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Press Release

CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR £1 MILLION SAVING

Cambridge Regional College has been Highly Commended for an Association of Colleges Beacon Award for a smarter procurement project that has led to a saving of more than £1 million.

The Awards, which this year celebrate 17 years of outstanding teaching and learning in Further Education Colleges, were announced at the AoC's Annual Conference and Exhibition in Birmingham on 18 November.



Steven Cooper, MD of Barclays Business at UK Barclays Retail Banking, announces the winners.

Cambridge Regional College was Highly Commended for the Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and AoC Award for Smarter Procurement. The Award recognises imaginative and innovative ways in which Colleges have managed their procurement activity to make sustainable savings that have been reinvested to support students.

The College won praise for its strategy to ensure value for money which has resulted in cash and efficiency savings of more than £1 million over the last three years. A suitably qualified College Governor has acted as a procurement champion and established a procurement framework and a team which works closely with senior managers throughout the College.

The new strategy has seen the number of building materials suppliers reduced from 25 to three, enabling closer relationships with local providers and mutually beneficial arrangements. Steel and timber framed house building kits for students to erect in the Smart Life low carbon centre have been provided at a saving of several thousand pounds.

The money saved has been reinvested in projects that have benefited students and staff. These have included a professional climbing wall and electronic basketball scoreboard in the new sports centre; industry-standard facilities and equipment for the catering, motor engineering and health and beauty departments and the introduction of a virtual learning environment for students.

The UK-wide Beacon Awards provide national recognition for excellence and innovation as well as acknowledging the talents of staff at all levels. They highlight the breadth and quality of education in the College sector.

Chair of the AoC Beacon Awards, Dame Patricia Morgan-Webb, said: "Beacon Award winners and Highly Commended Colleges raise the bar when it comes to finding new ways of doing things to enable Colleges to play a leading role in the communities they serve. They help contribute to social justice by widening participation in further education and play a key role in local economic and social regeneration by

encouraging links with local businesses and supporting people, both in and out of work, in learning new skills.

“We are pleased that this year’s winners have been drawn from all parts of the UK and demonstrate traits of innovation, creativity, responsiveness and a collaborative approach. Once again, I am delighted on behalf of the AoC Charitable Trust to acknowledge and reward the exemplary contribution made by these Colleges.”

Chris Lang, CRC’s Director of Finance and Resources, said the award was a great honour, and recognition of the hard work which had gone into improving the College’s procurement system. It was key in this that the Head of Finance, Charlotte Skinner, and the Procurement Manager, Noel Cassidy, ensured that there was close integration between finance and procurement processes:

“We have been through our processes with a fine toothcomb over the past three years and have been able to put in improvements that have allowed us to make substantial savings. Furthermore, these savings have gone directly back into improving the facilities for our students, which is why we are so delighted,” he said.

A government spokesperson said: “The Department for Education, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Association of Colleges, are proud to have sponsored the second Award for Smarter Procurement in the further education sector. This year’s Award highlights the power of collaboration and the benefits it brings to colleges – not only monetary savings, but the opportunity for shared learning – benefits that can make significant differences for both College staff and students.”

Roger Marriott said: “As Chief Assessor for the AoC Beacon Awards I am immensely impressed by the high quality of the work that is being done in Colleges, in all parts of the UK, to provide exemplary support for learning to such a wide range of students.

“The commitment of the sector to meeting the needs of learners and the degree of excellence which was displayed by Colleges during our assessment visits was outstanding. By presenting these Awards, the AoC shines a spotlight on best practice,

innovative development and continuous improvement; these Colleges create shining examples that other institutions can look to for help, inspiration and encouragement.”

Cambridge Regional College will receive a certificate testifying to their achievement in the New Year.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information, please contact Lynn O’Shea, Communications & PR Manager, on 01223 418773 or email loshea@camre.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

AoC Beacon Awards programme was established in 1994 under the auspices of the Association of Colleges at the suggestion of The Partnership Trust. The Partnership Trust wished to establish an awards programme for the further education sector after a similar event for the higher education sector proved successful. The Awards started with just six sponsors in the first year and 13 categories. A total of 101 applications were received from 61 Colleges. The event now regularly attracts around 270 applications a year for around 20 awards.

Cambridge Regional College is the second largest provider of full-time education for 16 to 19 year-olds in the eastern region. The College has around 3,500 full-time and 6,000 part-time students. Students come in from a 40-mile radius, covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk. Over 80 per cent of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years old and come to the College after secondary school; the rest are mature students, studying on a range of Access to Higher Education and vocational programmes. The College offers the largest and most comprehensive range of vocational courses in Cambridgeshire, and has one of the largest work-based learning contracts in the Eastern Region.