Audit Committee Meeting

Tue 28 March 2023, 08:30 - 10:00

Attendees

Board members

Dave Vasse (Principal), Tim Stockings (Member), Kwame Amoako-atta (Chair), Hussa Ali (Finance Manager), Jamie Davies (Member), Pauline Odulinski (Observer), Richard Boulton (Observer), John Kirk (Interim Clerk)

Absent: Sara Whittaker

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence, and Quoracy

Kwame Amoako-Atta

KA Welcomed everyone, especially Richard Boulton, the newly appointed Director of Finance and Operations.

Apologies received from Sara Whittaker and Pamela Dube

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting November 21 2022

Decision

To approve, or otherwise, the minutes of the previous meeting
The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record
📄 Minutes_Audit Committee Meeting_211122.pdf

4. Matters Arising

Kwame Amoako-Atta

Item 7 DV referred to financial viability, and that the Risk Management had met and reduced the score for Financial Viability down to 6 from 9.

5. Board Level Risk Register Report - Feb 2022-23

Information
Kwame Amoako-Atta

The committee received the report.

TS raised the issue of the format and the "so what" test. and asked if there mandatory risks that needed to covered.
TS suggested the descriptions could be simplified to a more basic level, which would then cover multiple entries. For example, T Level recruitment could reduced to "not attracting students". This would also cover the risk in "'Management Risks - good relationships with local schools"
RB welcomed the opportunity to meet with TS to fine tune the register, and apply his previous experience in risk management for the military.
📄 Board Level Risk Register February 2023.pdf

6. Schedule of Outstanding Audit Recommendations

Kwame Amoako-Atta

For information and review, or to note that no recommendations are outstanding.
The Committee received this report.

PG welcomed the the list of outstanding recommendations coming to the committee for continuous monitoring. This report is currently monitored and updated by management, though PG would be happy to take ownership of this service if required.
The Committee agreed to consider how this report would be managed in future.   **Action: KA /JK Agenda**
Planning
📄 March 2023 - Progress Report - SGMC - 2022-23.pdf
📄 Previous Internal Audit Recommendations for 2021-22 - SGMC Mar 2023 update.xlsx

7. Internal Audit Reports

Paul Goddard

7.1. Safeguarding Report

Paul Goddard

PG confirmed the strong assurance given in this report, he high profile this matter received among staff was welcomed, especially the high levels of staff training, and excellent in-house audits of internal cases.
The increase in the number of Safeguarding cases is a concern, and that mental health accounts for 25%, which stretches capacity.

The only value point is that the staff code of conduct is reaching the end of its review period this year.

KA welcomed this report and congratulated all those involved.
DV also welcomed these comments and will pass these on to the staff responsible.

KA asked PG about the extent of capacity at other colleges, and if there is best pratcie as to how we can support staff in the future.
PG noted that having tracking technology in place is crucial, which is not the case everywhere, where spreadsheets have proven inadequate. The main issue in future may be the increasing number of cases, leading to greater staffing requirements.
DV noted that increases in cases, combined with growing student numbers next September will require additional funding which will not come until 2024. This will require reorganising of staffing to continue to provide adequate mentoring, which is where these cases are picked up.

The Committee welcomed the report.
📄 Final Report - Safeguarding - SGMC - 22-23.pdf

7.2. Maths & English Report (draft)

Paul Goddard

PG Confirmed that this report was still with management for review, and will be available for the June meeting as expected.

8. Fraud, Financial Irregularity, or Public Interest Disclosure

Kwame Amoako-Atta

To report any incidents of fraud, financial irregularity of public interest disclosures arising since the last meeting of the committee.
PG noted that elsewhere there are concerns about academic fraud via ChatGPT. This is more likely in HE, but it is something to be aware of for the FE sector.
RB observed that there is already an AI tool to check if text was AI generated.
DV reported that this has been a regular discussion item for SLT, and the business team has trialled AI for vocational work The results are still extremely obvious to spot.

DV also reported that Cyber Security is a constant concern for SLT. All College provision is through JISC, and has recently undergone "penetration testing" where an individual attempts to get on site. The results will be reported at the next meeting.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Kwame Amoako-Atta

Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 8.30am

It was agree that future meetings continue to commence at 8.30am

10. Any Other Business

Kwame Amoako-Atta

None