

**STUDENT  
CONFERENCE**

**The Student  
Experience at  
Lowestoft College**

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007**

## **Report on Student Conference at Lowestoft College Tuesday 23 January 2007**

### **Introduction**

This Conference derived from the Quality Improvement Project: Sharing Good Practice, initiated by seven institutions in the eastern region. Lowestoft College was tasked with a project entitled 'Every Child Matters – or do they?' with the objective of establishing how effective student support is in achieving all five themes of ECM.

However, in view of the opportunities such a gathering presented, it was decided to widen the agenda to include other important issues. These included the viewpoint of our Higher Education students, general standards of behaviour, the College environment and how the College was perceived – both internally and externally. The title was therefore changed to 'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College'.

### **The Event**

The Conference, originally planned for December, was finally held on 23 January when high standard accommodation was available in the Astral Centre at Lowestoft College. Six external facilitators were invited from partnerships such as Suffolk IAG, SIFRE, Connexions Suffolk and Social Services and these were joined by staff in Student Services to head up the six working groups. A total of 43 students participated from all areas of the College.

Despite unexpectedly harsh weather conditions, everyone managed to get to the event, which was opened by Gwen Parsons, the Principal. The workshops addressed the seven themes set out in the Programme attached, each group tackling two themes. A busy morning was rounded off with a buffet lunch for all participants. Both facilitators and students alike felt that the Conference had been a great success and that it should become an annual event on the College calendar.

## **Outcome**

Deliberations from all workshops have been collated and will be presented to senior management for consideration and action. Feedback will be given to students, via the Student Forum and at a presentation ceremony when Certificates of Attendance will be presented by the Principal.

Jennifer Langeskov  
Head of Student Services  
3 February 2007

**STUDENT CONFERENCE**  
**Tuesday 23 January 2007**

**'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College**

**P R O G R A M M E**

0915	Arrival and refreshments
0930	Welcome and Introduction
0945 - 1030	Workshops – session 1*
1030	Refreshment Break
1045 – 1130	Workshops – session 2*
1130	Feedback
1230	Lunch

**\* The workshops will cover:**

- **Being Healthy and Staying Safe**
- **Enjoying and Achieving**
- **Making a positive contribution**
- **Achieving economic well-being**
- **The Higher Education experience**
- **Standards of behaviour and the College environment**
- **Lowestoft College – how are we rated?**

## Student Conference – Table Groups

<p><b><u>Table One</u></b></p> <p>Carole Williams (Facilitator) Bridget Bannister (Staff)</p> <p>Louisa James Cas Keeble Lauren King Kerryann Ocuneff Janet Piehl Corin Sutherland-Costen Danya Woolbright</p>	<p><b><u>Table Two</u></b></p> <p>Cynthia Capey (Facilitator) Sharon Brewer (Staff)</p> <p>Michaela Adams Alan Anderson Luke Catchpole Rebecca Cullingford Karl Langley Craig Louch Leah Stroud</p>	<p><b><u>Table Three</u></b></p> <p>Cathy Craig (Facilitator) Karen Lawless (Staff)</p> <p>Fay Calvert Daniel Coutts Jason Delgado Bekah Henley-Fowler Nathan Layton Jasmine McGinn Daniel Payne Gary Randlesome Jedda Smith</p>
<p><b><u>Table Four</u></b></p> <p>Jayne Holder (Facilitator) Jude Parr (Staff)</p> <p>Stacey Fisher Lewis Francis Lindsay Guy Scott Hay Danielle Jackson Rachael Shanks Debbie Starr Hannah Welsh Danny Wright</p>	<p><b><u>Table Five</u></b></p> <p>Jill Poulter (Facilitator) Louise Challis (Staff)</p> <p>Sarah Busby Michaela Elsemere Georgia Geering Scott Hay Sharon Northwood Kimberley Reeder Leanne Snell</p>	<p><b><u>Table Six</u></b></p> <p>Dot Granville (Facilitator) Ann Hayward (Staff)</p> <p>Daphne Adams Jo Boddy Daniel Coutts Stacey Fisher Nathan Layton Michael Marsh Hayley Roper Debbie Starr Rebecca Tyler Nicola Utting</p>

## Workshop Report 1

Workshop Title	<b>Being Healthy and Staying Safe</b>
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### Strengths

- College is generally a safe place
- Little or no drug use/abuse
- Students felt confident that bullying would be addressed and felt safe

### Recommended Actions

- Address anti social behaviour and apply rules that are already in place!
- Do more to encourage being healthy i.e. gym, healthy food etc
- Improve food options particularly healthy menu
- Improve health and safety information/provision eg sexual health (contraception/personal alarms to be provided)
- Strict enforcement of smoking areas and compliance with rules by all
- Improved lighting in College car parks

### Emerging Issues for Consideration

- Lack of information in general (all areas)

## Workshop Report 2

Workshop Title	<b>Enjoying and Achieving</b>
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Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tutorials are seen as a good idea</li><li>• Good feedback on student progress</li></ul>

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transport difficulties to be addressed eg from outlying areas</li><li>• Improved security needed to deter intruders; more CCTV and lockers</li><li>• Address litter, general behaviour, bad language and bullying</li><li>• Awareness raising of Complaints Procedure</li><li>• Challenge time-wasters and those who do not want to be in College</li><li>• More encouragement from tutors for good work etc</li><li>• Timely and accurate information on courses and costs</li><li>• Improved 'Students Mess' – layout and prices</li><li>• Students need to be more responsible and aware of College standards</li><li>• Smoking areas to be improved</li><li>• Improved Enrichment provision – Suggestions included dance, aerobics, yoga, paint balling, canoeing, survival tank and scuba diving, massage, nail treatment, keyboard/guitar lessons, cookery Lessons</li></ul>

Emerging Issues for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educational trips as part of their course to help widen experiences</li><li>• Lunchtime activities eg. pool table</li><li>• Better mix of teaching styles within the course</li><li>• Little enthusiasm for Parents' Evenings or Student Surveys</li></ul>

### Workshop Report 3

Workshop Title	<b>Making a Positive Contribution</b>
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Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Forum - it is good that students get their say</li><li>• College Induction Week well viewed</li><li>• The Student Conference is a good idea</li><li>• Generally the college and courses exceed students' expectations</li><li>• Attendance Officers and GIO class information sessions are effective</li></ul>

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better use of notice boards and student email to notify of events</li><li>• Leaflets in canteen and library</li><li>• More student involvement in charity events such as Children In Need, Red Nose Day, Breast Cancer Day</li><li>• Better notification of Student Forum meetings and better feedback</li><li>• Student issues not always resolved/made better</li><li>• Student Chat newsletter to be issued more frequently</li><li>• Student Services to communicate to students more</li><li>• More activities such as work experience and outings to develop skills</li><li>• More use of guest speakers</li><li>• Prince's Trust Course good for College profile and should be advertised more</li><li>• Introduce a Student Union particularly in view of UCS</li><li>• Use students to help raise the profile of College</li></ul>

Emerging Issues for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recycling bins for paper at the very least, but also for paper/polystyrene cups, tins and bottles. Use a blue bin system which students are familiar with</li><li>• Students to go out into local area to promote courses, services and Higher Education opportunities</li></ul>

## Workshop Report 4

Workshop Title	<b>Standards of Behaviour and the College Environment</b>
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### Strengths

- Generally poor behaviour emanates from a minority of students, with most complying with the Student Charter
- The new building and future projects should engender pride in the College and have a positive influence on behaviour

### Recommended Actions

- Dress standards or uniforms for different courses?
- Student badges to include course title
- Cultural Diversity sessions to be organised for every group to include disability, sexual orientation etc to heighten awareness for all students. Need to understand different individuals and cultures and also feel confident to challenge their behaviour when it is inappropriate
- Harassment, verbal abuse and bad language to be tackled
- Class control in general needs to be improved
- Address those staff who are verbally abusive and show lack of respect and negativity towards students
- Stealing and vandalism to be dealt with more robustly
- Improve facilities of Students' Mess, from layout to pricing
- Improve condition of classrooms and therapy studios that are shoddy. Stained and threadbare sheets and towels are embarrassing when dealing with clients

### Emerging Issues for Consideration

- Lowestoft College needs better image, (would encourage better behaviour and pride)
- Clearer guidance needed on who to approach with behaviour issues

## Workshop Report 5

Workshop Title	<b>Achieving Economic Wellbeing</b>
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Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fantastic support from tutors</li><li>• Tutorials were very helpful in planning future</li></ul>

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information needed on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Support groups eg Connexions, Counsellor</li><li>– Other courses suitable for progression</li><li>– Enrichment – and its value to individual development</li><li>– Improved information eg career opportunities/getting advice for the future</li><li>– Sessions on CVs, interviews and employability skills</li><li>– Sessions on financial awareness and guidance</li><li>– More involvement in Young Enterprise Scheme, Prince's Trust etc</li></ul></li><li>• Travel:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– If transport is late – EMA affected – tutors should be more understanding</li><li>– Car parks – more spaces needed</li><li>– Safety – no car parks mean walking home in the dark</li><li>– Bus fare not much cheaper when using Explore Card as return fares are no longer offered</li></ul></li></ul>

Emerging Issues for Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider introduction of a bus service to College with pick up points around the town</li></ul>

## Workshop Report 6

Workshop Title	<b>The Higher Education Experience</b>
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<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excellent tutorial support</li><li>• Course is a very personal experience – SMALL is supportive</li><li>• Links with working artists (tutors are working artists)</li><li>• All staff are trained to a high level. It is inspiring to have such a wealth of experience.'</li></ul>

<b>Recommended Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better organisation of financial support – earlier</li><li>• More realistic, accurate and timely information re child/financial support/bursaries</li><li>• HE common room – and building</li><li>• Better marketing of courses – if people knew about the excellent work it would be a powerful advertisement</li><li>• Introduce a Liaison Day with careers advisers/tutors</li><li>• Organise visits to careers lessons in schools, taking positive students along</li><li>• Go into Middle Schools to show them what they can do and aspire to</li></ul>

<b>Emerging Issues for Consideration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some students only found out about their course by chance</li></ul>

### **Student comments:**

'Regarding the problem with Bursaries – we have enough stress without having to worry about when we are getting one.'

'The debt that I will have when I finish the course is always at the back of my mind.'

'I am getting more confidence and my horizons are opening up.'

'It feels like a little gem up on the fifth floor.'

'Learning skills and learning how to apply them – that is what attracted me to the course.'

'It's more personal here. At ..... you could fade into a group of 30 or 40.'

## Workshop Report 7

Workshop Title	<b>How is the College rated?</b>
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### Strengths

- Not just for young students
- Breadth of courses on offer

### Recommended Actions

- Negative image of Lowestoft (rather than College) needs to be changed
- Challenge the concept that Lowestoft College is seen as isolated, insular, safe option
- Address misconceptions that there is no academic content, it is only for young students and only offers mainstream courses
- Publicise Inclusive Learning

### Emerging Issues for Consideration

- Better promotion of courses, age range, culture and backgrounds

### Students' Comments:

'Bullying at school – they didn't care. Here they are strict about it.'

'I think it's good that there are students here who have disabilities.'

'Are staff approachable? Definitely.'

'Student Services helped me out. I didn't feel confident about coming to college as a mature student.'

'The college needs a different slant – it needs to be promoted more – and be positive.'

'Make it trendy to come to college.'

'Students should go into schools with the GIOs.'



**STUDENT CONFERENCE**  
**Tuesday 23 January 2007**  
**Conference Room 1, Astral Centre, Lowestoft College**

**'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College'**

**DELEGATE LIST**

**FACILITATORS**

Cynthia Capey	Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource (SIFRE)
Cathy Craig	Social Services
Dot Granville (IAG)	Suffolk Information, Advice & Guidance
Jayne Holder	Connexions Suffolk
Jill Poulter	Connexions Suffolk
Carole Williams	Independent Careers Counsellor

**COLLEGE**

Gwen Parsons	Principal
Ros Pugh	Vice-Principal, Quality & Students
Jennifer Langeskov	Head of Student Services
Debbie Kerry	Disability Co-ordinator
Gillian Davies	Student Adviser
Sharon Brewer	Attendance Officer
Ann Hayward	Attendance Officer
Bridget Bannister	Guidance & Information Officer
Karen Lawless	Guidance & Information Officer
Jude Parr	Guidance & Information Officer
Louise Challis	Celcat / Administrator

**STUDENTS**

Daphne Adams	Michaela Adams	Alan Anderson
Jo Boddy	Sarah Busby	Fay Calvert
Luke Catchpole	Daniel Coutts	Rebecca Cullingford
Jason Delgado	Michaela Elsemere	Stacey Fisher

Lewis Francis  
Scott Hay  
Louisa James  
Karl Langley  
Michael Marsh  
Kerryann Ocuneff  
Gary Randlesome  
Rachael Shanks  
Debbie Starr  
Rebecca Tyler  
Dayna Woolbright

Georgia Geering  
Bekah Henly-Fowler  
Cas Keeble  
Nathan Layton  
Jasmine McGinn  
Daniel Payne  
Kimberley Reeder  
Jedda Smith  
Leah Stroud  
Nicola Utting  
Danny Wright

Lindsay Guy  
Danielle Jackson  
Lauren King  
Craig Louch  
Sharon Northwood  
Janet Piehl  
Hayley Roper  
Leanne Snell  
Corin Sutherland-Costen  
Hannah Welsh



**STUDENT CONFERENCE  
Tuesday 23 January 2007**

**'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College**

**NOTES FOR FACILITATORS**

**Why have a Student Conference?**

Lowestoft College has always been anxious to elicit student views on all aspects of their college experience. This has largely been done via QDP Student Surveys, the Student Forum and visits to tutor groups by Student Services.

In view of the increasing emphasis on the importance of responding to student needs during these important years in their development, together with the need to address the government agenda of 'Every Child Matters', it was felt that more could be done to improve our provision. Hence, the Student Conference.

Our objectives at today's Conference are therefore:

- To establish how effective we are in meeting the requirements of 'Every Child Matters'
- To identify areas for improvement with a view to enhancing the College experience for **all** students in preparation for University Campus Suffolk

**Your role**

As a Facilitator you will be regarded as a 'critical friend', experienced at drawing out thoughts and ideas and able to evaluate and summarise group deliberations. A member of Student Services will be there to assist, and will take notes as required. Ideally feedback at the final session should be delivered by the students, but if reluctant then the Facilitator/member of staff can take on this responsibility

In addition to general feedback, groups will be asked to highlight one issue which they feel particularly strongly about

### **Process**

Each workshop will comprise a Facilitator, a member of Student Services and between 6 – 8 students, depending on attendance. The workshops are as follows:

- **Being Healthy and Staying Safe**
- **Enjoying and Achieving**
- **Making a positive contribution**
- **Achieving economic well-being**
- **The Higher Education experience**
- **Standards of behaviour and the College environment**
- **Lowestoft College – how are we rated?**

Bullet points of findings should be made on the paper provided for feedback at 1130.

### **Outcome**

Points raised at the Conference will be taken forward to senior management for further consideration and action where possible. This will be reported back to the student body via the Student Forum and other communication methods.

Students will receive an Attendance Certificate, presented by the Principal, at a lunchtime reception in March.



**STUDENT CONFERENCE  
Tuesday 23 January 2007**

**'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College**

**FURTHER NOTES FOR FACILITATORS**

**An Agenda for Respect**

In recent years, behaviour has deteriorated markedly. Evidence of this includes ever-increasing cases of bullying, some serious and involving the police, acts of aggression, spitting, swearing, poor behaviour in class, threatening behaviour towards staff, smoking in non-designated areas, littering and the carrying of weapons (very rare).

Time permitting, we would like students to think about the standards of behaviour they would like to see in our College, and ways in which students can help bring about the necessary change. It might be useful to draw delegates' attention to our Core Values, set out below.

**OUR CORE VALUES**

- Learners come first
- Everyone is welcome
  - Our priority is teaching and learning
- We expect the best of ourselves and others
  - We will respect everyone as an individual
- We believe we can achieve more by working together

In your groups, ask students what **they** see as the main issues. Then, suggest ways in which we can address their concerns and how both staff and students can work together to improve the College environment

## **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**

In future Ofsted will have to consider, during inspection, the Children Act 2004 and the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well Being

In judging leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of providers of learning, inspections will consider the contribution made to all five of these outcomes.

### **How Do We Evidence This?**

#### **Being Healthy**

This includes enjoying a healthy lifestyle; having self-esteem; choosing not to take drugs; being physically, mentally, emotionally and sexual healthy; and being well-nourished and active.

- Sexual Health Information – pilot scheme with Care
- National No Smoking Day
- Enrichment Programme – includes sport
- Substance Use and Misuse (drugs, alcohol, tobacco)
- Healthy Eating Promotion
- Anti Bullying
- Addressed within curriculum
- Food in Nursery
- Risk Assessment of the working environment (ROSPA Award)
- Estates Maintenance.

## Staying Safe

This includes learning how to keep safe from accidental injury, bullying, harassment, discrimination, crime, anti-social behaviour, neglect, sexual exploitation, exposure to violence and other dangers.

- Valentine Campaign for Road Safety
- Health & Safety Awareness at Induction
- Anti Bullying
- Equal Opportunities Lesson Plan
- Behavioural standards addressed
- Student Charter
- Child Protection Policy, training, initiatives, nominated persons
- Women's Safety Campaigns- Personal Alarms
- Student Badges
- CRB Checks and List 99 Checks
- ROSPA Safety Award
- Internet and E-mail Policy (misuse of internet)

## Enjoying and Achieving

This includes attending and enjoying college and making good progress in learning, leisure activities and personal development.

- Attendance Policy and Monitoring
- Student Progress Reviews
- Student Achievement and Other Awards
- Enrichment Programme
- Waveney Richer for Diversity
- Inter-department Cricket Tournament
- Aim Higher Initiatives
- Identifying Students "at risk" of non achieving and action planning
- QDP Student Surveys
- Student Focus Groups
- Student Personal Profiles
- Parents Evening
- Library Events
- Tutorials and Mentoring
- Trips and Visits

### Making a Positive Contribution

This includes understanding rights and responsibilities, participating in the life of the community, developing self-confidence and enterprising behaviour, and choosing not to engage in anti-social behaviour.

- Register to Vote Initiative
- Participation in Church Readings
- Charitable Efforts and Fundraising (see grid)
- Student Forum
- Induction – Rights and Responsibilities
- Students representatives on College Sub Groups
- Students working in the community
- Princes Trust.

### Achieving Economic Well-being

This includes engaging in further education and training that leads to the acquisition of the skills and knowledge needed for employment, living in decent homes and communities and having access to transport. Helping learners to develop their self-confidence, team working skills and enterprise qualities.

- IAG Service in Student Services
- Preparing for Work via tutorials and work placements
- WBL provision
- Use of Real Work Environments within College
- Basic and Key Skills
- Young Enterprise Scheme
- Princes Trust
- Student Support Fund
- Employability skills as part of curriculum
- Financial awareness as part of curriculum.

## Letter of confirmation to external Facilitators

15 January 2007

Dear

**Student Conference: 'The Student Experience at Lowestoft College'**  
**Tuesday 23 January 2007: The Astral Centre, 0900 – 1315**

Thank you for agreeing to attend our first Student Conference as a facilitator. We very much look forward to welcoming you.

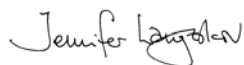
The Conference will be based on the Government's initiative, 'Every Child Matters', while also addressing other important issues. Please see the enclosed outline programme, together with further information on 'Every Child Matters'. The subject areas will be discussed by a number of groups, made up of students, an external facilitator and a member of the College staff.

A parking space will be reserved for you in our main car park. On arrival please report to the Astral Centre (opposite the entrance to our main building), where the event will be held.

If you have any dietary requests please contact us in advance.

We hope that this Conference will assist us in moving forward with offering students, both current and future, the College of first choice and we much appreciate your participation.

Yours sincerely



Jennifer Langeskov  
Head of Student Services

## Letter of thanks to Facilitators

24 January 2007

Dear

### **Student Conference: Tuesday 23 January 2007**

Once again many thanks for participating in Lowestoft College's first Student Conference. We deemed it a great success and we hope that you enjoyed playing your part. Your input was certainly appreciated by staff and students alike.

We gained much useful feedback which will be carefully scrutinised and put in the form of a report for senior management and ultimately deliberation with the whole of the management team. We will keep students advised of the outcome and hope that we will be able to introduce improvements as a result of their suggestions. There was a lot of positive thought but also some useful comments about our shortcomings, which we are anxious to put right. We have already fed back verbally some of the comments to those concerned!

We should have mentioned that we are happy to pay your travel expenses, so please do let me know what you would like to claim. We are only sorry that your sole reward was a sandwich and a lot of praise from the organisers rather than a fat cheque!

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Langeskov  
Head of Student Services

Gillian Davies  
Student Adviser

## Letter of thanks to students

31 January 2007

Dear

### **Student Conference: Tuesday 23 January 2007**

We would like to thank you most sincerely for participating in Lowestoft College's first Student Conference.

For our part, we felt that the Conference was a great success and we were impressed by your willingness to contribute in an open and positive manner. You gave an excellent account of yourselves to our guest speakers, who commented on how much they had enjoyed the experience with you.

Please rest assured that the comments you made are being carefully collated and will be taken forward to our management team for action. We will do our best, where possible, to meet your most important requirements and will in due course feedback to you what action we propose to take.

As promised, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance presented to you by the Principal at a reception in College. We will let you have details of this in the near future.

Once again, many thanks and continued success with your studies at Lowestoft College.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Langeskov  
Head of Student Services

Gillian Davies  
Student Adviser

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Making themselves heard**

Students' views and opinions were on the agenda at a conference at Lowestoft College designed to find out first hand what they wanted from their experience at college.

Over 40 students from various courses offered at the college took part in the event to share their thoughts about a range of issues including being healthy and staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being, the higher education experience, standards of behaviour and communication. They were also asked how the college was rated, both by students and from outside.

The conference took the form of a number of workshops and the students were divided into groups for the discussions. Each group was provided with an external facilitator who encouraged the students to share their views and helped to provide a summary of the discussions.

Head of Student Services Jennifer Langeskov said: "This was our first Student Conference and judging by the response from our students, it will not be the last. Feedback from students is of vital importance, whether they be school leavers or more mature students on our Higher Education or vocational programmes. Their views will hopefully enable us to introduce change, make improvements and ensure that Lowestoft College is their college of first choice.'

The students were both lively and vocal, and will look forward to progress reports at their regular Student Forum meetings.

**-ENDS-**