

LTC12D105

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 13 February 2013.

Recommendation

None

Resource Implications

None

Risk Implications

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Further Information

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Background

N/A

Discussion

The report is for information only and no discussion is anticipated.

Attachments

Summary report as attached below.

Report of the Meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 13 February 2013

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee on 13 February 2013 and are here presented for the Learning and Teaching Committee's information.

1. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

In his report the Chair, the Chair explained 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.

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

2.1 The Committee endorsed the membership and terms of reference for the Student Affairs Group (SAG) and the Student Experience Committee (SEC) as set out in document (SEC12D 01).

2.2 Members also confirmed that the Director of University Services (PPE) and the Head of the Equality, Diversity and DBS Service would be added to the membership of the Committee with immediate effect.

2.3 Members also agreed that 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. LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Members received a presentation from the Director of Library Services, Mr Nick Lewis (SEC12 D02) on future developments of the University Library.

3.2 The Committee noted that Library services were under constant review considering feedback from surveys such as the NSS, the ISD and UEA's own SES.

3.3 In response to such surveys, the Library had already responded to the need to increase the number of more computers and 48 additional computers had been added over the summer 2012.

3.4 Members heard that 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.

3.5 Members were informed that there was a need for more PG group study rooms in the Library which could be located in various places across the Library.

3.6 The Committee heard that there was a need for a larger eating area combined with a social study area and plans had been drawn up to develop the Library encompassing a café. This would need an investment of approximately £1.2 million by the University to make this happen and members agreed that the University should fund further development of the Library as one of its priority capital projects.

4. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

4.1 The Committee considered a report from Dr Annie Grant, the Dean of Students on latest activities discussed at the Student Affairs Group (SAG) (SEC12D03) and a presentation on the student usage of services offered by the Dean of Students' Office.

4.2 Members heard that the latest activities discussed at the Student Affairs Group were the following:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- the 24 hour, 365 days a year opening times of the University Library was welcomed by members of the Student Affairs Group;
- processing visas and renewals had led to an increase in the workload for the International Student Advisory Team;
- police registration of international students required a regular space to be made available at the University, members of DOS and LTS would work together to find a satisfactory solution;
- considerable work had been carried out by the President of the GSA to inject a new vibrancy into the Association;
- 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 with the Hubs and the PGR Students' Office.

4.3 Member received a presentation on student usage of services offered by the Dean of Student' Office and noted the following:

- the Office of the Dean of Students' provided a comprehensive service providing advice and guidance to support students' wellbeing and studies by specialist teams of advisers covering learning enhancement, finances, wellbeing, disability and dyslexia, international students, residences and general information;
- 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; 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;
- there had been a huge increase in the services offered by the Learning Enhancement Team which was pleasing, but was also reflective of an increasingly diverse student body;
- 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;
- 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;

- the International Team had spent a considerable amount of time assisting students in renewing their visas to comply with UKBA requirements;
- there was now a much needed DOS presence at UEA London.

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

5. FAITH ON CAMPUS

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

6. CHANGES WITHIN THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

6.1 The Committee received a presentation from the President of the Graduate Students' Association on recent development within the GSA.

6.2 Members heard that 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.

6.3 The Committee noted that 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).

6.4 Members noted that 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.

6.5 Members were informed that 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.

6.6 The Committee heard that 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 masters students and JIC/IFR representatives on the GSA committee, identifying more suitable social space and improving the GSA website and communication channels.

6.7 Members were pleased to note that there was evidence that a vibrant GSA had contributed to the retention of research students at UEA and 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.

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

7.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Community Office of the UEA Union of students on the annual student survey results.

- 7.2 Members were informed that 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.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that in ranked order, students had rated the following services as most important: student societies, course representation, sports clubs, home run and the Union Advice Centre.
- 7.4 Members noted that the 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 while non-Union services on campus which students valued most were: Employability, Sports Park, Careers, Zest and the Blend.
- 7.5 The Committee heard that there had been a significant increase in respondents' use of bars and shops in the Union as well as being involved in other activities such as societies, clubs and volunteering in comparison with the previous year and that 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.
- 7.6 Members were pleased to note that in general the majority of respondents agreed that the Union made a positive impact during their time at UEA.
- 7.7 The Committee noted that the Union had a tight budget and that this may lead to a decrease in services offered by the Union in future years.

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

Members were informed by the Academic Officer of the UEA Union of Students of the following joint activities between the University and the UEA Union of Students which the UEA Union of Students was keen to highlight:

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