

STUDENTS LIAISON COMMITTEE of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Meeting held on 4 October 2017, 4.15 pm

Members Present: Rob Pope (Chair), Will Whitmore, Neal Hook, Mark Payton, Cait Orton.

In attendance:

Andrea Tatu (SU President), Mihaela Pascalov (SU Education Officer), Zoha Shreef (Student), Iqra Akram (Student), Nabgha Waheed (Student), Zoë Lawrence (Clerk), John O’Shea (Deputy Principal), Sharon Cousins (Director of Quality and Student Services), Deborah Stephenson (Head of Student Services)

A	PROCEDURAL
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Paul Leonard and Aishat Animashaun.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items There were no declarations of interests.</p>
3	<p>Minutes of Student Liaison Committee held on 7 March 2017 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>Actions and matters arising JOS had looked into the support offered to students following their mock exams. He reported that extensive support had been provided to those students who had under performed. All curriculum areas had responded positively. This was evident in the results achieved this Summer.</p>

B	FOR DISCUSSION
4	<p>Discussion Topics Enrolment and induction – The second year students all reported that there were significant improvements to enrolment this year. The process including waiting times was reduced from 4 to 2 hours. The first years students felt that the process was well organised, everyone knew what they were doing, the college was well prepared and there was plenty of help available. They said that all the teachers were very welcoming which made a significant difference. The first years had also enrolled at other colleges in the area. At these colleges, the queues had been extensive and it had not been such a positive experience. This had influenced their choice of college. The students felt that their experience of enrolment was generally representative of the majority. On results day, there had been a computer issue in the Music Centre which caused delays to the enrolment process. This incident was managed swiftly and additional staff were brought in to help to minimise waiting times. Those students who had already received offer from the College had been provided with appointment times for enrolment and were processed separately to walk-ins. This had made a positive difference. Overall, the students thought that it was well organised. MP asked if this was replicable next year? The intention was to do so.</p> <p>Students also fed back that the induction process over four half days would have been better being two full days. This was largely due to many students coming from out of the borough and would have preferred to minimise travel and have two longer induction days.</p> <p>There was also reported a problem with the printing of student ID cards which resulted in a 3 day delay for students to receive their cards. The card company IPS said that the problem was due to the college purchasing faulty cards. The IT Department spent a significant time testing these and</p>

none were considered to be faulty. JOS said that the College was sorry for the problems and delay. This was the result of a new system which had not been tested. It would be in future so the issue should not be repeated.

All students reported that their teachers at the beginning of term had been very welcoming to their lessons and time had been taken to set out assignment briefs and the programme of work. The second years felt that it was more of a continuation from the first year as they already knew much of what was expected. Teachers had been helpful in settling students into their classes.

New Catering Arrangements at the College – NH explained that the college’s catering which was previously provided by Chartwells had been taken ‘in-house’. The Chartwell’s staff had been TUPed over to the RuTC subsidiary company, and catering students gained valuable work experience which was a requirement of their qualification by working in the kitchens. Bringing the operation in-house had provided the opportunity for improved choice of the catering offer including an increase in healthier options provided.

The students at the meeting said that they had not tried the food in the college yet and usually went into Twickenham to purchase their lunch from a fast food outlet. They said they would now try the food on site. The College’s offer included catering for halal, vegetarian and vegan diets, plus options with a better nutritional balance. A meal deal option was also being considered which would help students on a bursary. The catering operation was open to suggestions for improvements and options, and it was felt that the best channels for this feedback were either through the SU and/ or student services.

One of the students said that there had been comments about the students working in the kitchen, that this was student labour. Furthermore, that if there were mistakes made, this was likely to be of the students doing, which had put some students off from purchasing the food. She understood that this was a misconception but was influencing some students. It would be helpful to put out clear messages that the student were completing work experience in the kitchens which was an essential part of their courses.

Students had been under the impression that the changes to the food contract would mean cheaper prices but this had not been the case currently. NH explained that the quality of the food had improved for the price in that much of the food offered was now fresh with better quality ingredients. Students also commented that the prices meant that it was difficult to buy lunch including a drink for the £3 bursary. SC explained that the statutory bursary level for lunch was £2.41 which the college had increased to £3. The college had also increased the household income threshold for the bursary from £17k to £25k this year which had resulted in an increase of bursary applications this year.

Students felt that more information needed to be made available to students about student work experience and bursary arrangements to enable more transparency and reduce misconceptions amongst students.

The catering operation intended to break even in the first year. If any surplus was made, this would be re-invested back into the college. At the moment, it was difficult to predict revenue levels, as more time was needed to make projections.

Punctuality and Readiness Policy – This policy which came into effect at the beginning of term had been developed following wide consultation with staff and students during the Summer term. Students reported that their experience was that punctuality had improved as a result of the

	<p>measures now in place, and teachers were also respecting the rules. Some initial adjustment was needed in the first few weeks until the policy became embedded. Students felt that it needed to be consistently applied to continue to be effective. Students studying vocational courses would be expected to continue with theory work/ functional skills on Moodle if late for a practical lesson. Overall, there was a positive response from students about the policy. MP asked if they felt that a student who late who could not then attend their class were being force further out? Students were of the view that being late was not acceptable, and these students should put more effort into being on time. It was also acknowledged that some students had family responsibilities such as taking siblings to school on their way to college which may result in them being late to lessons. If the situation was explained to the teacher often reasonable leeway was considered. It was felt that this point needed to be communicated through tutors.</p>
5	<p>Business Matters</p> <p>Student Engagement Strategy</p> <p>This had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting for ratification. It was agreed that the strategy be provided to the students present for their comments as they had not had the opportunity to review it prior to the meeting. MP offered to provide to the Clerk information on the improvement initiative to better involve younger people within his organisation, Haymarket, for the committee’s consideration. It may be useful to incorporate ideas from their work into the strategy.</p> <p>Ofsted Learner Review Survey</p> <p>SC provided a demonstration of the current online results of the existing Ofsted learner review survey, which had been responded to by 203 returning students. A 20% response rate for an external survey was considered to be relatively good at this stage as the survey was still open. The survey had been cascaded through tutors and was available through a link on Moodle. The internal student survey on induction had also been launched that week, with the results due later in October.</p> <p>SU Activities</p> <p>The SU President reported that as she had been unavailable at the beginning of term there had been a slight delay in calling a meeting of the SU, but this had now taken place with a further meeting planned for this week. The SU’s focus was on an event to support Black History Month, and also to promote the SU more generally throughout the college. They were planning to visit tutor groups and talk with students to encourage more involvement in the SU. It was thought that many students were not aware of its existence or activities.</p>

C	FOR INFORMATION / OTHER
6	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The Chair thanked all those present and the students in particular for their contribution to the meeting. The Clerk would remain in touch with these students and it was hoped they would be available for the next meeting of the committee, plus be able to bring fellow students with them to participate in discussion.</p>
7	<p>Dates of future Student Liaison Committee meetings</p> <p>7 March 2018 9 May 2018</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.30pm.</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence (Clerk to the Corporation)

SIGNED: Date:

Action Points

Ref	Action	Who?
4	Communications campaign concerning catering work experience and bursary payments so that more students understand arrangements within the College.	SC/SU
4	Communication via tutors that students with responsibilities should be given dispensation if arriving late to class. Students would be expected to discuss the position with their teacher in advance.	SC/DS
5	MP to provide marketing package information from Haymarket	MP