

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014

Present: the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Professor N. Ward) (in the Chair), the 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 Undergraduate Education Officer of the Union of UEA Students, (Mr C. Rand), the Postgraduate Education Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr L. Mccafferty), the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms H. Staynor), the International Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms S. Glakousaki), the Campaigns and Democracy Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr C. Jarvis), the Activities and Opportunities Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr Y. Yu), the representative from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Dr C. Matthews), the representative from the Faculty of Social Sciences (Dr P. Dawson), the Joint Head of the Careers Service (Mr J. Goodwin), the Academic Director for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (Dr N. Watmough), the Head of Student Services, INTO (Mr B. Parsons)

In attendance: Ms J. Amos (Deputy Dean of Students), Dr R. Maguire (HUM Associate Dean for Employability) for Minute 6, Mr J. Dickinson (UUEAS, Chief Executive), Mr J. Clare (UUEAS Head of Student Engagement)

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

Apologies: the representative from the Faculty of Science, (Dr P. Mayhew), the Director of Estates (Mr R. Bond), the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the representative from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Dr J. Vitkovitch), the Independent Member of Council (Ms V. Keller-Dorsey)

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed new members to the meeting.

2. MINUTES

Confirmed
the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 22

3.1 Arising from Minute 22, the Chair had spoken to the Academic Director for Postgraduate Research Degree programmes who would raise the issue of ensuring that key reading for PGR students were available to them, at the

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Library Forum. It was confirmed that appropriate mechanisms to secure specialist texts were necessary and should be agreed with the Library.

Minute 22

3.2 Also arising from Minute 22, with regard to publicising the existence of a safe room for students who might have to leave their accommodation in an emergency, it was confirmed that relevant DOS, Security and UUEAS staff were aware of this. Those involved felt that it had been appropriately publicised.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

There were no statements from the Chair.

5. UPDATE FROM THE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

Received

an oral update from the PVC (Academic) on progress in key areas since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Chair updated Committee members on progress that had occurred since the last meeting on the following:

- i. Student Accommodation Pricing: this was now discussed at the SU Forum and there had also been separate meetings with Mrs Linda Shepherd, Deputy Dean of Students and UUEAS representatives.

The UUEAS Chief Executive advised members that this week UUEAS would be writing to the University to express its disappointment at its process for determining student accommodation pricing, as the University had already set the level of income it expected to receive from accommodation rents.

- ii. Faith: a Multifaith Consultative Group chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) with the Dean of Students, a representative from the Chaplaincy and representatives from UUEAS had been established. It meets twice a year.
- iii. Time for Change: the University's Equality and Diversity Committee had set up a Working Group to look at the UUEAS plan of action for the Time for Change Initiative. The group would be looking at a University plan of action which it was hoped would sit alongside the UUEAS pledge.
- iv. Students with outstanding debts: the UUEAS Education Officer advised members that graduating students had been emailed in April 2014 by the Congregation Office about Congregation. This email continued to re-iterate that students would not be able to graduate if they owed a debt to the University, which was contrary to other undertakings which the Union believed had been made with respect to students owing a debt.

Resolved

the UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer would provide the email in question to the Secretary to the Committee, who would clarify the University's position with the Director of Planning. Measures would then be taken to address any ambiguities arising from this email.

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6. UEA SKILLS AWARD

Received

an update from Mr James Goodwin and Dr Richard Maguire on the UEA Skills Award (SECD14D08 refers).

- 6.1 The Joint Head of the Careers Service gave an overview of the Skills Award and how it had been developed in UEA. Members were advised of the following:
 - i. Student focus groups were being undertaken, including an international student focus group, to get feedback on the proposals. Employers had been consulted and had been very positive about the award, seeing it as a value added initiative.
 - ii. A pilot scheme would take place between February and June 2015 and it was hoped that there would be between 50 and 100 students per faculty (excluding FMH which had its own skills related initiatives). It was intended to roll it out the awards in October 2015.
 - iii. Consideration would be given to offering a postgraduate (taught) award, within the next twelve months.
- 6.2 Dr Maguire gave an overview of reasons for HUM's strong support for the proposal. It was seen as being a way of helping students articulate what they were learning, which is directly related to employability and their lives after graduating. HUM now required all Schools to have 30% of its modules engaged with the Skills Award.

Resolved

the Dean of Students would meet with the Joint Head of the Careers Service to discuss mechanisms for ensuring that students with disabilities were able to participate in the Skills Awards.

7. UEA STUDENT ACTIVITY EVENTS AND GROUPS

Considered

a paper from Mr Jim Dickinson, the UUEAS Chief Executive on non-affiliated sports and activities (SEC14D01 refers)

- 7.1 Members considered a proposal from the UUEAS Chief Executive that where student groups or planned activities used the UEA name, the activity would have to go via a legal vehicle through UUEAS or a legal vehicle of the University. This would ensure appropriate levels of oversight, risk management and intervention for the event or activity, if necessary.
- 7.2 The UUEAS Chief Executive noted that UUEAS representatives were already in discussions with colleagues in the Dean of Students Office and ARM to address the issues raised in the paper.

Resolved

- i) the proposals outlined in the document were agreed;
- ii) the Directors of University Services and Executive Deans, all of whom have responsibility for staff should be advised of the proposals so that they could bring them to the attention of their staff;
- iii) the Chair would discuss with the Head of Equality and Diversity whether an Equality Impact Assessment was required for the proposals.

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8. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WORKING GROUP

Considered

A report from the International Students Working Group (SEC14D02 refers).

- 8.1 The Deputy Dean of Students informed the Committee that a Working Group had been established to look at improving the experience of international students whilst at UEA. At its first meeting the group had looked at aspects of dissatisfaction arising from the Student Experience Survey. It had also examined existing initiatives,
- including a Working Group to improve the arrivals experience for all new students, the enhancement of international student orientation, buddy schemes for international students and peer to peer language support. Further consideration was being given to how these initiatives were communicated to international students to ensure they were aware of all the support and opportunities available to them.
- 8.2 It was confirmed that the group would consider the experience of PGT, PGR international students and INTO students. This would include improving the experience of international students transitioning from INTO and becoming UEA students. The group would also collaborate with ARM to develop a coherent communications strategy.
- 8.3 It was reported that UUEAS has its own student caucuses including one for international students. The UUEAS International Officer agreed to share information from that caucus with the working group. It was noted that the Careers office had employed two interns looking at experience of Chinese students, particularly with regard to employability. It was agreed that any relevant information from this would be submitted to the Chair of the group as would anything relevant following the Dean of Students' analysis of the Adviser survey.

9. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT 2012-13

Considered

an update on any actions arising from recommendations made in the 2012/13 UUEAS Student Experience Report (Parts 1-3) (SEC14D03 refers).

Resolved

- i. any outstanding actions from the 2012/13 report would be considered at the UUEAS Academic monthly meetings and the Assessment and Feedback Working Group.
- ii. a report on decisions made following consideration of the report by these groups would be submitted to the February 2015 meeting of the Student Experience Committee.

10. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT 2013-14

Considered

the UUEAS 2013/14 Student Experience Report (SEC14D04 refers)

- 10.1 The UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer gave an overview of the report. UUEAS had identified five key priorities for 2014/15. These were Organisation and Management, Learning Resources, Equality,

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Assessment and Feedback and Advice and Study Choices: Joint Honours/Sandwich courses.

- 10.2 The Chair noted that the process for taking forward the issues identified in the report and timescales for action, where appropriate, needed be agreed. A timeline for processing the report and working out what could be delivered by when would be produced.
- 10.3 Following discussions about some of the proposals contained in the report it was agreed that the Director of Learning and Teaching Services would investigate a problem with regard to the late release of PHA timetables in September 2014. The LTS deadline for the release of timetables for continuing students, which was mid- August each year.
- 10.4 The Chair noted that that the most appropriate fora for considering matters relating to students on joint honours required further consideration. It was agreed that it was crucial that joint honours was fully taken into account in the 2015/16 Course and Module update process which was currently taking place.
- 10.5 Members acknowledged that a number of the actions proposed in the report could be taken at School or Faculty level not just at University level.

Resolved

- i) the Chair would produce a paper on the University's response to the UUEAS Student Experience Report 2013/14 for the Committee's meeting in February 2015;
- ii) the PGT/PGR Student Experience Report would be presented for consideration at the February 2015 meeting of the Committee;
- iii) the Chair would ask the Faculty Executive Deans and the Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) to draw staff attention to the key issues contained within the report. It should be considered by all Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees;
- iv) the Director of the Learning and Teaching Services would investigate a problem with regard to the late release of PHA timetables in September 2014.

11. HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY INSTITUTE (HEPI)/HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY (HEA) STUDENT ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE REPORT 2014

Received

the 2014 HEPI/HEA Student Academic Experience Report (SEC14D05 refers).

- 11.1 Members' attention was drawn to the executive summary to the report. The report contained some positives, including high levels of student satisfaction with their course. In particular the correlation between higher levels of contact hours and increased student satisfaction was noted. Also noted were students' views on hidden course costs and how these impact on their perception of their course. It was agreed that the report could provide some useful benchmarking for the University in a number of areas.

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12. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE

Received

a summary report from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group (SEC14D06 refers).

13. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS GROUP, STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE AND LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Received

Membership and terms of reference of:

- Student Affairs Group,
- Student Experience Committee,
- Learning and Teaching Committee (SEC14D07 refers).