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**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Monday 10 February 2020, 6 pm, Paddington Green Campus**

Members Present: Mary Elliott (Chair), Colin Smith, Angela Drisdale Gordon, Desmond Bishop (Staff Governor), Rose Sareami (Student Governor), Nick Bell (CEO), Alex Fyfe (Observer).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, Stephen Davis, Grethe Woodward, James Wilson, Melanie Guymer, Nicola McLean, Jim Gallagher, Claire Collins, Amanda Thorneycroft.

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence Apologies were received from Stephen Hayes, Matthew Green, Glenys Arthur and Sukhveer Singh.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items Rose Sareami declared an interest in item 4iv as she was an A level student at the College.</p>
3	<p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee 11 November 2019 <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i> These were approved as an accurate record and signed.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising The actions from the previous meeting were noted. One action had been deferred to the next meeting on March 16, and the other was covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p>iii. SAR Approval <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> The Committee noted that the SAR had been amended to reflect the original grades (pre-validation) that were consistent with the Ofsted grades on inspection. Members approved these changes and were content for this to be uploaded to Ofsted.</p>

	Strategic Matters
4	<p>i. Risk Register <i>(Risk register circulated in advance)</i> SD explained that he had completed a refresh of the academic risk register in light of the Ofsted inspection. A number of the mitigating actions were covered within the Ofsted Action Plan, including the expansion of front line managers. SD drew members' attention to the risk of not developing business intelligence and data to drive performance management. He explained that once the scoping was complete the level of resource would be identified which would then determine delivery timelines. It was hoped that this could be delivered at the beginning of the next academic year. Discussion were in progress with view to using capital expenditure so it would have less impact on P&L. ME sought that the TLS Committee were kept up to date on the business intelligence (BI) developments alongside the F&GP Committee which had overall responsibility for the IT Strategy. AF expressed concern about managing the position until the business intelligence systems</p>

were in place. It was recognised that main KPIs and student achievement needed to be monitored closely to be able make progress before the Ofsted monitoring visit.

ii. KPIs

(Paper circulated in advance)

SD presented a data dashboard for curriculum which provided a range of KPIs for governance and performance management. He explained that the future development of a BI system would enable governors to access this platform and been able to access the data by campus, and drill down by faculty. AT expressed caution that the project was still yet to be fully scoped and it was not certain what could be provided. This dashboard could not be automatically generated at the moment, but this was the intention going forward. The data provided in this version of the dashboard had been put together manually which had been time consuming. Feedback from the Ofsted inspected had included that middle managers were unable to speak about or articulate their data or know where to find their performance information. A BI facility would support improvements in this area. CS sought assurance on timelines and whether it would be operational in time for the Ofsted monitoring visit. It was noted that this would depend on the level of resource, but that the BI would be fundamental to driving performance improvements.

SD talked through the information included on the dashboard, and that it was designed to be a snap shot and not be longitudinal. Members welcomed the information and how it was presented, but wanted the national rates and data from previous years to be included going forward to be able to compare. CS noted the declining attendance in English and maths and how this appeared to contradict the improved predictions on achievement. Members asked if reasons for students leaving were known. It was noted that retention of students should begin at enrolment, not post-census. ME asked if this dashboard could be regularly updated for the Committee. She also requested that achievement of higher grades 4- 9 for GCSE English and maths be included. Management of punctuality was being included in lesson observations going forward. ADG asked if there was an attendance and punctuality policy which could be applied. SD explained that this was being addressed through a review of student policies including a behaviour framework. AF sought assurance on how improvements to teaching quality would be shown in the KPIs. It was also suggested that staff absence and turnover could be included, though this would also be covered in under the HR responsibilities of the F&GP Committee. It was agreed that the KPIs needed to focus on the Ofsted priorities at this stage.

iii. Student Surveys

(Paper circulated in advance)

GW explained how the survey results were compiled and the benchmarks used for QDP surveys. Prior to the meeting members had been given access to an online link which allowed them to access and drill down into the data at multiple levels. It was noted that this was the first time that this survey had been completed across the Group, so this would create the baseline for comparison. The survey had been completed at Wembley, Willesden and Kings Cross campuses previously and there were generally indications of improvement from the previous survey. It was noted that the majority of questions placed the college in the bottom 25% of the 85 colleges used as a benchmark. The information from the survey was being used to drive improvements at faculty level and all managers had a target to achieve a 60% response rate. This response rate was currently at 55%. DB raised the issue of lack of resources at a curriculum level to be able to improve learner experience. GW said that this should form part of their portfolio review, as additional resources could be requested though that process. The response rate of 60% was

challenged and whether this should be higher. RS (Student member) reported that she had not been aware of the survey, and did not recall having the opportunity to complete it.

iv. A levels

(Paper circulated in advance)

SD presented his paper which assessed the A level provision against certain criteria as part of a curriculum review. The conclusion from this assessment was that current A level provision was low quality, and did not achieve the progression opportunities for students as part of the college offer. This provided a strong evidence base to suspend A level provision. However, SD also proposed an alternative option verbally, to narrow the A level provision and to approach it differently.

Members expressed their concern that the options paper requested at the last meeting had not been provided. There was still insufficient information from a strategic and wider impact perspective on which to make an informed decision on this issue. It was difficult for the committee to assess the impact and risks of the options being considered in the absence of wider information. The options of narrowing the provision to either STEM subjects, or humanities was discussed. The committee recognised the potential benefits of a dedicated A level/ sixth form centre, and the appointment of teachers instead of lecturers to deliver programmes. Members would have liked to have understood patterns of A level provision in wider GFE; A level provision at competing colleges and which A levels were provided to better understand potential gaps in the market; the number of potential A level students and whether demographics would increase in the coming years. It was noted that A levels were a key aspect of government policy, though it was important for A levels to be delivered to a good standard.

CS reminded the Committee of the shorter-term human element that the college was currently offering some A levels, and that a decision needed to be made on this so as not to mislead students for enrolment in the Summer. ME recalled that the issue of A levels had been discussed for a number of years and that it was yet to be properly resolved. RS said that she thought the choice of subjects being offered was good and that there were few colleges in London offering the course she wanted to do. Additionally, there were a number of older students doing A levels (19+) and the college was providing them with a second chance to succeed and access university. NB suggested that the committee take a tactical decision at this point until a more long-term strategic decision could be taken. JW reminded the Committee of the scale (250 students, small scale), the reputational impact on the college and the longer-term view. NB explained that strategically there were both risks and opportunities on whether to select STEM or humanities subjects. STEM linked more closely to T levels, but there was a risk that the college may be unable to recruit strong enough teachers. There was less risk appointing humanities teachers. Members noted that there were currently 4 dedicated A level teachers in post, but it was considered that it would be possible to redeploy these staff should A level provision be suspended. Members expressed a concern about what was being asked of them in respect of the paper provided. It was agreed not to suspend A level provision and to allow the Executive to decide what the narrowed provision would look like and to keep the Committee apprised going forward. It was requested that the lessons learnt from the previous 'narrowing' of the A level provision be looked at and reflected in plans.

RS left the meeting at 8.05 pm

Teaching, Learning and Skills	
5	<p>i. Post-Ofsted Action Plan <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>SD explained how this plan aligned with the strategic themes and would form part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. Action plans for each of the areas identified would be developed by the short-life Working Groups which were to be established after the February half-term. The action plans would be reviewed by this committee and form part of the QIP. It was agreed that given the six week life of the Working Groups that a verbal update on progress would be given at the March Corporation meeting.</p> <p>ii. Attendance, Retention and Punctuality <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>MG reported that attendance was below target being on average 77% and lower for English and maths at around 60%. Some areas of the curriculum enjoyed a higher attendance (ESOL and high needs). Punctuality was also being recorded and monitored through spot checks. Members welcomed the strategy indicated in the paper to address English and maths attendance below 50%, and sought that its impact be evaluated and further strategies rolled out where effective. Consideration had also been given to incentivising students to attend, though it was recognised that fundamentally engaging and challenging lessons and an improved student experience were key levers to improving attendance.</p> <p>NB left the meeting at 8.30 pm</p> <p>iii. Predicted Achievement <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW explained that assessment points had been undertaken at 6 and 10 weeks into term, with a further assessment being undertaken in March. The predicated grades were based on actual achievement which provided a higher degree of confidence. Currently, based on this information, all faculties were showing headline improvement which was bringing the college's performance more in line with the national rates. Students at risk of not achieving had been identified and were being supported and monitored. It was hoped that the re-timetabling at the Paddington Campus would have a positive impact on attendance and achievement. It was noted that fully funded programmes and apprenticeships were not included in the report. It was agreed that a Business Development report would come to the Committee in the Summer term.</p> <p>iv. HE Update <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW reported that the College was still awaiting the QSR outcome report which had been originally due in December. It was noted that this was not a UCG specific issue as other colleges had experienced similar delays. GW provided a summary of the recent HE Oversight Committee meeting which had considered the college's progress in meeting the OfS conditions of registration including alignment with consumer protection legislation. The low response rate of HE students to the QDP survey was noted. Members requested that the NSS survey outcomes be recirculated.</p>
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>i. Prevent <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p>

	This paper had been provided for information to reassure members of the Prevent measures in place throughout the college. This had been made in response to a recent extremist related issue involving a former student. The arrangements for Prevent would be reviewed at the Strategic Safeguarding meeting which was taking place in March 2020. Colin Smith as the safeguarding governor would be attending.
	Dates of next meeting Monday 16 March 2020

Zoë Lawrence 11/02/20120

SIGNED: **Date:**

Mary Elliott
TLS Chair

ref	Action	Lead	Status
11/11 4iv	To further develop the Student Engagement Strategy in to a stand-alone document for publication which is clearer on its aims and deliverables.	SD	
4ii	For previous year data and national rates to be included in the KPIs. Consideration be given to including GCSE grades 4 – 9 for English and maths in future versions of the KPIs	SD	
5iii	Business Development Paper to be presented to Committee at the meeting in the Summer term	AT/SD	