

AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 12 October 2021
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: Virtual

GOVERNORS PRESENT

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

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

There were no apologies for absence.

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 6 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

6. IMPACT OF COVID 19

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would report on Covid in relation to admissions at the college.

Students enrolled on 23 August 2021 after they had uploaded their GCSE results remotely. The number of students on roll was 2,450 plus and the college had over recruited by about 180 students. Students had two tests off site before they returned, those who had not taken the tests had two lateral flow tests on site, if necessary and were provided with the kits. There had been a good response to testing, however, there were 60 positive cases at the start of term who started in isolation. This number went down to as low as 10 in the following weeks but there has been a slight rallying recently and there are now 41 cases of Covid with those students isolating. If the number increased to around 100 the college would have to re-introduce the wearing of mask in college.

The numbers at the college are similar to those in the North West and with similar colleges in ACVIC. The college is no longer required to undertake a track and trace of students. There are 9 members of staff, mainly support staff absent due to Covid. Dr Smith asked if it was known why support staff had been affected. Mr Pearson replied that it was staff in the library possibly as a result of a member of staff who had been on holiday.

When the students returned to college the measures that were in place were reinstated with hand sanitisers and masks being provided. However, students were only wearing masks when reminded and the college feels more like it is returning to normal. Over 250 students were vaccinated on site by the LA team. Classes sizes have returned to normal except for registration and Ethics, and assemblies are online to avoid large congregations of students.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that within Greater Manchester, Trafford had the highest number of Covid cases per 100,000 of population with Stockport the second highest. It is not known if these numbers have peaked. He added that 5 local authorities were considering bringing back the wearing of masks within school/colleges. It seems like pupils are bringing the virus home to their families. Dr Smith added that ONS had reported that the infection rate in secondary schools is 1 in 14 students. The college is good compared to this figure.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there is a severe cold going around at the moment and many people have been quite poorly as a result. Students are encouraged to take lateral flow tests twice a week. Mr Hynes referred to it as freshers Flu and asked if the college had a Covid plan and does it fall under safeguarding. Mr Pearson replied that the college does have a Covid plan. Mr Bailey added that in regard to safeguarding there is a policy to cover how the college keep students and staff safe if the college re-introduced remote learning or college closure.

Dr Beatty added that the infection rate for Covid will go up and down but it will last for some time to come. Mrs Miller asked with the impact of Covid are flu are vaccinations promoted in the college. Mr Pearson replied that they were for staff but not students. The cost is between £10 - £15 per person for the flu vaccine and that the college had booked 140 slots and all were booked. Cllr McGee added that people over 65 and pupils aged 3+ (known as super spreaders) were being targeted. The take up of the Covid vaccine in Stockport was 85% which is amongst the best in the country.

7. ADMISSIONS 2021/2022

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had started the term with 2484 students including Pathways and that the college is funded on 2297 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.

At the start of the term 1400 students had accepted places and 1315 had enrolled, the aim had been to have 1200 new students. The latest figures suggest that there will be around 2427 students on roll at the census date of 15 October 2021, with a L6 of 1290 and U6 of 1112. In addition there will be 25 pathway students. Mr Pearson added that this number will fall as a result of illness or students who have not settled in at the college. The college has 130 students over the number that it is funded for. The college had looked for a growth of 20/40 students. At any one time there are about 1700 students on the college site. The average class size is around 21 and the maximum size is 27 students. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college may get additional funding in year for the number of students over 100 which could be as much as £100,000 depending on the census population.

Mrs Miller asked have those students taking up Apprenticeships left the college. Mr Pearson replied that there are few Apprenticeships available. Mr Bailey added that most leavers have gone to other colleges because they held multiple places, or the college could not offer their first subject choices. The college had a soft start/ induction and asked which students were considering Apprenticeships. In addition, the college were looking at students whose attendance record was poor and those with health issues. The college were providing advice and guidance to these students.

Mr Taylor felt that the additional student numbers were a significant increase. Mr Pearson replied that it is not unusual to see a 20/40 increase in student numbers but the current increase was indeed significant but had however been absorbed within the budget. He added that the category 1 conversion rate had increased by 8%. Mr Pearson indicated that he would look at the data for the last 4 years and may undertake a postcode analysis to see if there are any emerging patterns.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college is getting close to its capacity and that the Governing Body need to be looking at some strategic planning for the future. Cllr McGee added that the college needs to look forward and see if it can get additional accommodation. Mr Pearson added that Catholic colleges can now acadamise but the Diocese was not particularly interested in that at the moment.

8. ADMISSIONS 2022/2023

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Open Day had been scheduled for Saturday 25 September 2021 and Open Evenings in October 2021 but these had been cancelled because of Covid 19. These would now be virtual events. In addition, the college had also been scheduled to attend school events and whilst they would avoid large open events they would still attend year 10/11 assemblies at secondary schools,

The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2022/2023 is 30 November 2021. All category 1 students will have a telephone interview before Christmas 2021. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2021 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 2021 inviting them to an interview in January/February 2022. The telephone interviews for category 1 students have started.

Mr Pearson reported that the following applications have been made or started:

Roughly 300 applications 200 from category 1 100 from category 2

When considering applications, the college consider 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

Further information on the number of applications for 2022/2023 would be available at the Governing Body meeting on 23 November 2021 and a further report would be given to the next General Purposes Committee.

9. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

Mr Byrne suggested that in paragraph 1 the roman numerals be replaced with letters and that the following changes are made:

- 1. vii) consider change to considering
- 1. ix) review change to reviewing
- 1. x) ensure change to ensuring

After a full discussion it was agreed that these changes be agreed.

10. PUBLICITY

Mr Pearson advised the Governors that the new College Prospectus for 2022/2023 had been delivered to the 5 feeder schools and 15 other secondary schools.

The virtual Open Evening held on 25 September 2021 had been well attended. A voice over had been made for every subject that the college offers, there had been a virtual tour of the college and an address by the Principal. Attendance at Year 11 assemblies had also been undertaken.

Dr Smith asked if the events organised by the college were similar to other colleges. Mr Pearson replied that Loretto and Xaverian colleges were holding Open Events. Dr Smith added that he felt the online material produced by the college was good. Mr Hynes asked if there had been cases where parents/students do not turn up to events after booking them. Mr Pearson replied that this had been the case at colleges such as Loreto and Xaverian.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

25 January 2022 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

AQUINAS COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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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 July 2021 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

a) Appointment of Additional Staff - Mr Pearson advised Governors that 12 new support staff had been appointed which include a Personal Assistant for the Principalship and an Assistant Manager in Adult Education. Eleven new teachers had been appointed along with internal appointments to cover Wellbeing Mentors (9), Learning and Development Tutors (6) and Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year.

b) Four staff were on long term sickness, 3 due to anxiety/depression and 1 due to long term Covid. In addition 3 staff are on short term absence.

c) Two support staff had been subject to disciplinary action and both had received a verbal warning. One had been due to a failure to follow college policies and procedures, whilst the other was due to lateness and general poor attendance.

d) Mr Taylor asked what arrangements had been made following Carol Mayall's retirement as Head of Careers. Mr Pearson replied that John Morrison had been promoted to Head of Careers. Two part time staff had increased their hours to cover his promotion and workload.

6. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

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

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 235 staff including invigilators and the split was 165 (70%) females and 70 (30%) males. The college has a teaching staff split of 69% female and 31% male. Females on average earn more than males due to the fact that there are more females than males on management points. The snapshot date for the public sector was 31 March 2020. 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

The college does not pay bonuses to any staff. The support staff are entitled to an annual standards payment of £320 pro-rata depending on hours worked. This is paid in December and so is not included in the March figures. It does not fall into the definition of bonuses for the purposes of Gender Pay Gap and is immaterial to the statistics. Therefore, the 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.

Mrs Miller asked if the college looked at external training opportunities for staff. Mr Pearson replied that the college would look at the benefit for the individual, department, the college and the cost. He added that internal training was mandatory for staff.

Dr Smith reminded Governors that the college used to have a senior management team of 5/6 which was mainly male.

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

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

Mr Byrne asked why there were only 8 members of the committee, whilst the General Purposes Committee had 9 members. The Clerk replied that the Student Governor was not a member of the Employment Committee that is why there is one less member.

After a full discussion it was agreed that point 2 should read “The number of members shall be eight including at least five Foundation Governors”.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no Any Other Business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

25 January 2022 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____