

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee
Monday 13 June 2022, 6 pm by Zoom

Members Present: Colin Smith (Chair), Angela Drisdale Gordon, Stephen Davis (CEO), Tony Johnston, Max Maalimey (staff governor), Temitope Alebiosu (student governor), Desmond Bishop (staff governor).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence, James Wilson, Angela Jackson, Claire Collins, Malgorzata Zielinska, Gabe Manthorp, Nicola McLean, Paul Bradley, Sal Hamaide.

A	Procedural
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence Apologies had been received from Matthew Green, Natalie Dweh and Melek Mandal.</p> <p>Members acknowledged that this was Temi Alebiosu’s last TLS meeting before she stood down as student governor at the end of July. The Chair thanked her for her significant and invaluable contribution to the Committee and Corporation, and how she had been effective in bringing the Student Voice into governance. Members congratulated her for being an outstanding Student Governor and wished her well for her exam results in the Summer and future endeavours.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interests in agenda items No interests were declared.</p>
3	<p>i. Approve minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Skills Committee of 28 March 2022 <i>(The minutes were circulated in advance)</i> The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising There were no matters arising.</p> <p>iii. Grey Box No items were raised for discussion.</p>

	Strategic Matters
4	<p>i. Curriculum KPIs <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i> JW presented the main KPIs in his report. He highlighted how the over-recruitment for the Health Care and Wellbeing course had had an unintended negative impact on quality due to the difficulties recruiting teachers. The higher levels of sickness absence from Covid 19 and difficulty in filling posts generally had also impacted on predicted achievement. It was noted that attendance was variable pending the course and campus, but overall was at 73%. There were more detailed reports on predicted achievement and lesson observations later on the agenda, however, at the time of preparing this report the English and Maths exams had not taken place so were excluded from the figures at this stage. There was some decline in predicted achievement from the figures shared with the Committee in March.</p> <p>TJ commented that attendance had been an issue for some time. Various initiatives had been implemented this academic year to try to incentivise attendance. He asked which of these initiatives had worked and would be repeated, and what new initiatives would be</p>

prepared for September. JW said that where attendance was good, this was mostly because of the individual relationship the learner had with the teacher/tutor. Where attendance had declined these relationships were less good. He also suggested whether the monitoring of processes to manage attendance were strong enough and if it would be of benefit to go into more detail and thoroughness on this. TJ asked if the financial incentives had had a positive impact. The data on this scheme had yet to be collated and analysed. A review would be undertaken at the end of the year. It may be that the target level for the payments is increased, and it may be useful to reward the best improvers. TJ reported back from his visit as a Link Governor to English and Maths where he met students. In the past the feedback from students had often been issues with the IT, but this had now changed to timetabling. TJ asked if the timetabling issues would be resolved and whether these had also impacted attendance. JW said that feedback from students at a conference in May concerned the lack of breaks or too large gaps in the timetables. Due to Covid, timetabling had been compressed so that students were on campus for more limited periods to control numbers which had resulted in fewer gaps. The feedback would be taken into account for timetabling next year, but it was acknowledged that it was difficult to get right in every case. The model would also be adapted to accommodate the new curriculum delivery and meeting times for staff.

ADG commented how attendance had been a longstanding issue and requested a substantive report to the Committee at a future meeting to pull together all the initiatives. SD said that attendance was fundamentally a responsibility of the teachers, and it was hoped that the implementation of Power BI would facilitate improvements. More use of Pro-monitor could also be made to record interventions and provide data. It was noted how attendance figures for 16–19-year-old students tended to correlate with achievement. There was also a trend across the education sector of young people not returning to education after the pandemic. The importance of improving attendance levels was recognised.

ii. Power BI

(Papers circulated in advance)

PB provided an update to this project which had begun two years previously. The delay in its completion had been a result of the pandemic, and also MIS skills resource, however, the data architecture that had been developed was robust. The Power BI system was being used but its roll-out had been patchy and not joined-up. It was hoped that use would become mandatory as its value was recognised. Permanent MIS resource and a person to act as the user interface were now in place and it was planned that it would be rolled out to teacher level by the end of the year.

ADG asked if it was possible for governors to have access to Power BI. PB confirmed that it was always the intention for governors to be able to access the system on their college accounts. SD stressed the crucial importance of the availability of Power BI to be able to monitor students on an ongoing basis to ensure interventions were timely and effective. TJ echoed this point as he was aware from his Link Governor visit that some teachers didn't have access who would have found it beneficial. Comments were also made on the levels of transparency, whether a teacher should be able to view the attendance data for other teachers.

iii. Student Experience & Outcomes Risk Register

(Risk Register provided in advance)

JW explained that out of the 9 risks on the risk register 3 required further mitigating actions. These were in relation to the completion of Power BI, achievement of an Ofsted Good, and improvements to English and Maths achievement. TJ commented that AI software was being used in maths and provided individual feedback to students. He suggested that this type of software be used in other departments.

iv. Safeguarding Update

(Paper provided in advance)

AJ provided a summary of the term's Safeguarding report. Mental health concerns had continued to increase, but mostly within 16-18 year-olds at Paddington Campus for which Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers were in place. Various safeguarding initiatives were reported, and also improved links and access to resources in Brent. All DBS checks were complete and recorded on the SCR. CS queried the data regarding mandatory safeguarding and prevent training. In both cases 20% of staff overall had not completed detailed training through an online module, but had received an information leaflet. ADG asked whether Covid 19 had impacted on students' mental health and that the college was still being influenced by a residual affect? It was confirmed that this was likely and would have impacted attendance in respect to staff and student absence.

TJ asked whether it was possible that there was an under reporting of male mental health concerns as the data showed a higher number for females. He also asked where we were capturing data for students in gender transition. AJ said that the rise in MH concerns was consistent in both genders and arrangements were in place to provide support specifically to male students. Currently there was no data on gender transitioning students and this would be revisited. NMc said that it was the intention to establish an atypical club from September to support students in transition.

v. Marketing and Enrolment (Summer Campaign)

(Papers circulated in advance)

SH gave a summary of her comprehensive paper setting out the marketing plans for the Summer enrolment campaign. The marketing efforts were being prioritised based on the non-enrolment research from the previous year, and data from previous years where the most impact had been achieved. This centred on five London local authorities. Members welcomed the thorough approach. TJ commented on the use of social media and that this was one of the right channels. He asked why there were so few Instagram followers and likes on the content compared to other colleges. SH explained that to date Instagram had only been used within the existing college community and not as a recruitment tool. She had plans to expand this with paid advertising to target prospective students and showcase the college.

PB explained how the enrolment process would be further developed from the previous year to include the online enrolment, but more face to face and open-door access which younger students appreciated. The appointment system used during pandemic years would be abandoned. The processes would be stress tested with progressing students to check for any bottle necks and IT issues. CS asked what proportion of enrolments were progressors. This was thought to be in the region of 1500 students, but it was not certain. SD stressed the importance of attracting enough students at the outset to ensure conversion rates to enrolments. MM queried the level of IAG support and arrangements for internal students to change courses from one department to another. NMc explained that a FTE Careers Advisor had been appointed to Paddington, plus 75% of front of house staff were IAG trained. 680 IAG appointments had been fulfilled this year to date.

	<p>Teachers were also able to provide careers advice. SD said students should be supported into the course of their preference on the proviso that it was at the appropriate ability level. AJ supported this view and said that a clear reason must be given for non-progression into a new curriculum area. The process currently involves a transfer of the student data, to enable a meeting to take place. Generally, student applications were not rejected, though students may be redirected on to a more appropriate level to match their abilities. TJ commented how the careers advice could be included in the marketing, particularly for those students who were uncertain what they wanted to do.</p>
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Teaching, Learning and Skills	
5	<p>i. Ofsted Feedback <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>An Ofsted Monitoring Visit took place in March 2022. This paper set out the feedback from that visit and included the published letter. It concluded that reasonable progress had been made. JW said that overall, the issues concerned consistency, as there were many areas of good practice. The inspection report validated the SLT’s judgment on performance. Actions to address the areas for improvement were set out in the paper and included additional CPD at the beginning of the term in September. TJ welcomed the paper and asked when it was anticipated that we would receive a full inspection. JW said that it was difficult to know for certain, but likely to be in the first half of the Autumn term.</p> <p>ii. Lesson Observations <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>AJ reported the lesson observation (LO) outcomes which were now based on a new grading scheme. There had been an improvement of 5% since the previous year at 78% being good or better, but this was still below target. 40 teachers were still to achieve good. Developmental support was in place. The weaker areas such as sequencing and higher-level questioning were consistent with Ofsted’s findings. The limitations of the lesson observation process were discussed with the potential of moving to a broader assessment process which would triangulate data, though this would need the agreement of recognised trade unions (TU). CS asked when it was expected that the new approach would be implemented. It was hoped that this may be for the next academic year, depending on how long it might take for TU agreement. It would not be introduced part way through an academic year. ADG asked whether the 40 poorer performing teachers were HLPs or permanent members of staff. AJ said that she did not have this breakdown but would provide this. TJ commented that the LO process could be seen as a blunt instrument though it was informative. He asked what would happen if a teacher’s performance continued to be unsatisfactory. AJ said that it would be viewed in context of the individual and depending on that could trigger a range of interventions including capability. Action would be taken in line with policies. SD said that no staff were currently in capability proceedings, and PDR processes had only been introduced this year. He felt that it was important for PDR processes to be robustly applied going forward to drive performance.</p> <p>iii. Predicted Achievement <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>JW explained the process taken since CAD1 in January (reported to TLS in March) on which the predicted achievement figures were based. Overall, a decline of nearly 1% for 16-18 year-olds was expected and 0.1% on 19+. The reasons for the decline, though there were improvements in some areas, centred on the inconsistent performance of the middle management tier, and staffing issues. Actions were being taken for a final push during the</p>

	<p>academic year including resits for functional skills exams, intervention, and use of the tuition fund in an effort to support engagement and completion. The Business curriculum area had seen a significant decline at Paddington and was being reviewed. CS reminded members of the confidential and sensitive nature of the discussions.</p> <p>MM asked if grade inflation from Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) had impacted. JW said that this was possible, but it would not be fully known until the results were published. It was recognised that due to the pandemic there were some students that were unaccustomed to sitting actual exams.</p> <p>TJ said that there was a lot to absorb in the information and highlighted the areas of improved performance. He felt that the challenges were known and that it was clear where the solutions needed to be focused. The college was on a journey, and this was work in progress.</p> <p>iv. High Needs Learners Update <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>NMc provided an update on the developments and growth for high needs learners including internships with significant partners. She stressed that more internships could be pursued in the future, but the focus was on ensuring the quality remained high. Growth between 10 and 20% was expected each year. There were good examples of many students being offered paid work at the end of their course. CS who had visited Maida Vale as the Link Governor for high needs learners said that he had experienced an impressive sense of purpose that all actions were linked to careers, or life skills. SD remarked that this was one of the college's areas of outstanding provision and congratulated NMc and her team on the progress made. TJ asked that a fuller item including the partnerships be brought to a future Corporation meeting, and that the success be reflected in our marketing.</p>
6	<p>Student Engagement</p> <p>I. Fitness to Study Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>NMc explained the purpose of this policy which was to be used as a last resort once all pastoral and intervention approaches had been exhausted. The policy aimed to provide a fair and objective process to manage these rare occurrences. The Committee resolved to approve the policy.</p> <p>II. Access and Participation Statement (HE) <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>GM explained that this Statement was a requirement of the registration with the Office for Students (OfS). Due to the small number of HE students UCG was not required to have an Access and Participation plan, but this may be adopted as best practice in due course. The policy was aligned with the relevant OfS requirements and guidance. The policy would encourage improved data collection which would enable more responsive approaches to access and participation in HE. It was consistent with the college's EDI policy.</p> <p>ADG asked how marketing would aim to attract students of specific demographics to HE. GM said that there were a number of schemes and funding in place but more could be done in this area. SH commented that there were efforts to try to attract more female students to CNWL included in the Summer campaign. MM asked what was being done to</p>

	<p>reduce attainment gaps. Activities were set out in section 6 of the policy, though it was recognised that it was a statement of intent at this stage. The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p>III. Student Engagement Strategy <i>(Paper circulated in advance)</i> AJ set out the proposed changes that would be made to the 2020-22 strategy to develop the 2022-24 Student Engagement Strategy. She said that students and the SU would be consulted on next steps. Prioritisation would be given to involve students in quality procedures and to formalise their input into certain policies. TA commented about her frustration as an SU member with the lack of support the SU had received since the return from the pandemic with many events being cancelled repeatedly. AJ accepted this feedback and recognised the issues being raised. She planned to resolve matters to ensure the SU was fully empowered and decisions were made jointly.</p> <p>IV. Student Engagement Policy <i>(Draft policy circulated in advance)</i> AJ reported that this policy remained largely unchanged except for an amendment on page 4 and updating nomenclature. The Committee resolved to recommend the policy to the Corporation.</p> <p>V. QDP Student Survey (Paper circulated in advance) AJ explained that the survey results had only been received by the College on Friday of the previous week. There had been a 61% response rate which represented about 4500 learners. Most responses were in the C quartile with many for the Paddington Campus in the D quartile. It was possible to drill into the data to identify campus and career cluster. As the college had only just received the data, there had not been time to develop a detailed action plan. It was agreed that this would be brought to the Corporation meeting on 6 July. TJ commented that the results were disappointing and suggested that middle managers might have a role in developing the action plan, similar to the post-Ofsted Working Groups.</p> <p>ADG commented that the responses from specific learner groups appeared unchanged (from the previous survey), and there needed to be more effort put into addressing these issues for certain students. She was concerned about the continuing trend. SD commented how the majority of the college students were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Significant effort had been applied. There were some issues such as labour shortages which had impacted the survey results which were outside of the college's control. Actions were also taking more time to have impact due to the pandemic. He was keen to ensure a democratic student voice.</p>
7	<p>AOB MZ reported that the college had been successful in its registration to continue as an apprenticeship provider.</p>
8	<p>Date of next meeting TBC</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.59 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 14 June 2022

SIGNED: **Date:**

Colin Smith

TLS Chair

ACTIONS

Ref	Action	Owner	Status
4i	Student attendance to be a main item at a future meeting	JW/AJ	On agenda
5ii	To clarify the status of the 40 poorer performing teachers whether they are HLPs or permanent members of staff.	AJ	
5iv	A fuller item on High Need Learners (including the partnerships) be brought to a future Corporation meeting	ZL/NMc	
6v	QDP Survey action plan to be included on the Corporation agenda for 6 July	AJ	Complete