

SENATE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2007

Present: Mr M Riordan (Chair)
Ms R Appleton; Mrs M Barron; Mrs J Beard; Prof M Hadfield;
Mr B Howard; Prof T Husband; Mr A James; Mr P Kneller;
Mr N Richardson; Ms Z Zuvcenko

In Attendance: Ms A Fernandez (Item 3); Mr S Neaves;
Ms A Gutiérrez (Secretary); Mrs V Wood (Committee Clerk)

Apologies: Mrs R Dugan; Rt Rev T Thornton; Ms J Winter

The Chairman welcomed Ann Fernandez and the Vice President (Representation) elect, Sam Neaves to the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (14 February 2007)

The Minutes were approved as a correct record.

1.1 Matters Arising

1.1.1 Medical Services

A meeting will be arranged during the summer period with the Bournemouth & Poole NHS Primary Care Trust to discuss health provision for the student population.

1.1.2 Chaplaincy

The Chair advised a new Head of Chaplaincy had been appointed, Canon Dr Bill Merington, who will be joining the University during the summer.

1.1.3 Any Other Business: Council Tax Payments by Students

The Secretary and Registrar had written to the Chief Executive of Bournemouth Borough Council over student issues with the present council tax system, but had received no reply. A reminder would be sent.

S&R

1.1.4 Voluntary Work for 2012 Olympics

Mrs Beard reported on meetings with members of the Students Union on volunteering for the Games. Through the Hub, the Union will be supporting and highlighting volunteer opportunities, ensuring consistency and cohesion through discussions with interested parties. Further information will be available at the next meeting.

JB

2. REPORTS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 The following Annual Reports were taken as read: the Careers Service and Placement Unit; the Department of Sport and Recreation; the Music and Performing Arts, and the SUBU Volunteering and Learning & Development Department.

2.2 Members thanked those concerned for producing the reports.

2.3 Careers Service

- 2.3.1 Actions arising from the on-going review of the Careers Service were currently under discussion with the University Executive Group. It was anticipated that a new Head of the Service will be appointed within the next few months.

2.4 Sports and Recreation

- 2.4.1 Members expressed concern that students would be adversely affected should the University lose its Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) accreditation, at risk due to the upwards revision of provision and performance standards and fewer qualifying sports. The University Executive Group was conscious of needing to have appropriate sports facilities, and this was actively being discussed with the Head of Sports and Recreation. Members were advised that BU featured in a national league table in the top 20 UK Universities for academic sports provision, despite the University only recently engaging in this area.

- 2.4.2 Members also discussed the University's support for sailing. With the 2012 Olympic sailing events being held at Weymouth, an active involvement in sailing could provide a good opportunity to attract interested students. The Head of Sports and Recreation would be investigating how the University could attract those students who wanted to combine elite preparation for the Games with studies. Levels of student interest in sailing had fluctuated from year to year in the past, but generally it had been insufficient to maintain effective relationships with local sailing clubs. Different alternatives of funding such as sponsorship and fundraising opportunities should be investigated; Mrs Beard agreed to initiate discussions with the General Manager of the Students' Union in order to move this forward.

JB/AJ

- 2.4.3 With the University's increasing involvement in the game of "Futsal" further information on this sport was requested to be attached to the Minutes.

Sec

Extract from 'History of Futsal' from TheFA.com

*'Keen to emphasise the South American roots of a sport that the likes of Ronaldo, Denilson and Roberto Carlos all grew up playing, **Futsal** was the name chosen by FIFA for the only version of 5-a-side football that it supports, when it took over as the governing body of the sport in 1989.'*

*[Its name is derived from the Portuguese **futebol de salão** and the Spanish **fútbol sala/de salón**, which can be translated as 'indoor football' – Wikipedia]*

'Essentially 5-a-side but with some twists on how the game is currently played across most of England, Futsal has been designed to provide a high paced, energetic, fast flowing game for spectators at the same time as allowing players to be at their most creative by protecting those showing attacking flair.'

The end-to-end, non-stop, goalmouth action has proven a hit with the fans as the number of professional leagues in the world game grows every year. Russia, Portugal, Italy, Brazil and Argentina all have professional leagues along with Spain, the current World Champions, whose league regularly attracts over thirty thousand spectators a week to its games.'

3. askBU and talkBU PROJECT

- 3.1 Ms Ann Fernandez, Head of Marketing, and Ana Gutierrez, Deputy Registrar, gave a presentation on the main features of these two inter-related projects: askBU for future students and talkBU for those students currently at the University.
- 3.2 To be operational from September 2007, askBU would provide quality information through an extended hours' service given by a dedicated team of advisers. There would also be a 24/7 "Virtual Advisor" that could monitor and measure responses. All student enquiries (postgraduate, international, full and part time, distance learning and partner college students) would be included as well as access to appropriate support services information such as accommodation and library resources.
- 3.3 The service will also improve tracking of conversion rates and follow-up processes as well as identifying successful marketing activities that led to enrolment. Training, another key element, was currently being developed; on-going communication between Schools and Professional Services was highlighted as key to the success of the project.
- 3.4 Ms Gutierrez advised the talkBU project, aimed at current students, will have a different emphasis, providing support and information on non-academic issues such as accommodation, exam timetables and funding as well as helping to achieve clear understanding of students' rights and obligations. The dedicated team will be supplemented by others as appropriate, such as the Student Advice Centre and Careers Service, who could run workshops or clinics. As with askBU, the service will be supported by Virtual Advisor and training was seen as crucial.
- 3.5 talkBU will be a first point of contact, so should specialised services be required, students would be directed, or appointments arranged, with appropriate areas. At present the type and level of services provided, compared to current provision by Schools and Professional Services, was being identified. From September 2007, there will also be made an internal "helpline" in student residences and it was planned that HE students in partner institutions will be contacting the service through a freephone telephone number.
- 3.6 While also operational from the next academic year, talkBU's introduction would be staggered as handover was made from Professional Services and with the date of its presence on Lansdowne campus yet to be confirmed.
- 3.7 Members learnt that the majority of enquiries from future students were expected to be sufficiently generalised to be answered directly by the service. Any questions requiring detailed knowledge will be referred to School academics or administrators, although the adviser would be responsible for gaining satisfactory answers. It was emphasised that the University did not wish to create a second tier nor student uncertainty and that the initial transition period would clarify the boundaries over areas of referral, with these subsequently forming part of the team's training.
- 3.8 With recruitment already underway, members discussed whether the proposed number of staff would be sufficient and the crucial role of the advisers. Levels of demand will be monitored carefully, as well as the role of the Virtual Advisor in filtering queries. Over time the service will provide opportunities for Professional Services to promote their work, and also supplement the team at certain peak periods.

- 3.9 Members learnt that the Virtual Advisor will be regularly updated and monitored. Initially data would only be in English, although other languages may be added at a later stage.
- 3.10 The Students' Union had expressed concern about the Student Advice Centre (SAC) losing some incidental advice enquiries. However, over time SAC should gain more referrals as greater information on its role became more widely available, and via occasional "clinic" sessions.
- 3.11 Members were informed that many other Universities now offer this type of centralised information and advice centres to its enquirers and students. Both projects will adopt performance indicators to monitor demand and quality of the services. Keeping abreast of developments in the sector was also seen as crucial.
- 3.12 Members thanked Ms Fernandez and the Secretary for their presentations and agreed that a review of the two projects should come to Student Affairs Committee at its meeting in May 2008.

Sec

4. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN THAT MAY IMPACT DIRECTLY ON STUDENTS

- 4.1 The Chair gave a summary of current progress, with the Strategic Plan now in its third phase. Schools had started the quantification of their Plans, and the Interim Director of Finance was integrating these into School and Professional Services budgets.
- 4.2 Members learnt that, subject to funding, a "Dean of Student Experience" post was being proposed. The successful candidate, accountable to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education), would have responsibility for Student Services and take a pro-active view of the student experience, comparing it to other Universities in terms of improving provision and anticipating future needs.
- 4.3 The University was considering specific proposals for additional flexible social/learning space provision for students. However, Members were advised that any proposed new building, or alternative use of an existing one, would not be completed until 2011, even if planning was starting now.
- 4.4 The Chair informed Members that semesterisation had been agreed in principle by the Senior Management Team. As a significant change, this would require a full discussion at Senate on its academic implications and any issues around support services. A project group headed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor included representation from Deans and Professional Services staff.

5. STUDENTS' UNION MATTERS

- 5.1 The President of the Students' Union reported only 800 students had voted in the elections, with a very small number of students running for office.
- 5.2 A current issue for students was the provision of campus laptop storage facilities and possible renting of laptops for specific projects, field trips etc.
- 5.3 The President gave the provisional results of the SU Living Survey, prior to a summary being compiled and circulated. Drawn from e-mail responses across the institution, the survey concentrated on students living experiences, working arrangements and funding. Results showed that 56% of students were in paid work, mostly in retail, hotels or bars. The main reasons given for having to

work were money for basic essentials (65%), and to avoid getting into debt. Around 30% of students worked between 6-12 hours a week, with 3% working over 26 hours. This latter result required more analysis on whether these were part time students. Students' principle source of income was given as allowance and grants (60%) then part time work, with parents as the third major source.

- 5.4 Members felt that an analysis of those paying or not paying under the new fee structure, and differences between first and subsequent year students would be of interest.
- 5.5 Members noted that most students at Partner Institutions accessed the college's own student portal in preference to the BU site. Ongoing discussions with Academic Services and IT aimed to improve this situation and promote the usefulness of the BU e-mail system.

6. REVIEW OF STUDENT REGULATIONS

- 6.1 Mandi Barron, Assistant Registrar (Regulation) reported that only minor changes to the regulations were required this year. The academic offences procedures had changed to allow Partner Institutions to chair their own Offences Panel, as well as introducing a procedure for students to allow them to prepare a paper statement when they are unable to attend panels for genuine reasons. A fuller review of the Regulations was planned for next academic year.
- 6.2 An updated Fees Policy, which incorporated increases in fee levels, changes in the refund policy and some minor adjustments, was approved by the Fees Board in April and is now on the University web site.
- 6.3 The University-wide Student Handbook, first published this year, had been well received by students and will be continued, although re-written to give a more supportive approach. In response to the findings in the Freshers Survey, the Handbook will be distributed earlier and will continue to be available both electronically and as hard copy, the latter being the preferred option by the students. Complementing this staff will receive from October 2007 a Staff – Student Support Handbook, which is being developed by Heather Hartwell in Services Management, as part of her Learning & Teaching Fellowship.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS AND THEMES FOR 2007-08

- 7.1 Members noted a paper showing a schedule of proposed themes for future meetings. The dates for the 2007-08 academic year were confirmed as: 14 November 2007; 13 February 2008 and 14 May 2008 all at 2.15 pm.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

Ana Gutiérrez
Secretary
18 May 2007

Vikki Wood
Committee Clerk
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