

# STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



## Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2013.

Present: Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor (Professor N.Norris), the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), the Director of University Services (LTS) (Dr A. Blanchflower), the Director of University Services (PPE) (Ms A. Rhodes), the Academic Director of Taught Programmes (Dr A. Longcroft), the Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Programmes (Dr N. Watmough), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), the Director of Estates (Mr R. Bond), the Community and Student Rights Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr S. Clarke), 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), Ms Dawn Dewar (Transport Co-ordinator), Dr D Thurkettle (Senior Resident Tutor) and Mr M McCormack (Risk Assessments Manager) for agendum A2, Dr S. Ghosh (Survey Research Manager) and the Faculty Managers (Ms L McGonagle, Dr J Ashman and Mr M Hitchcock) for agendum A5.

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

Apologies: The Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences, (Ms H. Gillespie), the Independent Member of Council (Ms Vicky Keller-Dorsey).

### 12. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2013

### 13. MATTERS ARISING

Ms Dawn Dewar attended in response to a Students' Union report that First Bus had closed one route in January with only two days' notice. Ms Dewar reported that the University had built up excellent relationships with First Bus and that she was not aware of First Bus discontinuing a bus route at such short notice as bus companies had to give 56 days' notice before any changes were made to bus routes. Recently representatives from First Bus had attended a meeting of the Student Affairs Group to initiate a dialogue with the University and to elicit from University staff and student representatives improvements that could be made to bus services offered by First Bus.

### 14. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair reported that UEA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations would take place during the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

## SEC12M002

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### 15. UEA FAITH POLICY

Received

the Faith Policy as approved by UEA Council in January 2013; SEC12D 04 (Document A, a copy is filed in the minute book). The policy and all the appendices can also be found at:

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/vco/faith-report>

### 16. EVENTS PERMISSION GROUP

Considered

a report from Dr David Thurkettle, the Senior Resident Tutor, (DOS), on reducing the current six week deadline for event applications; SEC12 D05 (Document B, a copy is filed in the minute book).

Reported that

the Events Permission Group had examined ways to reduce the deadline for events applications as well as fast tracking events for week 1.

RESOLVED that

- (i) members of the Committee endorsed the proposals to have the following deadlines for events approvals: 6 weeks for major events (as identified in the major events guidelines document); 3 weeks for small events (flashmobs, dance displays, performances) and 2 weeks for small events (basic stalls/stands promoting a society or event). Any shorter deadlines would seriously jeopardise the risk assessments needed for such events which had to be put in place to protect students.
- (ii) staff responsible for approving event applications would work as fast as possible and would aim to approve applications before the agreed deadlines if at all possible.
- (iii) fast-tracking events for week 1 would need further consideration since week 1 was already crowded with many events for new and continuing students. For the time being, it was agreed that no fast-tracking of events for week 1 should happen and that students should be encouraged to organise events for the summer and definitely before week 1 until the logistical concerns about too many events on campus in week 1 will have been considered further.

### 17. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Received

a summary report from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group SEC12D06 (Document C, a copy is filed in the minute book) presented by Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students.

18. NRP ENTERPRISE CENTRE

## Received

a presentation on the project of the NRP Enterprise Centre from Dr John French (CEO and Project Administrator Adapt Low Carbon Group)

## Reported

- (i) progress on latest developments in relation to the building of the NRP Enterprise Centre which is planned to open in October 2014.
- (ii) that the building proposed would be the most advanced low energy building on any UK University campus and would contain a 300 seat lecture theatre, a café, an exhibition area, business hatcheries and further space for academic teaching.
- (iii) that the University had plans for a Phase II development in relation to the land between Earlham Hall and the NRP Enterprise Centre which amounted to 10,000 square metres and could be developed into another area containing high quality academic space. Currently, the University had not yet identified funds for the development of Phase II of this project.

19. STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2013

## Received

a presentation from Dr Sree Ghosh on the outcome of the Student Experience Survey 2013, SEC12D07 (Document D, a copy is filed in the minute book) and SEC12D08 (Document E, a copy is filed in the minute book)

## Reported that

- (i) for the second year running, the University had carried out a Student Experience Survey in spring 2013 covering all first and second year students at UEA. Questions asked were modelled on the questions included in the National Student Survey. Students studying in the Norwich Medical School were exempt from this survey with the permission of the PVC-(Academic) as these students were already required to complete surveys from the Professional Body as part of their studies and further surveys could lead to survey fatigue.
- (ii) students were broadly happy with the quality of teaching at UEA. Students were less happy with timely return of coursework from the hubs, especially from the Arts Hub as 53% of students disagreed with the statement that their coursework had been returned in a timely manner. The survey did however not differentiate if this was due to slow marking or hub procedures.
- (iii) students mentioned the following areas in ranked order as contributing most to improve the student experience: a) greater range of sports activities; b) academic support; c) feedback; d) organisation and management.

## SEC12M002

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- (iv) overall the results of the Student Experience Survey were positive and encouraging with a few minor causes for concern, in particular the perception of late feedback on coursework. Members also heard that the Learning and Teaching Service was conducting an analysis on return of coursework in more detail to identify concerns and remedies to enable the speedy return of coursework.

### 20. UEA STUDENT UNION STRATEGIC PLAN

#### Received

the Strategic Plan of the UEA Union of Students presented by the Academic Officer, SEC12D09 (Document F, a copy is filed in the minute book).

#### Reported that

- (i) the Strategic Plan had been updated since the last Strategic Plan had been published in 2009 using information gathered from 5000 students.
- (ii) the UEA Union of Students aspired to become the best Students' Union in the country and this would be achieved by focussing on three key indicators: a) participation of students in as many Union activities as possible; b) engagement by being member led and empowering members to shape their education and academic experience through representation at school, faculty and committee level; c) satisfaction by providing services of high quality and gathering feedback to further improve the Unions' services.
- (iii) by focussing on the principles of participation, engagement and satisfaction, the academic experience of students would improve as the Union would work in partnership with academic staff to ensure that feedback mechanisms such as course representatives will create a pro-active partnership conducive to improving the academic experience. Similarly, student welfare would improve as the Union would focus on participation and friendship by promoting events which would centre around social activities such as quiz and salsa nights and avoiding the promotion of alcohol centric events.
- (iv) the Union had employed new initiatives to reach all students and had launched a campaign to reach Chinese students via Rebo, a Social Media site available to Chinese students in the absence of Facebook and Twitter. The Union web site had also been redesigned to ensure maximum exposure of Union activities to UEA students.
- (v) the Union of UEA Students was keen to diversify its income streams by moving away from the sale of alcohol to support its business and was exploring alternative income streams to ensure business sustainability.
- (vi) the Union of UEA Students worked in partnership with the Research, Enterprise and Engagement Service (REN) on improving students' employability rates and similar initiatives comparable to the Pitch up project would be pursued to achieve this aim.