Learner Council Forum

Minutes of the Learner Council Forum held on 8 February 2018 in the Cove, Dartford

Chair:	Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning – Wendy Davies ("WD")
Members:	Principal – David Gleed ("DG")
	Deputy Principal Curriculum – Rhiannon Hughes ("RH")
	Student Engagement Assistant Dartford – Lorna Goddard ("LG")
	Student Engagement Assistant Gravesend – Trevor Fox ("TF")
Student Union Representatives:	Millie Knapp - L3 Ext Diploma in Applied Arts (Dartford) – ("MK")
	Daniel Newman - L3 Diploma in Creative Media Prod & Tech (Dartford) – ("DN")
	Jason Beaven - L2 Diploma in Photography (Dartford) – ("JB")
	Zara Jeffrey - Adv Tec Dip in Media Make-up Artistry L3 (Dartford) – ("ZJ")
	Robert Hill - Higher National Diploma in Creative Media Motion Graphics & Animation (Dartford) – ("RHi")
	Fiona Winder, Engineering yr2 (Gravesend) – ("FW")
	Eliza Cox, Catering Yr 2 (Gravesend) – ("EC")
	Lucy Giles, Childcare Yr 2 (Gravesend) – ("LG")
	Fred Titshall, Motor Vehicle Yr 2 (Gravesend) – ("FT")
	Iiya Gushchin Motor Vehicle Yr 2 (Gravesend) – ("IG")
In Attendance:	Clerk to the Corporation – Yolanda Hughes ("YH")
	Tyla Hooper ("TH") - (observing capacity)
	College Governor – Dalia Halpern-Matthews ("DH-M")
Late Arrival:	College Governor – Dr Richard Longman ("RL")

Action By

1. **Introductions**

   WD welcomed learners to the meeting of the Learner Council Forum and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table.

2. **Points from the Learner Council Dartford and Gravesend**

   WD referred members back to the points raised on the Dartford and Gravesend Learner Council Feedback sheets overleaf and mentioned that additional comments raised at today's meeting were noted in **red** on the sheets.

   RL arrived later to the meeting and WD briefly introduced him to members.

	Feedback Sheet		

Dartford Council Final Points February 2018

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By

1	There have been many issues raised about the Shuttle Bus in Learner voice meetings.
	   1. Not checking Lanyards,
	   2. allowing the public to ride on them,
	   3. Buses breakdown a lot
	   4. Buses always full at peak times
	   5. Bus app often not working
	   6. Never on time,
	   7. Drivers always on phones & rude,
	   8. speeding and then breaking too fast,
	   9. Going through red lights.
	
	Not running late enough for the students who are on site in the evenings
		1. Drivers should ask to see lanyards
		2. Drivers should not public on
		3. Newer Buses so that they don't break down so often,
		4. More buses at peak times as buses always full and many students often late to college because having to wait for the next bus which may then be running late.
		5. To have a real time tracker or a Bus app that actually works so that the students can keep track to see if they are running on time.
		6. Drivers need to be on time so the students are not late for lessons
		7. Retrain the drivers,
		8. Retrain the drivers
		9. Retrain the drivers
		10. To run later in the evenings especially when students have late nights (Hair & Beauty)or shows at Miskin (Actors, Musicians and Dancers)
			DG thanked members for raising the points about the shuttle bus and stressed that the College relied on their feedback in respect of these types of matters. He agreed to arrange for these points to be raised with the bus company and the outcome would be brought back to May's Learner Council meeting.

2	Fire drills, as many students have not had a fire drill since they have arrived in September 2017 • RHi stated that he had been at the College for 4 years, but had never participated in a fire drill. • RHi mentioned that he had been informed of a member of staff who did not know what action to take in the event of a fire.	To have them run over a week to catch all students not just on one day • Going forward, it was agreed that the College would arrange for fire drills to be held on different days and points of the year to capture all students in the process. • DG thanked RHi for bringing this to his attention and confirmed that the College would deal with this matter and ensure that all staff members were apprised of the fire evacuation process.	DG to raise this point with the College Risk Manager. DG to raise this point with the College Risk Manager.
3	PCs are very slow and are often not updated with the latest software. • Noted that some Macs had different software (some newer and some older) on them at some points in the year and this affected students' work. Printers are always running out of paper & toner due to the amount of use,	• DG confirmed that the College undertook a rolling replacement programme for computers, including Macs. • RH advised members that the College was currently in discussion with the IT team and Media staff, so that Media staff could be instructed on how to perform simple fixes on PCs to speed up solutions for local support. To have a supply cupboard near the printers that could be used. • DG outlined that the new copiers included a facility enabling them to feed back to the centre when toner and paper levels became low etc.	

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
	Print Credit - £12 is not enough for some courses. If a student buys extra credit towards the end of term and does not use it they lose that money • Particularly Art courses	Can this be increased? Also when PCs or Macs are not networked and work is sent to the printer this does not come off the print credit. If a student is returning can they have the credit rolled over to the following year? • RH reported that there was a scheme that Curriculum Managers ("CMs") were aware of and, if they knew that students needed more than the allocated £12 printing credit, due to the nature of the course, the CMs could log a request to IT to adjust the printing amount for students. RH suggested that students speak with their tutors to make that request and printing adjustment.	
4	Security – Old students still have ID cards that work and current students are letting in friends with their ID cards onto the campus. Gates are left open after 5pm • Students have witnessed 2 people trying to get in through one turnstile on a number of occasions – potential safeguarding issue. • Noted that some students use other peers' ID cards to get in through turnstile, if they have forgotten their own card.	Old students need to have their ID cards cancelled. More ID checks need to be put in place. • DG reported that the College had been in touch with the Security team about this issue and they said that there had been a problem with the previous supplier, whereby a function had not been switched off and that was the reason why the old ID cards worked. Security confirmed that the supplier had now switched off the device and the problem was now rectified. This needs to be stopped as anyone can just walk onto the campus when they find the gates open so students don't feel safe. • DG confirmed that the reason the gates were left open after 5pm was to accommodate external hirers who used the College's facilities after that time. He mentioned that it was not feasible to issue ID cards to all these people. Therefore, the gate was closed from 9.00 – 5.00 when the majority of students attended the College and re-opened for external people at 5pm. • DG added that the gates also needed to be open from 5pm onwards for any members of the public attending Miskin productions. • DG acknowledged that this was a challenge and asked SU representatives to help the College by using peer pressure to change things.	Student Union representatives to monitor this situation and relay message to their peers about the importance of bringing in their own ID cards to College daily.

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
	• Students generally feel that some Security team members at both campuses are 'lazy' and not focusing on their task of ensuring that students use their own ID cards to gain access to the College. It was noted that some students also jumped the fences at the turnstiles behind the Nursery at Gravesend and this should be monitored more closely by the Security guards.	• DG took on board these comments and agreed to speak to the Head of Security about this matter.	DG to raise these comments with Head of Security.
5	Some of the tutors in Photography, TV & Film, MGA and Access don't have the knowledge for the course they are on saying just look on the internet for answers. Some just read from work sheets or from power points and then cannot give any explanations or help to the students. The only time the teaching improves is if someone else comes in to watch the lesson.	Retrain teachers, or replace • This point was addressed by RH under point 4 of the Gravesend Council Feedback sheet overleaf.	

	Feedback Sheet		

Gravesend Council Final Points February 2018

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
1	There have been many issues raised about the canteen in both November & January Learner voice	Gravesend SU have written a report and have presented it to SLT and will have a meeting on 23rd Feb to go through the points raised	TF confirmed that packs had been produced on this topic and full feedback would be given at the next Learner Council meeting in May.
2	In Motor Vehicle many of the cars in the workshops are Non-Runners. This means by working on the cars we still will be unable to see if there is a fully functional car at the end of our practical lessons. We understand some of this is due to damage caused by other students but higher levels would like to work on some that will help us achieve our goals.	Working cars to be purchased for use in the workshop that are signed out to students to work on so that they are responsible for the cars, meaning is damage is caused it can then be traced back to those responsible. • DG said that the response back from the Curriculum Manager on this point was that they would zone the Motor Vehicle Workshop in different areas for Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 students. This would hopefully alleviate the issues and students would also have better equipment as they progressed through their courses. He asked members to report back if the new system was effective at the next meeting in May.	Student Union representatives to report back on the new system at the next Learner Council meeting in May.
3	Many Timetables are having 2 to 3 hour gaps between lessons as English & Maths are being timetabled during the day, this is leaving many students who do not do those subjects with long waiting times between lessons, as some live too far away this leaves no option but to stay at College.	Timetable Maths and English at Start or the end of the day. • RH acknowledged that this situation might be frustrating for students, but explained that, unfortunately, there would always be gaps within timetables and this was due to the finite number of English and Maths teachers and the allocation of 3 slots each day for them to utilise (morning, midday and afternoon). RH suggested that students utilise those gaps by using the LTC facilities to develop their study skills. • Going forward, it was planned that, even those students that were normally exempt from English and Maths, would be expected to undertake those lessons, as staff wanted to enhance literacy and numeracy skills within the College. Consequently, students wouldn't be idle for those hours.	

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
4	Some of the temporary tutors that we have had covering our lessons have not been great as they often are not teaching us the right syllabus, or are leaving us to learn on our own, whilst we appreciate that people can be sick when someone is off for 3 months then it really needs to be looked at so our learning is not affected (Engineering).	Replacement Tutors need to be able to actually teach us what we need rather than just be "someone in the room" • RH agreed to respond to this point and point 5 on the Dartford Council Feedback sheet simultaneously, as the points raised were on similar topics. • RH stressed that, in terms of the quality of teaching staff in some lessons, the College took teaching, learning and assessment very seriously. Members noted that the College had received a 'Good' grade from Ofsted for teaching, learning and assessment and a wide range of strategies were in place to develop teachers, including internal training, peer observations, lesson observations and external courses etc. • RH acknowledged that it was sometimes difficult and challenging for the College to recruit high quality staff in some areas, for example, Engineering, and agency staff were not always up to speed, but the College was looking at more innovative ways of improving staff. • In terms of the College's own staff, support was provided for weaker or inexperienced staff. She added that the College recruited practitioners with current industry experience, which was very valuable. However, on the flip side, this often meant that they had never taught before in a teaching environment. Nevertheless, these staff would undergo a rigorous system whereby they would be trained to devise a scheme of work for each session, how to set work and engage students in their lessons etc. • RH advised members that she appreciated it was frustrating if a member of staff was not up to high standards, but stressed that the College was looking to overcome and address these issues. She added that the College often arranged for internal cover of lessons also. • DG asked members to speak with Lorna and Trevor if they had any particular concerns and they would relay this information to the senior management team for addressing swiftly. • On a similar note, TF confirmed that Andy Stevens had come back to him about this particular issue and was speaking with WD about ways to resolve it speedily and satisfactorily.	

	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
	• RHi mentioned that he had observed that there were specific tutors in Media who needed to refer to tutorials on how to use basic information for Media. • RHi asked if Andy Sayers had been replaced.	• DG reiterated to members that if they had a particular issue about a member of staff, they should alert Trevor or Lorna and it would be fed back through the CM for that member of staff to receive additional support. • RH confirmed that Kieran had replaced Andy and had a radio background.	
5	Some of the tutors in our area are not the best and we feel that we do not learn very well. The only time the teaching improves is if someone else comes in to watch the lesson, otherwise we are usually "talked at" and do not learn in the ways we feel we would best. (Motor Vehicle)	Retrain teachers, or replace • This point was addressed by RH under point 4 above of the Gravesend Council Feedback sheet.	
6	We would like a Shuttle bus that Runs from Gravesend Campus to the Train Station. This would help many students who have difficulty getting in on time as well as helping on journeys home. Dartford have this as well. • RHi suggested operating a token or pre-paid ticket scheme for the shuttlebus.	It costs a lot to get a bus from town to college, and as we don't have a lot of money this would help greatly. (Maybe run a trial to see how it goes). • DG reported that the College did operate a shuttle bus service at Gravesend about 5 or 6 years ago, but it did not receive great usage and cost a lot of money to run. He explained that the College was undergoing difficult challenges in the current financial climate and had to prioritise spending on what it felt benefited students the most. • TF said that he had floated a potential idea with Tina Bates, which involved part-funding the shuttle bus through the bursary fund. • RL mentioned that he was aware of 2 schemes operating for minibuses in the region. One was a pilot scheme in Sittingbourne, which had proved quite successful, whereby a minibus service went around the Sittingbourne area and people had the option of an Arriva Click App on their phone, which informed them of the time of arrival of the bus. RL had also seen in the paper recently, a scheme in the borough of Greenwich, which offered a low cost minibus service for people on ill-served routes to connect them up to a mainstream bus or station. • DG agreed to investigate with the bus company Arriva if there could potentially be a minibus solution for the College, in the form of a pilot scheme.	DG agreed to consider and investigate ideas and suggestions from members. DG agreed to speak with Arriva about possible solution.

3.   Any other business

DH-M remarked that it had been interesting to listen to the issues raised by the students and welcomed the fact that their points were being responded to in such a positive manner.

DG thanked and commended the students for their contributions and making their points so clearly and succinctly at the meeting and confirmed that this was a very valuable forum to obtain feedback on students' experiences with regard to teaching and learning within the College.

4.   Close of meeting – 4.45 pm

RH concluded the meeting by informing members that they would receive a copy of the minutes of this meeting and asked them to reflect on the outcomes before the next Learner Council meeting in May.

ALL