**Corporation of Sir George Monoux College**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Quality & Performance Committee**

**held on 8 June 2021**

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| **Present** | Alastair Owens (Chair), Caroline Evans, Nehendra Jonas, Stephen Jones, Jagdev Kenth, Anisa Khadija, David Vasse. |
| **In Attendance** | Holly Bembridge (Vice-Principal: Curriculum), Robert Smith (Clerk to the Corporation). |

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| **1** | **Apologies for Absence and Quoracy**    All members were present.  Members expressed their condolences to Jonathan Bush on the tragic death of his son, and to the family of Angus McBirney (Site Officer) at his untimely passing. |
| **2** | **Declarations of Interest**  None. |
| **3** | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 9 February 2021**  It was noted that the draft minutes had been approved by the Chair of the Committee for circulation.  They were approved as a correct record of the business transacted and *prima facie* evidence of the proceedings to which they relate. |
| **4** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes: 9 February 2021**  *Minute 7:* members expressed serious concern at the absence of “Covid-19 catch-up” funding provided to the College, leaving it entirely reliant on its own resources to fund the necessary measures.  No other matters were identified except as provided for within the meeting agenda. |
| **5** | **Board Level Risks**  It was noted that board level risks pertaining to the Committee’s remit relate to agenda 6 and 7 below.  No other risks requiring the Audit Committee’s attention were identified in the course of the meeting. |
| ***6*** | **Summer Assessments**  A briefing for members prepared by the Vice-Principal: Curriculum was received and considered.  It was noted that:  *almost all students will be assessed using Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), apart from first year A Level students (who will have had two sets of mock examinations since returning in March, informing assessment of their progress, as well as homework and assessments in class), some vocational students in performing arts and L2 Law (who will be assessed through grades sent to the awarding bodies, although based on fewer units than normal) and students on Functional Skills English (who will sit examinations);*  *grades are not predictions, their sole basis being assessment of student work, using the awarding body’s mark-scheme;*  *whilst some TAGs are based on successful assessment events from earlier in the academic year, the bulk of evidence will be derived from work completed in April and May;*  *students will only be assessed on content that the College is satisfied has been fully taught;*  *questions will allow for the full range of abilities, accessible to all and with enough rigour and stretch for top grades to be achieved - some of the questions set by the examination board in late March will be used providing incontrovertible evidence, if marked correctly, that will protect teachers and students from any challenge to the grades awarded;*  *a college policy was produced to help teachers and managers deal with TAGs, including training sessions, procedures to deal with access arrangements, special considerations and making sure that all students are treated fairly;*  *the College has communicated regularly with students about arrangements for TAGs, has posted all guidance on the parental section of its website, and has advised parents how to access it;*  *before submitting grades to the awarding bodies, senior managers will check the grade profiles across all subjects, as well as checking that different ethnicities, genders and economic groups do not appear to have been disadvantaged - where patterns differ from previous years (2017-2019), teams will be asked for their reasoning and grading samples will be checked before grades are agreed or revisions asked for;*  *after submission of grades, awarding bodies will contact the College for a sample of evidence and grading across different subjects - if grades look much higher across the College than in 2019, the College would be sampled more than a centre where the grade profile has not altered;*  *when grades are received in early August, students will be able to appeal to the College, and staff will check that there have been no clerical errors and that all processes were followed as per the College’s policy - if no errors are found, students can still appeal to the awarding body, who would request evidence and check the College’s grading;* and  *grades would only be changed where teachers are found not to have made a reasonable judgement, and could go down as well as up.*  In response to concerns raised by members, it was reported that the quality of student work had shown a degree of improvement on the previous year despite all attendant difficulties.  It was noted that there will be no nationally comparable data against which to judge College performance, that grades awarded will not be taken into consideration by Ofsted in the context of an inspection, and that, assuming external examinations are conducted in 2022, the most recent internal College benchmark for results will be the 2018-19 series.  In response to a question from Caroline Evans, it was confirmed that authenticity checks on submitted work are carried out using appropriate software. Where plagiarism is detected, a mark of zero for the paper is recorded. Where plagiarism is suspected, other forms of verification are conducted, including vivas and supervised re-sits.  In response to a question from Stephen Jones concerning the effect of this year’s assessment on disadvantaged groups, it was reported that early indications suggest that girls have outperformed boys in a third of subjects, and that students in two ethnic groups had performed below the College average (though the sample size afforded by the groups is small). The Committee Chair asked if students had been disadvantaged on account of the timing of assessment. In response, it was reported that teaching had continued to as late a date as permitted by the assessment schedule.  In response to a question from Jagdev Kenth, it was reported that parents had been kept fully informed of the assessment processes, but that there had been no specific comments received by way of feedback.  In response to a question from the Committee Chair, it was reported that there had been a high level of goodwill shown by teachers, and that despite the increased workload morale had been well-sustained. There had been a high degree of accuracy in the marking and grades submitted.  The Committee asked that its thanks be placed on record and conveyed to staff for their valuable cooperation in enabling the College to meet its commitments in a difficult year. |
| **7** | **College Improvement and Development Plan 2020-21**  The College Development Plan updated by the Principal was received and considered.  Measures falling within the Committee’s remit were noted in relation to three of the four development themes for the College, namely: |

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|  | **.** | how students demonstrate engagement with the College’s mission through their values and behaviours; |
|  | **.** | how teams and individual staff develop skills, make progress and take on challenges; *and* |
|  | **.** | optimal use of all spaces with clear routines. |

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|  | The column, reiterated across all sections of the Plan, “What will this look like when fully effective”, includes measurable data linked to KPIs where appropriate, as well as providing a robust template by which to judge the success of the measures implemented. Entries in the column should therefore be read in conjunction with those in the equivalent row of the column “What does this look like currently?” to gauge the progress needed.  In relation to the first theme, it was reported that:  *the current in-year retention rate for all Year 1 Level 3 and Level 2 students is 94% compared to 95% at the same point last year - the decrease being mainly a result of lower retention across the Level 2 cohort (89.4% vs 93.7%) owing to factors relating to the public health emergency;*  *“Talent Lab”, predominantly a vehicle to increase the level of independent supervised study as a strategy to structure personal development, had continued throughout the year despite social distancing, lockdown, remote learning and changes to the calendar for the purposes of centre assessment, and will, from June 2021 onwards, include its normal menu of activities and assemblies, and from September be fully re-established across the week;*  *“Catch-Up” had been effectively embedded as daily practice during 2020-21, with the number of students studying at college beyond scheduled lesson finish times and on Saturdays having increased significantly - 76% of students had been scheduled for Catch-Up on at least one occasion this year as a result of missing a deadline or lesson;*  *additional workshops for Maths and English are providing good support alongside timetabled lessons, including during lockdown;*  *“Read-to-Succeed”, with a focus on literary fiction, was set up and running prior to lockdown and will resume as Talent Lab is re-established;*  *95% of students had agreed that teaching is good (including through online provision during the public health emergency), a significant improvement on the response 24 months ago;*  *attendance levels had been maintained during the early stages of the winter lockdown;*  *Learning Walks suggest that “Readiness to Learn” is on track, with the December 2020 student survey having placed the College in the top quartile against other colleges for the statement: ‘My teachers always challenge me to do my best’;*  *there had been an increase in parental involvement in events such as parents’ evenings, and also more regular communication home, with a new App for parents having been launched in May 2021;* and  *students had given positive feedback regarding numeracy skills in the December 2020 survey, with 87% of students considering their skills to be improving, placing the college for the first time above the 50th percentile in a national data set.*  In relation to the second theme, it was reported that:  *the College is currently assessing and grading students in line with government policy on awarding qualifications in 2021, and it is therefore too soon to predict performance against targets - performance data will in any event be ineligible for use in a future college inspection;*  *evaluation of Learning Walks at the end of the Autumn Term judged that, whilst good practice is increasingly evident, the following areas relating to “stretch” in lessons are not yet consistent – setting hard tasks in addition to having high expectations, improved use by students of spoken and written language (including subject-specific language), and the use of exemplary work serving as benchmarks for student attainment;*  *teacher staff retention (of those appointed in spring/summer term 2020-21) is 19/22 in the current year;*  *adaptations made to the College leadership and management structure had facilitated career progression and demonstrated succession preparation, with internal appointments having been made to key roles;*  *T Level planning has started with adaptations to curriculum management roles, an internal conference on strategic options and, through the CSLT team, a decision-making process regarding T Level pathways;*  *assessment of students’ knowledge and skills in maths and media reveals a mixed picture;*  *although the overall ALPS grade for A Level courses improved in 2018/19 (and was on course to improve further in 2019/20) and is in line with the London SFC average, it is significantly lower than the value added grade for BTEC courses - Sociology and Psychology are the two large A Level subjects closest to exceptional value added performance and will be tracked this year;* and  *in relation to the Accelerated Learning Pathway (ALP):* |

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|  | **.** | despite the challenges of starting to run the Borough’s provision for newly arrived children in Year 11 during the public health emergency, the College has ensured that safeguarding practices are appropriate, that students receive good progression guidance and are appropriately organised by academic level; |
|  | **.** | the quality of the current tutorial programme for ALP students is in need of improvement, and must fulfil statutory requirements for school-age children; |
|  | **.** | some behavioural policies require adaptation for pre-16 learners; *and* |
|  | **.** | not all teaching in the ALP meets the expectations of the Monoux Teacher Framework. |

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|  | In relation to the third theme, it was reported that:  *measures to optimise independent study in College spaces will be a priority from September 2021 onwards;* and  *an evaluation of the impact of the College’s IT provision on disadvantaged students will be carried out in September 2021, though the College was able to provide IT resources during lockdown - disadvantaged students were more commonly affected by domestic factors such as poor broadband, unsuitable furniture etc.*  In relation to the Accelerated Learning Pathway (ALP) it was commented that the Plan, because it concentrates on areas requiring improvement, reflects matters where development is needed, notably in the context of embedding College expectations, policies and processes within this new provision.  The Pathway is in its first year of operation at the College under a service agreement with the Borough of Waltham Forest, having previously been run elsewhere. Most students had joined in the course of the year, reflecting their differing arrival times in the UK or the local area. A full complement of around 40 had been enrolled. Student behaviour was reported as good, with many showing a keen readiness to learn. It is hoped that some will progress to post-16 courses at the College.  In response to an observation by the Committee Chair, it was agreed that student induction to the Pathway is not straightforward in the context of staggered enrolment times, but that a more defined induction programme should be possible in 2021-22 under increasingly normal operating conditions.  Turning to other matters in the Plan, the Committee Chair asked about levels of student attendance. In response, it was reported that attendance levels had been very close to those recorded for the previous year. High attendance had been recorded for attendance at assessments, and deadlines for the submission of work had generally been met.  Members commented on the Read to Succeed initiative, an element of Talent Lab. More generally, it was reported that a new access system operable from September 2021 will support the College’s measures to support students at times when they are not in class.  The Committee Chair enquired about progress in various Maths courses offered by the College. In response it was reported that, with reference to A level, although there had been a few issues during the year over the quality of teaching, significant progress had been observed in this area by comparison with 2019-20. Early analysis of student outcomes appear to show them to have improved. A full A level teaching team is in place for 2021-22.  With reference to GCSE resits, it was noted that there had been fewer complaints from students. A full GCSE teaching team is in place for 2021-22.  Caroline Evans observed that, since the Plan is a record of improvement required rather than a self-assessment report, its overall tenor is gratifyingly positive. |
| **8** | **Dates and Times of Meetings: 2021-22**  The following dates and times were approved:  ***Tuesday 21 September 2021 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 30 November 2021 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 8 February 2022 (6.30pm)***  ***Tuesday 7 June 2022 (6.30pm)***  In accordance with the decision of the Corporation at the meeting held on 11 May 2021, the format and location of meetings will be determined by each Committee Chair in consultation with members of the Committee, but such meetings will be either face-to-face at a location to be agreed (with the right of any member, including staff in attendance, to attend virtually without restriction), or will be entirely virtual. |
| **9** | **Any Other Competent Business**  None. |

There were no actions arising from this meeting.