

**CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGE GROUP**  
**Minutes of a meeting of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee**  
**Monday 4 March 2019 6.00 pm**  
**6SW1, Paddington Green Campus**

**Members Present:** Mary Elliott (Chair), Jan Knight, Glenys Arthur, Matthew Green, Angela Drisdale-Gordon.

**In attendance:** Jackie Grubb (Principal CWC), Stephen Davis (Principal CNWL), Ita Leavy, Sam Bramfitt, Lauren Gaylor, James Wilson, Grethe Woodward, Zoë Lawrence.

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received from Keith Cowell, Colin Smith, Ravina Jignesh, and Joshua Okakpu.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest in the agenda items</b>  No declarations were made.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>  <i>(Minutes were circulated in advance)</i>  The minutes were approved and signed as an accurate record. Matters arising were included elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Strategic</b></p> <p><b>i. New Inspection Framework - Ofsted Preparedness</b>  <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i>  JW presented his paper which set out the current position on the consultation on the new Ofsted Inspection Framework. He highlighted the new judgement areas and how these differed from the existing ones. It was likely that the Group would be inspected within the next 12 months, three years after merger. The new Inspection Framework would be in place from September 2019. A piece of work was being taken forward to align the research specified in the consultation with the requirements of the framework to be able to identify preferences and Ofsted’s likely interpretation of the Framework. This would be taken forward in to a preparation action plan. Once this was available, it was suggested that specific training for governors be arranged on the Framework and research findings. Governors were encouraged to read the documents referred to in the paper (links provided).</p> <p><b>ii. Risk Register</b>  <i>(Risk Register was circulated in advance)</i>  Members noted the risk register and had no comments.</p> <p><b>iii. Attendance and Retention</b>  <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p>	

	<p>Members noted the paper which set out attendance and retention figures across the Group. Attendance was currently at 77% across both colleges. The areas of poorest attendance were functional skills and English and maths. There were no overall trends in regard to attendance with very few long-term absentees who had not been withdrawn. Retention was generally good at 96%, which was above the national rate. Work was continuing to encourage attendance. A range of means including tutorials and pastoral support, texting, and improvements to the quality cycle were used. Students were still considered able to achieve if their attendance was over 65%, though it was recognised that 77% was not a good position and needed to improve. Comments were made concerning students who came into college, but did not attend their lessons, and some students who were studying at Willesden were spending time at Wembley Campus. This was considered to be due to seeking space to feel safe away from potentially disruptive home lives.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Teaching, Learning and Skills</b></p> <p><b>i. Student Achievement</b> <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>LG reported that the Group was predicting an achievement rate of 85.6% for this academic year for vocational delivery which was very slightly above that of the previous year. These predictions did not include English and maths (functional skills/ GCSE). The static nature of the predictions was noted but was not of a particular concern. It was currently uncertain what the outcome would be with the inclusion of English and maths.</p> <p>At CWC LG reported no significant concerns other than A levels which were currently predicting a decline in performance. Interventions had been put in place and a general discussion regarding A-levels was held later in the meeting. The two-year aims for level 3 learners was having a negative impact on achievement, but this would only be for this academic year. 50% of level 3 vocational learners were predicted to meet or exceed their VA targets.</p> <p>At CNWL a 7.8% uplift was predicted for 16 – 18 provision, which was bucking the three year trend of declining achievement. 19+ courses were also predicting a 1.2% increase to 88.3%.</p> <p>ME welcomed the report but asked if a consistent method of presentation of predictions/ results could be provided for both colleges, acknowledging that that there were differences in the type of provision.</p> <p>ADG asked if there was a breakdown of the data according to type of learner and factors such as gender, ethnicity and deprivation. SD said that this information was available but was not usually provided at this point in the year. It was suggested that the SAR be provided to ADG for background information.</p> <p>Members also asked if acronyms could be provided in full for the first use in a paper. ZL said that she would also see if she could provide a list of frequently used abbreviations.</p> <p><b>ii. Quality Improvement Plan</b> <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p>	<p>ZL</p> <p>ZL</p>

JW explained how the QIP brought together most of the other teaching and learning items on the agenda into an overarching plan. Work had been ongoing to bring the two different data sets across both colleges into a more aligned system for reporting. The QIP also outlined the range of strategies being used to improve attendance together with the new Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy which was progressing well. This included lesson observations, work scrutiny and feedback from student surveys. The data on VA at CNWL was still being progressed through localised systems for tracking. Awareness of Prevent and British values were also being embedded.

ME welcomed the updates to the QIP, and asked if CWC could follow similar formatting as CNWL in their presentation using the Ofsted headings. This would enable easier tracking of progress from the issues described in the SAR.

### **iii. Teaching and Learning Update**

*(Paper was circulated in advance)*

GW highlighted the main points of the paper. In the first set of lesson observations 296 lessons were observed; 81% of these met or exceeded minimum standards and expectations. 19% did not meet standards/ expectation. Support through CPD was being provided. A further set of observations were to take place this term. New software (ProObserve) was being used to record observations.

ADG asked if numbers could be provided alongside the percentages in the paper. MG asked what strategies were in place to support the 19% with poorer performance. It was reported that slightly different approaches were being taken in each college due to their starting points. At CWC an action plan was agreed with the member of staff's line manager and a re-observation was conducted within 2 weeks of the first one. At CNWL there was a more developmental approach with staff being given a personal action plan and a coach, and a further observation being conducted with the next tranche of observations in April. All teachers would be re-observed except those who had exceeded expectations who would be supporting the sharing of best practice. CWC were reporting a 6% increase on teachers meeting the standards in comparison with last year.

MG asked how issues were being picked up with poorer performers. SD explained that there was now more data to be able to look at performance more holistically through lesson observations, plus attendance, appraisal methods and other feedback.

ME asked if the contract of employment (such as VT or agency staff) had any impact on performance and if data was available on this. She also asked if it would be possible at some point to see the software packages being used (ProSolution suite). JG said that all teachers regardless of contract were observed. In general, agency staff did tend not to perform as well as those on permanent contracts.

Members were reminded that there was an open invitation to them to attend lesson observations. ZL said that she was looking to provide LO training.

### **iv. A levels (CWC only)**

*(Paper was circulated in advance)*

The provision of A levels to a good standard was continuing to be challenging. This appeared to be a trend across the GFE sector but particularly in London. In recent years

achievement had improved by removing science subjects which were poorly performing from the curriculum. These had now been reinstated and it was again having a negative impact on overall achievement. The Head of Faculty for A levels had recently left the college, and had not been replaced. It was also difficult to appoint to A level teaching positions in FE; resulting in high reliance on agency staff.

MG was supportive of the college providing A levels. He felt that this was a social issue to provide opportunities for young people who may not ordinarily be able to attend sixth form colleges. He was hopeful that it would still be possible to provide a local offer.

ME was particularly concerned about this position. It was suggested that detailed analysis be undertaken to assess the cost benefit/ financial contribution of A levels to the Group, and the longer-term success of the courses being delivered. It was noted that this assessment would need to take into account overall curriculum planning as the provision of A levels could impact on upcoming T levels, destination data for progression for learners to university, and staff CPD. The changes to linear two year A levels with end point assessments, and specifications of entry and progression requirements also needed to be taken in account. It was agreed that this analysis needed to be undertaken promptly and should not wait until the next meeting of this Committee on 3 June, as this would be too late for curriculum planning for the following year. ME would update the Corporation of this issue at the next meeting on 3 April.

ME

**v. Value Added**

*(Paper was circulated in advance)*

LG explained that national performance tables for VA were published for 17/18 data in January 2019. This covered A level provision at CWC only and English and maths across the Group. A level provision was marginally below the threshold which may lead to a notice to improve from the DfE. A level provision was in a similar position 3 years ago. The curriculum offer was reduced at that time which improved VA/achievement. CWC were ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 9 London FE Colleges. Intervention on A levels was being undertaken through the Performance Improvement Group and focussing on individual learners.

VA on English and maths provided a more mixed picture. English was in a positive score whilst maths at CNWL required improvement. Learners were achieving a qualification, but were not making the predicted levels of progress. An action plan was in place this year.

ME sought clarification on the significance of this for Ofsted Inspections. It was acknowledged that VA was an inspection criteria and was important, however, it depended on the starting point and previous achievement of the learner.

**vi. English and Maths**

*(Paper was circulated in advance)*

The joint strategy on English and maths had produced 6.3% improvement overall, however in 2017/18 fewer students had achieved the higher grades. GW reminded members that students who had achieved grade D previously needed to re-sit the GCSE, and those with attainment below that did functional skills. This had been compulsory since 2015. Attendance for Eng/maths for 16-18 was problematic, though

	<p>19+ was better as adults were more motivated as doing it out of choice. Many strategies were in place to support attendance including texts, posters, postcards, and individual support. Some momentum had been lost due to staff changes and vacancies at CNWL.</p> <p>The difficulties were acknowledged by members and the need to be supportive to re-engage learners who come from deprived communities.</p> <p>MG asked for clarification on whether those attending were achieving? It was generally understood that students aged 17 were less likely to pass a resit in English or maths if studying a vocational programme. Support from tutors including mock exams and help with exam technique were provided to help build confidence. It was important to stress that maths and English were everyone's responsibility and that attaining a qualification in these subjects had an impact on gaining meaningful employment. It was noted that exam attendance exceeded class attendance. IL pointed out that revision classes were also offered during the school holidays. English and maths were fed into careers advice and apprenticeship applications.</p> <p><b>vii. HE Action Plan</b> <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>SB presented this paper which set out Office for Students' (OfS) concerns following the Group's recent registration. The OfS were requiring an action plan covering the main issues to be submitted with Corporation approval to OfS by 29 March. The OfS concerns were largely as a result of a five year period of low achievement and completion rates, and related to quality and standards and consumer protection. The action plan covered all required elements including arrangements for an oversight committee feeding into the Corporation, and plans for staff CPD.</p> <p>ME acknowledged that this work was required to completed the registration process, however felt that there was a need for a wider strategic discussion on the provision of HE, how capacity for it was might be managed. ME sought clarification on what level of commitment the action plan made, which elements of it were mandatory, which elements may be varied and the overall cost. SB explained that there currently was no tangible allocated resources for HE though the income from it was in the region of £300k from 50 learners. Many of the actions in the plan involved further planning for growth which he considered were achievable in the timelines indicated and were necessary. JK thought that work on the brand identity needed to be completed to feed into this plan. SB did not feel that the timelines allowed for this. Overall, it was not felt that there were any inadvertent consequences in taking the plan forward at this stage.</p> <p>ZL noted that the Corporation approval was needed before the timing of the next meeting and agreed to liaise with SB on securing approval by written resolution.</p> <p><b>viii. T Levels Update</b> <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>This paper was provided to update the Committee on the Group's current activity in respect to T levels. This had been raised by another member outside of this committee. It was agreed to send a copy of this paper to that member for information. The paper noted the work being undertaken with the capacity funding and preparation</p>	<p>ZL</p> <p>ZL</p>
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	<p>for extended work placements. It was currently planned to run a single cohort in the first year.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Other</b></p> <p><b>i. Safeguarding update</b>  <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i>  Members were made aware that the paper included a UCG wide safeguarding policy which had been updated to reflect changes in the national agenda. This was recommended for approval by the Corporation.</p> <p>The accompanying report highlighted the main safeguarding and student welfare issues including money laundering, drug awareness, and safeguarding training for all staff. Suicide and mental health issues, County lines, and the impact of poverty remained the main concerns. A joint safeguarding steering group had taken place the previous week. JK had attended as safeguarding governor.</p> <p>ADG asked what safeguarding training was provided to staff. IL said that safeguarding training was mandatory for all staff within the first three months of being in post, and was regularly refreshed. Prevent training had been provided both in face to face and online media. Online safeguarding training would be provided for all governors to complete.</p> <p>MG acknowledged homelessness as a key challenge and reminded members of the council's role to attempt to prevent it. He referred to a number of charitable organisations which the College may be able to signpost students to for help. There had been some recent incidents involving knives which had now been dealt with. Members were aware of the increase in knife crime nationally and were pleased with the Group's continued actions to ensure the safety of students.</p> <p><b>ii. Exclusions and complaints</b>  <i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i>  So far this academic year there had been 11 exclusions at CWC for behavioural issues. There had been a number of suspensions at CNWL but none of these had resulted in an exclusion. The figures were comparable with the previous year. The decision to exclude was general made in line with policy which is within 30 days.</p> <p>The level of complaints was also comparable with the previous year, with 52 formal complaints received. The policy had been amended to adjust the timings for complaint handling outside of term time. This policy would be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p><b>iii. Equality and Diversity Action Plan</b>  This item would be referred to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>iv. Student Engagement Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>ZL</b></p> <p><b>ZL</b></p>

	<p><i>(Paper was circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>It was noted that the two colleges took a slightly different approaches to student engagement. CWC's approach was largely around the learner voice. CNWL's embraced 5 themes - healthier, wealthier, smarter, fairer, safer, which included a range of activities including work experience and volunteering.</p> <p>MG suggested that the College may want to apply for My Westminster Fund grant for financial support for volunteering or social cohesion projects.</p> <p>ADG asked what proportion of students responded to the survey, and if this was online or paper based. 2000 students (50%) had responded to the online survey. As some ESOL learners found the online survey more difficult to complete, student feedback was also acquired through face to face meetings, and other online forums. The surveys were helpful in being able to drill down into the data, triangulate it with other information to be able to better address issues such as retention.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Dates of Future meetings</b></p> <p><b>Monday 3 June 2019</b></p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.10 pm</p>	

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 05/03/2019

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

**Mary Elliott, Chair, Teaching Learning and Skills Committee**

**ACTIONS**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>5i</b>	To send ADG s copy of the SAR for background information.	ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>5i</b>	To provide a list of frequently used abbreviations.	ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>5iv</b>	ME to raise issue of A level provision with Corporation on 3 April.	ME/ ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>5vii</b>	ZL to draft written resolution for the approval of the HE action plan. To secure approval by 29 March.	ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>5viii</b>	ZL to send a copy of the T levels paper to AF.	ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>6i</b>	Safeguarding policy to be included on the Corporation agenda for approval on 3 April 2019	ZL	<b>Complete</b>
<b>6ii</b>	Complaints policy to be included on the Corporation agenda for approval on 3 April.	ZL	<b>Complete</b>