**Curriculum & Standards Committee**

**AGENDA**

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| Date | May 21 2020 | Time | 10.30 am |
| Venue | Zoom | | |
| Chair | Gill Short | | |
| **Membership:** Gill Short (Chair), David Smith, Steve Hedges, student governor (Vacant), Catherine Manning (observer, new Governor as from June 1 2020)  **In attendance:** Dan Shelley (Executive Director – Strategic Partnerships and Engagement), East Sussex Group Principals [Rebecca Conroy (Eastbourne), Fred Carter (Lewes), Jim Sharpe (Hastings) | | | |

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|  | Item | Action |
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|  | **Apologies**  Apologies were noted by Steve Hedges |  |
|  | **Declarations of Interest**  No interests were declared. |  |
|  | **Minutes of the last meeting**  The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.  **Action: Mia Bryden to amend the spelling of surnames.** | MB |
|  | **Matters Arising**  Noted and covered via agenda. |  |
|  | **New Terms of Reference**  Mia Bryden presented the amended TOR which had been discussed with the Chair of the Committee and Jim Sharpe, as the Quality Lead. The relationship between the Local College Boards, this Committee and the main Board have been clarified as follows:  Local College Boards are responsible for maintaining and growing the  the reputation of the East Sussex College Group in its local communities and  amongst learners both locally and beyond.  Specifically, the purpose of the Local Board is to:   1. To ensure accountability at a local level and engage with stakeholders, staff and students respectively 2. To monitor, support and challenge in respect to the quality of provision, achievement and progress of learners within the local College setting 3. To provide an opportunity for the College and stakeholders to discuss the current and future skills needs   The requirement to have representation from each local college board, outside of the Principals, on the Curriculum and Standards Committee was noted. There was a discussion about whether or not members needed to be Independent Governors. David Smith advised interviews were underway for additional co-opts and members of local college board to supplement existing arrangements.  There remains a vacancy for a student member, and this will be rectified in the next student elections.  Mia Bryden advised that the responsibility for overseeing issues arising in the areas of Disclosure Policy, Information Policy and the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, is now proposed move under the remit of the Audit and Risk Committee.  Mia Bryden proposed the responsibility of this Committee to review and approve contracts with subcontractors of the ESCG should move under the Finance Committee. This Committee should receive reports to support it to quality-assure provision delivered by ESCG subcontractors.  **Action: Mia Bryden to discuss with Exec team and relevant Committee Chairs.**  David Smith asked for quality of learning, assessment and teaching to be added into section 5.  It was noted that Mia Bryden would read across all TOR to ensure consistency and synergy ahead of Board sign off in July 2020.  **Action: Mia Bryden** | MB  MB |
|  | **Quality update**   * **SAR** – Jim Sharpe advised updates were made to the SAR and uploaded to the Ofsted portal. The Committee was reminded of the FEC's draft recommendation that self-assessment and quality improvement processes need further refinement to ensure they are aligned and monitored effectively by the Board. The SAR will be a substantive item at this Committee's next meeting. The Committee will need to consider arrangements to improve scrutiny and monitoring. It is acknowledged that the SAR will need updating to reflect Covid-19 arrangements.   David Smith thanked Jim Sharpe for his work on the SAR. He advised that the Governance Development Committee will oversee input into the Governance elements in next year's submission.   * **QIP –** The current iteration of the QIP is suspended and replaced with priority lockdown actions including:   1. Academic Continuity Plan  2. Lockdown Quality Action Plans  This is tabled for Committee's next meeting.   * **KPIs –** Again, this will form a substantial agenda item for the next meeting. Jim Sharpe advised that whilst some KPIs, such as retention remain significant, there will be some modifications to this year's KPIs in light of lockdown and calculated and delayed results. * **Quality Improvement Plan update – Inc. CV19 response summary**  |  | | --- | | Jim Sharpe updated on how learning is being delivered across the College. He described; remote distance learning, paper packs, live virtual lessons, pre-recorded sessions, and work uploaded onto the portal.  Student engagement was noted to be high in comparison to national rates. Jim Sharpe said student resistance to continued study is increasing and that a small percentage of students have failed to engage with any remote learning. |   David Smith asked what support was being provided to students who have found, or are now finding, engaging with learning a challenge. Rebecca Conroy advised the Intervention Team are working in addition to the Wellbeing Team to support and encourage those students. A meeting is planned on May 26 to look at barriers to engagement for individual students. Rebecca Conroy advised 162 students are currently being monitored for safeguarding purposes. Safeguarding Managers on each Campus are working to distinguish which of their students are no longer engaging and why. She noted that engagement from at-risk students is an ever-changing picture.  Jim Sharpe advised of IT supports provided to students, including the delivery of devices to support home learning to those in need. Gill Short noted the response has been impressive, but that learners have raised this as a real barrier in their feedback (item 7).   * **Support for "at risk" teachers/training.**   A staff survey has been completed, the results of which are tabled at the HR Committee this afternoon. The survey focused on staff experience of lockdown. Themes have emerged about confidence and support received to alter their teaching practices to an online delivery platform. There is some inconsistency across teachers and subject matter as to how well adjustments have been made and experienced. Fred Carter outlined the supports offered to staff in this area, including training on Google Classroom. It was noted that teaching staff whose performance was being monitored before lockdown continues to be scrutinised. The Committee was provided with an Academic Continuity Plan, which detailed the support and guidance for staff during the lockdown.   * **Progress update on how grades will be awarded to students**  |  | | --- | | Jim Sharpe advised that the College has established a working group to ensure full engagement with the examination board processes. | | He advised there will be no performance tables this year used for Ofsted/DfE, etc., including destination data. He said that many student outcomes will be awarded based on college performance over the last three years and that this poses a relatively large logistical challenge. He said that results must be in line with previous results. However, there would be recognition of upward trends, supported by evidence, e.g. improved retention. He described the processes around calculated grades, adapted assessment and delayed assessment. It was noted that students who are unhappy with their results from the first three categories would be provided with additional assessment opportunities as early in the next academic year as possible.  Jim Sharpe advised that Ofsted are unlikely to undertake full inspections but will be looking at a mixed model of inspection. This will comprise remote assessments combined with short monitoring visits on a risk-based approach. Due to the time passed since the last inspection, being in intervention status for inadequate financial health and the significant senior post-holder changes that have taken place recently, the College is likely to receive an inspection when they re-commence.  It was noted that the current relationship with Ofsted has been supportive. David Smith urged the College to continue an open dialogue and to draw on Ofsted expertise during this quieter time for the regulator.  Catherine Manning concurred with Ofsted's support rather than challenge role at present. She committed to sharing with the Committee relevant quality assurance findings from small scale study undertaken by the EFT with Principals and CEO's across the Country.  **Action: Catherine Manning** | | |  |
|  | **Student voice**   * **Course Rep Feedback from all age groups ("You said, we did") – Inc. feedback from students on remote learning (survey monkey)**   Jim Sharpe said the College had utilised three main mechanisms to capture  student voice during the lockdown.  1. Initial student voice feedback received by the Group Head of Marketing on April 1, via a virtual "chat".  It was noted that feedback involved a limited sample of students. The vast majority of the course representative present felt they were not missing out on key and relevant information. However, some concerns were raised and noted within the cover paper presented to the Committee. These concerns were also raised during the other student voice activities.  2. Student Voice – on Monday, April 27, the College launched an online survey to all full-time students, from all age groups. There were 2376 responses across the College.  There was strong agreement with:  a. Frequency of teacher communication – 78% positive  b. Helpfulness of teaching – 85%  c. Quality of overall college communication – 83%  There was a reasonable level of agreement with:  a. Frequency of receiving work – 67%  b. Support with college work- 62%  Key areas of concern are around:  a. Support with IT concerns – 28%  b. Support with personal concerns – 41%  Jim Sharpe advised further investigation is being undertaken into responses for the IT and personal concerns. The majority of students scored these responses neutral, which could suggest that they did not have concerns that needed support, or the support was not of a high enough level. Jim Sharpe advised the negative responses around the English and mathematics provision requires further analysis, as there is significant variation at campus level, which needs unpicking.  3. Course Representatives – All elected course representatives were  requested to complete an online survey, in addition to the student voice  survey. The response rate from course representatives was also high, at 94%. Responses are being reviewed in detail at an HoC level. They will be used to develop HoC level action plans and "you said, we did responses" to facilitate the sharing of good practice.  The Committee was provided with full feedback and noted the key headlines shared by Jim Sharpe.  Rebecca Conroy said it was essential to consider the student's resilience and personal circumstances when reviewing the feedback.  Gill Short praised the diversity of strategies used to hear the student voice. She asked how the Executive Team is triangulating the feedback from the variety of sources and how issues will be addressed. The Committee was advised that immediate intervention has already taken place to any significant issues identified. The Committee were also advised Principals and Assistant Principals are reviewing feedback for campus-level actions. It was noted that the data is also being used as part of the evidence base for the HoC area reviews.  David Smith said it was incredibly helpful to have sight of the full feedback report. He said it provided a real sense for how it feels to learn at the College during the lockdown.  David Smith asked if there were any emerging themes for adult learners. He asked for details about the help and support being provided. Rebecca Conroy advised that student voice survey was circulated to all full-time learners. She said adult learners had been communicated with to ensure they are aware of the support on offer.  Dan Shelley said HE students offered an opportunity to return to finish specific pieces of work, free of charge, next academic year. He also advised that a survey is planned for circulation to ascertain how apprentices feel employers are supporting their needs during this time.  Fred Carter advised those on Access courses will be given a calculated grade, and those practical qualifications will need to be completed at such a time as is practicable. Jim Sharpe noted that students on Access courses were scoring most highly. It was noted that relationships with tutors tend to be strong in this cohort.  Jim Sharpe said a learning point for the survey was to ask students to determine if they were 16-19 or adult learners.  Gill Short advised she had met with Rebecca Conroy for assurance about how SEND needs are being met during the lockdown. Rebecca Conroy is working closely with parents and advised of good practice in this area that could be shared more widely. <https://www.escg.ac.uk/support/send-for-parent-carers> |  |
|  | **Emergent Curriculum Plan for 2020-21(to include T-Levels Strategy)**  Dan Shelley, the Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships & Engagement, provided the Committee with an overview of the new curriculum planning process enacted for 2020/21. He explained that the new process had been implemented to ensure that the offer is efficient and consistent across the College in terms of taught hours, student resources and remission. He also gave an update on the progress made implementing some of the key recommendations of the Education case. He advised the technical and vocational offer has been arranged into four Career Families to better support learner employability and meet the local need; Health, Care and Sport, Business & Service Industries, Construction, Engineering & Logistics and Digital Design, Creative and Performing Arts.  It was noted that additional adult provision had been developed to plug some gaps in the Group offer. However, there remains further work to achieve this completely. In addition to the standard curriculum planning, Sussex Skills Solutions has been developing a responsive Covid-19 support package of training with a range of partners. For unemployed people, the College has worked with DWP and ESCC. Dan Shelley said the College would maintain and expand the range of online programmes delivered for free to residents. These will include short non-accredited upskilling and personal development programmes. The Committee was also advised about Higher Education developments. A fully updated map for 2020/21 will be shared with Corporation members in June.  **Action: Mia Bryden to forward plan.**  The Committee was advised that there has been a review of the A-Level offer to ensure it is financially viable and provides the most popular subjects and combinations.  Summary of A-level no longer running at Eastbourne campus but are available at Lewes or Hastings   * Computer Science, Geography, Law, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology   Summary of those continuing   * Accounting, Business Studies, English Language, English Literature, History, Maths, Further Maths, Sociology   Summary of NEW courses   * Applied Science (3 A level equivalent) * Applied Psychology * Applied Criminology   Rebecca Conroy said there is a strong sense that students at the Eastbourne Campus are much more appropriate for an applied route. She advised of work with feeder schools to support students into the most suitable route.  Jim Sharpe advised that there were no material changes to A-Level provision at the Hastings Campus. However, he noted work required to align course to career families and further implications arising from continued business planning modelling.  The Committee discussed the current Coivd—19 crisis and the impact on how education may be delivered in the immediate and longer-term future. Dan  Shelley said the adult pledge is an excellent example of how the College could recast itself.  Rebecca Conroy presented the College's T Level Strategy. The Committee was reminded about the draft FEC recommendation for senior leaders to urgently review the current level of readiness of each T Level pathway to assess the associated risk of progressing with any of these qualifications for the coming year.  It was noted thatT-Levels are being rolled out in phases with the first subject areas available as; Construction – Design Surveying and Planning, Education and Digital – Production design and Development. The offer will be grown, and expressions of interest for the next wave of T levels are open. The College is assessing the routes to make applications to run in 22/23.  The Committee was advised of work to review the curriculum to allow a smooth transition into T levels. Assistant Principals are working closely together to share practice and expertise and support one another.  The importance of the activity to bring schools on board to understand and advocate the T-level route to students and parents was discussed. The College will be proactive in their approaches to schools. It was noted that the College had worked closely with Brighton University at a senior level as a key progression partner. |  |
|  | **Update from College Board meetings**  **Lewes**  Experiences of lockdown have been explored with student and staff members of the local Board. Main concerns have been around clarifying arrangements around vocational qualifications.  The local board reviewed the QIP and discussed the uncertainty around the senior management structure at the Campus when the Principal departs.  Challenges in recruitment were noted, but opportunities arising from lockdown might encourage more students to say local for FE.  Dan Shelley is meeting with members of the local Board about the post Covid-19 offer for young people and adults in Lewes.  The local Board has a focus on adult learning.  **Hastings**  Jim Sharpe advised the update for Hastings is similar to that of the Lewes local Board.  Main concerns for students on the Campus are around IT provision for home learning.  It was noted that the local Board has a new Chair who will be supporting the growth of the Board and increasing local stakeholder membership.  The local board has a focus on social mobility and enterprise.  **Eastbourne**  Rebecca Conroy advised the update for Eastbourne is similar to that of the Lewes and Hastings local Boards.  Cllr David Tutt, Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council, was a guest speaker. He discussed several key challenges arising from Covid-19 and ways in which the College could support rebuilding the local area. Regeneration and community focus is a real area of attention for the local College Board.  The local board are considering a focus on either employer-led curriculum or higher technical/T-Levels.  It was noted that there should be representation from each local college board on the Committee, aside from Principals. Mia Bryden advised conversations are underway with potential new co-opted and local College Board members. |  |
|  | **Safeguarding and Prevent update**  Rebeca Conroy advised that there are 70 'high-risk' students experiencing poor mental health, who are in regular contact with a mentor. Safeguarding support has increased during the lockdown. Not all cases are concerned with the student's mental health, some around their domestic circumstances.  Each Campus has a Safeguarding Manager who is working closely with the Executive Team to ensure students with safeguarding needs are well supported.  Covid-19 related wellbeing information has been incorporated into safeguarding packs alongside a reminder of contact points for students.  Gill Short asked about PREVENT safeguards in lockdown. Rebecca Conroy said more information about safeguarding students from being drawn into terror-related activity had been included in safeguarding materials for staff. The challenges of safeguarding students from this threat when they are using their own devices were acknowledged. Rebecca Conroy advised of mechanisms in place to educate parents around reporting any concerns. The College works closely with local Prevent Leads. |  |
|  | **Verbal update on cross-curriculum areas:**   * **International**   Dan Shelley advised the College has suffered £1.1m loss to income in international. Opportunities to deliver group and individual provision are being tested and trialled with a proposed mix of formats.   * **Sussex Skills Solutions**   As noted above**.**   * **Apprenticeships**   Discussions about grading internal and sub-contracted apprenticeships continue. Some learner will need to come into the College, e.g Engineering, to complete assessments to gain their qualifications.  A survey to illicit the lockdown experiences from learners on apprenticeships is underway.   * **HE**   HE provision has moved online. It was noted to be a more straightforward adaptation for some courses than others. Courses with a 'practical' element, e.g. placement hours for counselling, will pose a challenge that the College will need to address.  The Sussex Learning Network has undertaken a piece of research work into lost generations in terms of year 11 and 13 and final year graduates and how these cohorts can be tracked and traced. The College will need to ensure provision is adapted to meet their needs and those of the local job market.  David Smith said the current variables outweighed the certainties and urged Dan Shelley to continue to grow local stakeholder engagement.  Rebecca Conroy said the consistency of delivery was vital as well as flexibility to provide a different type of offer moving forwards, in response to clear and focused horizon scanning. |  |
| 11) | **Any other business notified to the Director of Governance in advance of the meeting**  The importance of staff support during this time was noted. Rebecca Conroy spoke of the importance of a strong collaboration between departments to capture learning and share good practice.  Jim Sharpe said the HoC were finding it useful to meet once a week as a team to share practice, concerns and anxieties. |  |