

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Monday 16 March 2020, 6 pm, Paddington Green Campus

Members Present: Mary Elliott (Chair), Colin Smith, Angela Drisdale Gordon, Glenys Arthur, Desmond Bishop (Staff Governor), Stephen Hayes (staff governor) Rose Sareami (Student Governor), Nick Bell (CEO), Tony Johnston (Observer).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, Stephen Davis, Grethe Woodward, James Wilson, Melanie Guymer.

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>ME was a few minutes late for the start of the meeting, so it was agreed with the members present that CS would chair the procedural items of the agenda until ME arrived.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Matthew Green, and Sukhveer Singh.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>
3	<p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee 10 February 2020 <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>These were approved as an accurate record and signed.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising</p> <p>The student engagement policy was covered elsewhere on the agenda. The national rates had not yet been included in the KPIs but this would be completed for the next meeting. The third matter was not due until the Summer term.</p> <p>ME arrived at 6.10 pm and chaired the meeting from this point.</p>

	Strategic Matters
4	<p>i. KPIs <i>(KPIs circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW explained the position on each indicator to the Committee. There was only a £15k deficit expected on adult learner funding at the current time, and a small over spend against total committed delivery hours. Retention/ attrition and attendance were stable and similar to the February report. It was expected that Covid 19 would impact attendance. TJ reported that he had seen teaching staff challenging students about their attendance; and that he had attended a recent student representatives meeting where students did not like their attendance being recorded incorrectly. There was a positive culture about attendance showing that it mattered to students. There had been some improvement to attendance at Paddington Green following the re-timetabling at half term, though this was not expected to be sustained with the impact of the Covid 19. Punctuality figures were good, but there was a lack of confidence in how it was being recorded.</p> <p>Achievement was the same as the February indicators, and would be updated in May following the assessment of submitted work. The second window of lesson observations was currently underway and would report in April. It was noted that the current arrangements for LOs had been agreed with the recognised trade unions and as such any</p>

change to them would require renegotiation. The student survey results were the same as February. Members welcomed the KPIs and said that they were very useful. ADG asked if the proportions of HPL/agency staff and permanent staff was the right mix. JW said that there was a higher proportion of HPL/agency staff at Wembley & Willesden than at Paddington and Maida Vale. The proportion was in the region of 35% to 65%. HPLs and agency staff were often used in areas which were harder to recruit to which included technology, science and construction.

TJ asked how attendance was being monitored for those remote studying with Covid 19 pressures. JW said that at the moment some teachers were in college though a number were working remotely. In the latter circumstance it was expected that students would continue to follow the timetable and use their technology and log in to interface with the teacher. Work would be expected to be completed and sent into the teacher as evidence of completion and for marking. In these instances the student would be marked on the register as attending. Staff were expected to advise if they were ill, or self-isolating due to a family member being ill. If the latter they would be expected to be working from home. It was acknowledged that remote study was more difficult for practical subjects where there was a limit to what can be taught in this way. A questionnaire had been issued to all student seeking information on their access to wifi and hardware to be able to study remotely. This was likely to result in some hardware provision for students to give them better access to study.

DB said it would be helpful to have clear directions for the marking of registers, plus more support to cover for staff absences. It was acknowledged that the situation and response needed was changing on a daily basis. ME sought that governors be kept apprised of the Covid 19 response, though it was recognised to be an operational issue. TJ agreed to provide updates to Corporation members as necessary.

SH suggested that the response to Covid 19 be embraced and learning from it be used to increase the college's ability to do more online teaching. Microsoft Teams being rolled out, plus improvements to the infrastructure were enablers to this. Digital delivery could be a solution to other business continuity issues. The Paddington Green Open day scheduled for 26 March was being represented online with video clips and testimonials.

ii. Student Engagement Policy

(Policy circulated in advance)

MG presented the Learner Engagement Policy, with two accompanying documents – the learner engagement strategy and operational plan. MG explained that there had to date not been a learner engagement policy for the merged group. She explained the progression from informed to engaged/co-collaborator, and the types of activities at various levels as set out in the policy. She also talked the members through the proposed action plan. The current inconsistencies in student engagement activities across the campuses and by age group of student were recognised. It was the intention that there be equitable representation of all groups going forward. Members welcomed the documents and commented that they were very informative, and were impressed at the list of activities included in the action plan. It was acknowledged that the plan was yet to be resourced and that support and training would be necessary to implement it.

The Committee's role was to consider the policy with view to recommending it to the Corporation for approval. The other aspects were more operational, however the Committee would want to monitor implementation once the policy and action plan were in

	<p>place. ME welcomed the level of useful and informative material in the documents. She was of the view that the policy needed reworking to bring some elements of the strategy into it, and for it to be redrafted with simpler more accessible, student focused language; to be less theoretical and include examples of activities.</p> <p>ADG asked if students had been involved in the development of the policy. They had not. She also wanted to see more on inclusivity as a key strand of the policy. The revised version would pick up these points and students would be consulted on it. The next version would come back to this Committee for further review in June. The final approved policy would be published on the UCG website.</p>
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Teaching, Learning and Skills	
5	<p>i. Post-Ofsted Action Plan – update ToR <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW brought members attention to page 6 of the paper which set out the arrangements for the Short-Life Working Groups (SLWG) which met for the first time the previous week. Each SLWG has a specific area it was considering with view to agreeing an action plan by the 3rd meeting which will take place before the end of term. The SLWGs were involving a range of staff which was providing ownership and momentum to the action plans which was hoped would continue in their implementation. Members welcomed the progress made, and asked that the action plans once prepared be shared with the committee members by email (and not to wait until the next meeting of the Committee in June).</p> <p>ii. Curriculum Planning and Review <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW explained the three stages of the curriculum planning process and how these were based on the curriculum principles of Connected, Responsible, Valuable, Inclusive and Developmental. He explained that a decision had yet to be made on A levels – this was still under discussion with the curriculum leads. Currently STEM subjects were weak, but these were more consistent with the government’s agenda. Humanities were stronger, but there was less of a strategic policy fit. The Curriculum Delivery Plan would follow which would include changes to A levels as a decision would be made by that time. CS sought clarity on why the decision on A levels was proving so difficult. JW said that this was largely due to the curriculum planning process being new at Paddington Green. Previously, there had been little analysis and managers tended to lack ambition and confidence in their decision-making and in operating at a more strategic level. This year was developmental, and it was hoped would improve the following year. Curriculum in the past at Paddington had tended to be supply driven rather than demand-led.</p> <p>GA queried the changed in the awarding body for some of the exams. JW said that this decision had been made as it gave greater flexibility to when exams could be taken and the results were received more quickly.</p> <p>ME said that she appreciated the information shared with the Committee including the 345 page accompanying document including all the detailed analysis. However, she requested that in future only the final part of the process be shared at Committee with respect to the final curriculum offer.</p>

	<p>iii. Lesson Observation Outcomes (Window 1) <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW drew members' attention to the 10% increase in the number of teachers exceeding the minimum standards compared to the previous year. She was encouraged by this progress but was still concerned that the degree of improvement was still too slow. Of the 29 teachers who were below the minimum standard more than half of these were HPLs or agency staff, and some had left the organisation. Appendix B showed performance by faculty and she continued to be concerned at the number of areas which had 50% or less exceeding minimum standards. Observers had been trained and moderated and governors and students had also received training. Poorly performing teachers had been assigned a coach and had agreed an action plan for improvement which was reviewed by their line manager. GW and Alison Eaglestone were also meeting with teaching teams to discuss outcomes. This has led to identifying subject specific CDP needs.</p> <p>ADG asked if there were plans to appoint more permanent staff. GW said that this was the intention though in practice there were limitations. Improved staff induction processes would be of benefit to ensure that all staff were skilled and equipped to deliver.</p> <p>TJ asked how confident GW was that the position would improve. GW said that she was confident of improvement, but not of the speed in which it needed to happen. Covid 19 was likely to impact on the lesson observations taking place so timescales were likely to slip. However, the Committee asked that the report be provided to the Committee by email as soon as it was ready.</p> <p>RS left the meeting at 8.10 pm.</p>
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>i. Safeguarding <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GW reported that there were 386 safeguarding referrals this academic year, a large proportion of these for mental health issues. She said that the CSE and CCE cases had required extensive in-depth work with agencies. Good relationships for safeguarding had been fostered with relevant agencies including the police and social services in both Brent and Westminster boroughs. Following the review of the SCR it was reported that 92% of staff had now completed compulsory safeguarding training and that safe-recruitment training was also taking place. It was also hoped that funding could be secured for specialist mental health workers based in the college. Members welcomed the report and sought that this include quantified information the completion of the SCR and safeguarding training for staff in future termly reports going forward. ME asked what the safeguarding category in appendix 2 referred to. This was a systems issue and included miscellaneous cases which were not urgent. Reporting software 'My Concern' was being introduced which would better manage this. It was hoped that this would be up and running from September 2020. ME asked given the position on Covid 19 what the safeguarding risks were should the college need to close. GW said it was a concern as some students come to the College as a safe space as home or on the streets was not a good place for them. This will be a challenge as it will not be possible to provide the same level of support. TJ asked if it would be possible for a site to be open to offer a safe place for at risk students. This was being considered along with whether bursary payments could continue to be made.</p> <p>ADG asked what S/T and E/D stood for in appendix 2. GW said she would provide this information after the meeting.</p>

	<p>ii. Complaints <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>The number of complaints was up 33 on the same period last year to a total of 81. Most complaints related to quality of service or the college physical environment, and were related to IT. The complaints policy was being reviewed for some small improvements. ME commented that the increase in the number of complaints was significant. SD said that he thought that this may be due to improved recording of complaints as there was now a single system across the campuses, and previously not all complaints may have been captured. It was also acknowledged that some complaints were taking too long to resolve.</p> <p>iii. Exclusions <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>It was noted that all the exclusion in the report were for students based at Paddington Green Campus. The majority related to a particular incident in October 2019, and were for violent behaviour. Since the report was prepared there had been two exclusions from the Willesden Campus, which would be included in the next report. JW reported that the Behaviour For Learning Policy was having a positive impact, and the policy was being reviewed for further improvements. Despite the majority of those excluded being from an afro-Caribbean ethnic background it was not considered that there was any current bias as the majority of incidents involved groups of individuals from a range of ethnic backgrounds. ADG asked what support and follow up was offered once a young person was excluded. JW said that the college provided initial advice and guidance to signpost young people to organisations who may be able to help them, but generally there was a deficit of support. It was acknowledged that exclusions were avoided where possible, but it was also important to ensure the duty of care towards other students and staff at the College. SD said that more could be done to improve enrolment and induction at the beginning of term to minimise potential tensions that may arise between groups of students.</p>
7	<p>Dates of next meeting</p> <p>Monday 8 June 2020. Consideration will be given to changing the time of the meeting to a morning. ZL said she would canvas for availability.</p>

Zoë Lawrence 17/03/2020

SIGNED: **Date:**

Mary Elliott
TLS Chair

ref	Action	Lead	Status
10/02 4ii	For previous year data and national rates to be included in the KPIs. Consideration be given to including GCSE grades 4 – 9 for English and maths in future versions of the KPIs	SD	Carried forward
10/02 5iii	Business Development Paper to be presented to Committee at the meeting in the Summer term	AT/SD	

4ii	For the Learner Engagement Policy to be redrafted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring in elements of the strategy for context, include some examples of activities, Use simpler accessible student-focused language throughout To consult students on the next version of the policy and for this to be returned to the TLS Committee in June 2020 for consideration.	MG	
5i	For the SLWG Action Plans to be circulated to TLS Committee members as soon as available.	GW/ZL	
5iii	For the Lesson Observation Window 2 Outcomes to be circulated to the Committee as soon as available once the process has completed.	GW/ZL	
6i	For quantified information on the completion of the SCR and safeguarding training to be included in the termly safeguarding report going forward.	GW	
6i	GW to provide definitions for S/T and E/D as referred to in appendix 2 of the safeguarding paper.	GW	
7	ZL to canvas for member availability for potentially holding the meetings in a morning.	ZL	