CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
11 June 2025, 6 pm by Zoom

Members Present: Colin Smith (Chair), Max Maalimey (staff governor), Tim Ryan, Tanya Rose, Janet Davidson, Moosa Abuelzien (student governor).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence (Director of Governance), James Wilson (Principal), Nicola McLean (Assistant Principal), Rob Boucherat (Interim Director Innovation and Enterprise), Charlie Round-Turner (Assistant Principal CID)*, Aurora Lewis Green (Head of Marketing and Communications).

*for relevant agenda items only

	Procedural
1	**Welcome and apologies for absence** CS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Stephen Davis and Serene Stennett (Student Governor) who was currently in the middle of her T level exams.
2	**Declarations of interests in agenda items** No additional interests were declared.
3	*(Minutes and all papers for the meeting were provided 7 days in advance)* **i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 17 March 2025** The minutes were approved as an accurate record. **ii. Matters Arising** There were no matters arising.

	PRESENTATIONS
4	*(Papers circulated in advance)* **i. Curriculum Presentation – Creative Industries and Digital** CRT presented an overview of the Creative Industries and Digital career cluster including the range and level of courses, details of the student cohort and levels of attendance and retention. CRT provided details of how the curriculum area works with local employers, and how students often progressed within the college and to higher education. He referred to examples of the level 3 performing arts students being set a brief by the National Theatre Connections Festival to prepare a performance for the Hammersmith Lyric Theatre; and media students visiting Sky and Pinewood Studios. Computing students were involved in employability workshops with BNP Parabis, and at Willesden computing students received coding classes from Adacore online from Canada. The challenges in the cluster related to securing industry placements for T level students, plus staffing had also been an issue, though supported through agency staff. CS noted that student attendance in this curriculum area was higher than the college average and asked why CRT thought this was the case. He said that the activities of the area were time bound, particularly theatre productions so students were often motivated by the fear of missing out. He said that the curriculum was well crafted to encourage engagement. TR asked if the attendance figures included English and maths and if CRT knew the attendance figures for those. CRT confirmed that attendance was just for the

	vocational component. TR also asked about the extent of the industrial placements for T levels and what action was being taken. There were only 2 T level students that had currently not been placed, and work was progressing through an agency (AOG) to resolve. TR noted that predicted achievement was positive, though a slight decline on the prior year. The predicted achievement paper later on the agenda showed that the worse case scenario was a decline of 19%. TR asked how many students this might equate to. The numbers were not known though it could be calculated. CRT was confident of a more positive outcome and as level 1 assessments were nearly concluded, once verification was complete the final position would soon be known as the work was project based. JD noted the information on the students with EHCPs and asked about their student outcomes. CRT said that students performed well last year, and this year significant support had been provided and they were achieving well. BB commented that historically EHCP students outperformed their counterparts in this curriculum area.

	STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES
5	*(Papers circulated in advance)* **i. Accountability Agreement** RB presented this year's Accountability Agreement which was based on the one from the prior year with several updates. This included the updated National Skills Priorities following the change in government last Summer, UCG's Ofsted grade, skills mapping and how this demonstrated LSIP priorities, and a refreshing of the detail in the appendices. The format was similar to that of the previous year. It was noted that last year's Accountability Agreement had been a key element of the Strategic Conversation with the Department of Education (DfE) in May and that the document had been commended in that discussion. The Accountability Agreement needed to be submitted to the DfE by 30 June 2025 and required Corporation approval. As the Corporation was not next meeting until the evening of 30 June, it would be approved by Written Resolution. **The TLS Committee resolved to recommend the Accountability Agreement to the Corporation for approval.** **ii. Summer Campaign – Enrolment and marketing** ALG presented her paper setting out the creative concepts, visuals, spend and logistics of the Summer enrolment campaign. She referred to the different media channels including digital and out of home and that the Ofsted Good logo was being included. UCG staff had been used in the images for the visuals as part of the campaign. Keep warm activities were in place with regular communication with prospective students every three weeks, in addition to direct contact with tutors, invitations to exhibitions and taster days. 67% of those who attended a taster day the previous year enrolled at UCG. Logistically additional days of enrolment were included this year for adult learners ahead of 16-19 enrolment following the exams results day. CS noted that the number of enrolments were met in 2024/25, but attrition was an issue. This particularly effected London where there was a choice for students. ALG said that this was a concern, but from the research undertaken often location was the main attraction for students which made conversion difficult. JW commented that there was a lot of choice for students in London and that there was a need to be responsive and also to reflect on previous years. It was noted that those students who enrolled late were more likely to

withdraw. CS was pleased that the campaign was using the Ofsted logo which may help attract students.

JD asked about the evaluation of the effectiveness and reach of the media channels being used. ALG confirmed that there was robust data collected for each digital platform to track interest, applications and enrolments. Anecdotal feedback from students and through focus groups was also used. TR asked about the conversation rate from application to enrolment. Historically this had been poor but had seen improvements in recent years. JW commented on the work to ensure positive relationships with students throughout the process, creating a friendly and welcoming environment and how enrolment was owned by everyone across the college.

iii. Internal Audit Reports

These internal audit reports had recently been reviewed by the Audit Committee and were also being shared with this committee for information.

a. Attendance, Participation, Progression and Retention

This audit was a process-based desk top exercise into attendance. JW explained how attendance had continued to be a challenge at UCG and that a review was taking place to reassess the systems and processed for managing attendance which had been supported by the findings of this audit. One of the key factors was responding more rapidly to students not attending and how to maximise impact from the progress coaches. L2 English and maths at Paddington was an area of particular concern. JW also referred to the trauma informed approach and that UCG may not have got the balance right with this when managing attendance. Expectations on attendance would be set early in the term for 2025/26.

b. Additional & High Needs Learners

NMc reported that the recommendations included in this report were not unexpected as it highlighted several of the more common issues associated with this area of provision. Whilst consultations were meant to take place in advance it was often the case that the boroughs would request provision after the deadline so these were sometimes missed. It was also noted that there was not a requirement for students to declare an SEN need, so it was often not identified until weeks into the new academic year. EHCPs were also sometimes out of date and certain needs would no longer apply. A review within additional and high needs of these processes was already taking place and the actions were being taken forward through that.

iv. Predicted Achievement

RB presented the predicted achievement data as of CAD2 which was showing a best case for 16-19 years olds of 81.2% which was an increase on CAD1, above the BSC level but below national rate. 19+ was showing 91.2% which was both above the BSC level and national rate. Apprenticeship achievement was at 60% which was a good year on year improvement. RB highlighted the curriculum areas where there had been good improvement and others where there had been some decline. He said there was comfort in the predictions and that they continuing to be validated. It was noted that one of the most crucial areas for achievement was English and maths. More students had taken GCSE this year in place of functional skills. The exams had taken place in recent weeks and attendance at them had been monitored. TR asked if achievement differed in the same curriculum area between campuses. No stark differences were known. It was noted that

	the process was underway to secure a replacement partner for the VA analysis which should be in place by the beginning of the next academic year. MA asked about the funding for Green Skills courses and the criteria for those which are funded and those not. BB said that the arrangements for these were still being discussed and that every effort was being made to support existing students where possible. Members noted the predicted achievement and congratulated the executive on the progress made. **v. Safeguarding Report** NMc took the committee through the main points of the detailed report which had been prepared. It was noted that the number of concerns raised since January had decreased there was an overall increase for the academic year overall. Mental health concerns had decreased by 14%, but this was thought to be due to more support at a lower level preventing the escalation of these concerns. There had been three sexual assaults off-site and the college was supporting those involved. The report also covered a breakdown of the data by age group, campus and other variables, and a summary of the E-safe concerns. JD commented on the wide range of safeguarding events being offered to raise awareness of issues with students and that she would be willing to attend these where possible. TR asked if NMc felt that sufficient resources were being made available for safeguarding. NMc confirmed that there was and detailed the additional support from LSAs and mental health first aiders who all contributed to the safeguarding support offered at the college.
	STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
6	**i. QDP Student Survey** RB presented the results of the student survey which had been completed at a slightly earlier point in the term so that the results were available and complete now. This was also of wider benefit to be able to use the data from the survey to inform improvement plans. The response rate from this survey was much higher than the previous year at 73%. The five-year trend was showing an improvement in all areas of the survey, which was encouraging as a continuous improvement process. The grading was B overall benchmarked against other colleges, with some areas in the A quartile, however, the majority of responses for the Paddington Campus were in the C quartile. The response rate was at such a level to increase the validity of the results. Members congratulated the executive on the student participation in this survey and were encouraged by the results. **ii. HE Access & Participation Statement** RB explained how the HE provision had declined in recent years and that it was likely to decline further in 2025/6 due to some courses no longer being offered. The requirements from OfS had now altered to require an Access & Participation Plan, which had prompted UCG to look in more detail at the HE provision and consider a growth plan for the coming years, to then prepare the revised statement/ plan on that basis. Members discussed the opportunities around HE particularly around foundation courses and partnerships with universities and to take a strategic approach linked to the Accountability Agreement and curriculum planning process. It was agreed that following this evaluation, a plan would be brought back to this committee at a later date.
	STRATEGIC
7	**i. Teaching & Learning Balance Score Card** The BSC provided a helpful overview of the Student Experience and Outcomes KPIs which had mostly been discussed in the previous items on the agenda. Complaints at this point in the year were low in number and none had been upheld. Value added was on hold until another partner had been secured. Members noted the BSC.

	ii. Student Experience & Outcomes Risk register JW reported to the committee that the Ofsted risk and the risk relating to curriculum reform had been taken off the risk register. The three remaining risks concerned recruitment of 16-19 year olds, achievement outcomes for 16-19 year olds which were still below the NAR, and the inability to attract and retain teachers particularly to ECBE curriculum areas. 16-19 year old achievement was at a level that it was included on the strategic risk register though the driver behind the risk had changed. Members discussed the incentives for staff recruitment and retention and access to a teacher fund to support appointments to posts that were difficult to appoint to.
8	**AoB** **i. Bursary Policy** There was only one change to this policy which concerned the increase in the combined level of income for eligibility for bursary. This was to be increased from £32k to £35k per annum, to take into account the increase in the National Living Wage. It would enable more students to benefit from bursary support. **The Committee resolved to recommend this change to the Corporation for approval.**
9	**Date of next meeting** October 2025 (TBC) Meeting closed at 7.43 pm

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 12 June 2025

SIGNED: …………………………………… Date:
Colin Smith
TLS Chair