

NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

STUDENT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Notes of the meeting held on 8th February 2007

Present:

Students: See Annex A

Governors: Ed Prosser Governor, Chair
Linda Jordan Governor

Staff: Denise Brown-Sackey Deputy Principal
Graham Drummond Clerk to the Corporation

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Martin Tolhurst and Philip Badman

2. Introduction

The Chair thanked those who were present for attending and explained that the Forum gave students an opportunity to provide feedback to the Governing body.

3. Course Team Meetings and Student Feedback

Denise Brown-Sackey explained that student feedback was not always received during course reviews and asked students whether they had been asked to attend course team meetings. Students were also asked about the best way to get student feedback on the quality of course provision. Eleven students raised their hands to indicate that they had not received an invitation to attend a course team meeting.

A student on a Swedish massage course explained that she had been given two assignments, one on anatomy and another on physiology; it was her view that a better way to assess students' understanding of these subjects was by examination because it was possible to download information from the internet, which would allow students to pass the assignments without understanding the subject properly. A student on an Access to HE Law course commented that everyone on her course was passing and that when they do assessed work at home some students copy other people's work. Another student commented that it was unfair on those students who did all their work properly. It was also pointed out that some students are failing the exams but passing the written assignments.

Denise Brown-Sackey explained that the decision about the appropriate balance between exams and written assignments for a course depended on the type of course and was something that would be discussed in full at the College's Curriculum and Quality Board (CQB). Assessment must be appropriate, for example students would be assessed through examinations where it was appropriate for their progression e.g. on an Access course because examinations were the main form of assessment on higher education courses. For other courses, there should be a balance between the types of assessment used. The student President Kayodi Ossai said that students were told to reference where they directly copied work. The Chair then explained that teachers were expert at deciding whether students' work was copied. Denise Brown-Sackey added that there had been occasions where students had been subject to the College's disciplinary procedure for copying work.

4. Tolerance on Campus

Graham Drummond explained that this topic for discussion had been chosen for two reasons: firstly a report on the College written by a community worker in 2006 had claimed that there was racism at Newham College, and secondly with the recent racist allegations made about Celebrity Big Brother contestants it seemed appropriate to ask students what their views were about whether staff and students were tolerant towards one another. One student said that she had been victimised by younger

students who pass malicious comments about her, when she is near them. The Chair explained that if there were actions, which could be taken by the College to reduce intolerance then they would be taken. He then added that the College reflects life and was different to a school environment, where students could be immediately sanctioned if their behaviour was inappropriate. Denise Brown-Sackey said that tolerance could be improved with students undertaking group communication work as part of their courses. She added that if students felt vulnerable then they must let the College know so that something could be done about it. One student felt that the College was not getting the message across that it does not accept malicious or intolerant behaviour. Another student said that tutorial time could be used to discuss and understand each other's culture and that circulating leaflets was not enough. Denise Brown-Sackey said that the College would look into including this type of group work into tutorials and explained that the College's policy on dealing with anti social and racist behaviour was in the student handbook.

A Health and Social Care student said that a student on her course had been disciplined for racist behaviour but that the following year the same student returned onto the course and continued to behave in a racist way. Denise Brown-Sackey explained that teachers are sent on training to deal with difficult incidents. She acknowledged that the College needed to keep on top of this because teachers move on to other jobs, but that by incorporating group discussion work within the curriculum the number of racially motivated incidents would be minimised. A suggestion was made that the number of students permanently excluded and the reason for their exclusion could be included in a monthly bulletin.

Another student said that when he was growing up in the UK there was a large amount of racism and that now there wasn't. He said that in those days he was part of a small ethnic minority within the country but that now there were many more people from lots of different countries. He went on to say that racism stems from ignorance and as long as there were ignorant people there will be racism; he also said that people have different levels of sensitivity and what one person considers to be racist might not be what another person considers to be racist; if students spotted racism though they should report it. He concluded by saying that racism was not a big problem and that these sorts of discussions could not be imposed on all courses. Denise Brown-Sackey explained that the College would review how students were asked to address these issues so that tolerance was promoted.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and said that the discussion had been positive and useful.

Name	ID	Course
Rozina Iqbal		Swedish Massage
Ahmed Madlock	25005972-90	NewCAD YPA
Helen Cadogan		Health & Social Care
Kalanya Bashare	23002576-90	NewCAD Level 2 English
Patrick Orobor	23002576	Access to Computing
Sonila Haskaj	24502385-90	Access to H.E. (Law)
Kinga Iskra	24001221-90	Health and Social Care Level 3
Evelina Lilinskaite	21045794-90	Sports Level 2
Dipon D Baidya	22029153-90	ICT Level 2
Zalitheus Ferguson	25012037-90	Level 2 English
Sonia Janshed	2400844-90	BTEC National Diploma Early Years
Shani Whitehead	21015216-90	BTEC National Diploma Early Years Level 3
Saida Kayani	24518890-90	English Level 3
Rosemond Asomaning		
Lila Wardak	25006489-90	NewCAD YPA
Salida Abdi	25006167-90	NewCAD Young Adult
Kayodi Ossai	23002391-90	BTEC Business
Tasudeen Bello	25012191-90	Access to HE
Adeeb Sultana Pasha	25014047-90	ESOL Entry Level 3
Nadia Ullah	24525507-90	BTEC National in Early Years
Rubia Begum	24524665-90	BTEC National in Early Years
Salomey Takiwah Sestini	22037537-90	Health and Social Care
Emanuel Onajobi	25007233-92	BTEC National Diploma in IT Level 3
Olamide Adonisan	25028867-90	Access to HE/Science