

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2013.

Present: Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (Professor N.Norris), the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), the Acting Director of University Services (LTS) (Mrs C. Sauverin), the Director of University Services (PPE) (Ms A. Rhodes), the Academic Director of Taught Programmes (Dr A. Longcroft), the Head of Equality, Diversity and DBS (Ms H. Murdoch), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr J. Bowker), the Community and Student Rights Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr S. Clarke), the International Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms A. Simonsen), the President of the Graduate Students' Association (Mr J. Taylor), the Independent Member of Council (Ms Vicky Keller-Dorsey), the representative from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Dr S. Inthorn), the representative from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Dr R. Wood).

In attendance: The Student Support Manager (UEA Union of Students) (Ms J. Spiro), the Membership Services Manager (UEA Union of Students) (Mr T. Cunningham), the Library Director (Mr N. Lewis) for agenda A2.

Secretary: The Learning and Teaching Manager (LTS) (Ms C. Gray)

Apologies: The Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Programmes (Dr N. Watmough), the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences, (Ms H. Gillespie).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2012 were confirmed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair reported the following in relation to matters arising as set out in the notes of the meeting held on 4 Oct 2012:

- (a) Minute 1.3 "Additional Course Costs and Charges e.g. paying for CRB checks and work placement", this was issue was on-going and further discussions will be held with members of the Planning Office and LTS management in due course before definite decisions can be reported;
- (b) Minute 1.4: "Examination feedback", a proposal from the Academic Director of Taught Programmes was approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee in December 2012 to ensure that students received feedback on year 1 and year 2 examinations at the end of the academic year 2012/13;
- (c) Minute 1.6 "Transport issues", transport issues in relation to First Bus route changes and communication of such changes to students would need to be followed up and the Director of Estates, Mr Roger Bond,

SEC12M001

would be asked to provide an update at the next meeting of the Student Experience Committee in May 2013;

- (d) Minute 2 (c): "UUEA Student Experience Report and UEA London proposal for expansion of Union Services", the UEA Union of Students had requested additional financial resource to fund student support costs in addition to the part-time member of staff already funded by the University and employed by the UEA Union of Students at UEA London. The Chair reported that this proposal had been considered by the Joint Venture Board and had been rejected. The Committee noted the concern expressed by the Academic Officer of the UEA Union of Students and the Student Support Manager as this proposal had been rejected;
- (e) Minute 2 (d): "PG Experience": the Chair reported that further talks had taken place between the PVC – Academic and the President of the GSA to explore how the University might support the work of the GSA.

3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Reported

that the UEA response to the UEA Union of Student Experience report 2012 would be considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its next meeting on 20 March 2013.

SECTION A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

4. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STUDENT AFFAIRS GROUP (SAG) AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (SEC) 2012/13

Received

membership and terms of reference for the Student Affairs Group (SAG) and the Student Experience Committee (SEC) (SEC12D 01)

Resolved

that

- (1) the Director of University Services (PPE) and the Head of the Equality, Diversity and DBS Service will be added to the membership of the Committee with immediate effect;
- (2) the terms of reference will be amended to the following: "(b) provision of services, facilities and amenities for students" and "(e) the results of the NSS and similar".
- (3) all non-members of the Committee should be noted in the minutes as "in attendance"

5. LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS

Received

a report from Mr Nick Lewis, the Director of Library Services (SEC12 D02)

Reported

that

- (1) Library services were under constant review taking into account feedback from surveys such as the NSS, the ISD and UEA's own SES;

SEC12M001

- (2) the Library had already responded to the need to increase the number of computers and 48 additional computers had been added over the summer 2012;
- (3) a pilot project had commenced in January 2013 to block a selected number of computers from accessing Facebook with the aim to increase the number of computers available for completing academic work;
- (4) a need for more PG group study rooms in the Library had been identified and various scenarios had been explored in relation to location of these;
- (5) a need for a larger eating area combined with a social study area, e.g. the creation of a café within UEA Library; a number of competitor Universities had now included such refreshment areas within their Libraries;
- (6) plans had been drawn up to develop the Library encompassing a café and the need for a £1.2 million investment by the University to make this happen.

Recommended

that the Library was in need of further development as members of the Committee stressed that the creation of further social study areas ideally combined with eating areas was now a reasonable expectation of any student registered at UEA. Members stressed that the University should fund such further Library development as one of its priority capital projects.

6. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Received

- (A) a report from Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students on latest activities discussed at the Student Affairs Group (SAG) (SEC12D03);
- (B) a presentation on the student usage of the Dean of Students Office Services which is filed in the minute book.

Reported

- (A) the latest activities discussed at the Student Affairs Group as the following:
 - (1) according to Norfolk Police statistics crime against students had dropped in comparison with previous years which was a welcome development; there had however been a number of assaults on students in the autumn and the University was working with the Police, UEA Security and the Union of UEA Students on raising awareness of measures that can be taken to enhance personal safety;
 - (2) the Dean of Students was also working with the Norwich and Norfolk University Hospital, the Public Health Authority and the Police on an alcohol reduction strategy with a focus on the student population;
 - (3) the adverse knock on effects of the reduced three week University Christmas break on teaching and learning as well as the accommodation office and the international orientation programme;
 - (4) the 24 hour, 365 days a year opening times of the University Library was welcomed by members of the Student Affairs Group;
 - (5) processing visas and renewals has proved to be an increase in the workload for the International Student Advisory Team;
 - (6) police registration of international students required a regular space to be made available at the University, it was agreed that this discussion would be continued outside the meeting with members of LTS to ensure a satisfactory solution can be found;
 - (7) considerable work had been carried out by the President of the GSA to inject a new vibrancy into the Association;

SEC12M001

- (8) a Senior Manager from the PGR Office and a LTS Manager now regularly attended the Student Affairs Group which had proved to be a useful link between DOS and the other student service areas.
- (B) Presentation on student usage of the Dean of Students Office Services:
- (1) the Office of the Dean of Students' provided a comprehensive service providing advice and guidance to support students' well being and studies by specialist teams of advisers covering learning enhancement, finances, well being, disability and dyslexia, international students, residences and general information;
 - (2) the use of the services of the Dean of Student' Office had been steadily increasing and the number of total students seeking advice had increased from 14% of the whole student body in the academic year 2008/9 to 25% in the academic year 2011/12 respectively; this increased usage was seen as a positive development and had led to more creative ways of delivering the services, e.g. workshops rather than individual appointments when appropriate;
 - (3) there had been a huge increase in the services offered by the Learning Enhancement Team which was pleasing, but also reflective of the increasingly diverse student body;
 - (4) students in AHP, NMS, NSC, CHE and DEV used the services of DOS disproportionately more often in comparison with students from other UEA Schools of Study;
 - (5) there had been on-going problems which students had experienced when dealing with Student Finance England which had led to a significant increase in work for the DOS Finance Team attempting to help such students;
 - (6) the International Team had spent a considerable amount of time assisting students in renewing their visas to comply with UKBA requirements;
 - (7) there was now a much needed DOS presence at UEA London.

(Members of the Committee expressed their gratitude to the Dean of Students' Office for delivering valued services to all students at UEA.)

7. FAITH ON CAMPUS

Reported

that Council recently approved a new policy on "Faith on Campus" which had been widely disseminated. This policy would form part of the agenda of the next meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 1 May 2013.

8. CHANGES WITHIN THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Received

a presentation from the President of the Graduate Students' Association, a copy is filed in the minute book

Reported

that:

- (1) during the last 18 months the purpose of the Graduate Students' Association had been redefined resulting in a reinvigorated research student community and numerous social activities as well as new communication channels reaching new groups;
- (2) the representation of the GSA by the President of the GSA had led to an increased visibility and thus effective representation of the needs and concerns of all Postgraduate Students at UEA (PGR and PGT);

SEC12M001

- (3) in addition to the Graduate Bar, there was still a need for further social space for research students to enable students to meet in a non-alcohol-centric space;
- (4) the small budget allocated to the GSA would limit any further GSA developments and had a detrimental effect on the academic progress of the GSA president;
- (5) the focus for future GSA development would centre on getting funding for a part-time member of administrative staff to assist the GSA president, integrating postgraduate taught masters students and JIC/IFR representatives on the GSA committee, identifying more suitable social space and improving the GSA website and communication channels;
- (6) there was evidence that a vibrant GSA had contributed to the retention of research students at UEA.

(Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to the President of the GSA for his hard work in raising the profile of the GSA which had led to significant benefits for the research student community.)

9. ACADEMIC OFFICER – UEA UNION OF STUDENTS - ANNUAL STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Received

a presentation from the Community and Student Rights Officer of the UEA Union of Students on the annual student survey results, a copy is filed in the minute book

Reported

that

- (1) the annual student survey conducted by the UEA Union of Students was now in its fifth year and its purpose was to elicit student opinions on the Union and its services provided with a view to improve the Unions services;
- (2) in ranked order, student had rated the following services as most important: student societies, course representation, sports clubs, home run and the Union Advice Centre;
- (3) commercial services provided by the Union of UEA Students and most valued were ranked in the following order: Union Food Outlet, Union Post Office, Union Pub, Union Paper Shop and The Hive;
- (4) non-Union services on campus which students valued most were: Employability, Sports Park, Careers, Zest and the Blend;
- (5) there had been a significant increase in respondents' use of bars and shops owned by the Union as well as involvement in other activities such as societies, clubs and volunteering in comparison with the previous year;
- (6) 91% of respondents considered it important that the Union provided a wide range of clubs, societies and peer support groups and this represented a significant increase in relation to the previous year;
- (7) in general the majority of respondents agreed that the Union made a positive impact during their time at UEA;
- (8) the Union had a tight budget and that this may lead to a decrease in services offered by the Union in future years.

10. JOINT ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UEA UNION OF STUDENTS

Received

an oral report from the Academic Officer of the UEA Union of Students

SEC12M001

Reported

a number of joint Union and University activities which the Academic Officer of the UEA Union of Students wanted to highlight:

- (1) the redevelopment of the substandard sports facilities at Colney Lane;
- (2) a terrific arrivals weekend in September 2012;
- (3) positive collaboration with the Library and the ban of Facebook on a selected number of computers as well as provision of free LGBT journals;
- (4) introduction of examination feedback by the University in current academic year 12/13;
- (5) the new faith policy as agreed by Council on 21 January 2013

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Reported

that the Dean of Students had written a Social Media Policy for Students and this draft policy would be circulated to all members of the Committee for comments with the aim to have the policy approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee on 20 March 2013, a copy of the draft policy will be filed in the minute book.

SECTION B:

ITEMS WHICH CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS BUT WHERE NO DEBATE IS ANTICIPATED

No items have been received

SECTION C: ITEMS FOR REPORT

No items have been received

SECTION D: RESERVED AGENDA

No items have been received