



**Minutes of the Higher Education Committee meeting
held on 13 June 2024 at St Austell and on MS Teams**

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| Committee members | Pat Wilde | PW | Committee Chair |
| | John Evans | JE | |
| | Josephine John | JJ | |
| | Ian Tunbridge | IT | |
| | Sarah Watts | SW | |
| In attendance | Cleeve Jenkins | CJ | Director of HE & International |
| | Jennie Jordan | JeJ | Head of HE |
| | Mark Wardle | MW | Group Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality |
| | Tian Bersey | TB | Clerk to the Governors |
| | Jamie Hanson | JH | Group Lead for Progression to HE/Senior HE SPM |
| | Sue Alvey | SA | Head of Regulatory Compliance |

| | | Action |
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| 1 | Welcome | |
| 1.1 | Apologies were received and accepted from Lee Charnock, Wilf Hudson and Nik Ramsay Trease. The Chair welcomed Josephine John and Cleeve Jenkins to their first meeting. The Committee confirmed no further or additional interests to those already declared. | |
| 1.2 | Update on staff changes The Group Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality introduced the role of Director of HE and International reporting to him as the overall lead for HE. The Head of HE has also become the Head of Eden and currently also reports to the Group Deputy Principal with the Head of Newquay. | |
| 2 | Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024 | |
| 2.1 | The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. | |
| 2.2 | Matters arising The Committee noted that all matters arising were complete or in progress. The Chair asked Committee members to review the Terms of Reference and provide any feedback or comments to her and the Clerk. | ALL |
| OPERATIONAL UPDATES | | |
| 3 | Balance Scorecard/ KPIs | |
| 3.1 | Report including a data update: applications, enrolments and impact on finances, attendance, retention, suspension and withdrawal, continuation, success and progression. The Director of HE and International highlighted the following from his written report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus on creating a new dashboard to realign with OfS B3 metrics. | |

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| <p>3.2</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any areas that fall below benchmark will be identified and added to the risk register with planned mitigations. Applications are up with 89 applications now at Eden. Attendance is above national average. The Committee noted that figures are skewed by golf. Work to do on progression, careers support and platforms focusing on after graduation. <p>The Committee welcomed the creation of a new dashboard. The Committee discussed applications, withdrawals and market segments; accommodation and impact of no halls of residence; marketing progression from the College; not trying to compete with the traditional university experience but staying true to the uniqueness of our courses and campuses. The Committee noted that prospectuses had not been published for next academic year and were keen to understand the marketing strategy for HE at the College. It was agreed that the Head of Marketing should be invited to the November meeting.</p> <p>The Committee further discussed the College's offer and how to extend the uniqueness beyond Eden and Newquay and replicate it at other campuses; the need to be driven by employment prospects in Cornwall and the changing context for agriculture.</p> <p>The dashboard will be a regular item on the agenda.</p> <p>Update on resetting/building new KPIs to align with OfS quality procedures. Detailed above.</p> | <p>TB</p> |
| <p>4 4.1</p> | <p>Student Voice / Beyond the Boardroom (BTB) Update on compliance with student feedback processes.</p> <p>The Director of HE and International highlighted the following from his written report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of final year students in the National Student Survey (NSS) was circa 10% lower than 2023. In order to increase participation next year, the College will revisit communications, use student reps to deliver clear messages across every site and ensure no other surveys are taking place at that time. The responses from all other students to the Student Perception Questionnaire highlighted teacher marking/feedback and course organisation as the lowest scores which is not specific to the College. Plans to develop the student rep process. <p>A governor asked for further information on increasing participation in the surveys. This would include: holding talks from a senior member of staff communicating why it is important, explaining questions, ensuring all staff are on board, ownership from CAMs, tutorials, offering incentives to complete, dedicated group to go around courses and spend time with students and support completion. The Group Deputy Principal supported making the process more prescriptive and recognised survey fatigue as an important point as students are asked to complete surveys a lot.</p> <p>A governor highlighted the need for the College to listen to students before the survey process starts, acknowledge concerns and remind students where improvements have been made.</p> <p>Additional careers support and progression data have been identified as areas for improvement. A specific careers platform is being explored which can be accessed for three years after graduation to drive progression and assist with jobs.</p> | |

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| <p>4.2</p> | <p>Complaints</p> <p>The Head of Regulatory Compliance joined the meeting to present the HE Complaint report as of 17 May 2024 which was sent with the papers in advance of the meeting. She drew attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The outcome letter for the students from Land and Ecological Restoration qualification is due on Tuesday having been investigated through the University of Plymouth. ▪ Historic complaints relating to Garden and Landscape Design remain in progress. ▪ The University of Plymouth is experiencing resourcing issues in investigating complaints. ▪ She has joined a Point of Contact Working Group for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for HE (OIA) and wants to raise how difficult it is to find the opportunity to put forward additional information on students/context on complaints being investigated. ▪ Most complaints are varied and resolved quickly. ▪ Impetus is often generated by student What's App groups and it needs to be made clear to students that they should raise concerns at the point issues arise. ▪ The OIA have published their annual report which highlights that providers are not operating quickly enough and an increasing number of students reporting mental health conditions is a consistent theme. <p>Committee members asked if students are seeking financial redress which is generally the case and how the scrutiny of evidence works. An investigating officer is appointed and a framework is put in place. It can be time consuming and long winded but thorough investigation is critical. The College maintains relations with the University of Plymouth and the OIA. The Committee noted low numbers of complaints across the College and discussed the importance of responding promptly, seeking to resolve issues and learning from cases. Staff are encouraged to try and solve and not to put things off. Staff departures and staffing gaps can cause issues.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Head of Regulatory Compliance for her report and the work she does.</p> | |
| <p>4.3</p> | <p>BTB visits to Newquay and Eden</p> <p>Committee members provided feedback on their visit to the new soil labs at Eden. They are keen to see the facility boosted going forward by engaging with employers, conducting research and development for companies, connecting with Rosewarne, the Rural Business School and external agencies and involving more people in the conversation. This is an opportunity for a headline story for a new government!</p> | |
| <p>5</p> | <p>Key points from HEAB meetings in April and May</p> <p>The Director of HE and International highlighted the following points from his written report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HEAB discussed adding a pre-stage to the FDAP approval process ▪ Planning for the HE Conference on July 3 ▪ Discussion on the best time for progression events which will take place at Eden and Newquay in June and October for level 2 and 3 learners in the June of the first year of level 3 for landbased programmes. Student reps will be used as ambassadors and in an advocacy role. <p>A Committee member emphasised the importance of including level 2 students and demonstrating a career ladder and opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed the recommendation that Access and Participation Plan (APP) monitoring is added to HEAB agenda and College sub-committee formed to develop a new plan for 2025. | |

| STRATEGY AND RISK | | |
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| 6 | HE Strategy 2021-26 | |
| 6.1 | <p>The Director of HE and International presented his written report on progress against the action plan.</p> <p>A College sub-committee has been formed to develop the accommodation offer for students. Students are more satisfied with the experience but numbers have not grown. The College will use the extended FDAP for development and use in appropriate curriculum areas. Policy and procedure are being developed to support exploration of the international market. An update will be provided at the next meeting. Dedicated spaces for the HE learner community are being sought on each campus to create a sense of ownership and community. The College needs to develop targeted support to increase progression, drive employability and support careers after graduation. A new student rep process will assist with student co-creation opportunities.</p> <p>A revised strategy will also need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Apprenticeship development ▪ Lifelong Learning Entitlement and bite size learning opportunities ▪ Research into the workload model ▪ Collecting and reporting on data for Student Outcomes (Condition B3) and APP <p>A formal proposal to update the Strategy will be presented at the next meeting.</p> | <p>CJ</p> <p>CJ</p> |
| 6.2 | <p>Update on International</p> <p>A decision has been taken to pause international recruitment. 5 applications were received and the applicants have been informed. More consideration will be given to where do we want to focus international recruitment, putting country focus into the curriculum and visa matters.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Operating Statement – strategic aims linked to HE focus areas</p> <p>The Committee received the update on progress against the operating statement key actions. The Committee noted that the international strategy is the only item rated as red with the decision made to pause until 2025/26 as discussed above.</p> | |
| 8 | <p>HE related risks on the Risk Register and assurance needed</p> <p>The Committee received the risk register and noted that all identified risks were covered on the agenda. It was agreed to add the OfS B3 student outcomes indicators to the risk register.</p> | MW |
| Compliance, Policy & Governance | | |
| 9 | Access and Participation Plan 2022 - 26 (APP) | |
| 9.1 | <p>Current status/annual progress report</p> <p>The Committee received a written progress report on the Access and Participation Plan. Work is in progress to collect the additional data required and develop a dashboard. The Group Lead for Progression to HE is reviewing progress made in each of the six project areas. A College Access and Participation Sub Committee will be formed to monitor the current plan and inform the next plan. There are specific areas that need to be included in the next plan including raising of attainment in 14-16 year olds. The pre- 16 programmes that the College currently runs with schools could be integrated into the next plan. The HE Academic Board and this Committee will need to sign off the next plan. The Committee endorsed the important role that the APP plays in supporting the College in reaching communities.</p> | |
| 9.2 | <p>Next plan</p> <p>Discussed above.</p> | |

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| 10 | <p>Update on Environmental Sustainability KPIs for HE Committee</p> <p>The Group Deputy Principal reported that a draft set of KPIs for the curriculum have been developed and are currently being reviewed by curriculum colleagues. The KPIs are not HE specific but for curriculum across the whole group. These will be shared with the Committee at the next meeting.</p> | MW |
| 11 | <p>Office for Students FDAP revalidation</p> <p>The Group Deputy Principal reported that documentation has been submitted and was being assessed. A meeting is scheduled for the College to answer specific questions which are provided in advance and this will help to clarify the process. The extension of FDAP until May 2026 is helpful.</p> | |
| | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>A Committee Member raised the infrequent use of Honorary Degree Awarding Powers and suggested a recipient. The Committee discussed that Honorary Degree or Masters needed to be awarded by Plymouth University with its own scrutiny process. The College could award an Honorary Foundation Degree which did not have the same gravitas; awarding an Honorary Fellow of the College was also discussed.</p> <p>The Group Lead for Progression to HE highlighted the dates of the summer shows of art and design from across FE and HE which will be exhibited for the first time in one building and move to the Royal Cornwall Museum from 27 June for the whole summer.</p> <p>The Chair expressed appreciation to the Principal, attending his last HE Committee meeting, for his contribution to HE and the College.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>Communication between Committees/Board</p> | |
| 13 | <p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>27 November 24 1pm 12 February 25 11 June 25</p> | |