

STUDENTS LIAISON COMMITTEE of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Meeting held on 15th June 2016 at 4.15pm

Members Present: Rob Pope (Chair), Cathy Bird, Rebecca Courtaux, Ezra Smith

In attendance:

Clare Thornes (Clerk), John O’Shea (Vice Principal), Theresa Bray (Director of Q’y and Student Services) Jeff Lindsay (Head of Quality), Cait Orton (Youth Team)

STUDENTS - Muminah Rasul, Gabriel Aguma, Arun Kapila-husband, Kaitlin Twum-Konadu, Kieren Peckett

Apologies: Paul Leonard, Danny Volovsek

A	PROCEDURAL
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Paul Leonard and Danny Volovsek.</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 8th March 2016 The minutes were approved.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising Action A – <i>the ‘List of Curriculum Forums’ had been circulated in advance.</i> Jeff Lindsay (JL) also showed some examples of the ‘You said, We did’ posters, which are produced after a Curriculum Forum.</p> <p><i>Q: How many Curriculum Forum meetings are held per year?</i> The objective is to hold two meetings, though this may not happen in practice.</p> <p><i>Q: How many students are involved?</i> There is usually 6-10 students. This may include tutor group representatives. It is already part of a tutor group rep ‘job description’. However, some tutor groups are formed of mixed subjects, so the tutor group rep. will not necessarily represent the subjects of others in their tutor group.</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Action: Dates of curriculum forums to be added to the Student Weekly News (RCx)</p> <p>Students commented that staff seeking feedback from students varies widely by subject. For example, Dr Khan (chemistry) surveys his students a lot, but there are no equivalent surveys in physics.</p> <p>The Students specifically requested a Curriculum Forum for BTec in Applied Sciences. JL said that there had already been a forum and 2 meetings, but that another would be scheduled.</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Action: Organise a further curriculum forum for BTec Applied Sciences.</p>

Students noted that there is a clash between BTec Applied Science workshops, which are held on a Friday morning, and AS courses.

Action: JOS to investigate

B	FOR DISCUSSION	
1	<p>(i) Review effectiveness of the Student Engagement Strategy</p> <p>Rebecca Courtaux (RC) said that the Strategy is going to be revised, to add material about British Values, to add methods of student feedback, and to include community action. The revised strategy will be available by the end of the academic year.</p> <p>(ii) Update from the Students' Union</p> <p>Muminah Rasul (MR) ran through the Union events that had taken place since the election of the new Executive:</p> <p>Conferences attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NUS Conference NUS Black Students Conference FE Unplugged Safe from Extremism Conference Prevent Conference <p>Lead and Change training</p> <p>Activities planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping the Supported Learning Students with ice-cream selling SU Stand at the Fresher's Fair Black History Month (October) Rag Week (Nov/December) LGBT Outdoor cinema (Feb) Food Festival (April) Coffee with the community / litter picking <p>MR suggested that governors follow the SU on Twitter "@RUTCSU", and Facebook.</p> <p><i>Q: Is the SU able to mix with the other college SUs at the conferences?</i></p> <p>Yes, with a mixture of FE and HE students – particularly at the NUS National Conference. It was interesting and useful – the students discussed college mergers, and spoke with Kingston College and Croydon College students.</p> <p>(iii) Students' Survey Analysis</p> <p>This survey was principally for students who are leaving this year. The response rate was good at 65.9%, with the majority being 16-18 students. The area of greatest satisfaction was with advice given (particularly on choosing courses). The least satisfaction was expressed around communal areas / the refectory (only 44%).</p>	

- Overall student satisfaction: the 'on programme' result was 73%, but the current exit survey gives an overall satisfaction of 78%.
- In general, female students are less satisfied than male students.
- At Level 3, there is an issue with Maths skills (table on page 11). Students feel this is not adequately incorporated into curriculum areas.

Q: Why are black male students the least satisfied?

Kaitlin Twum-Konadu (KTK) responded that there are a number of reasons, but the main one is a culture of underachievement. Black boys are constantly told they will not come to anything. They tend to see college as a social event. They need more support from teachers, and some teachers at College are very good at providing it.

Black boys will do the absolute minimum work and attendance possible.

The media has a big impact on attitudes and there are very few black male role models – the example of the recent Oscars scandal was given. The media treats black women much better, and there are some good prominent female role models, such as Beyonce.

College has conducted some focus groups to interrogate the issue further, and what emerged was that black boys believe that 'academia is the preserve of white people'. In fact it is culturally unacceptable to do well in education, and students who try hard are labelled as "Oreos". They are made to feel they are betraying their culture, so they tend to regress to underachieving behaviour.

Theresa Bray (TB) noted that nationally, white working class boys are even worse achievers. In terms of RuTC's retention, retention of black boys has been better this year than last. In percentage terms, the biggest losses were of White Irish boys, though this is a relatively small group in college.

TB noted that mixed race boys are more satisfied.

Action: KTK to lead a further discussion on this topic at the Autumn Students' Liaison Group meeting. It was noted that by that time, exam results will be available, and it will be possible to break the results down by ethnic groups.

Q: Why are female students less satisfied?

The female students present were surprised at this finding, until TB pointed out that they are not dissatisfied with Teaching and Learning, but rather their experience outside the classroom. The students observed that there is simply not enough communal space around college: the main space is Glades, which is packed with loud boys. The girls feel uncomfortable there.

RCx had put up plenty of notices reminding students that they can use the quad, but students described posters as 'white noise'. RCx asked whether Student Weekly News would be a better method of communicating?

The students suggested that Student Weekly News needs to be read out in tutorials,

	<p>although some students don't have a tutorial until Thursdays, by which time the news is old. They also observed that Student Weekly News is not always updated on Moodle.</p> <p>Action: Arun Kapila-husband, who is the SU's marketing executive, to join RC's working party looking at the effectiveness of the Student Weekly News.</p> <p>Action: Make sure that outdoor spaces are advertised to Freshers in September (RC)</p> <p>The discussion moved to the problems in the refectory. The SU is implementing its own observation programme, whereby SU Executives will spend 10-15 minutes in the refectory observing what is going on.</p> <p>There is a sense of intimidation, and it is caused by groups of lads being loud. Their intention is to dominate the space, and their behaviour is anti-social. More staff are needed. Members wondered whether physically changing the space could improve the atmosphere, although it was noted that the initiative to use room dividers did not work.</p> <p>(iii) Review of the committee's effectiveness and suggestions for change</p> <p>There was not time to adequately discuss this item, but a quick suggestion was made that it would be good to see more representation from student representatives.</p> <p>Action: SU Exec / CO to remind student representatives to attend committee meetings.</p>	
2	<p>Discussion Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Perceptions <p>Litter is a big issue for the local residents. The students commented that more bins might not be the answer – some students are lazy and don't care about litter. The 'coffee' initiative and 'litter picking' initiative are likely help relationships with residents.</p>	

C	FOR INFORMATION / OTHER	
6	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None.</p>	
7	<p>Future Student Liaison Committee Meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 23rd November 2016 at 4.15pm 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?
A	A3(ii)	Dates of curriculum forums to be added to the Student Weekly News (RCx)	RCx
B	A3(ii)	Organise a further curriculum forum for BTec Applied Sciences.	JL
C	A3(ii)	Investigate the clash between BTec Applied Science workshops, which are held on a Friday morning, and AS courses.	JOS
D	B1(ii)	KTK to lead a further discussion on the topic of attitudes of black boys at the Autumn Students' Liaison Group meeting.	Kaitlin
E	B1(ii)	Action: Arun Kapila-Husband, who is the SU's marketing executive, to join RCx's working party looking at the Student Weekly News.	AKH / RCx
F	B1(ii)	Ensure that outdoor spaces are advertised to Freshers in September (RCx)	RCx
G	B1(iii)	SU Exec / CO to remind student representatives to attend committee meetings.	All SU Exec / CO