



Minutes

Meeting of the Higher Education Oversight Committee Wednesday 2nd October 2019 at 4.00pm Principal's Office, Mansion

PART 1

Present: Pippa Goodwin (*Chair of Governors*)
Gillian May

Apologies: Daniel Clawson

In attendance: Tracy Reeve *Director of Governance*
Jan Selfridge *Director of Higher Education (HE)*

9/19 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Daniel Clawson .

10/19 Notification of any other business

There was no other business notified.

11/19 Notification of Members interests

There were no interests notified.

12/19 Minutes of the Meeting 14 May 2019

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

The Director of HE (JS) reminded the meeting that the HE Oversight Committee had also convened on 24 July 2019 to formally approve the HE Improvement Plan without the Director of Governance in attendance.

The minutes from the additional HE meeting on 24/07/19 to be sent to the Director of Governance for the record.

13/19 Matters arising from HE Oversight Minutes of 14 May and 24 July 2019

It was confirmed that there were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous two meetings.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL

14/19 Higher Education (HE) Improvement Plan

The Director of HE updated the meeting with progress against the HE Improvement Plan as submitted to the Office for Students (OfS). The meeting focussed on the summary table on page 15 of the Improvement Plan and the Chair asked for additional recent detail to be included in the progress column and for the tense of the narrative to be amended where appropriate. The Principal suggested that an additional 'Red/ Amber/ Green' (RAG) rated column should be included to clearly demonstrate whether the progress was on track for timely completion.

JS confirmed that there had been a one-month delay to the new College website; the new HE element of the website would now not be 'live' until early November 2019.

Internal progression: The meeting noted that the HE Taster Day event dates would be set as soon as possible; the Chair asked that this be done with some urgency to provide assurance for the OfS. The requirement for a suitability assessment at these Taster Day Events would also be applied on a compulsory basis to internal progressors as well as external applicants. The meeting asserted the need for the HE options at BCA to be marketed to all existing FE learners, not just existing Animal Management and Equine learners. This would ensure that there was equality of opportunity to all learners in terms of IAG in relation to HE options at BCA.

Attendance: JS confirmed that the importance of good attendance had been stressed throughout the induction process and the position at 4 weeks into the HE term was positive. Attendance at the now compulsory tutorials was also positive to date.

Student academic and welfare monitoring: JS informed the meeting that the completion date for risk assessments on all HE learners to alert staff to any potential academic or welfare concerns had been put back to 25 October 2019 (from 31 August). This delay would enable tutors to know their students well enough to judge risk. However, JS confirmed that the criteria for this risk assessment had already been agreed. The meeting noted that individual targets would follow the RAG risk rating exercise and would be in place for all HE learners by 4 November. **The Chair asked for an update on this key issue to be brought to the next meeting of the HE Oversight Committee to give the meeting assurance around completion.**

Staffing: JS confirmed that dates for staff lesson observations had now been timetabled to fit into the performance management process. The aim was for all lesson observations to be completed by the end of the first term 2019/20. It was noted that the CPD budget had now been agreed but individual allocations had not yet been made.

Student Representation: JS confirmed that course representatives would attend HE Oversight Committee on an ad-hoc basis (there were two per course). An HE Student Governor Representative would also be in place for the next HE Oversight Committee (28/11/19).

The meeting NOTED progress against the BCA Higher Education Improvement Plan. It was AGREED that the Director of HE would:

- i) Update the report data and narrative to reflect the progress made and to make the HE Improvement Plan a 'live' working document.***
- ii) Amend the format of the Improvement Plan to include an additional RAG rated column to clearly demonstrate progress and highlight any areas of ongoing concern for Governors.***
- iii) Circulate the updated Improvement Plan to members of Oversight Committee and the OfS as soon as possible.***
- iv) Agree the HE Taster Day dates as a matter of urgency in order to provide assurance for the OfS.***
- v) Ensure that HE courses at BCA were marketed to all internal FE learners in order to ensure consistency of the IAG offer across the College.***
- vi) Provide an update to the next HE Oversight Committee on risk assessments and target setting for HE learners.***

15/19 Enrolment Update 2019/20

JS confirmed that numbers had grown for the September 2019 HE intake but the College had been rigorous when ensuring candidates were the right calibre. Total HE numbers at the College were now at 103 as reported to the Governing Body on 25 September 2019, compared with the prior year figure of 89. The meeting was reminded that the internal target had been 108 HE learners. The FdSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare now had 17 Year 1 learners which included 3 re-take learners. The Chair sought, and was given, assurance that there were not any surprises at course level; JS confirmed that the shortfall of 5 learners against target was spread across the HE courses. The Chair sought confirmation on whether the College had picked up any additional learners through the UCAS 'Clearing' process. JS informed the meeting that clearing had netted an additional 3 Vet Physio and 3 Animal Behaviour & Welfare learners. The Principal highlighted the ongoing issue of some small class sizes – notably, Year 2 FdSC ABW, the BSc top up ABW and Year 3 pf vet Physio - which had an impact on the financial viability of the courses. The meeting was reminded that the benchmark for FE courses was currently that they generated a 55% contribution. The meeting agreed that the Governing Body needed to clear maintain clear visibility of the bottom-line contribution of the College's HE provision. It was agreed that the BCA Director of Finance should attend the next meeting of the HE Oversight Committee to discuss contribution levels by each of the individual HE courses.

Applications 2020/21: JS confirmed that applications via the UCAS portal would close on 15 January 2020 and at this point the College would have an idea of numbers for the next academic year.

The HE Enrolment Report was NOTED.

It was AGREED that the Director of Finance should attend the next HE Oversight Committee (28th November 2019) to consider financial contribution of individual HE courses at BCA.

16/19 BSc Vet Physiotherapy: Maintenance Loan Issue

The meeting was given an update on the issue with BCA Vet Physio learners losing their access to Student Loan Company Maintenance Loans after the course had been re-classified as Distance Learning in August 2019. This was unforeseen and no warning had been given. The meeting was informed that the College was doing everything possible to get the Student Loan Company (SLC) to reverse this decision but it seemed to be falling on deaf ears; the Director HE had written to everyone possible flagging the impact on existing learners as well as new starters. It was noted that BCA would waive the £85 facilities fee for those affected – 7 Year 2 learners and 5 in Year 3. In addition residential accommodation on site had been offered free of charge when learners were required to be on site at BCA for 2 weeks; 6 of the 12 affected had taken up this offer. There was also money available in a special BCA bursary known as the 'Miss Matthews Fund' which could be put towards the affected learners travel costs. The Chair sought, and was given, confirmation that the course details on the BCA website informed future BSc Vet Physio applicants that they would not be able to access SLC Maintenance Loans.

The update was NOTED; it was AGREED that BCA should continue to try and exert pressure wherever possible to have the SLC decision reversed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17/19 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

18/19 Date of Next Meeting

The meeting dates for 2019/20 were confirmed as:

- Thursday 28 November 2019, 4.30pm
- Thursday 5 March 2020, 4.30pm
- Thursday 18 June 2020, 4.30p