

STUDENTS LIAISON COMMITTEE of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Meeting held on 23rd November 2016 at 4.15pm

Members Present: Rob Pope (Chair), Rebecca Courtaux, Shannon White-Reeves

In attendance:

Clare Thornes (Clerk), John O’Shea (Deputy Principal), Theresa Bray (Director of Quality and Student Services), Barbara Gilgallon (Chair of Governors)

STUDENTS - Gabriel Aguma, Arun Kapila-Husband, Kaitlin Twum-Konadu, Hanifa Mohammed, Fame Phillips

Apologies: Paul Leonard, Ezra Smith, Cait Orton

| A | PROCEDURAL |
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| 1 | <p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, and introductions were made. Apologies as above.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</p> <p>There were no declarations of interests.</p> |
| 3 | <p>i. Minutes of Student Liaison Committee held on 15th June 2016 The minutes were approved.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising Action A/B – The dates of Curriculum Forums have been added to the Student Weekly News, and there were a further two curriculum forums for Applied Science at the end of the summer term.</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Action: RCx to bring list of curriculum forums to the next SL Committee meeting.</p> <p>Action E – the Working Party to look at the Student Weekly News will be meeting in December. Arun will be invited. Action.</p> |

| B | FOR DISCUSSION |
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| 1 | <p>Items for the Annual Programme</p> <p>Students’ Survey Analysis</p> <p>This survey was an Induction Survey, which was carried out in September 2016, and covered Years 1 and 2 students. The number of questions has been reduced from 28 to 20. The results are marginally improved from 2015.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response to questions 7 and 8 ('I felt welcome on my first day at college' and 'It was easy to enrol') were 83% and 73% agreement respectively, which needs improvement. GA expressed surprise at the response to Question 7, as the SU had worked hard to make new students feel welcome. He suggested more student volunteers are needed in 2017 in weeks 1 and 2, to make the new student's feel welcome. <p>Action: Students to be invited to the Enrolment Working Party (JOS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 20 ('I would recommend the college to a friend') drew a 84% response rate. It was noted that family and friends are the biggest influence on students' choice of college, followed by guidance from the school careers teacher and the internet. Students did not feel that bus adverts or social media were influential. Question 12 ('Expected standards of behaviour are made clear to me') has had a high 89% agreement rate for the second year running. Staff members said that this was due to a positive drive by tutors around behaviour. Question 17 ('I feel safe at college') met with 85% agreement, which means that 15% of students do not feel safe. The question is ambiguous, as some students may interpret this as relating to internet safety, whereas others may think the question is about physical safety. Students said that they sometimes feel physically unsafe – for example, in the stairwell to the music rooms in the tower. <p><i>Q: Why is the response to Question 16 ('Given a good choice of extra activities / enrichment) so poor, at 62%?</i></p> <p>Students said that activities are not sufficiently advertised. They were not aware of some activities until six months into the year. The Freshers' Fair should be made compulsory, and should be held during form time (this year it clashed with lessons). The Sports Hall is not an ideal venue, as it is difficult to find; could the Fair be held in the Music Centre? It was noted that posters are 'white noise', and not that useful.</p> <p>Update on Student Union Activities</p> <p>There was a brief update on activities. The talk by co-opted Governor Dayo Oduguwa generated a good discussion, and more such talks would be welcomed. The SU reps have been to various conferences, where there were plenty of networking opportunities. Further, the SU stand at the Freshers' Fair generated interest, and encouraged people to apply to be student reps.</p> <p>Looking forwards, there will be RAG week (with the Christmas Pudding rodeo), the Food Festival, Coffee with the Community, and litter-picking.</p> <p><i>[AKH and GA left the meeting at 5pm]</i></p> | |
| 2 | <p>Discussion Topics</p> <p>Attitude and Achievement of Black Boys</p> | |

(the 'Report by Kaitlin Twum-Konadu on Attitude and Achievement of Black Boys' and the transcript of the related group interview, were circulated in advance)

The interviews were conducted by KTK and FP. Some key themes arose from the interviews:

- Impact of parenting
- Peer group pressure
- Importance of social life (easier to spend time socialising than working)
- Racism / Labelling / Categorising
- Setting by school/college into lower sets, but because of behaviour not ability
- Lack of voice
- Housing; housing estate mentality

Specifically, black students described the feeling of being surrounded by white men in suits (never black men); of wanting to 'get rich quick', and thus not giving consideration to a career path; the perception that asking for help in college is not masculine.

The committee complimented KTK on the report.

Q: What has been the response of college staff to the report?

KTK has spoken to Cait Orton, and they have discussed arranging more focus groups with staff present. JOS had not seen the report before the meeting.

Action: TB to liaise with Cait and KTK/FP and arrange focus groups with tutors and students present, ensuring that all subject areas are represented.

Q: What type of support would the student E&D team like to see from RuTC?

Students would welcome more inspirational talks.

Action: KTK/FP to discuss some possibilities for inspirational speakers, then feedback to CO.

Q: How about black girls. How can they be more engaged?

RC noted that in the canteen, the boys communicate better than the girls, and are friendlier. The students said that girls are very cliquy, and feel safer in groups.

Student behaviour in the refectory and off-site; neighbourhood perceptions

There have been many student complaints about the refectory. There is a specific group of students that occupy the raised area of the refectory, and a specific group in Redwoods. They won't mix with other students, and the problem is exacerbated by the physical segregation created by the raised area and the barrier down the middle of the refectory. The refectory was described as 'territorial', with the upper area being a 'no go zone'.

The presence of CMT oversight at lunchtimes has had a positive effect. However, as soon as senior staff are not present, the refectory gets trashed.

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| | <p>Students suggested that more events should be held outside Glades, to encourage better integration of the various social groups. They also wondered whether lunchtime duty by students might help behaviour? JOS thought it was worth a try.</p> <p>JOS mentioned that the college is receiving ongoing complaints about students gathering in the recreation ground at the back corner of college. Students commented that some neighbours are very interested in the college and the students, and often ask what is going on.</p> <p>The Chair said he would like to see more liaison opportunities to hear students' views and ideas.</p> | |
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| C | FOR INFORMATION / OTHER | |
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| 6 | <p>Any other business</p> <p>None.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Future Student Liaison Committee Meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 8th March 2017 at 4.15pm Wednesday 7th June 2017 at 4.15pm</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.30pm.</p> | |

Minutes taken by Clare Thornes (Clerk)

SIGNED: **Date:**

Action Points

| Ref | Item | Action | Who? |
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| A | A3(ii) | RCx to bring list of curriculum forums to the next SL Committee meeting. | RCx |
| B | A3(ii) | Arun Kapila-husband to be invited to Students Weekly News working party in December and thereafter | RCx / AKH |
| C | B1 | Students to be invited to the Enrolment Working Party | JOS |
| D | B2 | TB to liaise with CO/KTK/FP and arrange focus groups with tutors and students present, ensuring that all subject areas are involved and represented. | JOS/CO/KTK/FP |
| E | B2 | KTK/FP to discuss some possibilities for inspirational speakers, then feedback to CO. | KTK/FP/CO |

