

AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 7 July 2014
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Mr L Byrne, Ms C Calverley Miss H Delahan, Mrs B Donovan, Mr J Horan and Mrs E Rice.

Mrs E Rice in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson Principal
Mr E Moore Vice Principal

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Mr B Hickey and from Mr L Byrne for his late arrival.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered by the Agenda.

5. ADMISSIONS 2014/2015

Mr Pearson advised Governors that following the Welcome days it became apparent that many students were holding places at more than one college. He reminded Governors that the target number for September 2014 was 2051 students.

The number of students in the Upper 6 would be around 1088 made up of 1023 moving from the L6, 28 Pathway students and 37 recyclers.

To achieve the target number of 2051 student the college needed to recruit 963 to L6. The college's best prediction of the number of students from categories 1-4 based on the last three years was 706, which meant that the number of students needed from category 5 was 257.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that having completed the admissions process students were awarded a mark out of 100. He then determined the correct cut off point in order to make 362 offers which would give a conversion rate of between 256 -312 students. This would result in a total number of students between 2050 to 2106. However, on tracking the student conversions from offer to acceptance it looked like the predictions for categories 1-4 were somewhat out. The conversion rate from categories 1-4 was set at 74% but it in the worst case scenario it could be as low as 60%. It is most likely to be closer to the mid 60%.

Mr Pearson also reported that student numbers would also be affected by the funding changes regarding retakes and 18+ students.

As a result of the above information Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would prefer to adjust the minimum target to 2100 rather than 2051. In order to achieve this a further 100 students from the waiting list had been invited to the final induction day.

In preparing the budget for 2015/2016 Development Plan even with a growth of 50 students the college would be struggling to set a reasonable budget.

Mr Bryne arrived whilst this item was being discussed.

Mrs Donavon asked when the additional 100 students were invited to the induction days how had they been selected. Mr Pearson replied by saying that the college had gone down the list in strict order effectively lowering the cut-off point.

In response to a question from Mr Horan concerning the funding for recyclers Mr Pearson said that if they were not doing the same subjects then funding would be received. Mr Horan expressed the view that the college should be aiming for similar number in both L6 and U6. Mr Pearson agreed.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that more L6 students than previously would start on 3 A levels and that the group sizes should be similar to previous years. Mrs Rice asked if students taking 3 A levels could take General Studies in addition. Mr Pearson indicated that there was a move to Extended Project Qualification. Mr Horan asked how did the college decide which students took 3 A levels and which took 4 A levels. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college looked at the students' prior achievements and their G score. Those students with a G score of 5.84 or below would take 3 courses although he stressed that the college was flexible.

A discussion place about the competition from Loreto and Xaverian and Mr Moore advised Governors that that the two colleges were aggressively marketing to pupils in Stockport schools particularly in the Heaton area. In response to a question from a Governor Mr Moore indicated that the perception of students at Priestnall School was that Aquinas was difficult to get into. Mr Pearson undertook to discuss the matter with the principals of Loreto and Xaverian. Miss Delehan asked if students at these colleges were doing 3 A levels. Mr Pearson indicated that although not entirely sure their offer would be comparable whilst other colleges in the consortium were offering similar to Aquinas.

Mrs Donovan asked if students in categories 1-4 were asked if Aquinas was their first choice. Mr Pearson replied by confirming that students had been asked this year and that the figure was between 65%-70%. Dr Beatty expressed the view that if the students were academic they were more likely to come to Aquinas.

In response to a question from Mrs Donovan, Mr Pearson said that there had been over 1000 applications from category 5 students. He added that the conversion rate from the 4 feeder schools was slightly down and that the main issue was category 4 students.

Mr Pearson undertook to provide a detailed analysis for the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED: That the above strategies be approved.

7. ANALYSIS OF STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

Mr Moore circulated a paper that gave details of the number students who had withdrawn from Aquinas during the 2013/2014 academic year on a month by month basis, the same information was provided for the 2012/2013 academic year. The analysis showed that that

there were 118 early leavers compared with 97 last year. A breakdown of the numbers showed that the majority of leavers were in the Autumn Term, with the exception being March and May 2014. Another paper showed the number of withdrawals for the last four years and the reason for the withdrawal.

Mr Moore advised Governors that the college try to ensure that the student is on the right course for them.

Governors noted that the high number of students leaving in September 2013 was due to late offers being accepted at HE and FE colleges

Mr Pearson referred to the fact that sadly two students had died this year.

Governors noted that 21 students had entered FE and a further 21 had opted for full time education or training including apprenticeships.

The Governors noted the paper and thanked Mr Moore for the informative report.

8. CURRICULUM ISSUES

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there were no changes to the curriculum from those identified at the training session in May 2014.

9. PUBLICITY

Mr Moore reported that there was Marketing Group within the college which included both teaching and support staff would be looking at a new prospectus for September 2014. A part time graphic designer had been appointed and they would play a major part in developing the new prospectus. He felt that the college needed to focus on the key issues including the nurturing of students and the fact that the college was fully inclusive.

Mr Horan asked if the college website needed updating. Mr Moore replied that this is one of the areas that the marketing group are looking at. He acknowledged that the college could do better in publishing news items on the website and on social media sites. The college would consult the Student Council on what they think should be included.

Mrs Donovan asked had students been asked for their views on the admissions process. Mr Pearson said that feedback would be obtained from the focus groups within the college.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Horan asked what would be the impact on this committee once the new Teaching and Learning Committee had been established. Mr Pearson replied that the Teaching and Learning Committee's terms of reference had not yet been finalised but clearly all the curriculum issues would become part of its remit.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 October 2014 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

AQUINAS COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 7 July 2014
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

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Mrs E Rice in the Chair

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Ms Calverley reported that along with Mr Horan they had reviewed the Appeals Policy referred to in Formal Capability Policy and Procedure and that the information had been passed to Mrs Barlow in the Human Resources Department

5. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Mr Pearson advised Governors that a number of staff were leaving at the end of the academic year. Governors were invited to celebrate their contribution to the college at the end of term celebrations on Friday 11 July 2014.

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Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____