



NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

STUDENT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Notes of the meeting held on 4th November 2015

Present:

Students: 25 students attended.

Governors: Linda Jordan Chair
Di Gowland Principal
Andrew Edwards

Staff: Zioge Smith Clerk to the Corporation
Sean McGarrigle Director, Estates and Facilities Management
Mary Herbert Vice Principal - Curriculum
Annette Cast Deputy Principal – PQI
Anil Nagpal Deputy Principal Finance & Infrastructure
Andrew Mitchell Interim Head of Marketing
Liam Davis Student & Staff Liaison Officer

There were no apologies.

1. Introduction

The Chair welcomed the attendees and all the staff and governors present introduced themselves. She explained that the purpose of this forum was to discuss issues of common interest as well as general concerns and that the meeting served as a direct line to the governors and the College management.

As there was an open agenda for the meeting, the Chair invited students to talk about issues that they wanted to bring to the attention of senior staff and Governors.

2. Matters arising

- There were no matters arising from the previous notes.

3. Issues raised by students

The meeting started by learners sharing what they enjoyed about the College-

- Opportunities were given to learners over 18;
- It was a more grown up and friendly atmosphere and 'better than school';

i. Canteen/food

- There were a number of comments about the East Ham Canteen:
- The quality of the food was not very good and not enough options for vegetarians;
- Not much choice on the menu;
- The canteen atmosphere was stressful for older learners and therefore taking a break there was not an enjoyable experience.

Response:

- College management was looking at the canteen areas and food services on both campuses.
- A learner survey would be carried out to get feedback on the canteen services and quality of food.

ii. Enrolment (Childcare L2)

- A Childcare level 2 learners complained about her enrolment experience, saying that staff were uncommunicative which led to a lot of uncertainty.

Response:

- Enrolment should be as stress free as possible.
- The College management was aware that some issues arose during enrolment as a result of the Early Years course being oversubscribed and some issues with communicating this.

iii. LLDD

- Issue with the timing of break time for LLDD learners as the canteen was not ready when they got there at 11.30am and the learners had to wait for about 15mins on a regular basis for the canteen to open.
- Learners wanted Certificates of Attendance at the end of each term.

Response:

- The canteen would open from 11.25am, starting immediately.
- Request for certificates noted.

iv. Health & Social Care Lvl 1 & 3:

- Complaints that in her final year (L3), there was a constant change of teachers – three teachers since September;
- Same complaint was made by a L1 learner.
- The recently introduced Late Desks, although welcome by some, was resulting in some learners coming in even later as they tried to avoid the Late Desk.

Response

- Apologies that this happened. The VP in charge would investigate.
- Follow-up meeting with relevant students were planned

v. ESOL English L2

- The learner complained that there had been a high turnover of teachers.

Response

- Apologies that this happened and would be investigated.
- Follow-up meeting with relevant students were planned

vi. Estate issues

- Focus (Room 213) – the room was always cold.
- HASC L1 (Room 524) – blinds don't work, internet was slow and kept crashing which meant that learners were losing their work.

- Hand sanitiser canisters all empty.
- The toilets were really dirty (7th and ground floors). No soap in toilets.

Response:

- Wifi on both campuses was being upgraded and the problems with the classrooms will be investigated.
- A decision was taken not to refill the sanisters because they were not being used properly generated significant spillage. The canisters would be taken down.
- Cleaners go into the toilets regularly to ensure that they are clean and will ensure that there is always soap available.

vii. Business Studies L3

- The learner complained that there were issues with attendance – their attendance was not showing on registers.
- Some teachers were not giving out handouts because they complained that they did not have enough credits to print out the handouts. The reports were also not being emailed to learners.
- There had been no cover for classes where tutors are on a trip.
- Room 512b is far too small for 25 learners.
- Timetabled rooms keep being changed with learners being asked to move regularly.
- Breaks were too long and at the wrong time.

Response:

- The issues with the registers were being checked.
- The College was trying to go as paperless as possible but this issue would be investigated;
- The learners were invited to meet with the VP Curriculum to discuss further.
- The breaks were for self directed study and enrichment.

viii. NUC:

- HE learners have the same entrance as FE and are being made to go to the late queue.

Response:

- The DP apologised and explained that issues with lateness had prompted NUC to be included in the late desks process.
- Staff would now ask HE learners what time their classes started instead of assuming that they were late.

ix. Enrichment

- There were no options with enrichment – the learner commented that she was timetabled to do cheerleading which she didn't want to do.
- More awareness of enrichment opportunities especially for adults to be communicated.

Response:

- The timetabled enrichment was based on feedback received from learners and the action taken was for a trial period. The VP Curriculum guaranteed more options will be provided to learners.

Miscellaneous

- There was a request for support for anger management and anxiety amongst learners.

Response

- There was a comprehensive team in Learner Services.
- The learner was encouraged to talk to her personal tutor who would point her in the right direction.

Compliments and Suggestions

- Hair & Beauty L1 – learner really enjoying her course. Very supportive teachers.
- Childcare L2 – Great course with good teachers;
- LLLD rep – well done to management A lot more support provided to LLDD learners that he had seen in other places;
- Positive feedback on the library service.

Students were reassured that their queries and complaints were taken very seriously and followed up by the relevant departments. Managers were challenged by the Board of Governors to ensure that issues were being resolved. Feedback was given at Student Council meetings.

The Chair thanked the students for their questions and comments and encouraged them to raise day-to-day issues or concerns with their faculty managers or through the official customer complaints system.

4. Date of the next meeting
3rd February 2016, Stratford Campus