

AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 23 January 2024

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr L Byrne, Mr P Horton, Mr T McGee, Mr M Matthew, Mrs J Miller, Dr A Smith and Mr M Taylor.

Mr P Horton in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson

Principal

Mr A Bailey

Vice 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 Mr G Hynes and Mr I Ishaq.

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 10 October 2023 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. ADMISSIONS 2024/2025

Mr Pearson updated Governors on the latest position regarding admissions for 2024/2025.

There had been 1173 Category 1 applications and they had been interviewed over the telephone before the end of November 2023. The interview is to give students advice about entry requirements and courses available at the college. The number of applications was similar to last year.

The closing date for Category 2 applications was 30 November 2023 and 1659 applications had been received which was the highest number ever received. Prior to the interviews the student's applications are classified as follows:

i) excellent, ii) good or iii) requires improvement. The interviews should be completed soon and offers will be made by the February half term. Those students classed as excellent (355) would not be interviewed but directly offered a place. A similar number would not be offered an interview based on their poor application.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that between 15 – 18 staff had been involved in the interview process. This had meant that each member had undertaken 15 interviews in a session of 2.5 hours. Staff tend to do 4 sessions each. There are 138 students still to have an interview.

On the census date in October 2023 there were 2421 students, which is the number that the college is funded for in 2024/2025. The college usually aims to grow by between 20-40 students. The aim for next academic year will be to have 2450 students on roll in September 2024. An additional 30 students gives the college an additional £150,000 in income. The college is significantly above its built capacity, the original building was for 1850 students to be on site at any time but we have made the most of the timetabling flexibilities to ensure this figure is not exceeded.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there are 48 late Category 1 and 102 late Category 2 applications. These will be held and looked at before any offers are made. A Governor asked is there any particular reason for the late applications. Mr Pearson replied that the college sends reminders to its feeder schools about the closing date for applications. Some may be students who have moved into the area, others are students who have just left it late to submit an application. The interviews should be completed soon and appropriate offers will be made by the February half term.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the new build will increase the capacity at the college but is unlikely to be completed in time for the start of the next academic year. A more realistic date is after the October 2024 half term, if everything goes well. The college does not want to include the new build for timetabling arrangements. It is hoped that the contactors will be on site by the end of February 2024. A series of contract agreements have still to be signed and agreed before the college has a fixed price for the new build. It is hoped that it will remain within budget.

An update on the admission numbers will be given at the Governing Body meeting on 19 March 2024.

Mrs Miller and Mr Bailey joined the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

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 2022/2023 academic year.

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

a) 1131 students who had completed a level 3 course left the college in 2023. Additionally, 6 students also completed their studies who were on level 2 courses.

b) 60.4% of students progressed straight to higher education courses, whilst 15.7% progressed to either an apprenticeship or employment. The remaining 23.9% of students took a gap year, an FE course as well as some currently seeking opportunities.

c) The Final UCAS reports students completing level 3 qualification and accepting a place at university was 683.

- Female acceptances – 368 (53.9%)
- Male acceptances – 291 (42.6%)
- Prefer not to say – 24 (3.5%)
- 51 Students deferred entry to university for 2024
- Total number of students gaining a place at a university was 734 students
- Number of students who gained entry to their first choice – 578 (84.6%) a decrease from last year (598).

d) 194 students accepted places at Russell Group Universities which was 28.4% of total number of acceptances to universities. This is a decrease from last year 202 students (30.0%) of total acceptances.

e) Oxford and Cambridge places – 5 students.

f) Universities in northern cities continue to be the most popular with Aquinas students. Once again Manchester Metropolitan University is again the most popular university with 96 students progressing onto a higher education degree course. Other popular universities were University of Salford 71, Sheffield Hallam 51, University of Sheffield 37, Leeds Beckett 32, University of Liverpool 28, Liverpool John Moores University 27 and Lancaster University 22.

g) Students from the college went onto 89 institutions compared to 88 in the previous year.

h) 118 students out of a total of 175 who identified as anything other than White British (67.4% of cohort) progressed onto higher education. This compares to last year, with 126 students out of 167 (74.4%).

i) 122 students out of a total of 218 who identify as from a “widening participation background” (55.9% of their cohort) progressed onto higher education. This compares to last year, with 129 students out of 195 (66%).

j) Governors noted that 56 students started apprenticeship compared with 59 in the previous year.

k) 48.9% of students who left are based in the North West.

l) Aspire students who participated during the first cohort (2021/2022), 43 out of 78 completed their studies in Summer 2023. 57.3% of those students progressed to either university or employment.

m) There were 181 other, students who do not fit in one of the other categories.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that most student were staying in the North West due to the financial pressures that families are facing. Mrs Miller wondered how many students explored the opportunities of moving away from the area. Mr Taylor added that there are a large number of good universities within the North West and easily accessible. Mr Matthew replied that it was for social economic reasons that students remain close to home. Mr Taylor asked if many students went to universities abroad. Mr Byrne added that for many courses it does not make sense to go abroad i.e to go to France to study law.

A discussion took place on a) Widening Participation and Governors noted that the numbers had increased to 218 from 195 in 2022, whilst the number in 2021 was 121 and b) Low Prior Attainment, the number had reduced to 108 from 127 in 2022 and 258 in 2021.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the way in which universities welcome students plays a large part in determining which university a student will choose.

RESOLVED: That the Student Destination Overview for 2023 be noted.

9. PUBLICITY

Mr Pearson advised Governor that the college had decided to update its website and that work on the new website was 75% complete. The timing of when to switch over to the new website had still to be determined.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governor noted that this was the last meeting that Mr Matthew (Student Governor) would be attending. Governors thanked him for his contribution to the meetings and wished him all the best for his future studies.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 2 July 2024 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

AQUINAS COLLEGE

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 23 January 2024

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr L Byrne, Mr P Horton,, Mr T McGee, Mrs J Miller, Dr A Smith and Mr M Taylor.

Mr P Horton in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Pearson

Principal

Mr A Bailey

Vice Principal

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence were received and accepted from Mr G Hynes.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 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. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

Mr Pearson introduced a paper that had been prepared by Mrs Blackburn and had been circulated to Governors.

Governors noted that it is now a statutory requirement for any employer who employs more than 250 staff to undertake an annual gender pay gap analysis. The college had 232 staff including invigilators and the split was 153 (66%) females and 79 (34%) males. The college has a teaching staff split of 63% female and 37% male. Females and males on average earn roughly the same. There are more females than males on management points. The snapshot date for the public sector was 31 March 2023. The College needs to report on the following:

1) The mean gender pay gap

- 2) The median gender pay gap
- 3) The mean bonus gender pay gap
- 4) The median bonus gender pay gap
- 5) The proportion of males receiving a bonus payment
- 6) The proportion of females receiving a bonus payment
- 7) The proportion of males and females in each quartile pay band

All employees are paid on nationally negotiated pay scales for staff in Sixth Form Colleges with annual increments up the pay spine to a maximum point. No bonuses payments were paid to staff during the reporting period. Categories 3, 4, 5 and 6 above are not applicable.

The college has a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process and advertise a wide range of job vacancies. Applications are invited from those who wish to work either full or part time, including some posts with significant management responsibilities, in order to encourage both males and females with caring responsibilities, who do not wish to work full time, to apply to work with us. The college believe in appointing the person who we feel to be the best candidate for each job vacancy regardless of gender. All staff, irrespective of gender, are eligible to apply to take part in funded external staff development and our internal staff development programme is available to all staff.

Mr Horton asked to whom is the return sent. Mr Pearson replied that it is sent the HMRC who in turn pass the information to the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Mr McGee felt that the information was useful at a college level but was less significant when aggregated.

Staff surveys are undertaken bi-annually as are staff exit interviews.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Mr Pearson reminded Governors that a member of staff had opted to go to an Employment Tribunal claiming unfair dismissal due to disability. An arbitration meeting between the two parties was held in November 2023 to try and resolved the matter without going to an Employment Tribunal. No agreement was reached at the meeting with the two parties some distance apart.

Mr Pearson instructed the solicitors not to give up on reaching a settlement and to remain in contact with the ex-staff member and their representative to see if further work and hurt could be avoided, allowing the ex-member of staff to move on. In response to this their representative has suggested that their preference in this regard would be to work with the employment committee through our solicitors.

Mr McGee as Chair of Governors felt that as he had been closely involved in the case that he should excuse himself from any such arrangements. Mrs Miller indicated that she would be willing to take part as did other members of the committee should it proceed in this way.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2 July 2024 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____