

Summary of discussions

Meeting of the **Student Panel** via Zoom

Date Tuesday 23 February 2020 17.30 – 19.00

Attendees City Lit: Karin Kalfus (KK), Wendy McKaig (WM), Dragana Ramsden (DR)

Student Panel Members: 12 panel members in attendance.

Notes Melanie Headley (MH)

1.0 Welcome - KK Introductions, (Zoom meeting) ground rules and group contract

2.0 Exec update – WM It has been a tumultuous 12 months for the college.

Financial model/update
Financial model: City Lit receives funding from the Department for Education, but the just over half of income is from student fees. The pandemic had a significant impact on our financial security as a large number of courses were cancelled. The focus has been on ensuring that City Lit survives the pandemic and has moved beyond the initial fear for the colleges' continued existence.

Lessons learned
One of the things learned was that City Lit can also deliver a high quality curriculum online. Pre pandemic 2 courses were delivered via a blended online/in person format. In a relatively short period of 3-4 weeks, over 1,300 courses were converted to online delivery. This was a huge testament to both staff across the institution and students who still wished to continue with their studies. This has ensured that the college has been able to operate within a virtual environment for nearly a year.
City Lit has learned valuable lessons which will positively impact college strategy and future course development. There is a strong element of online provision which could be continued post pandemic.

Within the next 6 months, City Lit will be undertaking research into whether there is an appetite for online learning post pandemic. Students from the London Business School will be

FE Commissioner's Office and Ofsted visit

undertaking the research and speaking to students regarding their online learning experience to gain insights into how the programme can be developed.

The FE Commissioner's Office visited just before Christmas to check how City Lit was coping during the pandemic. OFSTED also visited to see how the college was managing in a remote environment and how the quality of courses was being maintained; both visits went well. The student panels input has proved invaluable as they can be called upon to give honest feedback regarding their experiences.

Covid secure spaces

The college is currently reflecting on the guidance issued by the government regarding the reopening of education from 8 March. Priority will be given to provision that must be delivered face to face. Students will be updated regarding reopening plans.

A significant amount of work has been done in the building to make it Covid secure. Feedback from students (when the building was open) has been positive regarding the safety measures/procedures

Q & A

Q: Is the college planning courses for in person delivery in September?

A: WM It is a challenge to decide which curriculum areas will be returning to the college. There are curriculum areas which work best when delivered in person: visual arts, music, performing arts, massage, counselling etc.

Students have fed back that even with teaching returning to normal, they would like to continue studying online, particularly where personal circumstances have changed e.g. working from home. Aside from the practical courses which will need to be based on site, decisions regarding remaining courses will need to be made ad hoc. Curriculum areas will be monitoring demand and will looking to create appropriate opportunities for learning.

Q: Are there any plans to reopen for art courses after Easter or is it likely to be summer?

A: WM There were discussions taking place with plans to update students in the coming weeks. There are no barriers that can be seen to some courses to returning by Easter. There are a number of Covid protocols in place to safeguard students and the feedback has been positive

Q: Miss the library and the areas for practicing and borrowing books; when will it reopen?

A: WM It is unlikely that the Student Centre will reopen before September. The risk of transmission would prove difficult to manage in this area due to the high level of student traffic. Once it is safe to do so, the Centre will reopen. Suggestion made to contact tutor regarding resources for practicing.

3.0 Online learning agreement and conduct; cameras on or off - DR

To help students make the most of their learning experience, City Lit worked with tutors and students to put together (n)etiquette for online learning. The result was an animation which is shown to students before their online course begins. City Lit is seeking the panels input regarding the development of the online learning agreement.

Tutors and students have fed back that there should be rules around students having cameras on in classes. In a classroom situation, camera off can have a negative impact on the group dynamics and it makes it difficult for tutors to assess how students are progressing.

City Lit would like to add an expectation that cameras will be kept on (as is common in other institutions). The panel was asked to consider the following:

- When it is acceptable to have the camera off
- How best to communicate the new guidelines

Panel feedback:

- When not participating in an exercise e.g. drama scenes/scenes are being recorded
- Music appreciation – when having the camera on would be distracting to others
- During breaks
- To save bandwidth
- Tutors to advise when it is appropriate
- Inappropriate background/privacy concerns. Suggestion: advise students how to apply a virtual Zoom background.
- Uncomfortable being on camera (student can see themselves)
- Zoom fatigue

- Advise students of camera etiquette before the class begins
- Online – when booking
- Be mindful of language “we prefer” rather than “you must” have your camera on
- On course confirmation receipt
- Email reminder
- Google Classroom
- A slide/screen saver/hold screen that students can see whilst waiting for the course to start

Panel member question: What is the context for this? Why has this issue come up?

A: WM - From a tutors perspective, it is valuable to be able to see students interactions and assess a student's acquisition of skill. It depends on the subject being taught. In a lecture based/passive course, it may be appropriate to have a camera off.

Understanding your progress in an online class; how do you know you are making progress?

The panel were asked to provide feedback on the following:

- What are tutors currently doing to help you understand how you are getting on?
- Do you get individual feedback – how?

Panel feedback:

- Marked homework
- Exams (mock)
- Peer review
- In class feedback
- Suggestion: classes extended by 15 minutes to allow for chatting with tutor; private feedback is difficult to get online
- Drama course – playback of a scene with tutor feedback

- Depends on the course/how many students are in the class
- In class response to work/input
- Notes in class
- Whether a student receives feedback can be inconsistent

6.0 Questions KK

If panel members have further questions comment, contact Karin Kalfus