

**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP**  
**Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee**  
**Wednesday 24 January 2024, 6 pm by Zoom**

**Members Present:** Colin Smith (Chair), Stephen Davis (CEO/GP), Tony Johnston, Max Maalimey (staff governor), Liz Jones, Tim Ryan, Stephen Grainge (observer)

**In attendance:** Zoë Lawrence, James Wilson, Angela Jackson, Gabe Manthorpe, Rob Boucherat (observer)

<b>Procedural</b>	
1	<p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Tanya Rose, Ana Chimbembe (student governor) and Gashtiar Muhamadi (student governor).</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 2023</b>  <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p><b>ii. Matters Arising</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the action from the previous meeting would be covered under the non-enrolled report at the March meeting of this committee.</p>

<b>STRATEGIC</b>	
4	<p><i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p><b>i. Student Experience and Outcomes (SEO) Balance Score Card</b></p> <p>JW presented the SEO Key Performance Indicators. He reported that the KPI reviews were currently taking place and the 3% increase in achievement was currently on track. The student survey, value added, and lesson observations would be covered in detail under separate agenda items. The actions in response to feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection were included in the paper. The upheld complaints KPI was also on track. Student attendance continued to be a concern as current levels were below the 82% target, though it was recognised that this was a national issue across schools and colleges. Strategies were in place to address attendance. JW also highlighted the recent successful recruitment campaign which together with the fractionalisation work and grow your own initiatives had enabled a stabler workforce.</p> <p>CS noted the attendance figures presented by study level, particularly the differences between level 1 and 2 with higher levels. He asked if different approaches were being taken. JW said that the same strategies were being implemented in a holistic way, but it was likely that more effort would be invested at L1. The fundamental relationship between the student and tutor was key to good attendance, plus the trauma informed approach was making an impact. The approach to attendance was largely personalised.</p> <p>TJ asked if the attendance data included English and maths. JW confirmed it included all attendance. TJ noted an observation from his link governor activities around the</p>

perceptions of functional skills English and maths as opposed to GCSE and asked if this had a knock-on effect on attendance. AJ commented that GCSEs were often better understood by parents and employers and seen as the gold standard and could be more motivational for students. However, this was a complex area, and the decision should be based on what was right for the learner. It was noted that some colleges had phased out functional skills opting just to offer GCSE maths and English.

TR asked if there were differences in attendance across different faculties. JW confirmed that there were differences across the career clusters ranging from 5-20 %. Members welcomed the overview the BSC provided for this strategic area of focus.

## **ii. Student Survey Results (High level)**

AJ provided the initial high-level results of the student survey. The response rate was 60+%. Improvements in previous years had been incremental, but this survey feedback showed a definite jump into higher quartiles. To compare with the survey taken at the same point in the previous year, 10 out of 30 questions were now in the B quartile compared to 5 out of 30 in the previous year. There was some improvement shown in all categories. A breakdown of the data into site and career cluster level would be provided for the next meeting of this committee.

CS asked what action had been taken to increase the response rate. AJ said that various approaches were taken depending on the curriculum area. For A levels it was promoted through tutors, for other areas, classes were taken into IT rooms to complete it. Support was also given to students to explain what the questions mean and what the survey was about. Significant effort was put into this across the college.

TJ said that the SLT should be pleased by this improving picture and how this was validation of all the work that had been taken forward. He also asked if it was possible to know if it was the same 10-15% of students who were dissatisfied with the college or different ones. AJ said that the survey was anonymous so it was not possible to trace the responses back to individual students, but it may be possible to look at career clusters where there had been little improvement. Members welcomed the report and looked forward to receiving the more detailed analysis at the next meeting.

## **iii. Student Destinations**

GB explained that the cohort included in this research was larger this year because it also included data from UCAS applications, intended destinations and internal progression. Overall it related to nearly 5000 learners. 94% were positive destinations which was a 13.65% improvement on the previous year notwithstanding the comparison differences between the cohorts. The report included breakdown by campus and gender, and reasons for withdrawals.

Members queried why voluntary work, and independent living were negative destinations as these may be the destinations of choice for those learners. This was also felt to be the case for those not in work and not looking for work as they may have caring responsibilities. These definitions were set in the ILR and were outside of the college's control.

TJ said that there were some fantastically powerful messages in this research which were very impactful for Ofsted and for prospective students. He asked if this information was being used for marketing purposes. GM said that he agreed with this and confirmed that

	<p>he was integrating this into marketing messages and also using it for enrolment and internal progression. AJ said that it was referred to as part of open events as well. GM also reported that there was an internal audit on destinations currently taking place which was currently progressing well. Members welcomed the report and noted the positive outcomes.</p> <p><b>iv. Student Governor Report</b></p> <p>In the absence of the student governors, ZL provided a short rationale for their paper, and how the student governors had approached it. The aim was to provide some student feedback to the committee to help triangulate it with other information. The student governors had offered their views on what had gone well since September and what could be better. Student members were positive about their student experience generally, though the IT and arrangements for the prayer room at the Willesden Campus were mentioned. AJ said that she would follow-up on the IT issues reported and she confirmed that there were known issues with the prayer room that were being addressed and work was progressing on establishing a non-denominational space to manage students' differing needs. The absence of the student members at the meeting were noted, and support for student members would be discussed again at the upcoming GSR Committee meeting. Members welcomed the report and thanked the student members for their time in preparing it.</p>
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<b>Teaching, Learning and Skills</b>	
<b>5</b>	<p><i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p><b>i. Lesson Observations</b></p> <p>JW described the work being taken forward to implement the developmental lesson observations. These were intended to work in partnership with the teaching professional agreeing areas for improvement with additional observation and coaching as needed. Currently the college was appointing a smaller and more focused team of specialised observers. This would create a more standardised approach for better assurance on the quality of teaching and learning. It was being taken forward on a risk basis from analysis of other performance metrics and impact measurements were being included. The scheme was still subject to agreement from the recognised trade unions following the pilot last year. Objections to it were not currently expected. The paper also set out other actions that were being taken to support good quality teaching and learning.</p> <p>CS asked if teachers were sufficiently confident to ask learners for feedback. JW said that learner voice postcards had been used in the past which had provided a rich source of feedback. Other more structured approaches had also been used. TR asked about the arrangements for T&amp;L coaches. JW said they were being appointed for an initial two-year period. 50% of their time would be the observing and coaching duties whilst the remaining time would be for teaching to validate their expertise. There would be the option of reverting to their substantive post following the two years. TJ asked what proportion of the T&amp;L coaches had digital qualifications. JW said that this was not currently known as the appointment process was still underway, but he would consider this. Members noted the paper and looked forward to receiving further updates in due course.</p> <p><b>ii. Value Added (VA)</b></p> <p>JW provided an example to demonstrate what value added means and how it can be used to promote individualise learning, ensure sufficient challenge or identify where intervention</p>

is needed. The value added data provided showed the amalgamation of grades with 0.1 representing one tenth of a grade. A minus figure showed less than expected progress with a plus figure exceeding expected progress. The VA for UCG was generally below zero, however it was less negative than the comparison year of 2018/19 as the intervening years of the pandemic with teacher and centre assessed grades were omitted. The VA provided a useful KPI which this committee could monitor as an indicator of teaching quality and student achievement. The starting point of UCG students was on average lower than other colleges so the VA would be a useful impact measure.

TR suggested extending VA to 19+ learners. JW said that he would consider this though it was currently restricted to 16/19 year old learners. The issue of nesting was discussed and that this would have a negative impact on VA. TJ asked what teaching professionals can do in response to the VA figures. JW explained that it can be a motivator for setting student targets, and can ensure that the teacher is setting sufficiently ambitious targets with enough stretch and challenge. It also encourages individualise learning and can trigger when intervention or additional support is needed. The data had only recently been received so it had not been possible to include it in the SAR process this year. However, it would be used in-year to ensure students were performing at the expected level.

iii. **22/23 Student Achievement by EDI learner groups**

GM presented this report which set out achievement in learner groups compared to the previous year. The positive improvements for African learners were noted, but white British learners and those from Caribbean backgrounds had lower achievement. There was also a positive achievement gap for girls, and high needs learners, those on free school meals (FSM), and Looked After Children (LACs) had shown moderate improvement. It was noted how the single version of pro-solution now in place had enabled this analysis to be completed more easily. The information was being used in career cluster SARs, and informing the EDI action plan. EDI awareness was included in the developmental lesson observation process.

TJ noted the differences in Caribbean learner data from 16/19-year-olds and adults and asked whether GM thought that the poorer levels of achievement in this age and ethnic group influenced progression and destinations as adult learners - was there a link between those not succeeding and their destination. GM said that there were often issues of wider context for Caribbean learners so it was difficult to draw conclusions. JW said that there had been a reduction in the volume of some learner groups because of the end of the procured contract which may have influenced this. However the data could be used by teaching professionals at individual and group levels.

SD said that the SLT would consider the benefits of analysing the correlation between achievement and destination for specific ethnic groups where this initial analysis highlighted possible issues. He also said that it may be beneficial to look at five-year trends to know whether this was an issue or a blip considering the cohort of learners changed each year. He was supportive of more research-based practice in collaboration with other colleges. TJ commented that it would potentially be useful as this demographic was likely to increase in size in the coming years. TR asked if the student outcomes were retention or achievement issues. JW said it was a combination of both.

iv. **Safeguarding Report**

AJ presented this report including figures of the level and type of safeguarding concern with mental health accounting for a third of these. The figures were similar to the same point the previous year. The increase in the number of males coming forward with concerns was

	noted, which showed that actions being taken to ensure equity of access to support particularly through having male safeguarding officers were effective. LJ commented on this inclusivity and that it was extremely positive. Three Prevent cases were discussed and the status of each. Members noted the report and commented on the excellent work of the safeguarding team across the college. LJ, as safeguarding lead governor, had met with the team recently and was assured by the hard work and expertise of all involved.
<b>8</b>	<b>AoB</b> No items were raised.
<b>9</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Wednesday 13 March 2024  Meeting closed at 7.51 pm

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 25 January 2025

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

**ACTIONS**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>05iv (06/23)</b>	For an analysis of the paid and organic media used in the marketing campaign to be undertaken to be able to demonstrate where there was the best return on investment.	CC	<b>Carried forward</b>