

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Tuesday 8 June 2021, 6 pm by Zoom

Members Present: Colin Smith (Chair), Angela Drisdale Gordon, Nick Bell (CEO), Tony Johnston, Matthew Green, Max Maalimey (staff governor), Temitope Alebiosu (student governor), Natalie Dweh.

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, Stephen Davis, Grethe Woodward, James Wilson, Angela Jackson.

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Desmond Bishop and Ofofonono Iwa. CS welcomed Natalie Dweh to the Committee as this was her first meeting. Natalie is the newly appointed safeguarding governor.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>
3	<p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 23 March 2021 <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>These were approved as an accurate record for signing.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising</p> <p>It was noted that the Value Added action had been deferred to the Autumn Term. The other actions had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>

	Strategic Matters
4	<p>i. KPI Dashboard <i>(Paper provided in advance)</i></p> <p>JW provided a summary of the main points of the dashboard covering recruitment, retention, attendance and lesson observations. Attendance in particular had been an issue all year and made more difficult due to the lockdowns. It was noted that whilst attendance usually correlated with achievement, achievement did not appear to be particularly adversely affected. Only attendance for vocational courses was included in the dashboard. The current focus was on preparation for the new academic year, ensuring engagement with curriculum for the enrolment process through keep warm activities and marketing efforts.</p> <p>ADG noted that attendance appeared to be a consistent issue and suggested that an intensive audit be undertaken to fully understand what the issues were, and whether there could be improvements to how it was being monitored. JW explained that attendance was a whole systems issue which included preparation, planning and infrastructure that would compel students to attend. It was also hoped that the Power BI system would be able to provide better attendance data to be able to target issues more systematically.</p> <p>TJ noted that the poorer attendance had not particularly negatively impacted on achievement and asked for an explanation for this. JW said that through lockdowns it had become clear that L1 and 2 learners struggled to be motivated and engaged with online lessons and engagement became an issue. So attendance on campus for this group of learners was important for achievement. However, other learners who were more able to</p>

work independently and could access the course materials online, work with their tutors, were more adept at diversifying their learning methods and attendance was less of an issue. It was also a testament to the teachers' commitment in working with the students through a range of less traditional means to enable the learners to succeed. It was noted that a more blended approach may be suitable for some students going forward and for transitioning to higher level programmes.

ii. Academic Risk Register

(Paper provided in advance)

SD highlighted the main risks which included student recruitment, completion of the Power BI project, workforce planning and value added. TJ asked if the lack of progress on value added and the slight decline in achievement for adult students would have a negative impact on the Ofsted Monitoring Visit. SD said that he thought that there was enough progress in other areas such as lesson observations, and student voice to be able to counter this. The delay of the value added project was not ideal and it was hoped that there may be some progress made on both these areas by the time of the inspection.

ADG asked about the recruitment position and whether the number of applications was currently on track. SD said that there had been an inequalities impact on student enrolment the previous year caused by the pandemic. This was being used as part of a business case with the ESFA to try to recover some of the losses from attrition. A decision from the ESFA was awaited, though further information had been requested that week. SD expressed concern about resource issues as a result of attrition which may result in increased class sizes and that this may impact quality. Participation at the open days had been positive and progression and continuation was good with approximately 1500 students re-enrolling with the college.

MM commented that he had met students at the open days who had applied to multiple colleges and had had interviews at other colleges. SD said that students always applied to more than one college and that it was for UCG to ensure engagement from the beginning so that students enrolled with us. Positive student experience was vital for a good reputation. TJ asked MM what he thought the college needed to improve. MM said that he thought it was important for applications to be passed on to curriculum staff promptly so that engagement could start. He noted that enrichment activities were not included in the open days which he considered to be missing as many students would be attracted to the college by the sports and other facilities available. SD said that a decision this year was taken not to do this, to enable covid safety to maximise student numbers on site. CC considered that MM had made a valid point and that Marketing would pick this up in non-pandemic years to 'sell' some of the special aspects of the college to prospective students, and also use staff profiles in this work.

ND raised the issue of school liaison and how it could be of benefit to develop transition links with secondary schools in the area, particularly those without a sixth form. This was noted and was part of the forthcoming marketing strategy.

iii. Marketing Strategy

(Paper circulated in advance)

CC provided a short commentary to the proposed marketing strategy, including its evidence base, and the themes in contained, including enrolment. The process had also prompted a review of the marketing skills within the organisation and retraining of staff.

MG commented that the Marketing Strategy looked very good, was smart, and targeted. However, he did not consider the use of advertising on tube barriers and buses to be consistent with the strategy which was more digitally focused. Members discussed the merits of transitioning from traditional to more digital media this year, and how the bus and tube advertising blocked this space from competitors.

TJ commented that this new strategy had been needed by the organisation for some time and welcomed its approach and the increased ability to measure the impact of marketing and its value for money. He asked if the strategy included internal communications and if governors would be able to access the new intranet. CC said that internal communications were a priority and that a lot of work had been done on the intranet. Access to governors would be provided.

TJ asked about the timing of the rebranding work proposed in the strategy. CC said that this was likely to be in the Autumn term.

MG asked if there would be an operational plan to support the implementation of the strategy and that this would be monitored at TLS. CC confirmed that this would be the case.

MM asked what marketing efforts were being made to parents. CC said that this was mostly by direct mailing, but consideration was also being given to school liaison and other youth associations.

Members resolved to recommend the Marketing Strategy to the Corporation for approval.

iv. Safeguarding Report

(Paper circulated in advance)

GW highlighted the main points of her safeguarding report which included reference to increases in mental health referrals, and some more serious cases which were ongoing. These included the deaths of two students during the Easter Holidays. Neither death happened on college campuses and neither of the students had been considered to be at risk or were known to safeguarding prior to the incidents. GW reported that the Everyone's Invited website was being monitored for any college issues. A Prevent policy was also included in the paper for review. The Single Central Register was up to date and only 5% of staff had not completed the mandatory safeguarding training.

ADG queried the definitions of suicide in the appendix and it was agreed that this was not clear, and would be reviewed. ADG also asked how students were engaged in Prevent by the college. GW explained that it was included in induction, and further conversational sessions as part of tutorials in the Autumn and Spring terms.

MG asked what mechanisms were in place to track autistic students who might be at a higher risk of suicide. The MIS would be able to identify these students and it would also be picked up through their Educational Health Care Plans (if they had one).

TJ commented on the tragic student deaths and sought clarity on any connections with the stabbing on Edgware Road in September 2019. It was confirmed that the incidents were unrelated. Security at the Paddington campus had been proportionately increased, and knife wandering put in place as precautionary measures. The increasing gang activity in the

	Willesden area was also noted. The college was working closely with local police and relevant agencies in respect to these incidents as necessary. Members noted the report.
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Teaching, Learning and Skills	
5	<p>i. Predicted Achievement <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW described the main points of his paper that there was a 1% increase in 16-18 achievement and a slight decline for adults, though it was hoped that this would be minimised. Some areas had shown significant improvement but this was countered by a decline in English & Maths results. The paper included actions being taken. Achievement in supported learning was as expected.</p> <p>ADG noted that there was no breakdown of achievement by EDI learner groups. This data was not yet available but would be for the next meeting.</p> <p>TJ noted the pivot between 16-18 year-old students and adults and asked if it was possible for an increase in achievement in both these age groups in the same year. JW said that this was coincidental and that it was possible to gain achievement across the piece. It was thought that the pandemic may have adversely affected 19+ achievement with the need to juggle family commitments and work during lockdown with school closures. TJ commented that longitudinal trend diagrams showing achievement for previous years would be useful.</p> <p>TJ asked what catch-up provision was in place for English and maths as the timetabling issues had prevented these courses starting until November. JW said that provision had been offered during the February half term and Easter breaks and Summer schools were being established. TJ asked for assurance that these delays to timetabling would not re-occur. JW said that it was difficult to be able to guarantee this completely as the intake for English & maths was unknown until after enrolment. However, every step possible in terms of preparation was being take now to have a clean a start to the new academic year as possible. SD said that some of the problem last September was due to a MIS coding issue. A more collaborative and responsive approach was now being taken.</p> <p>ii. Admissions Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This draft policy had been decoupled from the HE Admissions policy which would be considered by the HE Oversight Committee. The policy included reference for students aged 14 – 16 despite the college not currently having any students of this age, it was retained for completeness. No other changes had been made. Members resolved to approve the policy.</p> <p>iii. Lesson Observations <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW explained the arrangements for lesson observations during the year. The target of 85% was yet to be achieved though there had been a significant increase this year in teachers being considered good or better than the minimum standards. A small proportion of teachers had not improved and 50% of these were permanent members of staff. Extensive CDP had been put in place to support online provision as well as targeted bespoke training. This had impacted well on the improvements made.</p>

	<p>ADG asked if the college was using the exemplary teachers to develop and share best practice. GW confirmed this and that these teachers often ran CPD sessions and provided peer support.</p> <p>TJ commented on his experiences as a link governor where he had met with college staff from his career cluster and was impressed by their collaborative and supportive approach, working across campuses.</p> <p>iv. UCG Method <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW explained the philosophy behind the UCG Method and how it aimed to consolidate the science of teaching with the approach on how teachers needed to think about students and the communities within the college. It aimed to set out what good looks like and provide a means of self-assessment linking with improvements in teacher performance. NB commented on the importance of student focus in the document and making this a reality. The UCG Method would be launched at the teacher conference on 2 July to which governors would be invited. ND said that she welcomed the paper and that she looked forward to seeing it in practice.</p> <p>v. Learning and Teaching Operational Delivery Plan <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>Members noted the progress made in this report against the plan.</p>
6	<p>I. SU Constitution <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The SU Constitution is a legal requirement for a college and that it be reviewed at least every three years. The constitution's financial responsibilities had been drafted in line with the financial standing instructions. Members resolved to recommend the SU Constitution to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p>II. QDP Students Survey / Student Engagement Action Plan <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AJ presented these initial results from the student survey. It was currently not possible to provide breakdowns on age and ethnicity as these results were still to be received. UCG's target was to be in the B quartile overall. Whilst this was yet to be achieved, most areas had moved up quartiles. It was acknowledged that there was still some improvements to be made. By campus Maida Vale and Kings Cross had performed well and were in the A and B quartiles. Paddington Green was mostly D. This would be assessed in more detail.</p> <p>CS noted that the response rate to the survey had improved considerably from 40 – 67%. He asked how this had been achieved. AJ said that the survey had been sent to students directly and there had been follow up through tutors. It was hoped that this could be increased further for the next survey. MM concurred and said that staff had worked hard to support and encourage students to complete it.</p> <p>TJ commented that the results of the survey could helpfully link with marketing and be used in some of the key messages to promote the college. It was good to be able to see the progress being made.</p> <p>SD said that he saw the student survey results as a good indicator for how things were progressing and that it was positive feedback for staff. ADG was in agreement and</p>

	<p>commented on the coherence across the college and that there was a sense of the direction of travel which was credit to all those involved.</p> <p>AJ also presented the Learner Engagement Plan. Progress on some aspects of this had been hindered by the pandemic but overall the plan was being implemented. The focus was on moving students from passive recipients of education to co-creators. Members welcomed these reports.</p>
7	<p>AOB No items were raised.</p>
8	<p>Date of next meeting TBC</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.18 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 09/06/2021

SIGNED: **Date:**
Colin Smith
TLS Chair

Actions

ref	Action	Lead	Status
3. 02/02	To include an item on the Value Added project on the March Committee agenda	GW/ ZL	Deferred to Autumn term
4iii	Marketing Action Plan to be developed and brought to TLS for review and monitoring	CC	
5i	A breakdown of achievement by EDI learner groups to be included on the agenda of the next meeting	JW	
5iv	Governors to be invited to the Teaching Conference on 2 July	GW	Complete
6ii	A breakdown of survey responses by EDI learner groups to be included on the agenda of the next meeting.	AJ	