

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014

Present: the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Professor N. Ward) (in the Chair), Academic Director of Taught Programmes (Dr A. Longcroft) , 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 Estates (Mr R. Bond), 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 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 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 Joint Head of the Careers Service (Mr J. Goodwin for Agenda Item A1), the Market Research Manager (Ms R. Price for Agenda Item A2), Dr R.Thurkettle (Senior Resident Tutor)

Secretary: the Learning and Teaching Manager (LTS) (Ms M. Pavey)

Apologies: the representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences, (Dr P. Dawson)

16. MINUTES

Confirmed
the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2014.

17. MATTERS ARISING

17.1 Minute 13 – a meeting between the Dean of Students and the UUEAS Community and Student Rights Officer took place about opening times of the Multifith Centre. A strategy for use of that space over the summer was now being considered.

17.2 Minute 15- there had been two meetings between representatives from UUEAS and international students at UEA London. The work of UUEAS with regard to meeting and supporting students at UEA London in connection with its closure was commended by members of the Committee.

18. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION

Reported

that UEA's Faith Policy has been signed off and is published in <https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/unipolicies>

19. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

There were no statements from the Chair.

20. CAREER CENTRAL

Received

a presentation by Mr James Goodwin, Joint Head of the Careers Service, on CareerCentral. This is available on the Committee's website.

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombs/sec/sec1314/300414>

The main points from the presentation were:

- i) at CareerCentral students would be shown how to use online resources and how to access hard copy careers information. Employer interviews had already been hosted. Seminar rooms were available for employability related workshops and meetings;
- ii) the Careers Service had facilitated student focus groups which looked at what motivated students when seeking employment;
- iii) staff from the service had worked with designers to ensure that demand from students to have infographics rather than text heavy materials would be met;
- iv) Careers Service online- software called Career Hub would be launched on 1 May. It would enable students to interact online with careers events, appointments, and a number of other resources all in one place. Graduates would be able register and access the resource after they had left.

21. STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2014

Received

a presentation from Ms Rebecca Price on the outcome of the Student Experience Survey 2014. This is available on the Committee's website.

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombs/sec/sec1314/300414>

21.1 The main points from the presentation, which focused on non-academic related issues, were:

- i) all undergraduate students not participating in the National Student Survey (i.e. mostly first and second years) were asked to participate in the survey which was conducted in-house each year in the Spring semester. The analysis of all responses was still being worked on and would be finalised by end of May 2014;
- ii) the 2014 survey had a 21% response rate, down 3% on last year. The reasons for this were being investigated. MED students were included in the survey for the first time this year;
- iii) responses showed that overall, 83% of participants were satisfied with their 'non-academic' experience, with only 4% being dissatisfied.

- iv) the Union shop had the highest level of dissatisfaction at 11% dissatisfaction, with 97% of all respondents rating it. The main theme was around pricing in the shop and some concerns around product availability. The UUEAS Student Support Manager acknowledged that UUEAS had more work to do in raising students' awareness that it was a convenience store not a supermarket.

21.2 The Chair thanked Ms Price for her presentation and noted that the analysis of the survey would be rolled out across the University in due course. Further consideration would then be given to areas where students had expressed a degree of dissatisfaction.

22. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT- PARTS 2 AND 3

Received

- i) part 2 of the Union of UEA Students, Student Experience Report: a review of PGT and PGR students' experiences at UEA (SEC13D09 refers)
- ii) part 3 of the Union of UEA Students, Student Experience Report: welfare (SEC13D10 refers)

Considered

22.1 Part 2: a review of PGT and PGR students' experiences at UEA

- i) SEC members agreed that key recommendations in the report including lecture capture and investment in online resources should be a priority. However, adding flexibility by, for example, teaching twice was not deemed feasible on resource grounds;
- ii) postgraduate tuition fees and funding: this was a national issue especially for undergraduate students. It was noted that scholarships for a 50% fee reduction for UEA students with first class degrees would be offered for 2014/15 (for one year currently);
- iii) library related resources: channels that students can use to request resources should be clarified. The Head of ISD noted that Library staff were concerned that they were not provided with reading lists by module organisers. Lists to distinguish between essential and recommended reading with an example of student numbers would be very helpful to Library staff. It was further noted that, if successful, a CUBS bid would help to resolve some of these issues since the bid included the appointment of a member of staff and digitisation of reading lists;
- iv) access to social and work space for PGR students: Members were advised that space in the Library was being designed for PGT and PGR study. The Academic Director for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes would be meeting with Senior Faculty Managers and the University's Space Management manager to discuss space for PGR students. The redevelopment of the Student Union building was also addressing social space for PGT and PGR students;
- v) teaching opportunities: there was concern that these seemed to be more available to home than international students. Members were advised that the Head of

Postgraduate Research Service was undertaking work on students teaching, this included equality of opportunity and different levels of access to teaching across Schools. It was agreed that all PGR students should have access to teaching opportunities where it was appropriate for their course;

- vi) PPD: UUEAS was keen to ensure that dialogue around the PPD programme should take place. The Chair advised members that Graduate Schools and the PGR Executive were looking at this and it was being reviewed as part of PGR Learning and Teaching strategy.

Resolved

- i) ensuring that research degree supervisors made sure that key readings were available should be referred to the Library Forum. The Chair undertook to take this forward;
- ii) actions from the UUEAS Student Experience report would be an agenda item for first SEC meeting of the academic year and, henceforth should be a standing item.

Part 2: Welfare

- i) faith on campus: UUEAS representatives thanked the Chair for the work he had undertaken in this area. The Chair advised members that he would be meeting with representatives from UUEAS regarding the use of the Multifaith Centre and the Islamic Centre and he would report back to the Committee.
- ii) safe space on campus: it was noted that the Dean of Students Office make available a room in Broadview Lodge overnight for students who feel they need to leave their accommodation because of an emergency. There were discussions around UUEAS creating a safe room in the Union building. It was agreed that the existence of a safe room should be publicised on the UEA website as well as in the leaflet that will be produced by the Dean of Students Office.

Resolved

UUEAS representatives would liaise with colleagues in the Dean of Students Office to ensure the existence of a safe room was publicised on relevant UEA web pages.

23. ANNUAL STUDENT UNION SURVEY 2014

Received

a presentation from Ms Louise Withers-Green on the 2014 Student Union Survey (SEC13D11 refers)

23.1 The salient parts of the report were:

- i. the survey found that students do consider UUEAS services when choosing to come to UEA but course reputation was the most important reason;
- ii. when rating services the shop was deemed most important;
- iii. with regard to issues and concerns, 90% of respondents were very or quite concerned about academic achievement;

SEC13M003

- iv. the most important UUEAS campaigns were around exam timetables and coursework return;
- v. only 30% of respondents said they had received feedback on exams. 52% found this feedback neither helpful nor unhelpful;
- vi. with regard to methods of communication, 82% felt email was an important way of UUEAS communicating with students. However, on the other hand many students state they get bombarded with emails;
- vii. 65% of respondents felt the UUEAS had a positive impact on their experience of UEA.

23.2 Ms Withers Green informed members that in terms of acting on the results of the survey this would depend on the issues that the new Union Officers decided to prioritise. Committee members agreed that it was important to have a 'closing the loop' report based on the outcome of the survey findings.

Resolved

UUEAS representatives would bring an outcomes report to a future meeting of the Committee.

24. GENERAL REGULATIONS (1-12)

Considered

proposed changes to General Regulations for 2014/15
(SEC13D12 refers)

24.1 The Chair informed members that General Regulations 1-12 had been subject to considerable discussion between UUEAS and UEA and there was forum for discussion of these regulations.

24.2 Dr Thurkettle, Senior Resident Tutor had collated some statistics which demonstrated that the number of students subject to formal or informal disciplinary action under these regulations had decreased significantly in 2013/14. It was believed that this was in part due to work being undertaken by Senior Resident Tutors and Security Officers, which was proving fruitful.

Resolved

that the proposed changes to the General Regulations (1-12) be approved. They would be submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee for its approval.

25. ELECTORAL REFORM AND INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (IER)

Received

an oral update from the Director of Planning and the Director of the Learning and Teaching Services on the new online system for registering to vote

25.1 Changes to the mechanisms for electoral registration would come into effect in June 2014. Each individual citizen will be responsible to register to vote. Some Universities act as homeowners for registering students and they will no longer be able to do this;

SEC13M003

25.2 Two measures, the inclusion of the electoral registration hyper link within UEA's student registration task and a place on the portal to enable students to keep their registration addresses up to date would shortly be put in place. In addition the change of address page on the portal now had a link to the electoral reform site.

26. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Received

a verbal report from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group presented by Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students

The key issues from the report were:

- i) safety and security: despite a decrease in thefts from halls of residence over the last few months there were still problems in getting students to secure their rooms. Ongoing initiatives were being undertaken by the Library, Accommodation and Dean of Students to raise awareness;
- ii) mental well-being and counselling: there were very long waiting list for counselling. Initial evaluations were taking place happening but there could be a six week wait for appointments;
- iii) merging the Dean of Students Office and the Counselling Office with one Reception would free up some administrative resource;
- iv) there had been a very good take up by students of language buddies and conversation clubs to help students develop English language skills;
- v) Go Global initiatives had been very well received and supported;
- vi) the library and ISD had reported good use of 24 hour Library opening and positive feedback on planned postgraduate study space in the Library;
- vii) the Sportspark had seen engagement in sport for well-being as well as fitness;
- viii) at the annual meeting with First Buses it was reported that new buses were to be purchased with free wi-fi on board;
- ix) Hubs would soon be displaying Learning Enhancement Study Guides.

27. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2014/15 AND ANNUAL AGENDA PLANNING

Received

dates of Student Experience Committee meetings in 2014/15 and a schedule of agenda items for meetings (SEC13D14 refers)

The Chair confirmed that there would be three meeting scheduled in 2014/15, but the frequency of meetings would be kept under review. It was noted that the Student Affairs Group dealt with a number of issues relating to the student experience on an ongoing basis.

28. 2013/14 UNION OF UEA STUDENTS OFFICERS' REPORT

This item was moved from Section C to Section A of the agenda.

Received

a report from the 2013/14 UUEAS Officers SEC13D15 refers

The following issues were discussed by the Committee:

- i) accommodation pricing: UUEAS representatives were concerned that their officers were not fully briefed about accommodation price increase and did not feel they were consulted sufficiently on what they perceived to be a significant increase. The Chair advised members that UEA accommodation prices were now comparable with competitor universities and this was the rationale for the price changes. It was agreed that in future years there should be more transparent consultation on rent setting;
- ii) students' with debts to the university: the Director of Planning confirmed that the University would not prevent students from graduating if they owed non-academic debts;
- iii) equal opportunities: UUEAS was working with the University's Equality and Diversity manager on a range of issues including sub-cultures;
- iv) Time to Change national mental health campaign: UUEAS was signing the Time to Change Pledge on 1 May. Given that often student unions normally signed the pledge together with the university it was felt that there was more work to be done in this area;
- v) faith: this was an important issue for all faith groups and UUEAS representatives highlighted that it needed to be high on the University's agenda.

Resolved

Given the range of issues that were ongoing it was agreed that for the first meeting of SEC each academic year, the Chair would produce a PVC update so that members would be aware of the progress being made on key areas.

The Chair thanked the UUEAS representatives for all the work they had undertaken over the year.