

STUDENTS LIAISON COMMITTEE of RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE
Minutes of Meeting held on 29 September 2015 at 4.15pm

Members Present: Rob Pope (Chair), Cathy Bird, Daniel Volovsek, Paul Leonard, Tajay Bryan, Darren Keenan

In attendance:

Clare Thornes (Clerk), John O’Shea (Vice Principal), Jeff Lindsay (Head of Quality), Rebecca Courtaux (Head of Student Services), Cait Orton (Youth Team), Janna Perryman (Curriculum Director), and STUDENTS - Omba Okandju, Shawo Okandju, Oliver Peters, Savannah Mykoo, Gabriel Aguma, Zain Ahmed, Daniella Adjemon (Students Union Representative), Temidayo Oyekan (SU Representative)

A	PROCEDURAL	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, and introductions were made.</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items There were no declarations of interests.</p>	
3	<p>i. Minutes of Student Liaison Committee held on 13 May The minutes were approved.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising 4.2 – The Alumni page is now live on the website 6.0 – The Learner Voice working group met once before the summer, but has not met since.</p> <p>JOS noted that 1000 student questionnaires have been sent out this week. The results will be presented to the next meeting.</p>	

B	FOR DISCUSSION - The Student Experience September 2015	
4	<p>a. <u>Enrolment</u></p> <p>Students were generally very positive about enrolment and their interactions with staff, making the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students liked the ‘process’ of enrolment; going through a series of clear stages, culminating in receiving an ID Badge. In addition, they liked the fact that all enrolment took place in one location, not scattered around the building. • Towards the end of the week, enrolment was fast; it only took half an hour. • The advice from staff during enrolment was really good (unanimous agreement on 	

this). Staff were focussed on the individual. This contrasted with students' experiences at other colleges.

- Also, the Learning Support team was excellent, arranging individual meetings with students.
- RUTC was friendlier than other colleges visited, and felt more like a community. The presence of the student guides really helped.

However, queues were too long, and the wait was too long. Even Year 2 enrolment took several hours. Students made some suggestions for next year :

- Have two parallel enrolment queues.
- Use student guides to help with ID badge distribution.
- Use a bigger space than the library (eg. sports hall)
- Try to avoid making repeated requests for the same personal information.
- Make it clearer that enrolment is open for a whole week (several students thought they needed to be there on the first day).

Questions

Q: Did any students sign up to other colleges?

A: Yes, examples given of Westminster College and Coulsdon College. Students chose RUTC because it felt friendlier and the staff were more helpful. Staff were focussed on the individual. It was useful to speak to a tutor one-to-one.

Q: Why was open enrolment introduced?

A: Because the college felt it had lost potential students by giving them fixed appointments later in enrolment week. Students were anxious to secure a place, and did not want to wait several days once they had already received an offer.

b. Induction

Induction took place over four days, and was held earlier than in previous years. Experiences of induction were mixed, and students expressed a variety of sometimes opposing views:-

- The induction was well organised. There were set days for English/Maths testing, and others for introductions to staff and building. The one-to-one meeting with teachers was really useful.
- Four days was too long, and induction with the tutor group was not that useful. An induction with classmates would be better. Or better alignment of the tutor groups with the class groups (*JOS noted that college had endeavoured to group students together into Humanities/Sciences/Arts*).
- For students on vocational courses, the tutor group is the same as their class group. This group of students would have liked to meet students outside their tutor/class group.

Enrichment Session / Freshers' Fair:-

- The speeches at the Enrichment Session were great.

- Students were impressed with the variety of clubs and societies at the Freshers' Fair. Nevertheless, there were some suggestions about the Fresher's Fair and activities on offer:-
 - There needs to be more information about activities on the website
 - It would be nice to see more 'all-student' activities (*it was noted that the Student Union provides many*).
 - The Fair was rushed (lunchtime not long enough) and not sufficiently publicised. Next year, text messages would be good – make sure the location is clear.
 - Could the Fair be held earlier in the year?

Questions

Q: Do students tend to make friends in their tutor group or with classmates?

A: Initially with classmates. At exam times, this extends to study groups.

C. Courses and Classes

Students felt positive about their courses and classes, but raised concerns over timetabling:-

- The classes are great so far.
- Timetables/timetabling:-
 - The emailed timetables were complicated. Some students would prefer to be given a paper copy (promised but not delivered), or both.
 - Some classes were missed off the timetable, and some classes clashed.
 - The change in the timetable during the first week caused problems for students with work commitments (*JOS noted that some timetable adjustment had been necessary because of the volume of new starters*).
- An AS student taking Maths and Physics commented on initial tests - they varied in quality. Maths was really good; teaching started immediately, and new knowledge acquired. However, in physics this involved rehashing old knowledge.
- It is difficult to find teachers' email addresses (*noted that every course page on Moodle should list the teacher's email address*). It would be worthwhile to sacrifice a lesson to learn how to use Moodle.
- The tutor group student representative is a popular concept.

Questions

Q: Do students understand what their courses involve, and what the expectations are?

A: Generally yes. The opening lessons were good and expectations were made very clear. For some courses there was an A4 course plan, which is useful for revision.

A: (From vocational students) More clarity on grades would be helpful - the concepts of pass/merit are new. Students were also confused about the system of draft/first submission/second submission.

	<p><i>Q: Were course handbooks distributed?</i></p> <p>A: Not in all cases and there were one or two examples of course information being given on separate pieces of paper. A booklet would be useful for students on all courses.</p> <p>The discussion closed, and the Chair thanked all present for their contribution.</p>	
5	<p>Topics for discussion in future meetings</p> <p>Topics suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social facilities for students ➤ Food / canteen ➤ Facilities generally (suggestions could feed into planning for new building). ➤ Student wellbeing ➤ Assessments / marking 	

D	FOR INFORMATION / OTHER	
6	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None.</p>	
7	<p>Future Student Liaison Committee Meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 18 November 2015 Tuesday 8 March 2016 Wednesday 8 June 2016</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.35pm.</p>	

SIGNED: **Date:**