

LTC13D054

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 meeting held on 12 February 2014.

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 report is attached below.

Report of the Meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 12 February 2014

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2014 and are presented for the information of Learning and Teaching Committee members.

- 1 STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT: BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP
- 1.1 Members received a presentation from Mr Jim Dickinson, Chief Executive of the Union of UEA Students (UUEAS). This is available on the Student Experience Committee's web site at <https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeefice/ueacombds/sec/sec1314/120214/Presentation+by+Jim+Dickinson>
- 1.2 The presentation looked at the history of student representation over five decades. An important objective for UUEAS was to develop a more positive culture to secure a number of improvements, enhance its sphere of influence and celebrate successes. Mr Dickinson noted that QAA HE Review would examine the extent and impact of student involvement within institutions.
- 1.3 In looking at how the UUEAS and the University could work more closely together UUEAS representatives believe that the University might invest in posts similar to those at Exeter and Bath Universities, for example an Academic Representation Coordinator, who provided direct support for the academic representation function across the University.
- 1.4 UUEAS would enter the NUS Quality Students' Unions, a management tool which assures the quality, standards and overall effectiveness of students' unions, by 2015 or 2016. Within three years all University Student Unions were likely to be members.
- 1.5 A draft relationships agreement between UUEAS and the University was being developed from corporate to student level. It was hoped that this would help to facilitate cooperative working relationships between the Union and the University.
- 1.6 Potential UUEAS priorities for 2014/15 were:
 - supporting and organising student representatives in all UEA Schools;
 - transforming graduate student engagement at UEA;
 - improving central support for student engagement work;
 - research supported representation;
 - transforming nursing students' experience
- 1.7 The Academic Director of Taught Programmes noted that the HE sector was experiencing a profound cultural shift and HEI's were likely to have to renegotiate relationships with students and student unions. He was very keen to ensure that UEA drew on best practice across the sector on this issue.
2. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT 2013
- 2.1 Members considered the progress made on the recommendations made in Part 1 of the UUEAS Student Experience report:
 - 2.1.1 **Module Evaluation:**
 - a) Dr B Milner was working on how data could be used to highlight strengths and weaknesses in module delivery and help improve performance;
 - b) staff in LTS were working with academic colleagues to ensure that students were advised of how their module evaluation feedback would be used in future delivery of the module;

- c) in the Autumn 2013 there had been a workshop for SSLC representatives which looked at best practice in 'closing the loop' on actions taken in response to feedback given by students;
- d) TPPG had examined a survey of module evaluation return rates and endeavoured to disseminate good practice arising from the outcomes of the survey;
- e) UUEAS had implemented a 'How was it for you?' poster campaign to encourage students to complete module evaluation.

2.1.2 **Feedback**

- a) an Assessments Summit had been convened by the Vice-Chancellor and assessment was the subject of a policy half day attended by senior staff. These fora emphasised the importance of prompt, high quality assessment feedback. It was also hoped that electronic marking, which had been piloted last semester, would improve both the quality of feedback and turnaround times;
- b) generic feedback on examinations had been introduced in 2012/13 and this would be extended to course tests in 2013/14.

2.1.3 **Academic Support**

- a) placements were now centrally administered by the Learning and Teaching Service (LTS). Significant work had been undertaken by colleagues in AHP and NSC to improve a number of aspects relating to student placements. In addition, colleagues in LTS were working with ITCS to improve how SITS dealt with student placements;
- b) in FMH staff were working with placement educators to ensure that students were well prepared for their placements;
- c) the University had developed a Code of Practice on Placement Learning. This was being refined in consultation with colleagues from across the University who were involved with Placements;
- d) the Dean of Students Office was increasing online resources for students who might be experiencing difficulties in their studies and were also planning to extend some services into the evening. This might help increase the accessibility of its services to students on placement;
- e) UUEAS had been working with nursing students to look at how the Union could support them. It was planned to make a block grant bid for funds which would include funding for a union representative who could travel to visit students on placement if they needed union support or advice.

2.1.4 **Learning Resources**

- a) 24 hour Library opening was confirmed as long as there was evidence that it was used;
- b) a CUBS bid had been made for some digitisation software which could identify core chapters in texts, check for copyright clearance and then automatically copy the text into Blackboard.

2.1.5 **The School of Music**

- a Music Monitoring Group with staff and student representatives was ensuring that the closure of the School was being carefully managed and students' interests and their academic experience was being protected. Student representatives were very satisfied with the arrangements in place.

2.1.6 **UEA London**

This was discussed as part of agenda item D1.

2.1.7 **Joint Honours**

A paper from the Academic Director of Taught Programmes, outlining the considerable work undertaken with respect to ensuring a more consistent experience for students registered on joint honours programmes was tabled. Initiatives included:

- a) the creation of deputy Course Directors on joint degrees as part of the New Academic Model;
- b) new Course Director role descriptor clarifying the role and responsibilities, especially in relation to joint degrees;
- c) work towards developing more consistent module outline information for all students;
- d) the development of consistent expectations with regard to assessment tariffs and study time devoted to assessment.

2.1.8 **Examination Timetables**

A statement from the Learning and Teaching Manager for Assessments and Quality was tabled. This confirmed that a data modelling exercise indicated that the introduction of the NAM regulations and adoption of a 6 week examination period had made it possible for the vast majority of candidates taking examinations in May-June 2014 to be scheduled for no more than one examination per day. It was also reported that the 2013/14 main examination timetable would be published on 7 March 2014, which was much earlier than in previous years.

2.1.9 **Students with disabilities**

The Dean of Students Office was streamlining its administrative structures related to the Disabled Students Allowance. However, there was more work to be done with Schools in terms of ensuring that the support or facilities identified as part of the assessment of disabled students were provided.

Some members were concerned at the impact of the new policy of allowing students to self-certify once per semester for up to seven working days. In the Arts Hub this policy had led to a 300% increase in the number of coursework extensions received in the Autumn Semester in 2013/14 compared with 2012/13. This volume of work had impacted on the return of marked work to students and there was concern that this would be reflected in responses to the National Student Survey.

3. GENERAL REGULATIONS

Members noted details of a new process for approving changes to General Regulations. A working group, comprising UUEAS and UEA members had devised the changes which meant that in future changes to General Regulations would be considered by the May meeting of the Student Experience Committee. They would then be reported to LTC in June and Senate in June/July.

4.. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Members received a summary report from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group presented by Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students. It was agreed that that arising from discussions about the opening times of the Multifith Centre the Dean of Students and the UUEAS Community and Student Rights Officer should meet after the next Faith Committee to discuss possible ways of increasing the Centre's opening hours.

5. BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

In response to a question about the future of the Islamic Centre and a request to review the Student Experience Committee's terms of reference it was noted that

terms of reference were considered at the first meeting of each academic year. It was further agreed that SEC members should contact the Secretary to the Committee who would discuss issues that members wanted to raise with the Chair of the Committee (the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic)) to see if items were appropriate for SEC or if it was more appropriate for them to be dealt with at other fora.

6. UEA LONDON

Members received a confidential report from the Director of Learning and Teaching Services which outlined the work to ensure the interests of all students at UEA London were fully protected to enable them to complete their degree.