

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2014

- Present: Academic Director of Taught Programmes (Dr A. Longcroft) (in the Chair), the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), the Director of University Services (LTS) (Dr A. Blanchflower), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the Director of University Services (REN) (Ms H. Lewis), the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students, (Ms L. Withers-Green), the Community and Student Rights Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms B.Foday), the International Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms T.A. Ngo), the representative from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Dr C. Matthews), the representative of the Faculty of Science (Dr P. Mayhew), the representative of the Faculty of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Dr Z. Butterfint), the Independent Member of Council (Ms V. Keller-Dorsey), the Academic Director for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (Dr N. Watmough), the Head of Student Services, INTO (Mr S Evans)
- In attendance: the Student Support Manager (UEA Union of Students) (Ms J. Spiro), the Chief Executive (Union of UEA Students) (Mr J. Dickinson for Agenda Item A1)
- Secretary: the Learning and Teaching Manager (LTS) (Ms M. Pavey)
- Apologies: the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Professor N. Ward), the Director of Estates (Mr R. Bond), the representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences, (Ms H. Gillespie), the President of the Graduate Student Association (Ms K. Hirst-Jones)

7. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013.

8. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair reported the following in relation to matters arising as set out in the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013:

- (i) Minute 3 "Membership and Terms of Reference," the DUS (REN) was now a member of the Committee:
- (ii) Minute 4 "Internationalisation Workshops," the Dean of Students advised members that the Head of the International Student Advisory Team had set up an Internationalisation Working Group which would examine feedback on current surveys, building on the work undertaken by Mr Mark Hitchcock.

RESOLVED

that the Student Experience Committee should receive an annual report from the Working Group at its first meeting of each academic year.

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9. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

There were no statements by the Chair.

10. STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT: BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

Received

members received a presentation from Mr Jim Dickinson, Chief Executive of the Union of UEA Students (UUEAS). This is available on the Committee's web site at

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeefice/ueacombds/sec/sec1314/120214/Presentation+by+Jim+Dickinson>

Noted

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) 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
- (vi) 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.

Considered

Members considered the progress made on the recommendations made in Part 1 of the UUEAS Student Experience report:

(i) **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.

(ii) **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.

(iii) **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.

(iv) **Learning Resources**

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- 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.

(v) ***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.

(vi) ***UEA London***

This was discussed as part of agenda item D1.

(vii) ***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.

(viii) ***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.

(ix) ***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.

Noted

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

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and there was concern that this would be reflected in responses to the National Student Survey.

12. GENERAL REGULATIONS

Received

Members noted details of a new process for approving changes to General Regulations (SEC13D07, a copy is filed in the minute book). 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 April meeting of the Student Experience Committee. They would then be reported to LTC in June and Senate in June/July.

13. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Received

a summary report from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group (SEC13D08, a copy is filed in the minute book) presented by Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students.

RESOLVED

that arising from discussions about the opening times of the Multifaith 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.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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.

CONFIDENTIAL

15. UEA LONDON

Received

a confidential report from the Director of Learning and Teaching Services (SEC 13D09, a copy is filed in the minute book)

Reported

- (i) a majority of students at UEA London were due to complete their course between June and September 2014 and would be fully supported at UEA London during this time;
- (ii) detailed plans were in place to support the 56 year two BSc International Business Management students the 8 PhD students to ensure they could complete their studies;
- (iii) a small working group, which was meeting regularly, had been established to oversee all matters relating to the closure of UEA London. If UUEAS colleagues had any issues of concern they could raise them with members of the group;
- (iv) the SSF Senior Faculty Manager was going to UEA London every Tuesday to meet staff and students as necessary;
- (v) the equivalent of the Music Monitoring Group would be established to ensure that affected students were supported through to the completion of their studies;
- (vi) the Dean of Students Office team based at UEA London had all found alternative employment so by the end of February 2014 there would not be a DoS Office presence there. A Skype facility linked to the UEA DoS office was being established.

RESOLVED

Following concerns expressed by the UUEAS International Officer about ensuring international students at UEA London were appropriately supported, it was agreed that the UUEAS Advisor and the UUEAS International Officer should go to UEA London and meet international students to ensure they fully understood the implications of the closure and the offers being made to them by UEA.