

SUTTON COLLEGE OF LEARNING FOR ADULTS

Minutes of the Student Focus Group held on 2 March 2009

		ITEM	ACTION
1	Apologies	New members were welcomed	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June	Agreed as accurate	
3	Matters arising	None	
4	Learner Involvement Strategy and National Learner Satisfaction Survey	<p>Students were thanked for their contribution to the strategy, which will now be taken to the Governors' Standards Committee.</p> <p>The LSC is conducting a pilot national survey. SCOLA is not in the pilot, but we have added their questions on the back of our own marketing and customer services survey. It is a tick-box so the results will be quantitative rather than qualitative.</p>	
5	Complaints Analysis 07/08	Tabled for discussion. There were only 0.5% complaints and the highest percentage was to do with admin and fees and very few about quality of tuition.	
6	Programme 09/10	<p>Explained that we are trying to keep a balance between non-accredited courses and those that are Government priorities and therefore attract funding.</p> <p>Government funding priorities include classes for Adults with Learning Difficulties; ESOL; Skills for Life (Adult literacy and numeracy); and vocational NVQs such as Health and Social Care and IT (computing) which attracts funding under the Train to Gain scheme.</p> <p>We are endeavouring to keep fee rises to a minimum, but the funding for non-exam courses is gradually decreasing. While the government says it is funding to the same</p>	

		<p>level, in fact there have been no inflation increases for the past 5 years and future funding (after 09/10) is uncertain.</p> <p>Funding for exam (or accredited) classes is also getting harder to procure. The LSC will only fund qualifications they have approved, which does not include some of the more flexible arrangements such as the Open College.</p> <p>Curriculum Managers are seeking alternatives in order to keep a balance between exam and non-exam provision.</p>	
7	Future Developments	We are not planning to open any new centres for 09/10.	
8	Equality and Diversity	<p>E& D issue raised about college policy. A student reported that he had paid full fee in the first instalment, but then lost his job. He was not permitted to pay the benefit fee for the second instalment.</p> <p>However, the college does not apply the same ruling in the converse situation i.e a student will be charged full fee if they are working halfway through.</p> <p>Margaret agreed to refer to SMT for consistency of policy.</p>	
9	Health and Safety	<p>a)Walkway by Pottery is slippery when wet.</p> <p>b)Teenagers in LGS are intimidating at night – Civic security is aware</p>	
10	Any Other Business	<p>a)Summer Prospectus – the group liked the new mini format, and pleased that it was cheaper to produce. The format does not allow for an enrolment form to go in. Suggested that it could go in landscape if we feel it is necessary.</p> <p>b)Your Voice Cards – suggested that this is added to the induction check list in order to highlight them. Although they are displayed at centres, students don't see them.</p> <p>c)Saturday Workshops – there was a suggestion that facilities could be invoiced</p>	

	<p>out to schools.</p> <p>d)Pottery charges – clay is currently a set termly charge. Suggested that students pay by weight or charge on the finished product. Margaret to refer to Head of Department.</p> <p>e)ESOL Benefit – query about working tax credit. Confirmed that benefit fees apply for ESOL if student is resident last 3 years and household income is less than £15,500.</p> <p>f)Over-60 concession – confirmed that, sadly, this is unlikely to be reinstated. The over-60 percentage of the student profile has dropped by 1% to 20%.</p> <p>g)Weekly payments – we can accept some instalment arrangements, but weekly payments would be too difficult to administrate.</p> <p>h)Jewellery – concern raised about a tutor holding a slush fund for equipment that students are asked to contribute to. Margaret will follow up with Head of Department as this is not college policy.</p> <p>i)U3A – it is realised that we may lose some students to organisations like U3A, as they only charge a subscription, but pointed out that their tutors are voluntary and there is no monitoring of quality.</p> <p>j)North Cheam classes – thanks given for free classes at North Cheam under the NLDC project.</p> <p>k)Art class – complaint about lateness of a tutor and time wasted in setting up still life at start of session. Margaret to refer to the Head of Department.</p> <p>l)SCOLA Christmas Card – suggestion that we have a design competition and sell cards for charity.</p> <p>m)ASSET Languages – confirmed that the qualification should be completed in a year</p>	
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		n) Coffee Shop – concerns expressed about the removal of the coffee shop to the Library – time taken from lesson if queues are long, and risk assessments needed for students with learning difficulties.	
11	Date of Next Meeting	Monday 22 June 2009 at 6.30pm	