

SENATE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2009

Present: Dr B Astin (Chair)
Mrs M Barron; The Revd Dr D Hart; Mr A James; Rev Canon Dr B Merrington; Mr N Richardson; Mr F Ruffle; Dr E Mytton; Mrs F McMillan; Dr J Palfreman-Kay.

Student Members: Daniel Matalon; Scott Bellamy.

In Attendance: Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk).

Apologies: Ms J Hanson; Mr C Elder;

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (26 November 2008)

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 2.1.2: Work on positive PR is ongoing. It was noted that Matthew Bennett was to be featured on the front cover of 'Science' magazine.

Minute 3.1.3: Review of procedures during Open Days is an ongoing activity.

Minute 3.1.4: There had been no further developments regarding the introduction of the points-based immigration system, and it was noted that complaints had been raised by other organisations regarding the lack of guidance from the Home Office.

Minute 3.2.1: There had been no further developments regarding residence issues for students on 30 week placements and it was agreed to come back to this issue at a future meeting.

Sec

Minute 3.2.3: It was noted that improvements had been made to the arrivals week process and the Chair thanked SU for their input. It was confirmed that this would continue to be a 2 week process – an 'Arrivals' week coupled with an 'Induction' week.

Minute 3.4.1: A direct bus link between Corfe House and the Lansdowne is being considered as part of the current contract re-tendering exercise, with the new contract to commence in September 2009. However, students can use the Wilts & Dorset M1 and M2 services from Poole Bus Station to the Lansdowne after 9.00am for the same fare as other Unilink services. Members noted that the Accommodation Service tries to avoid housing students in Corfe House unless they are based at Talbot Campus.

Minute 3.2.2: A decision on funding for SU volunteering activities had been postponed. This would be picked up again at a future meeting.

Chair/Sec

Minute 5.5.1: A paper was noted by the Committee, setting out the measures being taken to improve the graduate employment service at partner colleges. In particular it was confirmed that these students were entitled to the same level of support and that the service was available for up to three years after graduation.

Minute 5.8.2: The Library has a booking system through which 50 PCs can be booked for academic use and the Library website states that these should not be used for social networking purposes. It was noted, however, that many students use social networking sites for academic purposes, e.g. to discuss group projects and share links to resources.

It was agreed that a policy of gentle encouragement to dissuade students from misuse of the PCs would be used. If this failed and the level of complaints increased, further action would be considered.

JH

Minute 5.9.1: The problems with the broadband connections at Okeford House had now been resolved and regular service level reports are being received from CableCom via Signpost.

3. REPORTS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

Chaplaincy

The Committee noted and welcomed the report presented by the University Chaplain. Highlights included the multi-faith involvement in the recent Red Cross collection, and the support of the Talbot Village Trust for the Chaplaincy Ambassadors programme.

Counselling Service

The Committee noted the report and welcomed the clear signs that the service was being used by students in many ways.

The Committee discussed the use of attendance registers as an indicator of potential problems, particularly for first year or vulnerable students. It was noted that the University's policy was not to use attendance registers but to leave students to take responsibility for their own attendance. Some professional bodies, however, require attendance records and they may also be a way of monitoring students contact with the University for Visa purposes. There may also be Health and Safety reasons for knowing which students were on campus. It was suggested that new technologies, such as SMART cards may be the answer.

Student Advice Centre

The paper was noted by the Committee, and it was highlighted that recent staffing/organisational changes had proved successful.

Student Representation

The report was noted by the committee. Highlights included the evaluation of the system, including the use of the Student Voice Survey, and the very high scores achieved for training.

It was agreed to consider adding a student representative link to the Student Portal. A development meeting for the Portal was due to take place next week and this would be raised, together with any other points which SUBU wished to submit to Mandi Barron.

MB/SUBU

Learning Support Services

The Committee noted the report which was taken as read. Demand for services had remained steady.

4. DIGNITY, DIVERSITY & EQUALITY (DDE) ISSUES

Work was progressing on the Impact Assessment pilots, and work on the Forum Theatre project was ongoing. It was noted that a replacement for Emma Stephens was to be recruited very shortly. Work was also continuing on the partnership with Prejudice Free Bournemouth & Poole.

5. NUS STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

The Committee noted and discussed the summary findings for 2008. Members considered the value of 'the Student Experience' as a factor for potential students when considering which Universities they apply to. It was noted that, although the report provided some interesting findings, it was difficult to interpret them without knowing further details, particularly the sample size involved.

6. STUDENT APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT

- 6.1 The Committee noted the report and the challenges in maintaining an efficient complaints process were highlighted. It was noted that the number of complaints had risen slightly, but that this was to be expected in the light of the introduction of the new procedures and was not considered a cause for concern.

7 STUDENTS' UNION MATTERS

- 7.1 Students' Union President's Report.
7.2 Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey
7.3 Block Grant vs Student Experience

The Committee noted the SU President's report, which focused on the latest Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey. BU achieved an improved 58th place in the survey and the report detailed some of these results. The Committee also noted a paper comparing these results against the Block Grant available. This suggested that good value was achieved for the current relatively low level of grant.

The Committee discussed the issue of Semesterisation (or hybrid forms of Semesterisation) and the impact this might have on Student Experience. It was agreed that SUBU would raise their concerns at Senate for further consideration.

FR

8 PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW

- 8.1 The KPIs were noted by the Committee. There was a brief discussion of the KPIs and whether they all related directly to Student Experience (e.g. measures such as the Average Tariff).

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday, 13 May 2009, 2.15pm
Wednesday, 25 November 2009, 2.15pm
Wednesday, 24 February 2010, 2.15pm
Wednesday, 12 May 2010, 2.15pm

Noel DG Richardson
Secretary & Registrar
February 2009

Geoffrey Rayment
Committee Clerk
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Approved as a true and accurate record:

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Dr Brian Astin (Chair)

Date:.....