

SENATE AND UNIVERSITY BOARD

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2008

Present: Dr B Astin (Chair)  
Mrs M Barron; Mrs J Beard; Mrs R Dugan; Mr C Elder; Professor T Husband;  
Mr A Hyland; Mr A James; Mr P Kneller; Mrs F McMillan;  
Rev Canon B Merrington (*part*); Dr E Mytton; Mr S Neaves; Mr N Richardson;  
Ms Z Zuvcenko

In Attendance: Ms J Hanson;  
Ms E Stephens (Item 4)  
Student Representatives: Mr M Locane; Ms T Humphreys; Mr S Delamere  
Ms A Gutiérrez (Secretary); Mrs V Wood (Committee Clerk)

Apologies: Professor M Hadfield; Mrs F McMillan

*The Chair welcomed the Reverend Dr David Hart to his first meeting as a Board representative, and to the student representatives, Matteo Locane, Terry Humphrey and Simon Delamere to the meeting.*

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (13 February 2007)**

The Minutes were approved as a correct record subject to two amendments: under Item 2.6.2 reference to the International *Student* Support Team, and Item 9.2 the first sentence to read “the University Chaplain raised risks that *vulnerable* students or staff ...”

**1.1 Matters Arising**

**1.1.1 Counselling Services**

The Secretary & Registrar had raised the issue of greater awareness by partnership students over counselling arrangements with the Head of Partnerships, and this was being communicated to partnership institutions.

**1.1.2 Student Representatives**

The Chair advised there was continuous liaison between himself and the Deputy Deans (Education) throughout the Institutional Audit preparations that would ensure all paperwork was gathered together.

**1.1.3 Administrative Process Review**

Members were informed Stephen Avery had now left the University and progress of the Administrative Process Review had become the responsibility of Professor John Vinney, the new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Resources), to whom any comments should be sent.

**1.1.4 Semesterisation**

At the Senate meeting in March 2008, the decision had been taken not to proceed to semesters. Although it was envisaged the 2009-10 academic

curriculum may contain elements of semesterisation, such as greater cross University standardisation, but contained within the current number of weeks. The possibility of retaining a slot for examinations in January to accommodate one unit/one term modules was also being explored. It was intended to introduce fixed terms from 2009, which would mean vacation periods possibly falling outside of the Easter period, although Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday would be retained, but where possible these would coincide with School holidays.

1.1.5 “At Risk” Students

The Chaplaincy’s joint forum of aid providers such as Counselling Services, Medical Services and Chaplaincy had held their first meeting to form their Terms of Reference.

1.1.6 myBU

The Head of Academic Services advised the University already had a student-focused user group, the Academic Services and IT Services Student Advisory Group, which covered all Academic Services and IT Services provision and had SU representation.. This was the most appropriate place to raise concerns about myBU or additional learning needs issues, although any specific issue or difficulty in the latter case should go to the ALN Service and for more general enquiries to the IT Help Desk.

**2. REPORTS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**

2.1 The following Reports were taken as read: the Graduate Employment Service; Department of Sports and Recreation; Music and the Performing Arts; Student Development and Volunteering Work.

2.2 Members thanked those concerned for producing the reports.

2.3 The Reverend Dr Hart raised the possibility of Sports and Recreation and the Music Department attending the joint “At Risk” forum being run by Chaplaincy to reflect the therapeutic benefits these had been shown to have on vulnerable students. Members were informed by the Chaplain that negotiations with the Sports Department for free access to this group of students were in their final stages. Members welcomed this development and agreed greater cooperation with the Sports and Music Departments should be taken forward by the Chaplain.

**BM**

2.4 Awards for volunteering were being given for the first time this year by the Students’ Union with the University hoping that, from 2010, that this could gain transferable credits. Members agreed the ‘good news’ stories in the report should be promoted, particularly within the local community to improve relationships. Mr Elder, as the University’s Press Officer was requested to take this forward.

**CE**

2.5 Members learnt the learning and development unit was located under the Students’ Union as its key objective was for students to engage in local community work, although it also provided training for staff.

**3. UPDATE ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

3.1 The Chair informed Members that the current focus was on enhancing the first year student experience, as part of the “student journey” within the University. Proposals had been considered by the Senior Management Team and were now being progressed. Apart from the developing the existing Peer Assisted

Learning (PAL) to every student, tutorials and voluntary language provision would be encouraged. Statements through VLE would aim to improve communication over changes to staff, and the reasons for doing so, as well as to explain the transformation taking place in the content of new programme structures and unit changes.

- 3.2 The Students' Union, raising variances in student feedback for cross School units were informed students remain enrolled on a particular programme and any opinions over these units as a particular element could be expressed at that level. Members were also informed the reviews of existing programmes into frameworks and monitoring unit change had student input throughout the process.
- 3.3 Members were informed that the distinctive roles of "programme" as opposed to "framework" leaders had not yet been resolved, but were reassured there would be a key person to whom the students can relate to, and that individual comments and issues could still be accommodated within a framework structure that would be capable of adopting exceptions where appropriate.
- 3.4 Members agreed that the final proposals being put forward on first year student experience should be brought for discussion at the next meeting, although the Chair would email the outline proposals prior to this. **Chair**
- 3.5 Members were given details of a recent conference on the first year student experience, which had been attended by members of the Students' Union Executive, and learnt the majority of institutions had currently a piecemeal approach to initiatives. Members were reminded BU's consolidated approach, such as the PAL initiative being available to the majority of students, was in the forefront of the sector and would be further developed to become part of BU's 'brand'.

#### **4. STUDENTIFICATION**

- 4.1 Members noted the paper prepared by the Chair and learnt that the relationship between the University and its neighbourhood was a sector wide concern with particular issues at BU in Winton and over car parking. It was emphasised problems were caused by a minority, some of whom were not BU students and were primarily in areas where accommodation was provided through private landlords, and not University-run residences.
- 4.2 A phone line had been set up to take residents' complaints, although the number of calls had been minimal. Other measures, aimed at greater engagement, had been attending the Winton Forum, providing material for the local public website and offering to host meetings on campus. The Chair, as Dean of Student Experience, and the University's Press Officer would be discussing other measures that could be taken but these would be aimed at encouraging students to be active in the community, including taking forward students automatically being included on the Electoral Roll through the on-line admission processes, providing some Data Protection issues could be resolved.
- 4.3 Professor Husband outlined his experiences at Salford and at Loughborough Universities and advised an emphasis had been placed on the benefits students brought to the area; the encouragement of local meetings and social events, and the University's leisure facilities being open to the community. Members agreed that, whilst there were drawbacks, the enhancement to the economic and voluntary activity in the community should be stressed, and the differences between students and residents life styles acknowledged.

- 4.4 Members learnt that, should the proposals for a new building on Fern Barrow be developed in the future, one of its functions would be to provide facilities for community based activities. Dr Hart also recommended approaching local faith groups to act as links and mediators within the community to celebrate the presence of students
- 4.5 The Chair welcomed any suggestions from Members to bring forward to liaison group meetings.

**Members**

## **5. GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

- 5.1 Jacqui Gush, Head of the Graduate Employment Service attended, and tabled some additional statistics on the Graduate Employment Service. Particularly highlighted within the Services' Report was the proposed development with askBU in the promotion of careers. It was noted that the proposals to use "The Base" at Bournemouth House had now been cancelled, although discussions with Registry were continuing over alternative provision in this area.
- 5.2 There were less concerns on the Talbot Campus, although issues over Kimmeridge House's inaccessibility, but improvements to the quality of the service depended on the proposals to open Career Offices within Schools being able to proceed. This initiative, based on a "Subject Librarian" model, would provide general information on employability and careers and give greater accessibility. The Committee's support for this project was sought, to add to positive responses already received. Efforts were also being given to bringing career education into the curriculum, although the recent meeting of the Academic Development Committee had felt this was unlikely, whilst supporting the development of on-line resource materials through myBU being used by staff and student groups or for independent student learning.
- 5.3 Members discussed the Appendix to the Report which gave a framework for employability as part of the student learning experience, and specifically the statement that all students should engage in some form of work experience during their programme of study where reservations were expressed that this may not be possible where there were large cohorts of students and that some form of caveat should be included.
- 5.4 Members learnt that work placements had been a problem in some areas, but mostly resolved through Schools providing something equivalent. However it was felt students would have an expectation that, if the programme specifications stated work experience, this was applicable to their discipline and may cause problems if this was not the case. Members were concerned that not obtaining placements would mean students there could also not see job opportunities in their future careers, a situation already recognised by forensic science students in the School of Conservation Sciences, who considered the degree course could achieve broader skills. It was felt that non discipline related work experience would increasingly be needed as the University moved into more generalised areas such as History and English.
- 5.5 Dr Mytton emphasised that developments should be considering a greater emphasis on the interface between the University and the curriculum itself generating work experience through projects.
- 5.6 Members concluded the statements referring to work experience in the Appendix were too restrictive and recommended this be amended to reflect the discussion.

**JG**

## **6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY REPORT**

- 6.1 Emma Stephens, the Diversity and Equality Adviser attended. Members were advised the Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report had been produced and could be viewed on the Diversity and Equality website and incorporated into the Dignity Diversity and Equality Annual Report produced during the summer term. The Race Equality Scheme was also on the website and would be included in this Annual Report. As it was likely that the Government would introduce a single Equality Duty from 2010 it would be important that all elements of equality and diversity reporting were brought into similar formats.
- 6.2 The Diversity Awareness week in March had been well received and plans were being made to repeat this next academic year. An on line survey would obtain feedback on the last two years events to establish how students felt and for ideas of future diversity awareness events. The events arranged by the MA Events Management students in March had successfully contributed to diversity awareness initiatives, and impacted work into the whole of the DDE agenda. It was expected this would continue next academic year, and possibly include undergraduate students and encourage links with local organisations.
- 6.3 An in house staff training initiative was being developed for a forum theatre style Diversity and Equality training programme, which it is hoped would eventually be rolled out to students under the Your Best You initiative.
- 6.4 The joint Jewish, Islamic and Christian SU Societies interfaith meal had been well attended and would be continued through Chaplaincy.
- 6.5 BU will be participating again in the Bourne Free festival in July, as a good opportunity to promote the University as a diverse organisation and this year have some student participation
- 6.6 The actions required under the Guidelines on Equality Impact Assessments had now attracted some funding from Human Resources which would provide additional assistance to Dr Palfreman-Kay to progress work in this area over the next few months.

## **7. PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

- 7.1 Members noted that the performance indicators relating to student experience showed a general move in a positive direction. A significant rise in the response rate for the National Student Survey, to over 60%, was also noted, although Members were reminded this gave judgements based on a snapshot in time and was based on headline figures.

## **8. STUDENTS' UNION MATTERS**

- 8.1 The President of the Students' Union, Adam Hyland, presented his report and particularly welcomed the presence of a number of Board Members, which reflected the key nature of this Committee within the University's structure.
- 8.2 There were continuing concerns over students living at Corfe House and their ability to socialise with the remainder of the student body. It appeared that, despite negotiations to achieve a 50% funding from the University on the night bus service, this was now being withdrawn. In order to continue the service, which was seen as generating greater student engagement in Poole, the Students Union had taken on the whole expense. Members were informed the

total cost of such provision was cf3k, and that, as no reasons had not been given for the decision, the Chair volunteered to investigate the matter further.

**Chair**

- 8.3 Members discussed the important issues implied over the provision of the Poole bus service and the likelihood that existing students would respond to applicants queries by highlighting the difficulties of the accommodation in Poole with future detrimental effects on being able to fill the Corfe House residence. The Students' Union were already receiving comments about providing more facilities in Poole, while students still felt the need to come to Bournemouth for socialisation. A higher student mass, and a venue for social facilities, were required in Poole to change this situation. Whilst unfortunate, Members were informed this situation was unlikely to affect League Tables, as these were drawn from final year student surveys.
- 8.4 Members were informed the Chair, as Dean of Student Experience, was consulting with the Students' Union over the impact of lengthening academic hours on three days to accommodate pressures on timetables and the implications this had for students such as for child care. However, it was hoped after the implementation of academic changes this would no longer be required.
- 8.5 The Students' Union had introduced award ceremonies for Clubs and Societies, to give an opportunity to reflect on successes and on achievements. There would also be volunteer awards that recognised individual achievements and fundraising efforts. The Students' Union was requested to ensure Board Members were made aware of the dates of these ceremonies, as it was felt efforts would be made to attend where possible.

**SU**

## **9. REVIEW OF STUDENTS REGULATIONS FOR 2008-09**

- 9.1 Mandi Barron, the Assistant Registrar (Student Policy and Support) advised, as a joint Senate and Board Committee, Members had been delegated the authority to approve alterations following the annual review of the student related policies.
- 9.2 The Academic Appeals and Student Complaints Policies had seen few alterations, following review, although there were two significant changes. These were the introduction of a more formalised filtering stage, handled by Registry, between non resolution at School level and formal appeals procedures and the clarification that, should a student be unwell, or could not attend an appeal, this could go ahead in their absence, or be withdrawn.
- 9.3 Various comments on the Policies were raised by the Students' Union, and noted by the Assistant Registrar (Student Policy and Support) including a clearer definition of the seriousness of an issue that required a response to a complaint and more specific references to Students' Union as a body who could be appointed by a student as an outside group for support and representation. Members were assured that when details are sent out to students for the appeals and complaints procedures, information on the Students' Union was also included.
- 9.4 Members approved the Academic Appeals and Students Complaints Policies and Procedures effective from September 2008
- 9.5 Members were advised that, as there were no changes to Bursaries, Fees or Scholarship Policies these had not been circulated to Members. For effectiveness, it had been decided a review of the Academic Offences Policy would be postponed for a year until after the completion of the Assessment Review.

- 9.6 Members were informed some minor changes had not yet been incorporated into the Admissions Code of Practice and it was agreed this could be approved by Chair's Action. **Chair/MB**

**10. FUTURE MEETINGS AND THEMES FOR 2008-09**

- 10.1 Members were advised that, under the new Senate structure, the Committee's remit would become broader and have greater responsibility to the Senate and Board for reports on the whole range of student experience. Consideration was therefore needed for substantive issues to be raised as themes for the meetings for the next academic year.

- 10.2 Members recommended a review on the effectiveness of the developments planned to enhance the first year student experience. The involvement of services such as counselling and the medical centre in the student experience could also be explored. The theme for the next meeting of the Committee, during the Autumn Term, was agreed as including the proposals for setting up Chaplaincy's "At Risk" group and its link with Schools and Professional Services. **Chair/Secretary**

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Students' Union President and Vice President, Representation were thanked for their efforts for the Committee during their term of office.

Ana Gutiérrez  
Secretary  
16 May 2008

Vikki Wood  
Committee Clerk  
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