

LTC14D248

Title: Student Experience Committee
Author: Michele Pavey
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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 meetings held 11 February 2015 and 29 April 2015

Recommendation

None

Resource Implications

None

Risk Implications

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Timing of decisions

N/A

Further Information

Ms Michele Pavey, Learning and Teaching Manager, extension 2097, email M.Pavey@uea.ac.uk

Background

N/A

Discussion

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

Attachments

The summary reports are below.

Report of the Meeting of the Student Experience Committee on 11 February 2015

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meeting on 11 February 2015 and are presented for the information of Learning and Teaching Committee members:

1. INTERNAL CONSULTATION FOR THE UEA 2030 VISION AND PLAN

- 1.1 Members received an oral update from Fiona Billings, UEA Communications Officer, on internal consultation for the UEA 2030 Vision and Plan. They were advised that staff, students and alumni were being consulted on 2016-2020 UEA plan and strategic vision up to 2030. On 16 February key UEA and UUEAS staff would spend 24 hours gathering opinions via face to face and online consultations. The overarching question for the launch would be 'What should UEA be in 2030?'
- 1.2 Responses from the consultation would be collated and analysed and key themes picked out and considered in more depth. www.uea.ac.uk/2030 would be open for comments and feedback until June or July 2015.

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

- 2.1 Members considered the Students' Union recommendations to the UEA responses on the 2013/14 Student Experience Report, SEC14D08 refers. The salient discussions from the recommendations are outlined below:

1. *A printing allowance for students*- the Director of Information Services advised that it was for the University to decide whether a printing allowance is funded. Members' attention was drawn to a student petition on the issue which to date had 700 signatures;

2. *Publication on the UEA website of estimated student living costs*- members agreed that this was desirable and was work in progress;

3. *Single key text for each module* –the Chair noted that new software had been purchased which will work in Blackboard modules to deliver digitised learning materials. However, the Director of Information Services warned that provision of reading lists to the Library was sometimes problematic. Often lists were not submitted to the Library and so software would only improve the process if the Library received the relevant information from Module Organisers;

4. *Refurbishing older areas of campus* – The Director of Estates and Buildings informed the Committee that by end of March 2015 a 25 year asset survey would be finalised. This would help identify the level of investment required by the University and prioritisation of key estate;

5. *Generalised examination feedback*- this was now being provided. However members of UUEAS were concerned about how the University communicated with students about where and when they could obtain this feedback stating that this needed further consideration. The Director of Learning and Teaching Services undertook to take this matter to a meeting with the PVC (Academic), Associate Deans (L&T) and the Academic Director of Taught Programmes.

3. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: GRADUATE STUDENTS STRATEGY

The UUEAS Postgraduate Education Officer informed the Committee that in 2014/15 UUEAS was focussing on the experience of postgraduate students in more depth. The creation of his post was an example of Union's commitment to the postgraduate experience. He advised members that the Postgraduate Student Strategy would be presented for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

4. REFLECTIONS ON THE OPERATION OF THE UNION OF UEA STUDENTS ADVICE CENTRE

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report on work undertaken in the UUEAS Advice Centre, SEC14D10 refers. 2013/14 saw the number of students using the service increasing. Students

came predominately for academic related or housing advice. Nursing students were the highest users of the service, mainly presenting with academic related issues. UUEAS staff would be looking at this statistic further to ascertain why this was. The Dean of Students noted that Nursing students were also the biggest users of DOS services. It was agreed that the DOS Office would work with UUEAS to ensure there was no duplication of effort or support of services provided to these students.

- 4.2 For 204/15, based on this year's findings, UUEAS would seek to give students more basic knowledge on key issues such housing contracts need. Adapting to changing student numbers and expanding demand would be two key issues as would ensuring students are signposted to the right services first time. The establishment of an Academic Engagement Team was an important resource for the UUEAS and particularly for student officers.
5. COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY (CMA) CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ADVICE FOR HE PROVIDERS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW
- 5.1 The Committee considered a paper from the Union of UEA Students relating to the Competition and Market Authority consultation on draft advice for HE providers on consumer protection law, SEC14D11 refers. The UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer advised the Committee that the UUEAS had undertaken research on how UEA policies and processes compared with consumer laws as outlined by CMA. The paper outlined some key areas where UUEAS believed improvements could be made.
- 5.2 The Director of Planning noted that UEA had responded to the Office of Fair Trading with regard to using academic sanctions against non-academic debts. Thus, the University would no longer withhold certificates or degrees to students who had non-academic related debts to UEA. He advised members that he would be meeting with the Head of LTS (Quality) and the Head of Admissions to look at practice in other institutions and consider how UEA could meet best practice standards. Information available on the UEA website was also being examined to ensure consistency.
- 5.3 With regard to postgraduate research, the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes informed members that within the Terms and Conditions, under 5 c) of the paper, it was planned to educate new research degree students on a range of issues including Intellectual Property rights. This was noted by the Director of Planning as an additional item for consideration
6. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE UUEAS/UEA 'NEVER OK' SEXUAL HARASSMENT CAMPAIGN
- 6.1 Members received an oral update on the joint UUEAS/UEA 'Never Ok' Sexual Harassment campaign from the UUEAS Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer. The campaign aimed to highlight what sexual harassment is and how can it be reported.
- 6.2 As part of the 'Good Night Out' initiative campaigners had trained UUEAS managers, staff and student employed by UUEAS on sexual harassment A video had also been produced. Feedback on the work of the campaign had been very positive and phase two was being developed. This would include workshops and looking in more depth at key issues such as consent.
7. DEAN OF STUDENTS' OFFICE AND ISD LIBRARY REPORT
- Members received summary reports from the Student Affairs Group and Student Safety Group and an ISD Library Report, SEC14D11 refers.

The following items were considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meeting on 29 April 2015 and are presented for the information of Learning and Teaching Committee members:

1 UNION OF UEA STUDENTS: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT 2014

- 1.1 Members received an update on actions arising from recommendations made in the 2014 UUEAS Student Experience Report, SEC14D12 refers. Arising from Recommendation 3 of the UEA response document report relating to organisational problems on nursing courses, the UUEAS Undergraduate Education Officer reported that the UUEAS now have a staff member from its Education and Engagement team assigned to working with HSC students. A report on issues of concern and proposed solutions arising from this work, would be published shortly.
- 1.2 Arising from Points 14-16 of the report relating to Joint Honours, the Committee resolved that the PVC (Academic), the Academic Director of Taught Programmes (ADTP), the Director of Learning and Teaching Services and the UUEAS Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education Officers would work on the top ten issues relating to joint honours students at their monthly meeting.

2. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS POSTGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

- 2.1 The Committee considered the UUEAS Postgraduate Student Experience Report, SEC14D13 refers. The report outlined five key areas and made recommendations, which were a mixture of action points and general commitments.
- 2.2 The Chair undertook to produce a table of the recommendations made in the report and the University's responses. This would be considered at the monthly meetings of the PVC (Academic), ADTP and the UUEAS Education Officers. It was noted that the issues pertinent to PGR students would be discussed at the PGR executive in June.
- 2.3 The ADTP agreed to give consideration to the merits of establishing a sub-group of the Student Experience Committee to look at the postgraduate student experience. This was pertinent as a New Academic Model for taught postgraduate programmes would be considered in 2015/16.

3. 2015 ANNUAL STUDENT UNION SURVEY REPORT

- 3.1 The Committee was given an oral report on key findings from the 2015 Annual Student Union Survey. 2195 responses had been received which equated to 16% of the student body, up 1% from last year. Findings showed a slight decline in satisfaction with the Union from last year. Most positive responses were about venues and bars. Students were least satisfied with retail (shop) and democracy representation. It was noted that the survey was carried out in December 2014 at the time when there were problems with queueing in the shop. However, it was noted that students had still expressed dissatisfaction with the Shop in the March/April Student Experience Survey.
- 3.2 With regard to traditionally 'hard to reach' student groups including PGT and PGR, members were advised that there was a UUEAS staff group for postgraduate students which was developing an action plan for postgraduate and international students.

4. TIMETABLING OF THE MAIN EXAMINATION SERIES

- 4.1 The Committee received a contextual document on timetabling of the main examination series, SEC14D14 refers. The University's Assessments and Quality Manager informed the Committee that for second year running the University had managed to ensure that students had no more than one examination a day in the main examination series. She explained that software problems caused significant difficulties with the summer 2015 examination timetabling which had impacted on some students. However, significant work had been carried out to ameliorate these problems. She noted that a broken-backed semester, course work deadlines and course test scheduled in Week 12 and in the examination period had caused some student discontent.

4.2 The Committee considered the contextual document. The main options presented to address student concerns were to have a requirement that coursework submission deadlines would be set no later than a pre-agreed date to enable students to focus on their examination preparation. There would also be an expectation that course tests would not be set in the examination period. Consideration would also need to be given to priorities when scheduling examinations. Currently timetabling was largely random to ensure equity.

4.3 Members heard that the UUEAS representatives view was that students would prefer no coursework, dissertation deadlines or Course Tests during the examination period. Also, having a buffer between the end of teaching and the start of examinations was deemed to be important. It was agreed that UUEAS representatives should consult further on possible priorities for timetabling examinations, outlining very specific options and highlighting possible ways forward. The University's Market Research Manager would work the UUEAS representatives on this.

5. GENERAL REGULATIONS 1-12

5.1 Members noted that no changes were proposed to General Regulations 1-12 for 2015/16, SEC14D15 refers.

5.2 A report on non-academic student disciplinary cases 2012-14 was submitted for information. Members were advised that the number of non-academic cases was less than last year. Figures for anti-social behaviour were declining. It had been found that where interactions with students, Senior Resident Tutors and Security Officers were positive the number of formal cases was reduced.

6. MULTIFAITH CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Members considered an update on the work of the Multifaith Consultative Group, SEC14D16 refers. Members were advised that the consultation group meets three times a year. In view of limited attendance at the last meeting consideration was being given to whether a different sort of forum might be more appropriate. This would include whether to continue with the existing group or have multifaith matters as a standing item on SEC. The Chair would review the most appropriate forum for consideration of multifaith issues and invite UUEAS for input on the matter.

7. REPORT ON HIDDEN COURSE COSTS

7.1 The Committee considered recommendations arising from a UUEAS report on hidden course costs. The report can be found http://issuu.com/ueasu/docs/hidden_course_costs_draft_nine 10 key recommendations were made which UUEAS members felt would significantly lift the burden of costs on students.

7.2 Following consideration of the report it was agreed UUEAS representatives should send any examples where they deemed there was a lack of transparency on course costs on the UEA website to the Director of Planning.

7.3 It was also agreed the recommendations outlined in the report would be taken forward and a response formulated. The Chair undertook to ensure that the recommendations were considered by the Executive Team. He noted that some of the recommendations had resource implications which would need very careful consideration. It was also agreed that the recommendations in the report would be discussed further at the monthly meeting with the Chair, the Academic Director of Taught Programmes and UUEAS representatives.

8. COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ADVICE FOR HE PROVIDERS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW

Members received an update on actions arising from the Competition and Market Authority consultation on draft advice for HE providers on consumer protection law, SEC14D17 refers. It was noted that the Director of Planning was aiming for the University to be as compliant as possible with the advice for HE providers on consumer protection law by 1 October 2015.

9. TIME TO CHANGE: MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

9.1 The Committee considered a draft UEA Action Plan, SEC14D18 refers. The Chair advised members that UEA was ready to sign the Time To Change pledge and the draft Action Plan outlined its commitment in this area. It was agreed that clarification was required on who owned each of the commitments.

9.2 The Committee resolved that SEC should be the body which takes an overview of the plan and that there should be an annual planning exercise involving the PVC (Academic), the Dean of Students, the Equality and Diversity Manager and the UUEAS Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to plan and allocate responsibilities for taking the plan forward. It was also agreed the Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees would ensure that further consideration was given by relevant staff and students to clarifying where responsibility for PGR rested and the Academic Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees would investigate whether there was any online support or training in Mental First Aid to ensure relevant staff were trained in mental health issues.

10. CHANGES TO THE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Members considered and approve proposed changes to the University's Bullying and Harassment Policy, SEC14D19 refers. These would be submitted to LTC for formal approval.

11. ISD LIBRARY REPORT

The Committee received an update from the Library, SEC14D20 refers.

12. 2015 STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY OUTCOMES

Members received an oral update from the University's Market Research Manager on the non-academic question of the Student Experience Survey.