



**BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2nd MARCH 2022 at 6.00 P.M. – Room 538, ELMS BUILDING**

Present: William Baldwin (Governor/Principal), Gillian Hampden-Thompson (Governor and Chair of Q & C Committee), Jiayue Liang (Governor – Student), Kathryn MacVarish (Governor – Teaching Staff), Chris Piper (Governor), Jackie Punter (co-opted Teaching Staff Member and Digital Director), Jo Redfern (Governor), Louise Serpell (Governor – Parent), Roxanna Toyne (Governor – Student), Andrew Wright (Governor)

In attendance: Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors), Alison Cousens (Assistant Principal – Student Services), James Moncrieff (Deputy Principal), Louise Pennington (Governance Director/Clerk),

Student Observers – Aston Virgo, Ava Peevers and Sachin Bhopal-Myers

The meeting was quorate.

***NOTE: FOR EASE OF REFERENCE QUESTIONS (AND RESPONSES) AND COMMENTS FROM GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN BOLD ITALICS***

## **SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS**

### **1.1 Apologies and Welcomes**

Apologies: None

Welcomes: Student Observers – Aston, Ava and Sachin

### **1.2 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

The Committee minutes were considered and approved by the Committee and the Chair authorised to sign them. **ACTION: Chair**

### **1.3 Matters Arising**

The contents of the actions' schedule were considered and updates were provided as follows, in respect of on-going and completed actions. The schedule would be updated for the next meeting.

- New SARAP points: 2.3 – The Deputy Principal gave the following update and referred to the identified online assessment issues relating to BTEC and the Criminology Diploma qualifications, explaining that owing to the fact that Students were assessed via an extended controlled assignment, there were significant challenges to all Colleges owing to the time element and computer-based nature of the work required.
- The CQT and Examinations Team did work with the IT Team on trying to tighten systems – but with so many Students needing to use the computer suites at the same time, this had an impact on the outcome. Unfortunately, another 7 Students' work was lost in respect of the Criminology examination/assessment in December 2021, but since then another 5 courses' assessment have taken place during January and February 2022 without any issues arising.

- College feedback regarding the issues experienced have been passed on to AQA (examination board), explaining the difficulties and unreasonable demands on providers. Ofqual are investigating putting more examinations online, so providers are keen to ensure that the boards are aware and understand the issues which providers and Students have experienced.

At this point Andrew Wright joined meeting.

– The Deputy Principal reported on the second issue arising from the SARAP process which related to computer science delivery, has been a more challenging problem, and reflecting the larger cohort compared to many other Colleges. The course has achieved good outcomes, but the pressure rests with the limitation in IT and Technical capacity to support Staff and Students, together with a need for further cyber security skill set within the Technical Team. Regarding the latter point and in line with the general need to improve cyber security within the College, currently the Digital Director is working alongside the Head of Computer Science. At this point the Digital Director, provided further information regarding the issue and in particular noting the continuous evolution of the cyber security problem impacting all aspects of the curriculum.

Organisational Influence and Stakeholder Engagement Map (progress is being tracked via CDP reporting: The Principal confirmed that the work to complete the information relating to Governors' networks/connections etc, would be taken forward this term. **ACTION: Sandra Prail/William Baldwin**

**1.4 Declaration of Interests** - None declared.

**1.5 Principal's Update**

William Baldwin reported to Governors as summarised below, after which questions were invited from the Committee as recorded below:

#### **Covid**

- 'Living With' Guidance: Move away from mass testing
- Absence rates
  - 2019 YTD 2.3% staff absence; 2022 YTD 4.1% YTD
  - 2022 YTD 8.7% (compared to 2019 end year 7.6% - attendance gets worse as year progresses).
  - First day back Feb half-term absence texts sent: 11.6% 2022; 3.76% 2021
- HR//Student Issues – up! Post-crisis PTSD? Very time consuming.

#### **Exams**

- Advanced Information
- Mocks/not mocks
- Need to switch off contingency arrangements

#### **Curriculum**

- HOF replacement
- 40 hours – on the agenda



## Finances

- 8.7% uplift for next year to accommodate
- In-year additional funding for growth students = £470k
- Adds £150k to projected end of year cash surplus

## Net Zero

- Carbon Trust Report - £500k Heat Pumps; By 2030 still emit around 200 tonnes of Carbon - Offsetting discussions at Resources.

## Strategic Development Fund Project

- 'Greener Sussex' BHASVIC leading Carbon Literacy element across all colleges
- Hopefully secured funding to continue to end of Academic year rather than financial
- Local Skills Improvement Plan should be reporting skills gaps and next steps before the summer – links to Skills Bill

## Government

- Skills Bill Final Stages/Royal Assent
- Schools White Paper
- Review of ESFA: ESFA should focus on funding delivery while all policy and implementation rests with the DfE
- Have received assurances this won't change anything in the short term.

## Questions

- Thanks to Tarquin Grossman (Head of Faculty) – leaving in summer. His initiative - Progress Central, amongst other things, was highly commended.
- Absences figures staff and students – any comparative data? Re what we are seeing here within sector? Happening nationally but no data to hand. Could do – start to put together through S7 or wait for work force survey. Principals meeting next week – will exchange info.
- Regarding student attendance, it was queried whether there was any difference between first and second years? Anecdotally, it seems to be higher in Year 2 Students, especially with regard to tutorials, although some lessons are impacted too. It was noted that SLT were intending to investigate this further. It was also noted that overall attendance also varied over the last 2 years owing to Covid (online lessons etc), compared earlier years. **ACTION: SLT**

## 1.6 Termly Update - Student Governor Perspectives

Jiayue Liang and Roxanna Toyne gave the following update to Governors based on feedback gained from Students which included references to the following subjects: a) SU/Ambassador Activity, b) Student Wellbeing, c) Student Studies:

- Absences referred to above: Student Governors' view was that there was likely to be more absences arising from tutorials rather than lessons and that for some, this may be owing to work deadlines, revision, illness or travel issues, particularly in light of the recent train disruption.
- SU Executive "election" – the current Executive were giving some thought to holding interviews rather than an election, but it was noted that the Student Union Constitution would need to be

followed, which incorporates an election process. The Student Governors agreed to liaise with Alison Cousens after the meeting. **ACTION: Student Governors/Alison Cousens**

- Request has been made to bring back a smoking area as Students are congregating outside the entrance/exits on Dyke Road and blocking the pavement. In response SLT advised that the College would not want to encourage smoking in Students so that a smoking area would not be endorsed. At this point, the Student Behaviour Policy was referenced, to which all Students are expected to comply. Governors were informed that there was a new Community Services Officer and that they would be asked to investigate the smoking issue, particularly with regard to policing the entrance/exits at break and lunch times.
- Student examination and assessment: it was noted that first year Students would be tested during the first half of the Summer Term which would be a useful experience (as Year 1 Students hadn't had GCSE examinations), whilst Year 2 had recently undergone their mock examinations. The Student Governors said that based on feedback received, Year 2 Students had coped well with the mock examination process. It was noted that there remained some uncertainty regarding the mock examinations may contribute to the Year 2 Students' final outcomes, but it was likely that final examinations in the Summer will be agreed – confirmation is awaited from the DfE. However, Students were unhappy about the inconsistent approach towards reducing the syllabus content which will be included in the final examinations/assessments, with some subjects remaining virtually unchanged whilst others will be based on a 50% reduction in the syllabus. The Principal confirmed that the examination boards have been informed about this inequity.
- Limited Student Study Space – the Student Governors queried whether it may be possible to prioritise Year 2 Students to have access to the available Student space, particularly in recognition of the Summer Term exams. In response, SLT advised that it would be difficult to introduce this, as A1 Students have important end of year examinations too. It was also recorded that in the past the Hall had been set up with single booth exam study space and it had not been fully utilised. SLT agreed to revisit the matter and confirm study spaces available, including potentially increasing study space options, by using any spare space in the Elms Building on the top floor. It was also resolved that a reminder should be sent out to Students/Staff that computer spaces in the Library were for those needing to use a computer.
- Face Masks – it was reported that the most Students had been happy to continue wearing these when needed, but since the rule change, with only a few Students wearing masts, it was reported that Students recognised individual Student choice and that no judgements were made.
- Wifi issues were reported in the main building eg intermittent wifi during a history class, where there was only access for 20 minutes – which made it difficult for Students to access documents distributed by the Teacher via Teams, in the time available.

***In response to a question regarding the general atmosphere on campus, the Student Governors advised that it had been stressful during the mock examination period, but that Students had appreciated that this was useful experience.***

## **SECTION 2: CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE ITEMS**

### **2.1 Draft Social Mobility Strategy**

James Moncrieff introduced the draft document and the following points were recorded:



- Currently in draft but once finalised, possibly by the Summer Term at the earliest, SLT will bring this back to the Committee.
- Document has an audit function, recognising the various aspects of what the College does, together with identifying the issues which need addressing.
- ***In response to a point raised by Governors, it was agreed that there were several KPIs (section 6), which will be evidenced via the College's quality assurance processes and reports. It was also confirmed that Governors originally raised the proposal for developing a strategy to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.***
- SLT is planning a consultation exercise together with further research on what others may do in other areas of provision (highlighted in yellow in the document).
- ***The Committee queried how the document would be used with effect from the next academic year, and James Moncrieff explained that the audience was SLT, together with some other relevant Staff and that there was no intention at present to share the Strategy with Students, although the Strategy informs Student induction. It was also acknowledged that the document would overlap with other college strategies and reports, for example the College's EDIMs analysis.***
- The Committee welcomed the document and the comprehensive detail within the draft strategy.
- ***The Committee suggested that the document could also be useful in the College's marketing.***
- ***In response to an offer made by Jo Redfern, it was agreed that HEI institutions' example strategies could be useful and she agreed to share these. ACTION: Jo Redfern***

The Committee gave its support to the draft plan and the proposals from SLT to take this forward. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

**2.2 College Development Plan – Spring Update –** the contents of the paper were taken as read.

- a) Quality of Education
- b) Behaviour and Attitude
- c) Personal Development
- d) Leadership and Management

James Moncrieff highlighted the following points and also noted the yellow highlighted sections which indicates targets to focus upon:

**a) Quality of Education**

- ***The Committee asked how phase 2 of Progress Central would be managed following Tarquin Gross's resignation and James Moncrieff reported that the vision for this project, had been developed many years ago by Tarquin and existed in paper form for all to use. During that period, James was closely involved in taking this forward with Tarquin, utilising the College's IT support with the necessary coding skills. Phase 2 is also underway and there are weekly meetings with stakeholders. Alison Cousens' input is critical to Phase 2&3 developments.***

- **Governors queried the reduction in overall applications and the Deputy Principal explained that this is a first but it comes off the back of an exceptional increase in applications last year. James Moncrieff advised that applications remained incredibly healthy, we are still oversubscribed and that the main risk to student numbers is now under enrolling because the college is completely full and cannot over-enrol for September 2022.**
- **In response to a question about the T Level discussions, the Principal reported that this was an area which SLT would monitor rather than include this in the College's curriculum offer: if we were to introduce T-Levels, this would have an impact on Student numbers (22 Students – A Levels, with perhaps single-figure student numbers who may be interested in a T Level).**

**b) Section 2 Behaviour and Attitude:**

- Attendance issues discussed earlier in the meeting – refer above.
- Employability – work is ongoing to develop the alumni data held by the College, co-ordinated by one of the College's Guidance Managers. An action plan has been prepared to incorporate EDI information. A further update will be included in the Summer CDP report.

**c) Section 3 Personal Development:**

- Reference was made to the work planned in this area utilising the additional funding arising from the 40 GLH proposals and in line with the College's Careers Strategy. A study programme will be prepared this year, with the intention of organising a work experience week which all students are required from Year 1; this will mean that all Students will have access to work or employability experience. **In response to a question from the Committee, SLT confirmed that there was work to be done to achieve the above, and that this would take additional staffing capacity. The College is basing its model for this work utilising the same one which Collyers has been using (noting that Ofsted Inspectors had thought Collyers strategy and plan was good but as it hadn't yet been implemented, Inspectors weren't able to access impact). Governors also questioned what the work experience would entail and in response the Deputy Principal explained that the work experience options were not yet finalised, but once resolved, there would be a qualitative reflection based on the available data. This will also then feed into the planning for Students' Year 2.** The College already has a part time work experience co-ordinator, but within the plans to be prepared in this task, with a change to the study programme, there will be a need for further staffing capacity, to cater for the additional work required.

**d) Section 4 Leadership and Management:**

- **Following a question from the Committee, attention was drawn to section 53 and the high CPOMs alerts, and it was confirmed that the reporting levels had increased, although SLT confirmed that the alert figures should not be compared to previous years' figures as reporting has changed.**

**2.3 EDI SARAP (incl. EDIMS and HR aspects)**

The contents of the paper were noted by the Committee and the following points recorded:



- The Report connects to the draft Social Mobility Strategy
- This annual report pulls together the statutory information required in respect of Staff and Students, within input obtained from the Guidance and EDI Teams and the HR manager.
- Next year the EDIMs' Report will be coordinated by one of the Guidance Managers, who will take over this role from Alison Cousens.
- Over this year Alison Cousens has worked with the Information Manager, Tara Davies, to review the data and its presentation and as a consequence the document includes more graphical representation.
- The figures relating to those Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were highlighted and the efforts which have been put in place to provide the support necessary in order to close the gap in outcomes, compared to other Students. There have been some improvements as evidenced via the value added and retention statistics, particularly through the pandemic and noting the Teacher assessed grades (TAGs); SLT will be closely monitoring the outcomes for this year to see the impact/changes.
- Alison Cousens reported on the work underway on the College's anti-racist strategy and an assessment of appropriate terminology, referring to the DfE guidance and the unpopular use of the term BAME, with further discussions on the latter, to ensure that the best terminology is being used which is acceptable to all. She also reported that in addition to the Student cohort who qualify for additional support under the Government criteria for disadvantaged Student status, there were many other vulnerable Students who also needed the College's support, which kept the Student Services Team, very busy.
- ***The Committee questioned whether there would be any merit in including governance impact, to establish whether the Board represents the Student population and local community in terms of EDI criteria and it was agreed to consider this in future. ACTION: Alison Cousens***
- The forthcoming March Managers' Away Day will be focusing upon EDI issues.

Governors thanked Alison Cousens and her team for the report and particularly found the executive summary very clear and helpful.

## 2.4 Increasing BHASVIC Study Programmes by 40 Hours

James Moncrieff referred to the paper, which was taken as ready and summarised the various issues.

- Historical update regarding funding over the last 10 years was given to committees, noting the difficulties experienced whilst funding remained unchanged. The additional funding offered this year, was welcomed, noting that this would be used to provide a better and more meaningful overall Student experience.
- Introducing a revised Study Programme in the time available will prove to be a challenge for everyone, but is welcomed.
- The Student Governors reported that where there are new opportunities for Students, account should be taken of the timing, particularly with the pressure on Year 2 students to focus on revision for their final exams.
- SLT are aiming to develop options which are quite ambitious within the short time available – due to be implemented with effect from the next academic year – September 2022. Currently, SLT

are investigating the best way to manage this in the time available, together with completing a risk assessment in terms of whether the options meet the ESFA criteria.

- Once the plans become formalised, the College will prepare and implement communications for all stakeholders, particularly students and parents/carers.
- ***Regarding the options under consideration, Governors asked for more details and in response James Moncrieff, explained that the intention would be to offer options which were attractive to Students and to complement their existing programmes of study, without involving classroom space (which is already fully allocated) – perhaps via digital means, but noting that following Covid, various alternative means of delivering the curriculum have been developed. SLT will also be taking forward plans to develop work experience placement options for A1 Students, which had been limited until now, owing to funding limitations, notwithstanding that plans may take some time to become established.***
- In line with the ESFA's requirements, the new programme will have to be audited and the details registered and evidence.

The recommendations within the paper were supported by the Committee and recommended to Corporation for approve in terms of utilisation of the additional funding, being part of the curriculum intent document and the proposed revision to the Study Programme. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

## **2.5 Admissions Policy**

James Moncrieff presented the document to the Committee and the following points were recorded:

- The Committee was reminded that a Corporation task and finish group was established to review the admission policy proposed changes regarding new wording relating to exceptional circumstances (including staff link) and in line with social mobility. The group met in October 2021, submitted their thoughts to SLT who then reviewed and revised the wording accordingly.
- The Committee discussed the impact upon those category 3 applicants who would be denied a place, owing to priority being given to those applicants gaining a place owing to exceptional circumstances, staff or sibling link and noting the data relating to this in the paper and that the staff link element was very small, between 0 and 4.
- ***The Committee discussed the Staff link element and data in the report. The Committee also discussed the Sibling link offer and recognised the problems it aimed to address (some children receive offers, but another in the same family be rejected owing to numbers and application of the policy re priorities). The Committee discussed the pros and cons of the special considerations and in particular the Staff and Sibling links, and also recognised the need to focus upon other special considerations such as looked after children, carers etc. The analysis relating to Staff and Sibling link numbers also provided context for Governors, noting that this formed a very small minority of the overall enrolments.***
- Currently of the Category 3 enrolments, for next year, 35 will be Sibling link, with a further 8 Category 3s falling into the special consideration classification owing to health issues and family bereavement. Further work needs to be done to monitor those special consideration enrolments who fall within the “contribution to the community” classification.
- Consideration was given to returning to this subject in future to allow for more time to review the special considerations' clauses in the Policy. However, on reflection it was agreed to approve the





policy for this review cycle, but it was accepted that quality impact assessments should be carried out by SLT and that special considerations' elements would then be re-visited next year (for September 2024 admissions) prior to the following year's admission process commencing – Spring Term 2023 review by Q & C Committee, or at the earliest Autumn Term 2022, when the data analysis should be ready. The quality impact assessments are expected to get underway in the Summer Term. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

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The Committee understood and accepted SLT's recommendations and recommended the revised policy to Corporation for approval. **ACTION: James Moncrieff.**

## 2.6 Risk Assurance

The Committee approved the recommendation to Corporation as explained by James Moncrieff, who had highlighted the key aspects of the paper, as outlined in the Executive Summary. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

## SECTION 3: CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were taken as read and endorsed where necessary, subject to the questions included in the items and recorded below.

### Policies and other Documents

3.1 **Student Charges' Schedule** – approved and recommended for approval. **ACTION James Moncrieff**

## SECTION 4: OTHER ITEMS

### 4.1 Any Other Business

As it was noted that this was the last meeting for the current Student Governors, thanks were recorded from the Committee for their excellent work over the last year.

4.2 **Date of Next Meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

## SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

**TO BE TRANSFERED TO CONFIDENTIAL( PINK) MINUTE – refer separate confidential record.**

At this point the Student Observers were thanked for attending and left the Meeting at this point.

Chair.....Date.....