

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2017

Present:	Jan Fielding (<i>Chair</i>))
	Don Logan) External Governors
	Caroline Vernon)
	Lorraine Falle	HE Student Governor
In attendance:	Keith Wardle	Head of Area: Health, Early Years and Education (<i>items 1 and 2 only</i>)
	Jeff Chadd	Assistant Principal; Head of Sixth Form
	Mark Nicholson	Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality
	Hannah Priestley-Jukes	Quality Co-ordinator
	Mark Preston	Quality Manager
	Oona Cushen	Clerk to the Corporation

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

LE/17/001 The Clerk advised that Committee Chairs are usually appointed annually at the first meeting of each academic year. In the absence of Ian Sinker, Jan Fielding was nominated, seconded and appointed as Chair of the Learner Experience Committee for this meeting only. Should Ian Sinker step down, members agreed that Jan Fielding would remain as Chair of the Learner Experience Committee for 2017/18.

LE/17/002 The Chair drew Governors' attention to the two paragraphs at the top of the agenda, formerly agenda items, reminding Governors of their responsibilities and to declare any interests relevant to agenda items.

CURRICULUM PRESENTATION; HEALTH, EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

Keith Wardle, Head of Area for Health, Early Years and Education gave a presentation on his curriculum areas, which had previously been requested by the Committee.

LE/17/003 Prior to merger, Mr Wardle was Head of Learning at the Sixth Form and still teaches A-Level Law at Rating Lane. The Law team had been judged outstanding prior to the merger. Following the merger, Mr Wardle became Head of Area for Health, Early Years and Education and Access to HE and is based at Channelside.

LE/17/004 In regards to Early Years, the curriculum runs from Level 2 through to Level 6, with a focus on supporting teaching and learning, e.g. teaching assistant, or on Early Years Educators (to work with young learners in nursery). There are both full and part time courses, alongside apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3, delivered by seven members of staff (two assessors, one assessor/tutor) and four tutors, who also deliver on HE to assessors, apprenticeships, part-time courses and to students in the workplace. All staff are qualified up to doctorate level.

LE/17/005 Health and Social Care currently offer courses from Level 1 through to Level 6, with a focus on career progression into health related care work, nursing, midwifery, paramedic, etc. Courses are full-time and sit alongside apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3, as well as a Level 5 offer with Cumbria County Council. The area is also seeking to offer new standards at Level 4. Health and Social Care is a big growth area and there are opportunities for upskilling by employers and there is one dedicated member of staff working on the 'Edge' offer, which is funded training for those already in employment. There are six full-time members of staff, including one assessor and all have Masters qualifications.

- LE/17/006 Access to HE is a smaller provision comprising of a one year, full-time Level 3 course leading into Higher Education for over 19+ and offers two pathways; Allied Healthcare Professional (leading to nursing etc.) or Humanities. Humanities, comprising English, Sociology etc. is the smaller pathway leading to teaching, sciences etc. There are four teachers, including one part-time Sociology tutor with the remaining three teaching across the curriculum and both sites.
- LE/17/007 There is a dedicated member of learning support, as well the inclusion team, who support with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP). There is also a designated mentor for Access and HE courses. As part of the new BTec, there will be compulsory work placements, but these are already offered as part of programmes of study, as well as English and maths if required. The team offer 'after school clubs', as well as giving school talks to promote early years and health courses. In addition, the College works with St. Bernard's High School on delivering early years programme to Level 1 students.
- LE/17/008 The team also works closely with the College sports maker to engage students in a six week programme, based around healthy lifestyle and general life skills, e.g. thinking on their feet. There are lots of activities to help learners with group work and to build confidence, including participating in a national dance competition.
- LE/17/009 There is also the 'Risedale Cadet' programme, and this is for students who the College feels are the most able and committed students to work in the care sector and, last year, four gained employment through the programme. The area has also developed good relationships with other employers and brings in guest speakers etc.
- LE/17/010 Early Years focuses on raising aspirations and encourages learners to consider progressing to HE courses at the College and nine students have progressed onto the College's HE courses. These are a good option for students lacking in confidence and maybe want to stay close to home.
- LE/17/011 The proposed self-assessment grade for 2016/17 for the area is 'good', as there are 100% high grades for Early Years and 100% achievement on the Foundation Degree and BA courses. Health has had outstanding value added for the past three years, with a good number of distinctions. 100% of Education and 96% of Health students would recommend their course to a friend. Overall attendance stands at 90%, although there is some work required on persistent learners with lower attendance of 85%. Retention is the biggest challenge, standing at 86% for Education and 87% for Health. There is good student progression, with 20 out of 26 learners progressing into HE or employment in the care sector and eight out of 11 Early Years learners progressed into HE courses at the College and there is supported study in specific units that are required for entry to some university courses.
- LE/17/012 For 2017/18, a key focus is to improve retention in all areas, but particularly for Access, as adults tend to have several commitments outside of College, but want to get back into education and Higher Education. Attendance is good but focus will be on the poorer attenders, some of whom will have complex support needs rather than behavioural needs.
- LE/17/013 There will also be a revised apprenticeship delivery model, as the College moves towards delivering the new standards rather than frameworks. Health has already made the transition but for a transient sector, employers are not keen on releasing people on paid leave to attend College for one day a week. The key will be to negotiate with employers by demonstrating the quality of delivery provided by the College under the new funding mechanism in getting learners through their end point assessment. Apprenticeships at all levels are a growth area and the College is already seeing an increase in numbers, with the removal of one provider and numbers should continue to increase as employers understand the different deliver model. LearnDirect is a big competitor, but their distance learning apprenticeship offer is under threat following their Ofsted inspection.
- LE/17/014 There are also opportunities for higher level apprenticeships and the College is already working with Cumbria County Council to deliver Level 5 apprenticeships. The team are

also working with the University of Cumbria (UoC) and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to develop Level 6 apprenticeships and a new BA course in Health. Existing staff already have the expertise to deliver these courses.

- LE/17/015 Early Years apprenticeships and part-time adult courses are also an area for growth. Although there has been a decrease in 16-18 students, which is sector wide in Early Years, there is increased recruitment through apprenticeships. Health and Social Care has also seen a small dip in recruitment at Level 2, as well as a smaller Level 3 cohort.
- LE/17/016 There are smaller numbers on Access overall this year, particularly on Humanities, which is a smaller pathway. The entry requirements were amended to ensure the best chance of retaining learners who will achieve as there were some retention issues last year. For those learners who do not hold maths and English, these qualifications must be completed prior to progression to a Level 3 course.

In response to questions:

- LE/17/017 Governors questioned the impact the maths and English strategy would have within the vocational area and Level 3 opportunities. It was clarified that this is not an issue within the Early Years programme, but is more of a challenge in Health. There were a number of students last year who were recruited onto Level 3 without maths and English but who had already struggled at Level 2. This year, a Level 1 course has been introduced to help learners with progression. There are slight improvements and learners are able to study at Level 3 without maths but the key is for learners to achieve English prior to their Level 3 course as this is specifically needed for career progression. There is greater emphasis on teaching within the vocational area and Functional Skills qualifications are also available as an alternative to GCSEs.
- LE/17/018 Health was a pilot for Pro Monitor and the system has now provided a huge benefit to the area and the pilot has had a smooth transition for all curriculum areas. Information has been cascaded through the teams and the first few weeks have progressed well.
- LE/17/019 It was clarified that the attendance figure includes authorised absence and the attendance figure excluding authorised absence would be notified to the Clerk.
- LE/17/020 The Committee received the Curriculum Presentation on Health, Early Years and Access to HE and thanked Mr Wardle for his informative discussion.**

ACTION: Head of Area to notify the Clerk of the attendance figure without authorised absence.

Keith Wardle left the meeting.

COLLEGE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Q3) ANALYSIS

The Quality Manager gave a brief presentation and advised that the report now covers a single survey, which was previously reported as two surveys last year. The key points highlighted were:

- LE/17/021 82% of learners (737) completed the survey, which is slightly lower than the previous year. There was a 90% overall satisfaction rate and, although this is a 2% decline, there are no significant issues to report.
- LE/17/022 Early Years learners were the most satisfied at 97%, with Construction the least satisfied at 86%, although this is still considerably high and is a reflection of some known issues in this area, which are already being addressed. Craft, with the largest numbers, had a satisfaction rate of 89%. There were three areas which showed a 5% decline from the previous year; career advice, application to university and motivation. This data has been shared with the teams for actions to be included in their quality improvement plans. There is an ongoing programme of focus groups, along with 'You Said, We Did' posters around College.
- LE/17/023 The question in relation to application to university was an optional question, although 97% provided a response even if this was not relevant to them. In future, students will

only be able to answer this question if they have first answered yes to 'Have you applied to university?'. In addition, the College has increased the number of HE awareness sessions, identified students for the 'Hello Future' project (which aims to get students from deprived wards into university), is running the High Flyers/Honours Programmes, introduced a cross-campus HE fair and twilight finance sessions for students and their parents/carers.

- LE/17/024 To improve the careers advice score, the College Careers Adviser and Co-ordinator is now available for appointment throughout the week across both sites. There has also been a successful pilot with learners on Access to HE and the National Careers Services (NCS), which has received 100% positive feedback. The Careers Fair will also take place in January, rather than March so learners are not missing out on opportunities and there will also be a comprehensive audit of careers advice with all curriculum areas. It is unlikely the same levels of satisfaction will be recorded next year and actions throughout the year will be monitored for impact.
- LE/17/025 The lower score for motivation is not clear and the question will be improved for next year's survey. Fresher's Fair was moved to Channelside this year and there was an increased range of exhibitors, with the aim of raising awareness of progression and enrichment opportunities. To improve learners' resilience, the number of drop-in sessions to improve confidence and motivation has been increased, and are promoted college-wide by the Personal Progress Coaches (PPCs). The model was taken from Rating Lane, where it works very well.
- LE/17/026 This will be the last iteration of the survey for Rating Lane and it followed similar questions and themes. There was a smaller response rate but overall students appear happy following the first year of merger. There were 20 out of 20 questions with a high satisfaction score and the response rate has been discussed and actions on how to improve this will be monitored to ensure strengths at Rating Lane are maintained and good practice is shared across both sites.

In response to questions:

- LE/17/027 Governors welcomed the reported actions on maths and English, careers advice and questioned the low scores from construction. There are known and reported issues in construction, with many learners focused on gaining employment at the end of their course, rather than progressing onto university. Work will be undertaken to support curriculum improvements for this area, as well as a more in-depth review of how the College plans and delivers construction. The College will be working much more closely with employers, as some distance has developed between the offer and the requirements of employers.
- LE/17/028 The 66% response rate for Rating Lane is noticeably lower. In previous years, completion of the questionnaire was part of a structured timetable where set times were available for learner to complete. This year, completion of the survey was voluntary. In addition, learners may have 'survey fatigue' as the survey is completed for each subject. Focus will be on the quality, not the quantity of responses.

LE/17/029 The Committee received and discussed the College Student Questionnaire (Q3) presentation.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

LE/17/030 Apologies for absence were received from Ian Sinker and Andrew Wren.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2017

LE/17/031 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15 June 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

Committee Action Checklist

- LE/17/032 The Clerk referred Governors to paper FC/LE/01/17 and advised that an action checklist is standard practice, as opposed to including a table in the minutes. An action checklist, therefore, will be introduced for each committee and Corporation to allow continuous tracking of any outstanding actions. Once an action has been completed and reported at the relevant meeting, it will be removed from the checklist.
- LE/17/033 The Quality Manager is liaising with the Clerk in regards to student focus groups.
- LE/17/034 It was confirmed that the Committee will receive a copy of the Annual Staffing Report, following presentation to the Finance and Resources Committee. However, Governors felt the staffing report may not address their queries, which focus on staff satisfaction and any potential negative impact on teaching and learning. The student surveys reflect that learners have not had any issues with the merger, but there is no comparative data in regards to staff. Staff wellbeing, absence and performance all have an impact on teaching and learning and Governors questioned whether there was a happy teaching workforce. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that staff had engaged with and understood the merger through regular communications, but felt it would be an inappropriate time to undertake a staff survey until the restructure had been fully completed.
- LE/17/035 The Committee noted and agreed the Committee Action Checklist, paper FC/LE/01/17.**

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

- LE/17/036 The Clerk referred Governors to paper FC/LE/02/17 and advised that the Terms of Reference should be presented at the first meeting of each academic year. They are fully detailed in the Standing Orders reviewed by the Governance and Search Committee and will require approval from the Corporation.
- LE/17/037 There is a proposed change in membership, in that Student Governors will only be in attendance at meetings, rather than actual members of the Committee.
- LE/17/038 The schedule of business and meeting dates will be reviewed for next year, to ensure full data with critical analysis is provided timely.
- LE/17/039 The Committee received and noted the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Search Committee, paper FC/LE/02/17.**

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE 2016/17

- LE/17/040 The Clerk referred Governors to paper FC/LE/03/17 and advised this was considered good practice for all committees. The report provides a summary of responsibilities, meetings, attendance and core business undertaken by the Committee in 2016/17 and allows each committee to ensure they are fulfilling their delegated duties.

In response to questions:

- LE/17/041 The list of items discussed was taken directly from the headings within the minutes. It was noted that the Committee had received some presentations which may not have been listed and the Clerk would investigate and amend the report.
- LE/17/042 The Committee discussed and approved the Annual Report of the Learner Experience Committee, paper FC/LE/03/17, subject to amendments around presentations received by the Committee.**

Action: Clerk to review the presentations provided to the Committee in 2016/17 and amend the report accordingly, prior to signing by the Chair.

HE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality referred Governors to paper FC/LE/04/17 and highlighted the key points:

LE/17/043 The survey is for final year HE students only, is the same survey used for universities and this year is the poorest result for the College, with overall satisfaction declining from 87% to 67%. Previous issues with the HE Computing and Business Foundation Degree have been reported to Governors. Students, however, exercised their right to voice their dissatisfaction with teaching and assessment in this area. Actions were taken in-year to rectify the situation, but it has still impacted on the overall results, which are especially disappointing as the College received the silver Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award this year. The TEF re-assessment will take place in three years' time, so the College has time to ensure corrective action had has a positive impact. Response rates in some areas were too small to be published.

In response to questions:

LE/17/044 The reported complaint regarded a specific member of staff and was fully investigated. An improvement plan is in place, with ongoing progress being monitored closely. All the students affected still passed their course and achieved their required grades.

LE/17/045 Governors questioned whether there were any financial implications or reputational risk from the poor result. The Business and Project Management courses are being wound down and there is a new Foundation Degree in Project Management, linked to BAE Systems and supported by the University of Cumbria.

LE/17/046 Governors questioned whether there was any correlation between the results of this survey and other internal surveys. It was confirmed that the survey results had come as a surprise to the team, given the actions taken in year to rectify issues in one particular area. The courses affected had a very high response rate compared to the cohort size, which has affected the overall result, especially as good responses were received from other courses. It was emphasised that this result should not impact on partnership working and did not affect learners' achievement.

LE/17/047 The Committee received and discussed the HE National Student Survey Analysis; paper FC/LE/04/17.

RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality gave a brief presentation, of which the key points are:

LE/17/048 Recruitment on 16-19 study programmes currently stands at 1,333 against a target of 1,473. This does not include 50 learners to be enrolled throughout the year with a sub-contractor or 100 learners recruited onto the pre-apprenticeship programme. Some courses have under recruited but numbers will continue to increase in-year.

LE/17/049 Adult recruitment stands at 364 against a target of 600, but the true measure for adult learning programmes is the funding these learners generate. The majority are on full-time programmes and the College is likely to meet its funding target for this year.

LE/17/050 The College has recruited 450 HE learners, against a target of 510. A lot of work has gone into this recruitment, including introducing a range of new programmes, e.g. a top-up course in Health and Social Care to Level 6, a top-up degree in Business Management. The College delivers higher apprenticeships for BAE systems and also won a competitive tender to run its Foundation Degree in Project Management.

LE/17/051 It is likely that apprenticeship recruitment will reach last year's figure, but this may be at the cost of some displacement on full-time courses. Following the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, it is clear employers are uncertain of their options. Larger

organisations are looking at higher apprenticeships, but this may be as a procurement exercise, rather than focusing on training and development.

- LE/17/052 The College had applied to become an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) a few years ago, but this had been turned down as one already existed in Cumbria at that time. Increase recruitment to apprenticeships may affect recruitment onto full-time courses, as evidence in the earlier curriculum presentation. The College is hopeful that recruitment levels will improve throughout the year.
- LE/17/053 The main areas of under-recruitment are A Levels, Construction (curriculum model being reviewed), Sport and Public Services. There will be spare capacity in Sport and Public Services, which could be redeployed elsewhere, for example, with the apprenticeship offer.
- LE/17/054 HE under-recruitment is mainly the HNC Electrical Engineering, Foundation Degree Business and HE Computing. The College does have a meeting planned with BAE Systems regarding HE under-recruitment, following the College introducing flexible study options, out-of-hours classes etc. to aid recruitment.

In response to questions:

- LE/17/055 It was confirmed that under-recruitment would always be a cause for concern financially, but this will be managed in-year.
- LE/17/056 Employers have not yet fully assimilated all the information surrounding the levy funding and are taking their time to assess options available. There is also the fear of committing their funding too early, but there are some good training opportunities available. Learners with Risedale have progressed onto the Foundation Degree. The College is working with local schools but it is likely the delivery model will need to change. Employers are looking at spending their levy on upskilling existing staff, who want to study at higher level, through an apprenticeship rather than taking on new staff.
- LE/17/057 There is a smaller demographic and there has been a dip in A-Level recruitment. Around 80% of the College's A-Level provision is delivered at Rating Lane, but a number of courses have been discontinued.
- LE/17/058 The College is working with Chetwynde, but Ulverston High School has also under-recruited as some learners do travel out of area. There is a lot of choice for learners and a falling demographic means a smaller cohort to recruit from and some consolidation of the local offer may be required. The improving reputation of Furness Academy, however, may make a difference in the future.

LE/17/059 The Committee discussed and noted the Recruitment Overview Presentation.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality gave a brief presentation, of which the key points are:

- LE/17/060 An overview of performance predictions by qualification, alongside 2015/16 outturns and National Achievement Rate (NAR) was provided to members. The College's overall achievement will increase from 80% in 2015/16 to 84%. If A Levels are discounted, the overall achievement rate is still 83%, so the increase from the sixth form provision has not had a significant impact.
- LE/17/061 Basic skills maths and English (Functional Skills) have seen a 13% improvement, alongside a 22% increase in GCSE English high grades. English results are better overall than maths results and this can be partly attributable to the positive impact from a dedicated lead for English, as well as the appointment of new staff who are experienced practitioners in the delivery of GCSE. A dedicated lead for maths has now been appointed as well.

- LE/17/062 There is also strong performance on Diplomas (the biggest cohort with 1,100 learners and achievement rate of 86%) and A Levels (second biggest cohort with 531 learners and a 93% achievement rate).
- LE/17/063 Apprenticeships overall have declined from 82% in 2015/16 to 75%, but remain above national average. This may be partly attributable to the changeover from frameworks to standards, the impact of funding changes, some unsuccessful staffing changes and an under-performing sub-contractor. This particular sub-contract has not been renewed for 2017/18. Similarly, timely achievement fell to 67%, compared to 76% but also remains well above the national average.
- LE/17/064 The areas for improvement in 2017/18 are apprenticeships, high grades for GCSE maths, construction and IT and Computing across both sites. Pro-Monitor is now installed across both sites and has worked well previously at Rating Lane. There has been a focus on the management of English and maths and now this has been resolved, focus will be on teaching and support, along with attendance and preparations for external assessment.
- LE/17/065 Out of 28 A Level subjects, 10 are on the newly reformed A Level courses. Although the overall pass rate has slightly declined from 99.1% in 2015/16 to 97.7%, this is attributable to the reformed A Level courses and a brand new specification of subjects in 15 years and mainly in traditional academic subjects, e.g. History, Biology etc. Only 13 out of 525 entries were awarded a 'U' (fail) grade. There has been a drop in the number of high grades, mainly but not all in the reformed subjects. There are very experienced, high quality teachers in the affected reformed subjects and assurance can be evidenced through the AS course results, which are taught by the same teachers.
- LE/17/066 The ALPS system is still being used for value added and this has seen a marked decline from 2015/16. Some previously high performing areas have dipped, but each course, which is deemed as under-performing is reviewed at the start of each academic year through a self-assessment process to identify whether additional support and monitoring is required. Some courses, e.g. English Language and History, will not be subject to intervention, as lessons have already been learned on the transition to reformed subjects. There is no overall picture on value added published by the Government.
- LE/17/067 AS Level courses now account for less than a third of the Sixth Form provision and cannot be compared with like-for-like owing to the change in grading system. Results are very good, with the pass rate being the second highest achieved for the Sixth Form. The ALPS grade 3 score also places the provision in the top 25% in the country. GCSE English is a stand out result, with nearly a 70% pass rate.

In response to questions:

- LE/17/068 There are performance issues for particular curriculum areas, including IT across both sites.
- LE/17/069 It was confirmed that, where learners have not achieved the grades they wanted, this has not appeared to affect their desired progression and they have been able to get onto the courses they wanted with the grades they achieved.
- LE/17/070 There are five particular A-Level subjects which have been identified as under-performing; Computer Science, Psychology, English Literature, Geography and Sociology.
- LE/17/071 The Committee discussed and noted the Performance Update Presentation.**

ASSURING QUALITY; LEARNING WALKS

- LE/17/072 48 hours' notice is given for learning walks and the Clerk will be advised of these, as well as dates for student focus groups, so Governors can participate, if available. Governors felt it would be useful to attend a focus group from a good performing area, followed by one from an under-performing area and to revisit these at the end of year to assess impact of actions. English and maths would also be a useful theme.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality and the Quality Manager on Governor involvement in learning walks and focus groups throughout the year.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LE/17/073 There were no other items of business.

CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION WITH EXTERNAL MEMBERS ONLY

LE/17/074 This is a confidential item, under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act, for Corporation Members only. Paragraph LE/17/075 is, therefore, minuted separately.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

LE/17/076 Thursday 16 November 2017 at 5pm

The Corporation agrees that these minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

SIGNED:

NAME: (Chair)

DATE: