

**WALSALL COLLEGE  
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THURSDAY 25 MAY 2022 AT 1230 HRS  
VENUE: TEAMS**

**PRESENT:** Charlotte Bosworth Chair  
Malissa Clarke SU President and Student Governor  
Leah Brookes Student Governor and SU HE Rep  
Jaswinder Dhillon  
Ray Simmonds

**TOGETHER WITH:** Jo Hughes Tutorial Coordinator  
David Turner Assistant Principal Quality & HE  
Aldrich Gonsalves  
Rebecca Bowater Assistant Principal Quality and HE  
Kevin Grindley Interim Head of Student Services  
Aldrich Gonsalves  
Melanie Smith Personal Assistant

**STUDENTS** Chloe-Jo Taylor-  
Higgins  
Ciera Curti-Warner  
Sara Mahmood  
Callum Michael Jones  
Aadam Motara  
Kashaan Ahmed  
Caleel Benjamin  
Sam Jarvis  
James McKenzie

**APOLOGIES** David Wheeler

**17.22 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Kevin to his first Student Voice Committee meeting.

Kevin Grindley was introduced as Interim Head of Student Services. The Assistant Principal Quality & HE was pleased that the gap in Student Services was being addressed with Kevin joining. He was working really well with the Pastoral officers and Student Exec.

The post was currently being advertised. The Assistant Principal Quality & HE and the Interim Head of Student Services would be involved in interview process and it was hoped that an appointment would be made this academic year.

Much focus had been around the Student Conference taking place this year and was being dedicated to learner voice. Lots of research had taken place and a team from Better Futures were to present at conference. However, following the decision not to hold the Student Conference this year, a Focus Conference will be taking place on 24 June and will be dedicated to the student voice for 2022/23.

The Chair raised the issue of too many surveys being sent to students. The Assistant Principal Quality & HE confirmed that there will be a pulse survey, but all other surveys would be switched off. In future only short, snappy surveys would be used.

## **18.22 MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 March 2022, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

## **19.22 MATTERS ARISING**

### **03.22**

Malissa Clarke had been in touch with the Student Union Rep in Worcester. Worcester has a lead on sustainability and has a sustainability group and are happy to share with Walsall

Feedback was received regarding price and variety of choice in the Food Hall. Comments included food being too expensive and being cheaper from MacDonalds or Tesco.

Whilst students recognised that the food was very nice and of good quality, they still preferred to purchase cheaper food from alternative outlets.

Members were made aware that free meals were now going up to £4.50. There were comments however, that students try to avoid paying for lunches here as they are trying to save money and spend less by using other outlets. More promotion was required to make students aware of the free breakfasts.

Having Halal as an option was once again raised and it was advised that it was not possible to provide food from every different food group as there would not be enough take up to make this worthwhile.

It was asked whether the free breakfast time slot could be adjusted to accommodate students who arrived into College for classes which started later.

The Assistant Principal Quality & HE undertook to explore this and feed back to the next Committee Meeting.

Students requested more drop in sessions with Jat. This would be followed up for the next academic year.

It was confirmed that there would be student involvement in the interview process for Student Experience post.

The Interim Head of Student Services was happy to meet up with student to identify number of students who would purchase Halal as an option.

## **20.22 STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Adam Motara took members through the report, highlighting the events which had taken place since the last meeting.

These included:

- NUS National Conference – 28/29 March in Liverpool. National NUS officers were elected.
- Students' Union Election.
- It was confirmed that Sam Jarvis had been elected as the Students' Union President and Malissa Clarke had been elected as the Deputy President for the 2022/23 academic year. 40 votes in total had been cast.
- LGBT Group meet weekly.  
A talk from an ex student was given on domestic violence.

- Guide Dog Fundraiser event had raised £97.09.
- Mental Health Awareness Week raised a total of £41.68 raised.
- Heal Hub attended the College to promote their free mental health therapy programme to students.

Upcoming events include:

- Pride Event
- Drag Act  
This event took place on 25 May and included sessions on costume dress, make up, history of drag queens, why become a drag queen?

The Chair thanked the Student Union for their great work, particularly fund raising activities.

The new Student Union President raised the issue of lack of trips for students. He suggested that all students should have a trip related to their course during their studies.

The Student Union were planning a BBQ to take place during the summer term.

## **21.22 STUDENT VOICE ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS**

Work was being undertaken to look at Student Voice with new strategies and ways to looking at things in a more formalised manner ready for September. Each term the Student Voice Action Plan is reviewed and communicated out through Student Portal and email to students. This was communicated in April and staff are confident that this is now communicated in a much more timely manner.

Some meetings haven't been as formal as before which needs to change for 2022/23. This will be looked at as part of the Big Focus Group.

It was agreed that the best meeting is the meeting held at end of term with students/representatives from each area. This is not always met with the same enthusiasm by all tutors/students.

Formal report would be shared with SMT to highlight to Assistant Principal Curriculum and the Assistant Principal Commercial Development predominantly, where gaps are. This is currently inconsistent and will be addressed by the Assistant Principal Quality & HE next year.

Students responded that not all students were in Wisemore on meeting dates. It was therefore requested that the meetings were held on Teams but with a more formal approach.

The Assistant Principal Quality & HE confirmed that steps would be taken to ensure that the meetings would be available online as well as in person.

Teaching and Learning surveys were a very important mid-term survey to gather student thoughts. 2,300 responses were received, although the ambition is to improve this number. 93.5% students still would recommend the College to a friend.

The year has been very difficult for everyone. At one point there were 15% of teaching staff off with COVID.

The survey recognised that student satisfaction has risen on previous years. Classes start on time, students find majority of sessions interesting and motivational and designed to increase their chances of progression. Students understand British Values and are happy with access to resources.

However, if we see more than 3% of students are not satisfied about something, we share with curriculum managers and will be picked up formally in Management Meetings.

There is a need to improve student satisfaction levels in English and Maths being relevant to core subjects. Not all Maths sessions are being applied to hospitality, public services etc.

With English there is always opportunity to link improvements to communication and written skills no matter what the subject it.

Students felt that assessment feedback not always timely. More work experience/enrichment/tutorial opportunities needed to be provided. The Assistant Principal Quality & HE commented that he was now seeing more planned trips for next year with more stability in the system.

There was increased student understanding of the importance to attend tutorials and engage with personal development as these are just as important as gaining a qualification.

Careers advice and guidance requires improvement. The College performs well when students apply to College, but once students are on the course we are less able to help them feel that they are on the right course.

The Interim Head of Student Services was looking at Careers Education Advice and Guidance. There are four advisers for 3,000 students. Research was currently taking place looking at different models to look at students' needs. Pastoral Support Officers and Advisers needed to focus on the first six weeks in order to target students require careers advice.

Tutorial Coordinator presented a case for purchasing a Big Rig and was looking for approval for making this purchase which was in the region of £27,000. Funds for this were available in the Student Union.

The Big Rig comprises a kit which can be built and has a large range of uses and benefits. It would provide an enrichment activity. The equipment is mobile and can be used to engage students in and out of classroom. It can be used for a range of students from 3-160. Jo showed photos of the challenge kit being used for enrichment activity but could also be used for careers/sports/open days, mental health activities, wellbeing, and problem solving challenges to support students.

Students would also be trained to deliver programme and will allow students to look at a breadth of activities.

The Student Union would like SU logo on it along with Walsall College branding.

Students and governors were asked for their opinion and all supported the purchase with the Student Union money, as long as there were enough funds available and to also cover other planned activities. Governors felt that it would be a good investment.

Aldrich confirmed what a good investment it was and was a great motivational piece of equipment and had received excellent feedback from another user.

An update to be brought to next meeting.

## **22.22 STUDENT CONFERENCE UPDATE**

The Student Conference was unable to go ahead in March or May and has now been replaced by a Big Focus Group. Big Focus is a Multi Academy Trust and now has several colleges, serving about 6,000 students. Lots of research has taken place and Big Focus will be coming into College to discuss with our students and advise what they have been done with Student Voice.

Student Voice is to be rolled out for next year therefore there is opportunity there for us to have some collaboration with them.

All students to be invited to the Big Focus Group will be progression students who want to be part of our voice for next year. It is hoped that we will get at least one person from each curriculum to attend.

Ray Simmonds talked about Black History Month and whether there was anything planned to involve the Student Union. Students advised that Black History Month has been talked about in some lessons.

The Assistant Principal Quality & HE advised that Health & Social Care have been tasked with presenting this across the College as they did a fabulous event last year for their own area. Student Union will be very much part of this. Every student will be looking at this in September. Displays will be in Atriums at all campuses in the autumn term.

Jo advised about a Student Voice opportunity. Skills World network doing online opportunity to talk about experiences with education. Five students were required who were willing to talk about their education experience.

Assistant Principal Quality & HE advised that we will be reinstating a student faced health and wellbeing group next year which will support students and their increased anxieties etc. He asked students to come forward if they were interested in joining the group.

Students asked whether they could have somewhere that students could go to that would be a safe place if they need help/advice.

The Assistant Principal Quality & HE suggested need to drive up student reps in all areas. He, along with the Interim Head of Student Services were putting together a more attractive Job Description to highlight benefits. Students at Green Lane were not interested in becoming Reps. There needed to be more encouragement for students to become reps at each campus.

Students asked whether clubs be replicated at all campuses and have more clubs to support smaller groups.

The Interim Head of Student Services undertook to raise this with the Student Union President.

## **23.22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 25 November 2022