

**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP**  
**Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee**  
**Monday 20 September 2021, 6 pm by Zoom**

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

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

A	Procedural
1	<p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b>  Apologies had been received from Matthew Green. It was announced that Grethe Woodward would be leaving UCG at the end of the calendar year. Members thanked her for all her hard work, and that she would be missed.</p>
2	<p><b>Declarations of interests in agenda items</b>  No interests were declared.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 8 June 2021</b>  <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i>  These were approved as an accurate record for signing.</li> <li>ii. <b>Matters Arising</b>  Matters arising were either complete or covered elsewhere on the agenda.</li> <li>iii. <b>Grey Box</b>  No items were raised for discussion.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Terms of Reference</b>  ZL explained that the ToR for the committee had been revised to include reference to two new statutory pieces of policy guidance from the Department of Education (which were included for information in the Grey Box) which included new responsibilities for the governing body. There was also an update in response to the changes to the UCG strategy on school liaison. Members agreed these changes to be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p>

Strategic Matters
<p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Risk Register</b>  <i>(Risk Register provided in advance)</i>  SD presented the main risks, and also referred to how these related to other items on the agenda. In particular were workforce planning to recruit and retain staff in posts which were hard to recruit to, English and maths achievement which may have reduced and have an impact on achievement overall, and Ofsted preparedness.</li> <li>TJ noted that the E&amp;M risk was increasing and asked what progress had been made on using AI and other tools to support learning in these areas. SD said that options had been looked into though there were some concern about the Americanised language in some applications which may cause confusion for some learners. JW said that three new curriculum managers had been appointed, and there had also been a better start to the</li> </ul>

year without timetabling problems so he was hopeful of improvement. GW said that Ed Tech online tools were being trialled working collaboratively with Creative Industries and Digital Technology. The immersive rooms were also soon to be in use so there were a number of approaches being considered.

TA asked about the hours timetabled for her English GCSE. JW confirmed that for adult students this was three hours a week. DB commented that there were noticeable improvements to timetabling this year.

MM commented that some students were finding the 4 day timetable a challenge to be able to fit in work and there was some negative feedback on the professional practice aspects of their timetable, that this was not a graded element so their attendance had dropped off. SD responded by explaining how the 4 day timetable had been adopted in response to negative feedback on the three day time table the previous year. He said that the position would be kept under review including how it affected attendance. SD explained that the timetabled hours for professional practice were required and that it provided a useful part of a student's learning in transition to the world of work or university. There were no specifications for professional practice or grading which should enable teachers to create a valuable experience for students under less pressure. SD suggested that a wider conversation take place on this outside of the meeting. Members noted the Risk Register.

**ii. Marketing Strategy – Implementation Plan**

*(Paper provided in advance)*

CC spoke to her paper stating that this was a working document that would be updated regularly. The main activity this academic year would be based on market research into student behaviour and their decision-making. It was anticipated that this would be more sophisticated than the previous year and would inform the marketing activity going forward, particularly enrolment and curriculum planning. Data collected from the recent enrolment exercise would also be used.

CS asked if there were any immediate changes to student behaviour as a result of the pandemic. CC said that at the moment this was hard to predict but consideration was being given to extending next year's enrolment processes.

TJ asked what was in scope for the brand identity aspects of the plan. CC explained that there was to be some local research into the brands currently used for the individual colleges and how this fitted with the artwork. Additionally there would be a consultation with stakeholders on the UCG brand on what and how this was used. TJ commented that he did not see content led approaches in the marketing plan, only advertising. He considered this a wasted opportunity not to use student success stories as part of the promotional campaigns. CC said that this was an important point and that this would be part of the PR Strategy. She admitted that the college's success stories were not being used enough and that this would be taken forward. Media students were also being used in a project to prepare content. TA commented on this, that there was only one student success story on the website. ADG supported these comments on using student and staff success stories and that it could also support the implementation of the EDI action plan.

TA asked for clarity on Instagram messages she had received about attendance milestones. SD said that this was an incentive scheme to support 16-18 year olds which would reward attendance over 85% with amazon vouchers. It was hoped that this scheme would improve

attendance and attract more 16-18 year old students. It was not open to adult students or those in receipt of the bursary. TA also suggested that the college set up a live chat. SD considered this a great idea and that it could be used to support specific themes as part of the weekly tutorials. DB suggested the use of the radio suite. AT said that art and media students were using this for podcasts. TA asked why the College had never been part of Colleges Live. SD said that this was not something that had been considered but thanked TA for suggesting it.

AGD welcomed the Implementation Plan but felt that it lacked context, qualitative data and information on the outcomes and impact the changes would make. TJ noted the inclusion of public relations, but expressed concern about the lack of reference to internal communication which he felt needed to be more effective. Members noted the paper.

**iii. Safeguarding Annual Report**

*(Paper circulated in advance)*

GW explained how this Annual Report provided a summary of the termly reports received by this committee and the Corporation. It was noted that there had been an increased in safeguarding referrals since April 2021 once the students were back on campus following lockdown. She commented that a higher level summary of the referral categories would also be provided in future reporting. ND praised the systems in place and the attention to detail provided in the report. She asked about the arrangements for transition when GW leaves in January. GW said that there would be a Strategic Safeguarding meeting this term where this will be agreed. ADG echoed ND comments on the thoroughness of the report and queried if there should be a suicide category. GW agreed with this. TJ asked if the higher level grouping would lend itself to being able to provide year on year trend data for comparative purposes. GW thought that this would be possible. Members resolved to receive the report which would also be shared with the Corporation at its next meeting.

**iv. Safeguarding Policy**

*(Paper circulated in advance)*

GW highlighted the main changes to the policy as a result of the Ofsted Report into peer on peer sexual abuse (which had been included as an annex). She set out the actions that UCG were taking in response to create a culture of non-tolerance and encouraging those affected to report incidents. Training was being put in place to hold awareness raising tutorials with students recognising the sensitivities and difficulties with this type of discussion. Poster and online campaigns to raise awareness would also be implemented. The effectiveness of the actions would be monitored. Members fully supported the policy changes set out in red text in the document. ND said how important it was for students to feel that the college was a safe place for them and that it must be remembered that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. **Members resolved to recommend the Safeguarding Policy to the Corporation for approval.**

**v. Link Governors**

AJ updated members on the Link Governor Scheme and that APs would be contacting Link Governors to become involved in their career cluster SAR meetings taking place the following week. ZL said that there were a couple of Link Governor vacancies which she was hoping to fill quickly.

<b>Teaching, Learning and Skills</b>	
6	<p><b>i. Enrolment</b></p> <p>SD provided a verbal update on enrolment. The two areas of concern were HE which was only 50% subscribed against target at the moment, and also the position on 16-18 year old enrolments. For HE a marketing campaign was being instigated to increase numbers.</p> <p>The funded target for 16-18 year olds was 3617. It was anticipated that the final numbers once all enrolments were complete would be in the region of 3900 – 4000 learners. This provided for the opportunity for some in-year growth funding from the ESFA depending on the levels of attrition which would not be known until after the first 42 days of the term. It was noted that other London colleges had struggled to enrol this age group and that the trend was likely to be wider than just London. Planned strike action at some other London colleges may also impact student experience and their attrition levels. The lower levels of enrolment were considered to be attributable to an increased number of NEATs and grade inflation from the CAGs meaning that more students remained in their school sixth forms. The reduction was seen most in level 1 programmes. The Committee resolved to receive this update.</p> <p><b>ii. Learning and Teaching Operational Delivery Plan</b>  <i>(Revised Plan circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW reminded members that the LTODP brought together the four strategic strands including technology and HR and provided a holistic approach to improvement. The paper showed progress made since the last review and responses to the Ofsted feedback from the interim monitoring visit. A key foundation was the UCG method which was aiming to provide the right cultural change. JW described some aspect of the UCG method which had been achieved.</p> <p>CS asked if the measures being taken would fulfil the requirements Ofsted were looking for. GW confirmed this and explained how specific training had been put in place which was evaluated by the Health Check in the Summer term. A further two training days in October would also build on this. SD said how success was based on partnerships and co-creation with staff and students. ADG asked the staff members how they felt the UCG method was working in practice. MM said that some aspects had been achieved to a point, but he felt that there was still some distance to go particularly concerning relationships and communication. It was noted that it was very early in the current term. ND commented how important it was to take advantage of the first few weeks of the term and induction of staff, to revisit the Method each term to ensure compliance with the agreement. Members resolved to receive the report.</p> <p><b>iii. Value Added</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW explained how value added worked, that this was the progress made for individual students against their starting point. The data included in the report was on known outcomes so may change once all the achievement results were known. Currently value added was showing expected progress for 16- 18 year olds. GW advised to be cautious of small number bias where these may not be statistically robust. Further reports on English and maths, and deprivation scores would be available in due course. The value added work would be used to improve outcomes for students on an individual basis. NB said that he thought the report was very useful and noted that the average number of GCSEs obtained by UCG students was 4.26 compared to 5.73 nationally. TJ asked if it would be possible to</p>

	segment VA by EDI protected characteristics. SD said that he thought this could be commissioned. Member resolved to receive the report.
7	<p><b>Student Engagement</b></p> <p><b>I. QDP Student Survey – EDI breakdown</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AJ highlighted the areas for development and the actions being taken as set out in her paper. ADG noted that the black African ethnic groups had responded less favourably to some of the questions and asked what specific actions were being taken forward to address this. AJ said that progress checks and more targeted support would be put in place and the use of the tuition fund for 16 – 18 year old learners. It was also the intention to have greater representation of this group within student voice mechanisms. MM suggested that it would be helpful to invite role models of black people from everyday industries and professions into the college. ND said how important it was to reflect the communities of the college and to celebrate these. It was noted that initiatives like Black History Month were limited and that the focus on ethnicity should be constant. Members resolved to receive the report.</p> <p><b>II. Exclusions and Complaints</b>  <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AJ explained that the nature of the complaints received had changed as a result of the lockdown. Many related to the move to online provision, communication and centre assessed grading. TJ asked if the higher number of complaints received in Engineering and Construction had been resolved. AJ confirmed this. The complaints had mostly concerned poor communication and lack of the practical component. The area was also understaffed which has now been rectified. ADG asked if there was an analysis of ethnicity for the complainants. AJ said that there was not for this report, but this would be available going forward.</p> <p>Exclusions had reduced from 16 the previous year to two. The improvement was thought to be due to the effective implementation of the Learning Behaviour Policy and fewer students in the buildings during the pandemic. Members resolved to receive these reports.</p>
7	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>
8	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b>  24 January 2022</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.21 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 21/09/2021

**SIGNED:** ..... **Date:**

Colin Smith  
TLS Chair

## **Actions**

ref	Action	Lead	Status
5i	A breakdown of achievement by EDI learner groups to be included on the agenda of the next meeting	JW	