

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2015

Present: the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), (Professor N. Ward) (in the Chair) the Director of University Services (LTS) (Dr A. Blanchflower), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), the Undergraduate Education Officer of the Union of UEA Students, (Mr C. Rand), the Postgraduate Education Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr L. Mccafferty), the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms H. Staynor), the Campaigns and Democracy Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr C. Jarvis), the Activities and Opportunities Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr Y. Yu), the Academic Director for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (Dr N. Watmough), the representative from the Faculty of Science (Dr P. Mayhew), the representative from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Dr C. Matthews), the Independent Member of Council (Ms V. Keller-Dorsey), the Head of Student Services, INTO (Mr S. Duckworth)

In attendance: the UUEAS Head of Student Engagement (Mr J. Clare), the Director: Student Advocacy (Ms J. Spiro) the University's Market Research Manager (Ms B. Price), the Assessments and Quality Manager (Mrs L. Ward) (for Minute 32), the Senior Resident Tutor (Dr D. Thurkettle) for Minute 33

Secretary: the Learning and Teaching Manager (LTS) (Ms M. Pavey)

Apologies: the Director of Estates (Mr R. Bond), the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant)

25. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2015 subject to an amendment in Minute 20.2 where 'Academic Engagement Team, should read Education and Engagement Team. The resolution arising from that Minute should also be deleted.

26. MATTERS ARISING

26.1 *Minute 15.1: UEA Student Activity Events and Groups*

RESOLVED

the Undergraduate Education Officer agreed to raise the need to progress an equality impact assessment for proposals relating to UEA student activity events and groups where these operated under the auspices of the University or UUEAS with the Chief Executive of the UUEAS.

26.2 *Minute 18, Resolution i) Generalised Examination Feedback*

The Academic Director of Taught Programmes (ADTP) clarified that examination feedback sessions should be provided by Module Organisers. The date and time of face to face feedback sessions should be posted on the module's Blackboard site or timetabled.

RESOLVED

the ADTP will ask Teaching Directors, via Associate Deans, to ensure that Module Organisers publicise methods by which examination feedback will be provided.

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27. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Additional meeting of the Student Experience Committee in 2015/16
There will be four meetings of the Committee during 2015/16.

28. 2015 STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY OUTCOMES

This minute is confidential and appears on a separate page.

29. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT 2014

Considered

an update on actions arising from recommendations made in the 2014 UUEAS Student Experience Report (SEC14D12 refers)

29.1 Arising from Recommendation 3 of the UEA response document to the Students' Union on the 2014 report relating to organisational problems on nursing courses, the UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer reported that the UUEAS now have a staff member from its Education and Engagement team assigned to working with HSC students. A report on issues of concern and proposed solutions arising from this work, would be published shortly.

29.2 Arising from Point 6 relating to reading lists being made available electronically, the Director of Information Systems emphasised that for this to be effective, the Library needed to be given the information by Module Organisers first.

29.3 Arising from Points 14-16 relating to Joint Honours, the Independent Member of Council, Ms Keller-Dorsey requested clarification on why, despite joint honours having been identified as an issue to be addressed, for a number of years, it was still being identified. Some progress on ensuring a consistent experience across Schools for students on joint honours was being made and the recent Review of the Advising System has addressed experience of students on joint degrees. The Faculty Convenor for SCI noted that she had convened a Forum and has collated information from students on joint honours degrees. She had also met with the Vice Chancellor and PVC (Academic) and an action plan on issues raised is being developed.

RESOLVED

that the PVC (Academic), the ADTP, the Director of Learning and Teaching Services and the UUEAS Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education Officers would work on the top ten issues relating to joint honours students at their monthly meeting.

30. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS POSTGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

Considered

the UUEAS Postgraduate Student Experience Report (SEC14D13 refers)

30.1 The UUEAS Postgraduate Education Officer introduced the report noting that UUEAS had invested considerable time and effort in ensuring that there was a full understanding of the needs of both PGT and PGR students. The report outlined five key areas and made recommendations, which were as mixture of action points and general commitments.

30.2 The Chair thanked UUEAS members for a very comprehensive report.

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RESOLVED

- i) the Chair would produce a table of the recommendations made in the report and the University's response. This would be considered at the monthly meetings of the PVC (Academic), ADTP and the UUEAS Education Officers;
- ii) the issues pertinent to PGR students would be discussed at the PGR executive in June;
- iii) the ADTP would give consideration to the merits of establishing a sub-group of the Student Experience Committee to look at the postgraduate student experience. This was pertinent as a New Academic Model for taught postgraduate programmes was being considered in 2015/16.

31. 2015 ANNUAL STUDENT UNION SURVEY REPORT

Considered

an oral report on key findings from the 2015 Annual Student Union Survey

- 31.1 The Committee was advised that the UUEAS had worked with the Business Intelligence Unit to ensure there was no duplication or cross-over in questions asked in other student surveys.
- 31.2 2195 responses had been received which equated to 16% of the student body, up 1% from last year. Findings showed a slight decline in satisfaction with the Union from last year. Most positive responses were about venues and bars. Students were least satisfied with retail (shop) and democracy representation. It was noted that the survey was carried out in December 2014 at the time when there were problems with queuing in the shop. However, it was noted however that students had still expressed dissatisfaction with the Shop in the March/April Student Experience Survey.
- 31.2 UUEAS representatives noted that students identified with UUEAS brand values which was pleasing. However, some students found some of the services offered confusing in terms of which were University services and which were offered by UUEAS.
- 31.2 With regard to traditionally 'hard to reach' student groups including PGT and PGR, members were advised that there was a UUEAS staff group for postgraduate students which was developing an action plans for postgraduate and international students.

RESOLVED

the report arising from the Survey should be put on the SEC web site.

32. TIMETABLING OF THE MAIN EXAMINATION SERIES

Considered

a contextual document on timetabling of the main examination series (SEC14D14 refers)

- 32.1 The University's Assessments and Quality Manager informed the Committee that for second year running the University had managed to ensure that students had no more than one examination a day in the main examination series. She explained that software problems caused significant difficulties with the summer 2015 examination timetabling which had impacted on some students. However, significant work had been carried out to ameliorate these problems. She noted that a broken-backed semester, course work deadlines and course test scheduled in Week 12 and in the examination period had caused some student discontent.
- 32.2 The Committee considered the contents of the paper submitted for this agenda item. The main options for the future to address student concerns were:

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1) to have requirement that coursework submission deadlines would be set no later than a pre-agreed date to enable students to focus on their examination preparation. There would also be an expectation that course tests would not be set in the examination period;

2) considering priorities when scheduling examinations. Currently timetabling was largely random to ensure equity. This meant sometimes students were pleased with their timetable and sometimes not.

- 32.2 UUEAS representatives stated that they would prefer no coursework, dissertation deadlines or Course Tests during the examination period. Also, having a buffer between the end of teaching and the start of examinations was deemed to be important.

RESOLVED

UUEAS should consult further on possible priorities for timetabling the examinations, outlining very specific options and highlighting possible ways forward. The University's Market Research Manager would work the UUEAS representatives on this.

33. GENERAL REGULATIONS 1-12

- 33.1 Noted
that no changes are proposed to General Regulations 1-12 for 2015/16 (SEC14D15 refers)
- 33.2 Received
a report on non-academic student disciplinary cases 2012-14.

Members were advised that the number of non- academic cases was less than last year. Figures for anti- social behaviour were declining. Normally such cases were referred to the University Disciplinary Officer when a second offence had been committed. It had been found that where interactions with students, Senior Resident Tutors and Security Officers were positive the number of official cases was reduced.

34. MULTIFAITH CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Considered
an update on the work of the Multifaith Consultative Group (SEC14D16 refers)

- 34.1 Members were advised that the consultation group meets three times a year. In view of limited attendance at the last meeting consideration was being given to whether a different sort of forum might be more appropriate. This would include whether to continue with the existing group or have Multifaith matters as a standing item on SEC.

RESOLVED

the Chair would review the most appropriate forum for consideration of multifaith issues and invite UUEAS for input on the matter.

35. REPORT ON HIDDEN COURSE COSTS

Considered
recommendations arising from a UUEAS report on hidden course costs

The report can be found in http://issuu.com/ueasu/docs/hidden_course_costs_draft_nine
Hard copies of the report were tabled at the meeting

- 35.1 The UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer took members through the salient parts of the report. 10 key recommendations were made which UUEAS members felt would significantly lift the burden of costs on students. He explained that from the work

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undertaken by UUEAS it was clear that students have realistic expectations on what the University can and should provide, as evidenced in the report.

- 35.2 During the Committee's discussions it was clarified that Recommendation 2 would include, for DBS checks and Recommendation 7 the cost of placements, such as accommodation and transport
- 35.3 Although the Director of Planning was unable to be at the meeting he had requested that any examples of where further work was needed on the UEA web pages be sent to him.

RESOLVED

- i) UUEAS representatives should send any examples where they deemed there was a lack of transparency on course costs on the UEA website to the Director of Planning;
- ii) the recommendations outlined in the report would be taken forward and a response formulated. The Chair would ensure they were considered by the Executive Team. He noted that some of the recommendations had resource implications which would need very careful consideration;
- iii) the recommendations in the report would be discussed further at the monthly meeting with the Chair, the Academic Director of Taught Programmes and UUEAS representatives.

36. COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ADVICE FOR HE PROVIDERS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW

Received

an update on actions arising from the Competition and Market Authority consultation on draft advice for HE providers on consumer protection law (SEC14D17 refers)

- 36.1 Members were advised by the Chair that the Director of Planning was aiming for the University to be as compliant as possible with the advice for HE providers on consumer protection law by 1 October 2015.
- 36.2 The UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer requested that UUEAS have sight of the first draft that was sent to Service Heads. They also requested that full costs be incorporated..

37. TIME TO CHANGE: MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

Considered

a draft UEA Action Plan (SEC14D18 refers)

- 37.1 The Chair advised members that UEA was ready to sign the Time To Change pledge and the draft Action Plan outlined its commitment in this area. It was agreed that clarification was required on who owned each of the commitments.

RESOLVED

- i) SEC should be the Committee which takes an overview of the plan;
- ii) there should be an annual planning exercise involving the PVC (Academic), the Dean of Students, the Equality and Diversity Manager and the UUEAS Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to plan and allocate responsibilities for taking the plan forward;
- iii) the Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees would ensure that further consideration was given by relevant staff and students to clarifying where responsibility for PGR rested;

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- iv) the Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees would investigate whether there was any online support or training in Mental First Aid to ensure relevant staff were trained in mental health issues.

38. CHANGES TO THE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Considered

proposed changes to the University's Bullying and Harassment Policy (SEC14D19 refers)

- 38.1 The Senior Resident Tutor advised the Committee that the policy was last reviewed two years ago. A number of enhancements and clarifications were now proposed including giving examples of sexual assault in Section 12 and introducing a new section (Section 30) dealing with criminal offences. UUEAS representatives had input into the proposed changes and were content.

RESOLVED

the changes be approved and be submitted for formal approval by the Learning and Teaching Committee subject to discrepancies relating to PGR being corrected, additional information on sexting when someone was not aware that an image had been taken being added and information about the Union Advice Centre and Nightline opening hours being included.

39. ISD LIBRARY REPORT

To receive

a update from the Library (SEC14D20 refers)

- 39.1 The high occupancy rates of new study spaces, especially those for PGT students was noted. However, spaces for PGR students were not so well used. The UUEAS Postgraduate Officer advised that this reflected how PGR students used space and what they perceived they need. It was agreed that occupancy levels would be kept under review.
- 39.2 The UUEA Undergraduate Education Officer noted that Integrated Masters students felt that they should be able to use the PGT space but were precluded from doing so. The Chair advised that this matter been discussed extensively at another forum and that the Government and HECFCE deemed them to be undergraduate. Mr Rand reflected that there was a need to manage the expectations of these students before and when they arrived at UEA.

40. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

No report was received

41. DATES OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN 2015/16 AND ANNUAL AGENDA ITEMS

Received

dates of SEC meetings in 2015/16 and a list of annual agenda items (SEC14D23 refers)