>Under the second part of the report, The Vice Principal outlined the college's HE provision and it was noted that outcomes for most provision were going in the right direction. The Vice Principal also reminded members that the HE Step-Up campaign was launched in May 2019 and she reported that this had helped to improve outcomes for students in the 2019/20 cohort. She highlighted improvements in retention and in pass rates, as well as a significant increase in students achieving higher grade degrees. It was noted that the Step-Up campaign included an increased investment in HE staffing and integration into college quality assurance and monitoring processes. It was also noted that student feedback had improved in the latest external NSS survey. The Vice Principal also advised that the Annual Monitoring Report had been commended by the UCLan Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether the college was confident that student experience issues were clearly understood. The Vice Principal responded that there had been issues in 2018/19 where students voiced the need for their experience to feel more like HE and more distinct from FE. It was noted that changes made in response to this included allocation of distinct HE areas and more specialist HE teaching staff. However, it was noted that this issue had not disappeared entirely and that some students still wanted a more distinct experience. It was also noted that, as previously discussed, the</p>

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	<p>stability of staff teams for certain courses had impacted on the learning experience and this was still reflected in NSS responses.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board expressed her concerns over whether improvements in HE provision were being delivered fast enough and whether students were getting the experience they deserved at all times. The Vice Principal agreed that progress had been slow at times but commented that there was a clear understanding of the issues and robust action plans were in place and progressing. The Head of Quality commented that the first SPOC survey for 2020/21 had been positive, including a 15% year-on-year improvement in satisfaction rates for Mechanical Engineering, which now showed 98% satisfaction. He also commented that there had been other improvements in the survey results, including an increase in satisfaction in Civil Engineering. The Chair commented that, based on surveys and other information presented, it would be good if Construction and Engineering could make presentations to the committee in 2021. She added that this would also provide an opportunity to try to unpick some of the HE student satisfaction issues.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Board be recommended to approve the HE Annual Monitoring Report for 2019/20.</p> <p>Maxine Mealy joined the meeting at 6.35pm</p>
<p>10</p> <p>CSM/20/11/10</p>	<p>ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2019/20</p> <p>The Head of Quality provided a summary of complaints received by the college during 2019/20 and highlighted the 4-year trend detailed within his report. It was noted that complaints early in the year were decreasing, but there had also been a slight increase in numbers of complaints in the latter part of the year. The Head of Quality provided a summary of the source of complaints, including teaching, learning and assessment, marketing, admissions and exams. He commented that a number of complaints did not relate to quality issues, such as complaints about the requirement to pay fees, and that some of these related to the impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>Members were pleased to learn that most complaints were dealt with at an early stage with satisfactory resolutions being found that had prevented complaints rising to higher stages. They were also pleased to learn that there had been no complaints raised in 2019/20 about issues associated with ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion. However, they were disappointed to hear that there were six complaints relating to disability. The Head of Quality explained that three of the complaints related to challenge applied by teachers about poor attendance and attitude to study, two related to communication issues which were resolved, and one complaint related to parking.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted five complaints relating to progress or delayed assessment in Construction and Engineering apprenticeships and actions put in place to address these were discussed. The Chair was satisfied that the actions put in place were appropriate and robust. She also commented that actions put in place to address complaints arising out of the ESOL area in 2018/19 appeared to have been effective as no further complaints of that nature had been received in 2019/20.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>CSM/20/11/11</p>	<p>EXTERNAL NSS STUDENT SURVEY 2019/20</p> <p>The Vice Principal, Curriculum reported that there had been an improvement in the college's response rate for the NSS survey and that satisfaction rates were also up. It was noted that the overall satisfaction rate was 76.53%, which was a 3.7% increase</p>

	<p>on the previous year. However, it was also noted that this remained 6% below the sector average. The Vice Principal highlighted results for Creative Industries and Sports Coaching, which had performed exceptionally well and overall satisfaction on these courses was above average, with 100% satisfaction on the sports programme. It was also noted that results for the Children, Young People and their Services programme had significantly increased and that this was likely to be due to improvements in student voice arrangements. However, it was also noted that some areas continued to receive satisfaction responses below sector averages.</p> <p>Members were pleased to learn that NSS positive comments continued to highlight students' appreciation of the high levels of academic and personal support that they receive, facilitated by small group sizes. It was also noted that comments in 2019/20 were largely positive and supportive of the teaching staff, although some recurring themes were acknowledged, which would need to be addressed. This included some poor teaching and learning, as well as issues with organisation and management.</p> <p>The Vice Principal explained that many of the college part-time students were not eligible to respond to the external NSS survey, although they were included in equivalent internal surveys. She commented that the internal surveys generally produced more positive results.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>CSM/20/11/12</p>	<p>ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2019/20</p> <p>The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) reported that safeguarding remained a high priority for the college and confirmed that the Safeguarding Team were active members of the Wigan Adult and Children's Safeguarding Board. She advised that a number of important changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements had been made. This included making new areas compulsory for schools. In particular, she highlighted the requirement for schools to provide guidance to pupils on recognising toxic or abusive relationships. It was noted that this now meant that when these pupils arrived at college as students, the advice from college staff was no longer their first introduction to these issues. It was also noted that a new section on adverse childhood experiences had been introduced, which had changed the requirements on schools and colleges in detecting problems, supporting good mental health and understanding indicators of children and young people having suffered or being at risk of abuse.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal outlined challenges relating to Children Looked After, including a lack of influence over decisions affecting children out of Borough when the respective council as Corporate Parent made decisions to move them to new care settings. She also outlined the five year trend of retention rates for Children Looked After and it was noted that the in-year rate for 2020/21 currently stood at 100%, following a fall in 2019/20.</p> <p>Members discussed the college's Covid-19 responses relating to safeguarding. The Assistant Principal advised that, throughout lockdown, the college had remained open two days per week for vulnerable learners and that approximately 200 calls to learners per day were made to ensure students continued to feel supported and to enable staff to check in on the most vulnerable learners. She also advised that the college's working patterns remained flexible during the period to match students' needs, including providing live online chats following all main announcements from the government. Members asked what arrangements would be in place over the Christmas period. The Assistant Principal responded that safeguarding services would remain available every day over the period through the use of a staff rota to cover the safeguarding telephone line.</p>

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	<p>The Assistant Principal outlined partnership arrangements, including purchase of CPOMs safeguarding software, developing partnership working with Wigan Family Welfare and 42nd Street, a mental health service targeted at young people. It was noted that the college had also worked with Charlie Waller, an organisation focusing on suicide prevention. The Assistant Principal advised that the college had taken part in training sessions for staff to better understand suicide indicators and ways in which at risk students can be supported. She also advised that this had led to a bespoke Blogg being developed to encourage good behavioural habits and to promote good mental health. Members were pleased to learn that the GM Mental Health Group had been successful in two AoC funding bids to further develop mental health services for young people.</p> <p>Members acknowledged that the college had been successful in fully embedding the Prevent Duty into day-to-day safeguarding activity. It was noted that this was particularly important at the current time as the national terrorism risk in the UK had been increased to 'severe', with an attack being 'highly likely'. The Assistant Principal commented that this was partly due to the amount of time young people were spending online during the pandemic.</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Board commented that the work carried out by the Safeguarding team and all staff at the college was extremely important in terms of protecting young people and it was very encouraging to see how effective and wide ranging the team's activities were. The Chair added that it was clear that the college was not just responding to issues but was also able to pre-empt issues. She also commented that it was good to see the innovative and flexible solutions put in place during the pandemic to maintain support for vulnerable students.</p>
13 CSM/20/11/13	ANY OTHER BUSINESS There was no further business.
	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: 5.00pm Tuesday 9 th March 2021
	The meeting closed at 7.00pm