

**Minutes of the Student Focus Group Held 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

Present:

Item		Action
1.	<b>Apologies</b>	MW welcomed all to the group meeting
2./3	<b>Notes of Meeting held 05/12/07 and Matters Arising</b>	<p>Agreed as accurate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It was confirmed by MW that jewellery classes for the next academic year would be 32 weeks in response to comments by learners.</li> <li>b) There was discussion in the group about classes ending at different times of the year. It was acknowledged by MW that the pattern may need to be revisited re the 23 week and 9 split. Some learners preferred longer courses</li> <li>c) It was commented that enrolments for the summer courses seem to be strong</li> <li>d) MW identified that the college is reviewing the enrolment pattern and planning courses accordingly</li> <li>e) Students suggested putting the complaints/compliments box in the Coffee Shop.</li> <li>f) Sam wished to thank the Head of Language Department for putting on a Level 2 Arabic at the request of students</li> </ul>
4	<b>Informal Adult Learning Consultation from DIUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) MW introduced the topic and distributed more copies of the summary document</li> <li>b) KR asked if the College was linked to the UCU campaign re adult learning. MW confirmed the College had representatives in the union</li> <li>c) Some significant points from the document were highlighted</li> <li>d) MW outlined the College's response to the consultation including the plans to visit centres</li> <li>e) it was pointed out by students that the college needed to use the data it had to make the point about the success of what it was providing and the benefits</li> <li>f) JS explained the funding streams and the way that the FE stream was organised</li> <li>g) MW identified that providers needed to sell provision to employers and that the college had appointed new staff to take up this role</li> <li>h) A suggestion was made that student work produced could be sold a proportion be retained for the College funds.</li> <li>i) Another student suggested it was worth looking at the schools and the growth of the creative industries</li> <li>j) Students were concerned that there appeared to be suggestions that funding would be diverted from current opportunities. They felt strongly that there were significant benefits that accrued from the courses and the funding should not be removed. Some recognised the importance of skills training and identified that it was difficult to prioritise adults for some type of learning opportunities</li> <li>k) MW invited all present to contribute their views as soon as possible</li> </ul>
5	<b>Leaner Involvement Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) MW tabled the draft that had been produced so far and how it reflected the points made by students</li> </ul>
7.	<b>Funding, Fees and Programme Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) MW identified the programme planned was as broad as previously offered and explained the likely fee rises and the reasons. Funding is divided between the FE Sector (courses leading to approved qualifications) and PCDL (Personal and Community Development Learning). FE has protection provided it meets government targets but there is a threat to PCDL courses, which only have protection until 2010. The DIUS consultation implies that government intends to withdraw funding for these courses, and that those who can</li> </ul>

		<p>afford learning should pay. Colleges are expected to generate income by employer engagement – training employees and charging higher rates for this type of training. One problem that will arise is the fact that, once everyone has a Unique Learner Number, the government will be able to track qualifications and will not fund a student who already has that level of qualification even if it is in a different subject. There was understanding of the implications and the challenges.</p> <p>b) MW discussed with the group some potential changes to the prospectus and asked for opinions. The group discussed the ideas but did not feel strongly about altering the ordering of the content. All felt the content was accessible. There had been several requests for the index to be reinstated. A comment was made about the cost of the navigation course.</p>	
8	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	a) No issues	
8.	<b>Health and Safety</b>	a) No issues	
9	<b>Any Other Business</b>	<p>a) One student raised issues from an SFL English class that MW agreed to address.</p> <p>b) Concern was expressed by a student about the inappropriate behaviour in the Coffee Shop by some students. There was acceptance of the need to integrate students but also a feeling that students need some supervision. JS agreed to discuss further.</p> <p>c) A student reminded MW re an issue re the stair lift and the Evac Chairs</p>	
10	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	<b>Thursday 26 June 2008 6.30-8.00 at Sutton Centre</b>	