



SOUTHGATE COLLEGE GOVERNING CORPORATION

Standards and Performance Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 26 April 2006

Members attending

Derrick Southon	Chairman
Claude Pehrson	Governor
Marion Ford	Staff Governor

In attendance

David Byrne	Clerk
Angélique Gainza	Vice Principal Curriculum
Philip Karstadt	MIS Manager
Adrian Powell	Director of Quality

1. Minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2005

Received: minutes of the meeting of the 3 November 2005.

Noted the minor typographical error in “*Matters Arising*”.

With the correction, the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

Item 11- Curriculum Review

Derrick Southon asked Management when the debate on the College’s curriculum offer would take place. Following discussion it was agreed that the item would be placed on the agenda for the June Governing Body.

3. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Michael Blagden.

4. Notification of any other urgent business

There were no items notified.

5. Declaration of Interests

None declared to the Clerk.

6. Analysis of 2005/06 January Module Results

Received: from the Vice Principal Curriculum, an analysis of the January 2006 (2005/2006) Module results with comparative data for 2004/05).

Noted:

That the results were broken down into separate presentations for A2/AS; AVCE, GNVQ qualifications.

Noted:

By the Chairman that notwithstanding some good results in specific areas, the overriding statistic appeared to be the number of learners achieving “U” grades, which was very disappointing given the statements made by Management in 2004/05 and the concerted efforts made to improve matters for 2005/06.

By Angelique Gainza that it was, indeed, disappointing and that an initial review conducted by her had not indicated any evidence of a lowering of standards. A more detailed review was being carried out but the outcomes had yet to be reported to her.

The Committee analysed the results in detail and challenged Management where results were of concern. Angelique Gainza reminded the Committee of the process for preparing, screening and recommending learners for entry for mock exams.

Reasons for the poor performance included:

- Anecdotal evidence of staff issuing generous marks for mock exams
- The culture of staff, still remaining in certain quarters, of “letting students have a go”
- Inconsistent Assessment procedures with some exam bodies (EDXCEL)

By Derrick Southon that whilst accepting the reality of the situation, this was still not really good enough and that the Committee had heard similar reasons for the past three years.

Claude Perhson asked for assurances that the cultural issues were being dealt with as strongly as possible. Angelique Gainza confirmed that where evidence existed appropriate action would be taken.

The Chairman asked what happened to the Division of ICT and CAD, an area where the College had CoVE status and where the College should, therefore, expect improvements? The main reason for this performance was the fact that a new qualification had been introduced and this was the first time the team had seen the detailed paper.

The College results appeared to be reflected across the sector.

The Committee discussed the better performances on AS/A2 and commended the staff and learners in Sociology and English Literature programmes where a high percentage of high grades were obtained and no “U” grades achieved. The Committee were very pleased with such results and Members discussed the possibility of sharing of good practice to other teachers/tutors. Management agreed that this would be done.

By Derrick Southon that the GNVQ results were equally worrying particularly as these had seen a marked decrease in those receiving a “Distinction”. Management agreed with this assessment but pointed out that the number obtaining a “Merit” pass had increased on larger entries.

Derrick Southon asked Management for a forecast of the potential “U” grades for the Summer 2006 Exams. Angelique Gainza confirmed that in her assessment, the number obtaining a “U” grade in GNVQ should be no higher than 15%.

By the Director of Quality that the issue surrounding poor grades was being addressed through a College wide focus, which included additional workshops for learners in specific subjects and clear action planning arising from the mid-year Quality Panels.

The Committee analysed the AVCE results and noted the reasons for the performance in Health and Social Care. The GCSE results were much improved on 2004/05 and this was very promising position, albeit accepting that the stronger students elected to take the assessments early.

7. Lesson Observations

Received: from the Director of Quality an analysis of lesson observations carried out Between September 2005 and April 2006.

Noted:

In response to a question from the Chairman, Adrian Powell stated that there was a mistake on the second page of the profile sheet. The “245” equated to the number of observations actually carried out, whereas the “345” indicated the number of observations originally scheduled, or due to have been carried out.

The Director of Quality reminded the Committee of the focus and raison d’etre for the observation process and reiterated the significance of raising standards in this area.

The total number of observations conducted sofar under the new scale was 245:

Total Grade 1 (outstanding)	16	(7%)
Total Grade 2 (good)	105	(43%)
Total Grade 3 (satisfactory)	110	(45%)
Total Grade 4 (inadequate)	14	(6%)

The report also analysed the profile between Established Staff and Agency staff.

From this, the Committee determined that the number of agency related observations conducted was 11% (28) of the overall total number carried out and 68% of these resulted in a “satisfactory” grade. No “outstanding” observations were confirmed whilst 14% were “Unsatisfactory”.

This was contrasted with the established profile, where 217 observations had been conducted, 42% resulting in a satisfactory grade. “Good” and “Outstanding” observations accounted for 53% of the established total. 5% of established staff observations were inadequate.

In overall terms, the total of inadequate observations was 6%, which was inside sector norms. The Committee agreed that management should be directed to concentrate on moving “satisfactory” to “good” and ultimately to “outstanding”.

The Committee asked for examples showing how staff could be moved from “satisfactory” to “good”/“outstanding”. The Director of Quality gave some examples and Members discussed the fact that these strategies relied upon staff being responsive to change and willing to adopt new teaching methods. Management concurred and was of the opinion that there was still too much passive teaching being delivered.

Derrick Southon questioned whether the College could obtain a cash refund from the supplying agency for those people that receive an unsatisfactory grade? Angelique Gainza explained that this was not possible.

The Chairman also asked for the Management’s assessment of the likely number of unsatisfactory grades next year. The Director of Quality stated that a precise percentage was unavailable at the present time, but that a 3% figure would be realistic. As far as unsatisfactory grades were concerned Adrian Powell was confident that for 2006/07 the College would be on, or better than, the national rates.

Angelique Gainza gave the Committee a very brief resume of the proposed changes to the Lecturers’ contract of employment and explained that these changes, such as shorter probation periods would allow the College greater flexibility in dealing with inadequate staff.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Quality for his report.

8. Complaints Monitoring

Received: data related to complaints received between September 2005 to April 2006.

Noted:

By the Director of Quality that the total number of complaints received in the period was 123 (with 116 resolved/processed and 7 outstanding). 55 of these complaints had been recorded under the “Service Area” of the Resources section, the majority of which related to some IT problems at the start of term.

The Committee discussed the number of complaints within the Division of Health and Social Care and accepted that these were part of an ongoing staffing restructuring exercise, which would be resolved for 2006/07.

Derrick Southon commented that at the last meeting the Committee asked to see future reports with an ethnicity break down and noted that this had been tabled. This was very helpful and asked that in future it was distributed with the main report.

The Committee discussed the barriers to making a complaint and cited the example of Young College, where no complaints had been recorded. The Director of Quality was of the opinion that such learners probably felt ill equipped or not as confident as other students.

Another opinion expressed was that these students might have lower expectations of complaints being taken seriously and might have also come from a school culture of not complaining.

Members commented that the total number of complaints seemed lower than in previous year – especially if the complaints arising from the one-off IT problems were discounted.

Angelique Gainza agreed with this suggestion and noted that there was no correlation between the complaints raised via the Student Union Council and the official database of complaints.

Whatever the actual reason, the Committee asked Management to ensure that it was as easy as possible to make a complaint and that barriers, where they existed, were to be removed.

9. Student Attendance, Punctuality and In-year Retention 2005/06

Received: a report showing the latest student attendance data 2005/06.

Noted:

By Adrian Powell that the data had been supplied in a number of formats:

- Whole College Attendance; Lates and In-Year retention by mode
- Whole College Attendance; Lates and In-Year retention by age
- Attendance – Full time by Division
- In - Year Retention, Full Time by Division
- Attendance – Part time by Division
- In - Year Retention, Part Time by Division
- Attendance – All ages by Division
- In- Year Retention, All ages by Division
- Attendance – 16-18 by Division
- In- Year Retention, 16-18 by Division
- Attendance – 19+ by Division
- In- Year Retention, 19+ by Division

The Chairman congratulated staff on what appeared to be continued success in a critical area. The statistics showed that on current data, attendance was up two percentage points to 84% for all students, whilst in-year retention was up seven percentage points to 91%. It was expected that this figure would come down by year-end but would still be better than the performance in 2004/05.

It was noted that as far as attendance profiles was concerned, there was very little difference between full time and part time students (84% and 85% respectively).

The Committee considered each report and discussed significant percentage variances (up or down on previous year).

The Chairman asked to see the next set of reports broken down into ethnicity groupings as previously requested.

Agreed that for the SAP meeting scheduled for the Autumn term, Management present the end of year statistics on Student Disciplinary matters.

10. Student Induction Questionnaire 2005

Received, a report from the Director of Quality covering the outcome of the student feedback following the Student Induction of 2005.

Noted :

The College used a company called QDP Ltd for its induction questionnaire that enabled the College results to be mapped or benchmarked against a “national” picture (defined as those colleges actually subscribed to QDP services).

A total of 923 questionnaires were distributed (142 on line), with 607 being returned. 43% of these were from the 14-19 Directorate. The overall return rate was 66%.

The Categories covered within this benchmarked questionnaire were:

- Full and Part Time students
- Female and male students
- 14-16 year olds
- 16-19 year olds
- 20+year olds
- Ethnicity
- ALS & Disabled Learners

The Committee learnt that areas where the College scored higher than/more positive than the benchmark were:

- Action Planning
- Personal Tutors
- Assessment to identify student needs (14-16 year olds)
- Understanding of personal rights (Chinese)
- Entry Qualifications (Pakistani)
- Awareness of Health & Safety

Areas where the College scored lower/less positive than the benchmark were:

- Students on the correct course
- Introduction to College and course
- Entry Requirements
- Students feeling welcome on their first day
- Initial Contact information was useful and staff helpful
- Knowing how work would be assessed
- Progression opportunities
- Additional Costs of the Course
- Additional work required for the course
- How Key Skills would form part of the course
- Work Placement information
- Staff are helpful

The Committee noted the individual breakdown of the student feedback and discussed issues relating to the weaker areas and enquired as to the strategies being implemented to improve matters. Derrick Southon suggested that a recurring theme was customer care. The Director of Quality highlighted a number of initiatives that were being implemented, including staff development opportunities for a broad range of staff, not just receptionists. . The Committee discussed various scenarios where learners could be treated in more favourable ways.

It was agreed that *all* staff could be better at dealing with customers and as a College, improvements had to be made.

Claude Perhson pointed out that other themes included “knowledge of key Skills” and “student union/welfare”.

The Committee also asked whether Management felt that the College received value for money by using QDP Ltd and raised the possibility of compiling a College based set of questionnaires, maybe focusing on ten key questions.

Management agreed to take this on-board and consider the implications and logistics.

A report would be given at the next meeting.

11. Any Other Urgent Business

None

12. Date of Next Meeting

To be advised.

13. Clerk to the Corporation

The Chairman advised the Committee that this would be the last meeting of SAP Committee for David Byrne. The Committee thanked Mr Byrne for his service and support and wished him best wishes for the future.