

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Wednesday 12 June 2024, 6 pm by Zoom

Members Present: Colin Smith (Chair), Stephen Davis (CEO/GP), Max Maalimey (staff governor), Tim Ryan, Tanya Rose.

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence (Director of Governance), James Wilson (Deputy Principal), Angela Jackson (Deputy Principal), Luci Ord (Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships), Aurora Lewis Green (Head of Marketing and Communications), Bilal Bobat (Assistant Principal Creative Industries), Nicola McLean (Assistant Principal), Joanne Smith (Assistant Principal Student Experience). John-Patrick Casey (Assistant Principal, Health, Well-being and Care)

Procedural	
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Ana Chimbembe (student governor) and Gashtiar Muhamadi (student governor).</p> <p>The Chair updated the Committee that Liz Jones had decided to stand down as a governor during May 2024. Liz was a valued member of this committee, the Safeguarding Lead Governor and also the Link Governor for Health, Well-being and Care. Members thanked Liz for her contribution to teaching and learning and her wider roles at UCG.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>
3	<p><i>(Minutes and all papers for the meeting were provided 7 days in advance)</i></p> <p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 13 March 2024 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising There were no matters arising.</p>

CURRICULUM FOCUS	
4	<p><i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>i. Health, Well-Being and Care</p> <p>JPC provided a short overview presentation of his curriculum area outlining the profile of the learners, achievement, retention and attendance; staff recruitment challenges, curriculum reform and future developments. CS commented that 9 out of 10 staff within the area were permanent and asked about the strategies used to achieve that. JPC said that there were staffing challenges 2 years ago but with the support from HR, persistence and adjusting the parameters for shortlisting away from just qualified teachers to those with industry background and to then provide teacher training it has been possible to successfully fill vacancies. CS also noted that achievement had improved and whether JPC had done anything in particular to enable this. JPC said that it was important to retain learners and the trauma informed learning approach had enabled this through better understanding of the students' circumstances, and providing additional support to work</p>

	<p>with them to achieve. This included support for them even if they were not able to attend, and changing the mind-set of teachers in this way. CS commented on the trauma informed learning approach and whether any themes had arisen from that. JPC said that some students needed to provide financial income for their families and this would affect attendance as many students needed to work. SD asked if there may be a point when it may not be feasible to deliver Travel and Tourism. JPC said that student enrolment looked positive for this September and he was hopeful of a stronger position, though he had considered this issue. TR asked what progress had been made to secure work placements for the Health & Social Care T level. JPC said that some employers had been identified through an employers forum and that would provide work placements for some of the students, but more were needed. It was only expected that there would be one group of around 14 students for the T level in 2024/25 and the BTEC qualification would be retain for a final year.</p> <p>The chair thanked JPC for the helpful presentation and for answering governors' questions.</p>
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STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES	
5	<p><i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>i. Predicted Achievement</p> <p>JW explained that the predicted achievement at CAD2 had increased very slightly since the previous report at CAD1 in most cases. For 16-19 year olds this was only 0.2% and was above the BSC target though below the national rate (NR) but closing the gap. 19+ had increased from CAD1 though in both age groups English and maths achievement had negatively impacted on the overall figures. JW pointed out that at CAD 1 exam results were awaited which had since been received for some qualifications so the predictions could now be more certain. In most cases students had done better in the externally assessed component than predicted. Business was an outlier and had seen a downturn since CAD1 from students withdrawing or not achieving. The overall retention figure which had increased by nearly 10% since the previous year was providing additional confidence in the predictions.</p> <p>JW said that there were several actions that were doggedly being pursued which had been sustained throughout the year. These included creating stable relationships between the tutor and the students, developmental lesson observations, TLA coaches, and investment in progress coaches. The metrics which were included in the balance score card were providing some confidence that the measures being put in place were taking affect. CS asked if any key themes were coming from the lesson observations. JW said that in some cases teachers were relying too heavily on the assignment brief for example in engineering and this was impacting attendance as this could be completed at home and there was less need to attend college. JPC concurred with this and how it was necessary to move away from this approach to make it more engaging for learners. This was confirmed in student feedback. MM said that the learning coaches had been helpful, but were introduced part-way through the year and more time would be beneficial. He noted that some teachers taught students how to pass the assignment rather than embracing the wider skills and learning aims. TR asked how the college had faired in the recent Advanced Technical Plumbing and Electrical assessments. JW said that the outcomes were positive and resits were in progress. TR asked how the college intended to encourage teachers to not over rely on the assignment brief. JW said that the approach would be individualised and that</p>

each teacher would have access to necessary training resources including the ETF and How To modules and it would be monitored going forwards.

It was noted that higher grades for English and maths were not included in the predicted achievement report this year, but that this may be something that could be reported in future years. JW explained that all progress whether the student achieved or not (partial achievement) was being captured to be able to set target grades. AJ said that the college would be moving from functional skills to GCSEs for maths and English from next year. The predictions for English and maths were generally good. Exam attendance had improved this year and those that attended the exam usually achieved.

Overall governors were pleased with the position on predicted achievement and thanked the SLT members present for their hard work in getting to this point.

ii. Teaching and Learning Balance Score Card

JW presented the BSC focusing on those elements not already discussed. These included the student survey which had improved in-year and a further survey was due to report at the Corporation meeting in early July. Upheld complaints remained low and within target. Student attendance was lower than target and also lower than other colleges when benchmarked against the AoC's recent survey. JW spoke to the breakdown of attendance data by age and level and that it was important to consider the learner profile and context. Attendance for students on courses at level 2 and below was often poorer which impacted engagement. However, retention had seen a good improvement. JW acknowledged the support from HR in the recruitment of teachers, the grow your own approach and the trauma informed learning which were all positively impacting student retention levels. CS commented that there were still 20% of learners who were at risk of not achieving. JW thought that this was mostly influenced by English and Maths as the exam component of this was still challenging for many students. He also commented that the improvements to the MIS were beneficial in providing access to up to date and accurate data enabling students to be better placed at the beginning of the academic year. MM provided some examples of the complex lives that students faced and how this impacted their attendance though many were still being supported to achieve. TR asked if it was possible to measure the impact of the trauma informed approach. It was thought that this would be difficult to pinpoint specifically, and that it contributed to many of the KPIs in the BSC. It was understood that a more punitive approach definitely did not work which was evidence in itself. AJ said that there were lots of indicators to show it was working. In feedback from students one of the key attributes that students appreciated of their teachers was that they mattered to someone. The connection and relationship between the student and tutor was key, that the student felt invested in.

iii. Student Experience & Outcomes Risk Register

JW explained the interrelationship between the five risks on the risk register and how they could spiral if not addressed holistically. Many of them and their mitigations had already been covered in discussions. The Committee noted the risk register.

iv. Safeguarding Report

AJ presented the safeguarding report from September 2023 to April 2024 which had also been reviewed by the Safeguarding Steering Group. She noted a slight increase in the number of concerns, and also the increase in concerns from males. This was seen as a success in response to several initiatives to encourage males to come forward with safeguarding issues. Ethnicity was being monitored to ensure that all students were accessing safeguarding support. AJ explained that if there were trends in concerns raised

specific agencies would be brought in to support students. She also highlighted the concerns by campus and that there had been an increased at the Willesden campus which was considered to be mostly ESOL learners. The numbers of food parcels being provided was noted and also actions in response to those learners missing from education. MM asked what the process may be to support students who were coming into the college having not eaten. AJ advised that MM take this up with JS outside of the meeting.

v. Summer Campaign – Enrolment & Marketing

ALG set out the main points of her paper which covered the creative visuals for the campaign, the marketing activities, and the practical enrolment processes. She explained that the visuals were focusing on the feeling of being enrolled and the images were all of actual current UCG students, and were based on research of branding and messaging that best resonated with the target audience. A media agency had been appointed to support the college with digital and out of home marketing activities which would span from July to October. Conversion rates and online tracking of applicants was also in place to collect metrics to inform future campaigns. The enrolment process was provided in terms of floor plans for the main campuses which had been developed with the Enrolment Working Group. CS asked if there was any intelligence on how the college was perceived by potential students; was it considered to be a caring environment. ALG said that this was not something that was currently measured, though she was aware that the marketing from previous years had not had sufficient reach. TR thought the measures for internet activity were good, and asked if we knew whether UCG was a student’s first or second choice of college. ALG thought this was included in the application form, and remarked that it was known from research that the main reason for non-enrolment was location and journey times. MM said that it would be good to attract more students at level 3 and above. SD commented that currently 9000 applications had been received with 4000 of those being from existing students progressing. He felt that UCG had taken note of the non-enrolled research and that this year’s campaign was more targeted and cost effective. It was anticipated that it would be possible to calculate the return on the marketing investment made. Attracting more level 3 students would be dependent on successful delivery of levels 1 and 2. SD commented on the connectivity of all the items on the agenda of this meeting and how they together showed that UCG was a better organisation.

vi. Accountability Agreement

AJ presented the draft Accountability Agreement to the Committee explaining that it was a requirement of funding. It sets out the key deliverables for the college against local and national priorities and how the college meets its Local Needs Duty. This year’s agreement included more detail on the key deliverables, pathways to skills and main outcomes. The date for submission to the DfE was 30 June 2024 therefore the Corporation would be asked to approve this subject to the Committee’s recommendation by Written Resolution as the next meeting of the Corporation was not until 3 July. The Committee resolved to recommend the Accountability Agreement to the Corporation for approval.

Members noted that AJ would be leaving UCG at the end of the academic year and that this would be her final TLS Committee. Member thanked AJ for all her hard work for UCG and the high-quality papers which she had prepared and presented to the Committee and Corporation during her time at UCG and wished her well for the future.

6 Student Engagement

i. Student Engagement Policy

	<p>JS explained that this policy was an integral element to the other student support and engagement activities. It linked several elements including Navigate, work experience, and learning principles. The aim was for the student voice to work in collaboration with curriculum to inform practice. The Committee welcomed the policy and recommended it to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p>ii. Student Union Constitution This SU Constitution was to come into force from 1 Aug 2024. The main changes included revisions to the SU position which now included a sustainability officer and enrichment officer. The SU roles were linked to areas of college management. It was hoped that these links would help sustain engagement and help support the students in those roles. A points and rewards scheme had also been introduced as an incentive. The Committee resolved to recommend the Student Union Constitution to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p>iii. Bursary Policy JS highlighted the main changes to the policy which were an increase to the income threshold and a slight decrease in the attendance level for eligibility. It was anticipated that these changes would enable more students to access and benefit from the bursary. She also referred to 'pay my student' which was a one-stop-shop for students to purchase study materials with their bursary. The bursary allocation had decreased slightly due to the poorer take up in recent years and informed the changes had been made. The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p>
7	<p>AoB No items were raised.</p>
8	<p>Date of next meeting November 2024 (TBC)</p> <p>Meeting closed at 7.51 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 12 June 2024

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