

**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP**  
**Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee**  
**Monday 23 January 2023, 6 pm by Zoom**

**Members Present:** Colin Smith (Chair), Angela Drisdale Gordon, Stephen Davis (CEO), Tony Johnston, Max Maalimey (staff governor), Grethe Woodward, Liz Jones, Patricia Aquino.

**In attendance:** Zoë Lawrence, James Wilson, Sal Hamaida\* (Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment), Joanne Smith (interim Assistant Principal for Student Experience).

| A | Procedural   |
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| 1 | <p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies has been received from Kieran Joseph, Desmond Bishop and Angela Jackson.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Liz Jones to the committee as it was her first meeting.</p>  |
| 2 | <p><b>Declarations of interests in agenda items</b></p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>   |
| 3 | <p><b>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 09 November 2022</b><br/> <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i><br/>           The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p><b>ii. Matters Arising</b><br/>           The breakdown of complaints information by student age category and campus was provided for information.</p> <p><b>iii. Grey Box</b><br/>           No items were raised for discussion.</p> |

| Strategic Matters |  |
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| 4                 | <p><b>i. Enhanced Student Experience &amp; Outcomes Balance Score Card</b><br/> <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i><br/>           JW provided an overview of the main indicators. Retention was at a level to be expected at this point in the year, and attrition had returned to pre-pandemic levels. Attendance for 16-19 year-olds was below target, but 19+ was close to the 80% target at 79.7%. Lesson observations and value added would be discussed under specific agenda items later in the meeting.</p> <p>TJ commented that it was good to see positive progress being made on many of the indicators but recognised that attendance would be challenging. He asked if there was confidence that the 80% target could be reached. JW said that every effort was being made, Task and Finish Groups were developing action plans which would report back the following week. It was a whole college approach which would be implemented in-year. He was less confident about 16-18 year olds, but thought the target could be met for 19+. TJ asked if the student swipe card system that was discussed at the strategy event could have a positive impact on attendance. JW said that it may need a degree of cultural change to implement as it places the responsibility on the student. It may be possible to bring it into the Paddington Campus, but would not be worthwhile at Wembley or Willesden due to the</p> |

estate being sold and the decant at Willesden. The implementation would depend on the migration to a single MIS and the interface with that.

ADG asked about strategies to improve teaching and learning and how this improves attendance. JW acknowledged that the inconsistency in teaching and learning was a key part of the attendance challenge. She supported the student swipe cards for attendance and commented that this had been beneficial at UAL.

## **ii. Summer Enrolment Campaign Evaluation**

*(Papers circulated in advance)*

SH presented the main aspects of her paper which focused on return for the investment in marketing spend, how the marketing campaign had prioritised specific London boroughs and channels of communication based on evidence from the previous year's campaign. Marketing spend had been reduced by 50% for similar levels of enrolments. Course offerings were being reviewed based on student feedback and there was a positive response from school liaison work.

SD noted that last year's campaign did not quite match the previous year on 16-19 enrolments and queried if SH thought that the marketing spend had been reduced by too much? He sought SH's views on what the impact of withdrawing the marketing investment in some areas had been. SH acknowledged the points raised and that the analysis undertaken would now allow more effective targeting of spend going forward. For example to focus on digital rather than out of home marketing. Members recognised that this was the first time that this type of analysis had been available and welcomed it.

TJ thanked SH for the useful and transparent report, but expressed concern at the relatively low conversion rates. He asked if there was data on where students were exiting the process and what action was being taken. SH said that this was being addressed through staff training to improve the interview process. This was being repositioned to sell the opportunity to the potential student, rather than the converse. Local competitors across London on A level provision were also being looked at for what UCG needed to change. The non-enrolled report would be discussed at the 15 March TLS Committee meeting.

GW thanked SH for the very useful report and asked if there was an understanding of why students chose UCG. SH said that this was being taken forward through student focus groups to get intelligence on how different groups of students are influenced which will inform future campaigns. She also mentioned the misconception that college was not a route to HE and that the use of case studies of successful students were being used to address this.

## **iii. Student Survey Report**

*(Paper provided in advance)*

JS provided a summary of the recent student survey results. The target response rate had been exceeded and overall the majority of responses were in the C quartile, a move from the D quartile last year, with a small number in A and B quartiles. The response rate provided the quantity of data to derive significant information. It was interesting how some of the survey responses correlated with the OFSTED feedback.

TJ welcomed the overall improvements in the survey and asked what the college was doing differently to improve the student voice. JS said that a range of initiatives were being taken forward including student focus groups, surveys and the student council. TJ mentioned

that the governors would welcome more dialogue with students more broadly across the college, and that the process to appoint student governors was slow at the beginning of the Autumn term, and may be a different approach may be needed.

SD congratulated the student experience team on the increased response rate and the positive change that was providing rich information about the student cohort. The defined roles in student services was resulting in more and better student engagement. There were still challenges ahead to be able to move into the A and B quartiles and to look at the differences by EDI characteristic. ADG commented that she could see that overall the learner voice was improving and asked why this was not translating within all learner groups. She also welcomed other approaches for governors to liaise with students outside the formal mechanisms. JS said that efforts on enhancing the learner voice had been proactive since last term particularly through the students union and being able to triangulate information. LJ asked how UCG compared to other London colleges. JW said that the survey results were against national benchmarks and it was not possible to compare regionally.

**iv. Destination Data**

*(Report provided in advance)*

JS and JW provided a summary of the report. It was pleasing that 80.4% of students reached a positive destination on leaving UCG compared with an achievement rate of 69.9%. This showed that the college was having a positive impact in terms of public value in most cases which was part of the narrative shared with OFSTED. The number of students who went on to HE and apprenticeships had increased. Information, Advice and Guidance was being reviewed in response to the report's findings.

TJ commented on the response rate and that there are a proportion of student of which their destination is unknown. He asked if this is recorded before they leave by their tutors. SD said that the intended destination is recorded but this sometimes does not come to fruition. The destination report provides actual information of destination achieved. ADG welcomed the data and congratulated the college on the positive aspects of the report. She asked about the number of students moving to HE and whether these were likely to continue to increase. JW said that it was the aim for more students to progress to HE, but the changes to qualifications such as the un-qualification of level 3 programmes, and the introduction of T Levels was likely to impact on this.

**Teaching, Learning and Skills**

**5 i. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Development post-OFSTED**

*(Paper circulated in advance)*

JW provided the context for this developmental work following the OFSTED inspection. Whilst there were improvements on student engagement and the planning of curriculum, teaching and learning in the classroom was inconsistent and not yet good enough across the college. The Innovation and Development Team had been repurposed with the Advance Practitioner group to analyse areas of improvement and provide intervention support. TJ asked what anecdotal evidence there was of these teams delivering improvements in existing areas. JW explained that there had been staffing challenges, and there were limits to the level of intervention in-year, but there was increased teacher responsibility and accountability and it was hoped that this would start to come through in improved attendance and attainment in the coming weeks. SD also referred to the operational plans for each curriculum area which was generating increased accountability.

## ii. Lesson Observations Report

*(Paper circulated in advance)*

JW presented this paper which showed that the recent lesson observations had shown an 8% fall in classes considered good or better. It was noted that the LOs were inconsistent with the achievement and attendance data and also at odds with OFSTED findings. The paper provided a critique of the current processes which were leading to inconsistencies in the way judgements on lessons were being made and whether there was a clear understanding of what a good learning experience looked like. Established and permanent teachers often performed better than HPLs or agency staff as it was often more difficult to persuade the latter to take the development opportunities and stay in college for the requisite hours. The paper proposed a move towards a developmental lesson observation process. It would be necessary to consult with the unions on this and also trial it next term for potential roll out from September 2023. The developmental approach was based on collaboration rather than judgement and took wider metrics into account in the assessment of teaching quality.

CS queried if the observers understood what good looked like and if they were judging the same things in the same way. JW said that he was not confident of this and the number of observers would be reduced. Going forward observers must be expert and use a common language. It may also be that there is a rolling programme of LOs rather than two windows each year. LOs would need to be negotiated and agreed with Unions.

LJ asked if the LOs were linked to performance management. It was reported that this process was starting though wider performance measures were included as well. The LO process alone would not trigger HR intervention on performance. Unions were likely to oppose this. SD commented that there had been a significant increase in middle leaders from 29 – 41 and some were still making the transition to becoming line managers. It was noted that the opportunity to do more learning walks was not used sufficiently and that this would be looked into.

JW explained that teachers who did not perform well at a LO were invited to a meeting on how to improve and offered a learning coach. All teachers had an hour each week on their timetable for professional development. Refresher teacher training sessions were also offered. Overall, he was confident that the necessary impact would be achieved.

## iii. Value Added

*(Paper circulated in advance)*

JW explained how value added showed learner progress made from their starting point to exit that was benchmarked against a national average. Minus figures showed below the national average and plus figures above it. Comparisons were against the 2018/19 pre-pandemic levels to avoid years of centre and teacher assessed grades. Overall there was general improvement on VA. Despite some students not achieving their qualification, their VA was higher than the national average. VA for English and maths was +0.15. The improvements had been supported by students understanding their own targets. TJ asked if it was possible to segment these data by ethnic groups. JW said he was not sure, but agreed to look in it. GW thanked the executive for the data, and asked what the challenges were with staff in taking this forward and what the next steps would be. JW said that externally led training with middle managers had been done in prior years and that it was the intention to repeat this. More work would also be done directly with teachers on

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|   | <p>student's individual target setting. SD suggested that the MIDAS data be shared at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>iv. 2021/22 Achievement by EDI Learner Group</b><br/> <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This breakdown of achievement data from 2021/22 focused on the ten largest ethnic groups of students. It showed where achievement had improved for some groups but declined for others. The volumes of students in each group varied which impacted the comparison of percentages. This paper would receive further scrutiny at the EDI Steering Group meeting. Data was also provided on gender, high needs, students in receipt of FSM and LACs. It was noted that the achievement gap for LACs was closing. This data would be shared with APs and CMs and the analysis would inform action plans.</p> <p>TJ queried the data regarding the overall decline in achievement. JW explained that the list of grouping, variances and volumes were at appendix 1 of the paper which showed the overall position. ADG welcomed the data and asked if it was understood what the uptick in achievement was due to for some groups of learners. JW said that this would be looked into further. SD said that it was hoped that this data could be analysed by level and starting point by each learner group to develop impactful timely interventions as the cohort changes each year. It was hoped that this would influence how teachers work with those individuals in the classroom and that teachers would really know their students. This links with differentiation in the classroom as part of the lesson observations.</p> <p><b>v. Safeguarding Update</b><br/> <i>(Paper provided in advance)</i></p> <p>JS presented a safeguarding update confirming that OFSTED viewed the college's safeguarding as effective. She highlighted the number of concerns, a sexual abuse incident which had occurred off site, the current safeguarding training being taken forward with staff and E-safe measures. ADG asked that the table of concerns by categories be included in the report, that the actions be dated, and the list of safeguarding events as part of student support and tutorials be included. GW had attended the recent Strategic Safeguarding meeting as lead safeguarding governor and suggested that governors receive a focused session of training from the DSL at the beginning of the academic year to reflect the annual changes to KCSIE. The online safeguarding training could also be better tailored to FE. It was agreed that these actions would be taken forward.</p> |
| 6 | <p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Freedom of Speech Policy</b></p> <p>ZL explained that this policy was currently outstanding from the policy framework and was a legal requirement. The draft was based on a template from Eversheds LLP for the FE sector which had been adapted for UCG. This policy subsumed the External Speaker Policy as it is wider and covers all activities whether on the colleges premises or through its IT systems. The Committee were asked to recommend it to the Corporation for approval. TJ noted that it applied to governors and suggested that governors were made aware of it. ZL confirmed this and that it was consistent with the existing governor Code of Conduct which all governors had signed on appointment and agreed to cross refer to this. The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p>   |
| 7 | <p><b>Date of next meeting</b><br/> 15 March 2023</p>  |

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|  | Meeting closed at 8.24 pm |
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Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 24 January 2023

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

Colin Smith  
 TLS Chair

**ACTIONS**

| <b>Ref</b>   | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Owner</b> | <b>Status</b> |
|--------------|--|--------------|---------------|
| <b>04ii</b>  | Non-Enrolled Study by Chalkstream to be an item on the March 2023 TLS meeting agenda   | ZL/CC        |               |
| <b>05iii</b> | MIDAS data to be included on the March agenda  | SD/ZL        |               |
| <b>05iv</b>  | Table of concerns by category, dated actions, and the list of safeguarding events as part of student support and tutorials be included in the next safeguarding update | AJ           |               |
| <b>6</b>     | Freedom of Speech policy to reference the governor code of conduct and be recommended to the Corporation for approval.   | ZL           |               |