

AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 8 October 2019
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Mr G Hynes, Cllr T McGee, Miss K O'Callaghan, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor and Ms E Urbancova.

Dr Smith was appointed as Chairperson for the meeting. Dr Smith in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson Principal

1. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Dr Smith.

2. WELCOME TO MR G HYNES

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Hynes (Foundation Governor) to the meeting. For the benefit of Mr Hynes all of the Governors introduced themselves.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr P Horton, Miss S Howard, Mrs J Miller and Ms C Vitti (Vice Principal).

4. 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.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record subject to an amendment to minute 8 - page, 3 2nd paragraph penultimate line "you" to read "your".

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

7. ADMISSIONS 2019/2020

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had started the term with 2273 students on roll and that the college is funded on 2243 students. A number of students had dropped out for a variety of reasons including going back to their previous school, apprenticeships or transferring to another college. On average around 30 students drop out by the census date for funding which this year is 18 October 2019. Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would prepare a summary for the next meeting of why students had dropped out.

At the start of the term the actual number of students on roll was 2273. The latest figures suggest that there will be around 2241 students with a L6 of 1170 and U6 of 1071. Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would have liked the numbers to be a little bit higher. He added that the college will be better funded next year as a result of the additional funding announced by the Government. In response to a question from a Governor, Mr Pearson replied that the college would be full at around 2250 students. The college has increased its staffing levels to take account of the additional students.

Dr Smith advised Governors that the funding will increase by 4.3% per student. Mr Pearson added that the cost of the increase in the employer costs for the teachers pensions scheme of around 7% will be fully funded by a grant. Cllr McGee reported that an offer of 1.5% had been made for an increase in teachers' pay but this has been rejected by the teacher associations.

A discussion took place on the financial position of colleges in general. Mr Pearson advised Governors that other Catholic colleges in the area are struggling to have a surplus budget, even though they generally have no problems in recruiting students. Ms Urbancova asked if the college had difficulties in retaining or recruiting staff. Mr Pearson replied that staff turnover is low but the college has been able to recruit staff including those from the PCGE course that is run at the college in association with Bolton University. He added that sixth form colleges tend to recruit a certain type of teacher who do not go back to the secondary school sector. In addition, the college is considered to be a good place to work. Dr Smith stated that when the college was expanding it had the dual advantage of both retaining experienced staff and being able to recruit new blood, but it is now stabilising. Mr Pearson reported that there has been some staff turnover due to colleagues looking for promotion and those retiring. The current teaching staff number is 165 staff which equates to 117 full time equivalent.

8. ADMISSIONS 2020/2021

An Open Day had been held on Saturday 28 September 2019 and another Open Evening has been arranged for Wednesday 9 October 2019. The final Open Evening had been scheduled for Thursday 31 October 2019, but this has been re-scheduled to 7 November 2019. The Open Day on Saturday had proved to be very popular. Some students come to more than one Open Day or Evening. Cllr McGee and Ms Urbancova agreed that the move to having an Open Day on a Saturday was a good decision.

The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2020/2021 is 30 November 2019. The college had also attended year 10/11 assemblies at secondary schools and local authority careers events.

All category 1 students will have an interview before Christmas 2019. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2019 will then be assessed. All applicants will be notified whether or not they are being considered for interview. Students who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter before Christmas 2019 inviting them to attend an interview in January/February 2020.

Mr Pearson reminded Governors of the difference between category 1 and category 2 applications and reported that the following applications have been made or started:

193 completed applications	89 from category 1	104 from category 2
275 applications started	99 from category 1	176 from category 2

There will be about 1000 category 1 students and 1200 category 2 students in the cohort for 1100 – 1200 places at the college. When considering applications the college take into account the following:

- i) Commitment to study at the college
- ii) Appreciation of and commitment to the college's ethos
- iii) Wider interests and the contribution the applicant might make to the college community
- iv) A reference from school regarding application, attendance, conduct and punctuality
- v) Whether the applicant currently attends a school located in Stockport
- vi) Quality of application

Mr Hynes asked how did the process and timescale fit in with Loreto and Xaverian colleges. Mr Pearson replied that it was similar. Dr Beatty asked are category 2 students aware of the things that matter at the college. Mr Pearson replied that schools want the college to say that there are no automatic places available at the college. He added that he had spoken to headteachers to outline what the college is looking for in its students. Cllr McGee added that all 11-16 schools should give impartial advice to students. Some schools, Cheadle Hulme and Hazel Grove have established their own sixth form because their students could not get a place at the college.

Ms Urbancova asked what is the breakdown of the students between category 1 and 2. Mr Pearson replied that category 1 fluctuates between 400-500. The college has outgrown its catholic feeder schools. Mr Hynes felt that the breadth of the curriculum offered at the college made it attractive to students. Dr Smith added that the per-centage of Catholics at the college has increased.

Further information on the number of applications for 2020/2021 would be available at the Governing Body meeting on 19 November 2019 and a further report would be given to the next General Purposes Committee.

Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College – Confidential Item

Cllr McGee left the meeting at this point.

9. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the current General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Taylor asked if racist incidents would be reported to this committee. Mr Pearson replied that if there were any incidents they would be reported to this committee.

After a full discussion it was agreed that no changes were necessary.

10. PUBLICITY

Mr Pearson circulated a copy of the new College Prospectus for 2020/2021. The information in relation to BTEC courses was correct at the time the prospectus was printed but there could be changes. The prospectus had been designed in house but printed externally. A great deal of time and effort had been put in to produce the prospectus.

Mr Taylor reported that students from the college had appeared in the Metro Newspaper featuring their attendance at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. Mr Pearson replied that the students had enjoyed the experience of attending the conference.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

28 January 2020 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College

Mr Pearson advised Governors that Cheadle and Marple Sixth College had recently been inspected and had been classed as Requires Improvement in relation to its Apprentice provision.

In addition the Commissioner of Further Education has intervened to issue the college with a Financial Notice to Improve. The Principal has been removed and the Chair of Governors has resigned. A Strategic Projects Appraisal has been undertaken and various educational establishments have been asked to make a Statement of Interest in merging/amalgamating with Cheadle and Marple Sixth College. The college had initial interest but this was not pursued. Dr Smith added that the different status of the two colleges would present great difficulties.

The outcome is that Cheadle and Marple Sixth College is most likely to be taken over by another college, similar to the situation where Stockport College merged Trafford College or the two sites could be split.

Mr Hynes asked if High Peak College would be interested in a merger. It was felt that as it was now part of the University of Derby it was unlikely. He also asked if Parrswood High School had a sixth form. It was confirmed that it did have a sixth form.

Mr Taylor asked if Marple Hall School was still interested in having a sixth form. Mr Pearson replied that the school had increased its Published Admissions Number (PAN) in year 7 and was therefore full and could not accommodate a sixth form.

There is a possibility that once the situation at Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College becomes public it could put the college under pressure to take additional students.

AQUINAS COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 8 October 2019
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Mr G Hynes, Cllr T McGee, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor and Ms E Urbancova.

Dr Smith was appointed as Chairperson for the meeting. Dr Smith in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson (Principal)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr P Horton, Mrs J Miller and Ms C Vitti (Vice Principal).

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 9 July 2019 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. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

This was a confidential item.

6. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the current Employment Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting.

After a full discussion it was agreed that no changes were necessary.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Taylor asked if there was a breakdown of student withdrawals and what was the implications for staffing levels. Mr Pearson replied that the withdrawals were spread thinly across many subject areas. The fact that students know that their course is for 2 years there are likely to be fewer withdrawals. Ms Urbancova asked do students understand that the course is now 2 years. Mr Pearson replied that at Year 11 talks in secondary school it is made clear what is expected by the college.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

28 January 2020 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

5. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

- i) Mr Pearson advised Governors that staff appraisals had been undertaken and those staff who had achieved their targets would progress up the pay scale. This would be backdated to 1 September 2019.
- ii) A member of staff had been absent on long term sickness following an operation. There had been complications and difficulties in seeing consultants. Good supply cover had been obtained.
- iii) A teacher who had not completed his probation and was awaiting a further classroom observation has asked to be released. This has been mutually agreed and no severance payment has been made. A Governor asked has it all been documented. Mr Pearson confirmed that it had all been recorded.
- iv) A member of staff has been absent due to stress and the college has been contacted by their solicitor saying that the stress had been caused by the college. They had requested a settlement figure of £30,000 plus payment in lieu of notice. The college had refuted the claim that the college had been the cause of the stress. Adjustments had been made to the working arrangement to help the member of staff. The response from the college had been that the absence would be dealt with in accordance with college policies once the member of staff had returned to work. The solicitors had come back with another proposal. The college has made an offer to make a payment in lieu of notice and £5,000. The solicitors have been asked to reply to the offer by 11 October 2019. The member of staff would have needed to take out a grievance against the college. Mr Hynes asked if the member of staff had advised the college that they were suffering from stress. Mr Pearson replied that the member of staff had been absent due to anxiety and arthritis and had accused the college of malpractice. An investigation would take place once the member of staff had returned to work.