



Meeting of the Student Panel  
Date 18 April 2017  
Attendees Student Panel: 14 panel members attended

Notes City Lit staff: Karin Kalfus (KK), Libby Tooke Mitchell (LTM), Anh Ha (AH), Mark Malcomson (MM), Nick Outlaw (NO), Dame Moira Gibb (DMG), Joe Cullen (JC)  
Melanie Headley

## Summary of actions and decisions to be communicated

### *Meeting Notes*

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#### **1.0 Welcome and introduction / Principal's update (MM)**

1.1 MM thanked the panel members for attending, despite not having classes this week. College officially resumes next week, however there are a very small number of 'catch up' classes running from the previous term. This week is primarily focussed on enrolment.

Last term was very successful; Ofsted official notification has been published (a link to which was sent to the panel). Since the introduction of the new inspection framework, no community learning and skills adult college in the country has achieved an 'outstanding' grading. City Lit was awarded 'good with outstanding features'.

MM met with the Ofsted inspector a number of days later, who praised the City Lit ethos. They were pleased to see that there was a wide range of courses on offer; this is not the case in many other colleges where the offering has been significantly reduced due to funding constraints. The number of students in adult education has fallen, partly due to local authorities no longer regarding it as a priority.

1.2 Strategic goals - MM outlined the work being undertaken in support of City Lit's 3 strategic goals:

- Customer at the centre



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- Increase social impact
  - Strengthen stakeholder engagement
- 1.3 Main stream provisions such as fine art, languages and humanities performed well in terms 1 and 2. City Lit has the widest language offering in the country and the programme is continually developing / expanding.
- 1.4 Charitable offering – English & Maths and Learning Difficulties (formerly Progress) receive government funding as well as cross subsidies (which allows for smaller class sizes). The college is currently running English and maths courses for Syrian refugees, which commenced shortly before Easter with a total of 16 students. City Lit is reaching out to other London councils in order to:
- Raise awareness of our provision, specifically for vulnerable groups
  - Seek additional sources of funding in order to provide counselling support to refugees
- 1.5 City Lit Fellows – In February Jeremy Swain, Chief Executive of Thames Reach received a Lifetime Fellowship Award during his sell out guest lecture. City Lit have delivered courses to a number of Thames Reach service users in Greenwich, Camden and Lambeth.
- 2017 Fellows:
- Sir Anthony Gormley (OBE) - renowned British sculptor and former City Lit art student
  - Ruby Wax (OBE) – known for her extensive comedy and television interview career and speaker at the 2016 Mental Wealth Festival
  - Nick Boles MP – served as Minister for Skills in the Departments for Education and Business, Innovation and Skills from 2014 until July 2016. He was a great advocate of City Lit funding for the last 3 years.
- There are currently a total of 15 Fellows who can fund raise and advocate for the college. Vince Cable will be opening the 2017 Mental Wealth Festival and it is hoped that Ruby Wax will once again speak at the festival.
- 1.6 The government funding statement has been received and the college will receive £7.2 million. This sum has remained static for the past 3 years, however this should be viewed positively as for many, funding has declined. From 2019, government funding will be devolved to London and the college will be forging links with the Mayor's office.
- 1.7 MM opened the floor to questions; none received.



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1.8 MM gave brief details of the course he will be teaching on 8 June (entitled US Supreme Court) and advised the panel that as well as line management/departmental responsibilities, a number the team also teach.

1.9 MM introduced the following guests:

- Dame Moira Gibb - Chair of Governors
- Joe Cullen – Student Governor, elected in October 2016
- Nick Outlaw – Deputy Principal who has held positions with Save the Children and Pearson and has an academic and charitable background.
- Anh Ha – Head of Customer Engagement

Wendy McKaig , a new Assistant Principal (Quality), will be attending future meetings as Kate Wickham has retired recently.

## **2.0 Update on projects since last meeting (LTM / KK)**

2.1 Digital screens (LTM)

- Re-design the layout to include floor plans and scrolling updates (weather and travel)
- New screen layout will be in place in time for summer school
- Discussing fundraising and possibility of texting in donations e.g. during events.
- Investigating whether companies that already offer students discounts would be interested in purchasing advertising space
- Deaf day - Screens will be taken over for the whole day to publicise event events taking place on the day. The screens will be used to stream events from the theatre throughout the building.

2.2 Course evaluation forms (LTM)

- In the early stages of a long term project to digitise the course evaluation forms. The aim is to send digital feedback forms to students 2 weeks before the course is due to finish, with an option to complete the form up to 2 weeks after the course has ended.
- There are plans to combine course evaluation, additional outcomes and online reviews into one, short questionnaire. The intention is to include customisable questions based on the course taken to ensure that they are all relevant.
- Looking into options to allow students to fill in initial information before course starts so that tutors can have access to the information before the first class



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- Individual record of learning (IRL) - Increased text size and encourage departments to add lines between the learning outcomes. Where there are too many (should be fewer than 8 or so), departments have been asked to shorten them. Larger scale changes to the IRL will be placed on hold until Wendy McKaig has settled into her new role as Assistant Principal - Quality.

### 2.3 Destination survey (KK)

- Survey will go out in the next couple of weeks
- Last years statistics will be featured at the beginning of the survey, to further explain the purpose of the survey.
- Planning for the inclusion of open question in both sections – education and employment, but stressing that other outcomes are also important.

### 2.4 New student story films (LTM)

- The panel watched 2 recently edited student stories. All of the films are available to watch on You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg4DOhf9idc> , the City Lit Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CityLit/> and website <http://www.citylit.ac.uk/student-stories-2>
- More filming is scheduled for June and the dates will be publicised. The panel were encouraged to participate and /or make their class mates aware should they too wish to share their inspiring stories.

## 3.0 Online Help Centre introduction (LTM / AH)

3.1 ZenDesk is a piece of software that helps companies communicate with their customers. It helps with the tracking of communication with students more efficiently than Outlook. Front line teams have been using it since August 2016. For students nothing has really changed as email addresses (for feedback) are still published; however there will be a move towards more online forms later on this year. There may be teething issues at first, but an online forms mean that students can immediately see the information required via drop down options and specific fields. Enquiries can be answered quickly and first time around.

All non-course related help and information content is being moved from the website to a new ZenDesk Help Centre, with a launch date of Thursday 20 April.

### 3.2 Impact on students

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With the new Help Centre students will be able to:

- find help content that is relevant faster as the search function is based not only on key words but also on the number of click through and student ratings; it should keep getting better with time
- feedback on the quality of the information given
- find the information they need without needing to contact a member of staff (if they don't want to)
- search help articles using the web widget so they can access help information or even contact a member of the Customer Engagement Team with an enquiry without leaving a course or information page
- get better quality information from staff when they make contact as staff will also see links to suggested help centre articles, this means that even if staff are new they will be equipped to answer enquiries on the spot.

The Help Centre will allow access to information such as what students are searching for and the links they are clicking on the most. Each article can be rated as either helpful or not, which will generate a list of those in need of improvement.

### 4.0 Online Help Centre - hands on exercises

The panel were asked to participate in a number of exercises

4.1 Exercise 1: Arrange Help Centre articles into categories.

4.2 Exercise 2: Rate how easily information can be found and how useful it is, using the Help Centre and City Lit website

### 4.3 Online Help Centre – feedback and discussion

Group feedback:

- Group 1 – Generally found what they were looking for on the second website than the first. Had trouble finding courses for a specific time. On first website got random results, on second, could not find it at all. On second website, cannot find events and cannot search for them

AH – There is a project to improve the search functionality

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- Group 2 found the help centre easier to use than the website. Using key words was not easy on the website until you clicked the 'help and information' tab
- Group 3 – the website is better for course specific info whilst the Help Centre is better for non-course / generic information
- Group 4 struggled with the exercise. It was difficult to find information on the European College and did not find the Help Centre any more useful than the website. A keyword search on the website tended to lead to course information
- Group 5 – The website search tended to lead to course information; the results were irrelevant. It was easier to find information on the Help Centre however it required further drilling down.

### 5.0 AOB

#### 5.1 Panel questions / comments

Q: Are you going to differentiate between course and general help?

A: Yes – The help links will be re-routed. There will be a widget that will pop up once you have been on a page for a while. This will allow users to type in a question without leaving the course page.

Comment: The Help Centre page is quite wordy – it may be difficult for those who are dyslexic etc.

Comment: I have had experience of a course being cancelled only to receive emails from classmates (from the previous term) who advised that they would have enrolled on the next terms course

AH: We try to avoid cancelling courses, however there is a notice period that we have to give to tutors.

Q: What is the cut off period for enrolling for a course?

A: AH – generally 1 week before. If you give me the course details, I will look into it.

Comment: Perhaps there could be a closing date on the website

AH: We try to encourage students to enrol as soon as possible. We are getting better at reminding students regarding progression

LTM: Have to strike a balance with the level of information regarding cancellations as it may discourage students from enrolling



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Q: Could you publish the minimum and maximum number of people on a course?

A: Minimum numbers vary from course to course – sometimes courses are run at a loss; it isn't an easy formula.

KK – Perhaps we can target students who attended term 1 of a course to encourage enrolment for term 2

AH – We are doing that for a lot of progression courses

Q: We used to have the brochure for the whole year which would allow you to plan for the whole year. Why has this changed?

A: AH – The seasonal course guide allows us to be rather more agile. All courses are published on line.

Comment: If people can see all of the courses for the year, they may book all in one go

AH: We can help with planning of courses – we found that the guides allow us to provide fresh information students. By the time we reached term 3, 2/3 of the guide was out of date

Comment: Perhaps you could include a note in the course guide to flag that a course runs for 3 terms, please see the website for further information.

Comment: There are still mice in the café

LTM – I will report it. Unfortunately because it is central London, this will happen; we will report this to Facilities

Joe Cullen– If there are any ways that you can think of me being a more effective Student Governor, please let me know

Date of next meeting    Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 18.00-20.00.