

**LTC15D179**

**Title:** Student Experience Committee  
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**Issue**

This is a round up report to members of the Learning and Teaching Committee for information on activities of the Student Experience Committee covering the meetings held on 10 February and 27 April 2016

**Recommendation**

None

**Resource Implications**

None

**Risk Implications**

None

**Equality and Diversity**

None

**Timing of decisions**

N/A

**Further Information**

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**Background**

N/A

**Discussion**

The report is for information only and no discussion is anticipated.

**Attachments**

The summary reports are below.

## Report of the Meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 10 February 2016

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2016 and are presented for the information of Learning and Teaching Committee members:

1. ARRIVALS EXPERIENCE OF NEW STUDENTS 2015: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Committee considered the outcome of focus group discussions with new students on their experience of arrivals in 2015, SEC15D16 refers. The findings from the focus groups were overwhelming positive but there were still areas which could be improved. It was noted that all the areas where potential improvements had been identified were being considered by various working groups.

2. A UNIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING THE OUTCOMES OF THE 2015 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES)

The Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes and the University's Marketing Manager outlined the key findings of the 2015 PRES, SEC15D19 refers. The survey outcomes had been discussed at PGR Executive and at the 5 Graduate Schools across UEA and Faculty action plans have been formulated and considered by the PGR Executive.

3. HONESTY PROJECT: THE PGR EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE STUDENT UNIONS' SURVEY OF PGR STUDENTS' WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

The UEA|SU Postgraduate Education Officer outlined the Honesty Project, a national survey of PGR students' mental health to members. UEA|SU had conducted a survey at UEA and the findings showed some areas of concern. The Academic Director of Research Degrees informed members that PGR Executive are progressing the eight recommendations in the report of the survey, several of which go beyond the PGR remit. It was agreed that DOS should also be involved given that some students had expressed concern at disclosing information about mental health issues to their supervisors. It was also agreed that consideration could be given to developing online training modules like those available for Advisers for supervisors.

4. CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The Chair advised the Committee that the Senior Faculty Manager for SSF was the University lead coordinating support for the Code of Practice on Student Representation. It was agreed that the University's Communications Officer would seek to raise awareness of the CoP via the Portal. In addition staff from the Business Intelligence Unit would have involvement in the production of the UUEAS Student Representative Handbook in future. This would help to ensure that information about the surveys students are asked to complete during the academic year are included.

5. UPDATE ON THE DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

The Acting Dean of Students updated members on the work of the Dean of Students Office including that being undertaken by the Learning Enhancement and International Student Advisory Teams. She noted that the waiting list for students to see a counsellor were decreasing and a series of workshops were being offered by the Counselling Team. She was working with the Student Union's Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer on how to help students returning from intercalation to re-engage with their studies.

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meeting on 27 April 2016 and are presented for the information of Learning and Teaching Committee members:

1. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

1.1 Members considered the UEA|SU International Student Experience Report 2015/16 SEC15D24, refers. They were informed by the Acting Dean of Students that DOS would be targeting particular groups of international students next year in an effort to help them gain as much as possible from their time at UEA. Chinese students in particular would be targeted since many did not participate in the DOS run social programmes or language courses. It was also intended to extend the international student orientation programme across the autumn semester from next year.

1.2 In response to concerns from UEA|SU representatives that the report demonstrated that only 43% of respondents would look to their Adviser for help and advice, the Director of the Learning and Teaching Service noted that Senior Advisers would be reporting on the operation of the Adviser system in their School and the reports will be considered by SSLCs and LTC. In addition it was agreed that the extent to which Advisers are engaging in the online Adviser training modules should be kept under review. It was agreed that the Chair would liaise with the Chair of the Internationalisation Executive on what role it might have in taking forward some of the report's recommendations.

2. CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The Committee considered an update on the implementation of the Code of Practice on Student Representation in 2015/16, SEC15D25 refers. The Senior Faculty Manager for SSF informed the Committee that all SSLCs have been asked to participate in a self-evaluation exercise and have been provided with a toolkit to help them complete the task. It is intended that this evaluation will be imbedded as an annual activity. It was agreed that the Chair and Associate Deans (L&T) will consider where else it would be useful to use the toolkit, for example Faculty LTQCs.

3. GENERALISED EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

Members considered the operation of generalised examination feedback in Faculties and plans to enhance this feedback, SEC15D27 refers. Faculty representatives reported back on the operation of generalised examination feedback for Schools in their Faculty. Many Schools used Blackboard and some Schools would be piloting individual feedback for example by the return of copies of examination scripts. Other Schools have group tutorials.

4. UEA SU: UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORTS 2014

4.1 The Committee considered an update on actions arising from recommendations made in the 2014 UEA SU Student Experience Reports, SEC15D28 refers. The Chair updated members on how timetabling issues (recommendation 1 in the Undergraduate report) were being taken forward. With regard to recommendation 4 in the postgraduate report relating to the establishment of a group responsible for the taught postgraduate student experience, the Chair report that a proposed New Academic Model for PGT courses would be considered at the May meeting of LTC.

4.2 Members resolved that the University's recommendation that Task and Finish Working Groups on PGT-specific matters as and when required and on governance would be fed into the paper going to LTC. It was further agreed that the Chair would look at the reports with the incoming UEA|SU sabbatical officers and consider how they might be taken forward, noting that the postgraduate report related to 2015 whilst the undergraduate report related to 2014.

5. MULTIFAITH

The Committee considered an update on Multifaith issues, SEC15D29 refers. The Free Church Chaplain advised the Committee that there are currently two major issues for the Multifaith centre. One was facilities for Muslim prayers in the next academic year. The other

related to the extensive use of the centre which means there are concerns that it is reaching its capacity.

6. The Chair advised members that Blackdale and the Lecture Theatre block would retain Muslim prayer facilities in 2016/17. He also noted that the issue of space in the centre was under consideration in other fora.

7. GENERAL REGULATIONS 1-12

The Committee resolved to recommend to LTC that a proposed changes to General Regulations 8 be approved, SEC15D30 refers. The proposal was to amend General Regulation 8 by removing the requirement for students to live within a 50km radius of UEA. No other amendments to General Regulations 1-12 were proposed.

8. PROPOSED AMENDEMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY'S BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

- 8.1 The Committee considered minor amendments to the University's Bullying and Harassment Policy, SEC15D33 refers. Members were advised by the Acting Dean of Students that after discussions with the Academic Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (ADLTE) it was agreed that information on the use of social media should be separated from the Bullying and Harassment policy where it currently resides. In addition it was hoped to change the title of the Policy Statement and Guidelines on Bullying, Harassment and Abuse, Assault and Stalking and the Use of Social Media to Policy Statement and Guidelines on Harassment and Sexual Abuse or Harassment.

- 8.2 It was agreed that the proposals outlined above would be considered further once the UUK Task Force on harassment and sexual harassment (of which the UEA Vice Chancellor is a member), had reported. The principle of having a separate document on the use of social media was endorsed. In addition, further consideration would be given to removing some of the specific definitions within the Bullying and Harassment policy and replacing them with more general principles.

9. STUDENT CONSULTATION ON TIMETABLING OF THE MAIN EXAMINATION SERIES

- 9.1 The Committee considered the outcome of consultation with students on examination scheduling, SEC15D27 refers, noting that an earlier release of the main series timetable was possible as requested by respondents but this would reduce the amount of time students had to change modules at the start of the spring semester from two weeks to one.
- 9.2 Considering the request from students not to have coursework deadlines set during the main examination period, some members noted that this could disadvantage those students on courses with no examinations and could lead to deadline bunching. It was agreed to endorse the proposals from the Assessments and Quality Office of LTS subject to the insertion of a clause that the setting of deadlines in the examination period is permissible but only for students on courses with no examinations. In addition for those courses with examinations, deadlines should not be set in Study Plus week. The amended proposals would be submitted for consideration by LTC.
- 9.3 Given the lack of understanding demonstrated in student's responses, the Head of LTS (Quality), the Manager of the Assessments and Quality Office and the University's Communication Officer would give consideration to how to make students more aware of the complexity of timetabling.