

AQUINAS COLLEGE

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 26 January 2021

Time: 4.00pm

Venue: Virtual

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss A Aspacio, Dr P Beatty, Mr L Byrne, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Cllr T McGee, Mrs J Miller, Miss E Shuttlewood, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor and Ms E Urbancova.

Mr P Horton in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson Principal

1. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

The meeting began with a prayer led by Mr Horton.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr T McGee for his late arrival.

3. 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.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2020 copies of which had been circulated previously be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

6. IMPACT OF COVID 19

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would report to each committee on how Covid 19 had impacted of the areas that are covered by their remit. Further reports would be given to the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Governing Body.

In the case of this committee it would cover how the college had operated the admissions process for the 2021/2022 academic year. It had not been possible to hold the Open Day and Open Evenings due to Covid 19. Students at the college had been involved in providing an overview of the courses that the college offers. Further details are given in the minutes of this meeting under Admissions 2021/2022.

7. ADMISSIONS 2021/2022

Mr Pearson updated Governors on the latest position regarding admissions for 2021/2022.

There had been 1100 Category 1 applications and they had been interviewed over the telephone before the end of November 2020. The interview is to give students advice about entry requirements and courses available at the college. The number of applications was up by about a 100. After the interview process there were 1081 applications for about 700 places. In addition there are 47 applications that were late and they have been placed on the reserve list.

The closing date for Category 2 applications was 30 November 2020 and 1509 applications had been received which was up by 150. By thoroughly assessing the application forms this number was reduced by 397. This meant that 1112 interviews over the telephone were undertaken and around 1000 offers will be made for about 600 places. Each interview lasts for about 10 minutes and 18 members of staff were involved over 6 nights with each member of staff having between 12- 16 calls per session. The final interviews take place tomorrow on 28 January 2021. Mr Pearson added that a moderation process will be undertaken before making any offers to students. Offers will be made by the February half term. It is hope that students can be invited in for taster days later in the year

Offers are made to students based on a conversion rate over the last five years of 65% for Category 1 students and 60% for Category 2 students. All of this should give the college a total of 1300 students to start in September 2021. Last year the conversion rates were up. Dr Smith added that there are always unknown factors of how many may stay at their current school in the sixth form or take up apprenticeships. Mr Pearson replied that there are less opportunities for apprenticeships this year.

In the last few years the target has been for the college to grow by 20 students each year but the college is reaching a point where it is full to capacity and there is pressure on the accommodation for some subject areas i.e. Art and Design. If there are 1200 students in L6 40 tutor groups and ethics classes would be needed, if the class sizes were 24 then 50 tutor groups and ethics classes would be needed.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that after discussions with Mr Pearson it was felt that the continued growth of the college cannot continue without some changes being made. There is a need to consider what options are open to the college and these may include some additional build or looking for some accommodation outside of the college.

An update on the admission numbers will be given at the Governing Body meeting on 9 March 2021.

8. STUDENT DESTINATIONS

Mr Pearson introduced a paper that had been circulated to Governors which showed the destination of students who had left the college at the end of the 2019/2020 academic year. He advised Governors that the paper should be considered as a final draft that gave a good overview of the destination for students that left the college in 2020. The paper is an overview of last year and not a comparison with other years.

Governors' attention was drawn to the Executive Summary in the report which showed the following:

a) 1075 students left the college in 2020. Additionally, 8 students also completed their studies who were on just level 2 courses.

The Final UCAS reports students completing level 3 qualification and accepting a place at university was 714.

- Female acceptances – 429
- Male acceptances – 285
- Number of students who gained entry to their first choice – 543.
- Unconditional offers – 527 unconditional offers were made to 369 of our Aquinas students.
- 100 students then progressed onto their chosen unconditional offers.
- 53 students (32 female and 21 male) deferred entry to university for 2021. The impact of Covid was the main reason why students decided not to start their course in 2020.

233 students accepted places at Russell Group Universities which was 32.6% of total number of acceptances to universities. This is an increase from last year 147 students (24.9%) of total acceptances.

Oxford and Cambridge places – 5 students.

Manchester Metropolitan University is again the most popular university with 90 students progressing onto a higher education degree course. There was a large increase in students going to Salford University who have opted for a variety of courses. The impact of the Covid-19 crisis and after talking to students who enrolled onto a course at Salford University it seems to indicate a student preference to study at a local university this year. Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield University and University of Manchester were also popular.

The main courses that students from Aquinas were following at university were Law, Design, Business Studies, Sociology, Psychology, Cinematics and Photography, Sport and Exercise Sciences and Computer Science.

Mr Hynes asked why the number of students going to the Russell Group of universities had increased. Mr Pearson replied that the Careers Team had raised awareness.

Governors noted that 72 students started apprenticeship compared with 119 in the previous year. The decrease can be argued due to the effects of the Covid 19 crisis as employers pulled back on their apprenticeship programmes. These included Barclays, Greater Manchester Police, Network Rail and MACE. Mr Pearson added that most apprenticeships were in finance, media and construction and that the college had a good reputation with employers.

Mr Taylor noted that the figures for apprenticeships were good and that some students will be on degree apprenticeships that are linked to universities. Mr Horton added that the armed forces provided an opportunity for apprenticeships.

Mr Horton asked if the college received any feedback from universities about students from Aquinas. Mr Pearson replied that there is no formal arrangement but some university contact the college at the time a student graduates. Oxbridge provide feedback on why a student has not been offered a place.

Mr Taylor noted that there had been increase in Widening Participation with 89 students going on to university. Mr Pearson replied that the college had provided students with more advice and guidance. Dr Smith noted that ethnic minority students do better and that their are 60% female and 40% male. Mr Pearson replied that mirrored the college population.

Dr Beatty commented that there had not been a drop in qualification for female as a result of a change from course work to linear examinations. He added that the changes to the curriculum were biased in favour of males.

Mr Hynes asked if the college were happy with the destinations for looked after children. Mr Pearson replied that the college were happy with the outcomes and that the safeguarding team work hard to ensure that the students are on the right path. He added that if Mr Hynes wanted to discuss this further he could contact him outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Student Destination Overview for 2020 be noted.

9. PUBLICITY

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there was nothing to report on publicity at the moment.

Information will be available at the next meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors noted that this would be the last meeting that Miss Aspacio and Miss Shuttlewood would attend because their term of office as Student Governors would cease at the end of the Spring Term 2021. Both Cllr McGee and Mr Pearson thanked them for their contribution to the meetings of the Governing Body and wished them well for the future.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 7 July 2021 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

AQUINAS COLLEGE - EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 26 January 2021
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: Virtual

Dr P Beatty, Mr L Byrne, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Cllr T McGee, Mrs J Miller, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor and Ms E Urbancova.

Mr P Horton in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson Principal

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

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 13 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

5. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

a) Appointment of Vice Principal

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he had updated the details that had been used for the recruitment of a Vice Principal when Ms Vitti had been appointed. It was anticipated that the advert would be placed by the February half term with interviews taking place either before Easter or soon afterwards. The dates for the interviews would be determined once it was known how lockdown would be eased. Everyone agreed that the interviews should be held on site at the college with social distancing in place. The aim was for the new Vice Principal to start in September 2021. It was noted that the last date for teachers to give their notice for a September 2021 start was 31 May 2021.

Cllr McGee reminded Governors that it was important to involve the Diocese in the appointments process.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he has regular catch up meetings with Mr Cunningham (Director of Education at Shrewsbury Diocese) and that he was aware of the impending appointment. Mr Pearson added that the Diocese had asked if he or Mr Bailey would be willing to undertake training to become Diocese inspectors for Section 48 inspections. Mr Bailey had expressed an interest because his background was in ethics and philosophy.

It was agreed that Cllr McGee and Mr Pearson would review the documentation to be used in the appointments process and then circulate to some Governors for their comments before finalising the information.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 July 2021 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____