

**SENATE (with Board Representation)**

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2010**

Present: Prof J Vinney (Chair)  
Mrs A Allerston; Ms M Barron; Mr S Bellamy; Mr G Darnton; Dr M  
Humphreys; Mr A Ireland; Mr A James; Ms J Jenkin; Mr P Kneller; Rev  
Canon Dr B Merrington; Dr J Palfreman-Kay; Mr J Ricci; Mr P Ryland

Student Representatives:  
Mr D Carter; Ms L Ellis; Mr R Frame; Ms E Kinsley; Ms H White.

In Attendance: Mrs A Gutiérrez (Secretary); Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk); Ms D  
Sparrowhawk (for Dr Dyer).

Apologies: Mrs J Dawson; Dr B Dyer; Mr C Elder; Mrs F McMillan;

**ACTION**

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (24<sup>th</sup> February 2010)**

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Item 2, Minute 7.3: Ms Jenkin reported that work on the re-development of the Student Portal was ongoing.

Item 5, Minute 5.1: The Chair reported that he had investigated the previous poor performance by the Media School on the KPI for the three-week turnaround time for assessments. This was a temporary problem resulting from one member of academic staff who had been ill during the reporting period and this had adversely affected performance against this target.

Minute 5.2: The Chair reported that work was also ongoing to consider the introduction of appropriate additional performance indicators which might better measure the wider student experience.

Minute 7.1: Ms Jenkin reported that the findings of the study into the needs of mature learners were being taken into account as part of the wider review of student experience (to be discussed at Item 3, below).

**3. FIRST YEAR STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

3.1 Ms Jenkin gave a presentation on the current state of discussions regarding first year student experience and the outcomes from the recent 'away day' meeting (comprising members of SAS and student representatives) which focused on this topic (presentation showing key themes and findings is attached at Annex A).

3.2 Discussions had considered Students' current views on life at BU now. Responses had shown a focus on social and community aspects of student life and the need for students to feel 'grounded' and part of a community. The division between

Talbot and Lansdowne campuses had been highlighted, with students based at Lansdowne sometimes feeling excluded from the wider University community.

- 3.3 Another factor which raised a number of issues was the initial induction process for new students and activities during arrivals week. There was broad agreement that the induction process was helpful, but that it would be beneficial for this process to continue into the academic year. This might be achieved through extending the induction activities over a longer period of time (for example, with sessions on plagiarism delayed until students were beginning work on their first assignments), or by holding 're-fresher' activities to re-cap on some of the key induction information. The usefulness and importance of pre-arrival information was also noted. There was also agreement on the importance of the involvement of academic staff during the arrivals week. The issues facing students who start their courses in January and June was also discussed and it was agreed that efforts had to be made to ensure that they received the same quality induction process as students starting in the autumn.
- 3.4 It was noted that student representation at the 'away day' meeting was not fully representative of all students, for example no international student representation was present. It was recognised that the student experience for international students and mature students would be different and that these students may face different issues; it was suggested, however, to focus on issues in terms of student need rather than grouping. The Committee discussed activities and processes which might help to encourage better integration between UK and non-UK students. Examples included the SUBU bike ride event and also the options available in terms of shared student accommodation. It was noted that the issues raised regarding integration were not unique to BU and that some other Universities had specialised in particular 'USP's which helped to focus student activity, such as Loughborough's specialisation in sport. It was suggested that the 'USP' for BU was the added value that it provided in terms of cost and academic quality.
- 3.5 The Committee discussed perceptions of BU and possible factors which influence students' decision to study here, including Bournemouth's reputation as a desirable location. Members also discussed the issues associated with the 'drinking culture' and how this formed the focus for many of the students' social activities. It was felt, however, that this was a general social trend among young people rather than a specific BU issue, and that there should be efforts to ensure that students who did not drink should still have access to appropriate social activities.
- 3.6 In summary, Ms Jenkin summarised the aspirations for the BU student experience, which included treating students as individuals, providing clear information via effective communication mechanisms, being friendly, responsive and accessible and promoting a sense of belonging. The next steps would be to 'sense check' further the findings with key stakeholders before devising a strategy and action plan.

JJ

#### **4. STUDENTS' UNION MATTERS**

- 4.1 Mr Ricci introduced his report which summarised the main Students' Union activities during the academic year. Student participation had increased in most areas. A first year experience officer had been elected. Two quorate general meetings had taken place during the year, which was an improvement on previous years. 300 students had signed-up to the Leadership Programme and close relationships were built with local community forums. The number of clubs and societies had grown to its highest level during the year, some of which were

earning BUCS points (such as rowing and surfing). Representations had been made on a number of issues of importance to the student community, including transport issues and academic staff redundancies. SUBU had also been accredited with the silver Sound Environmental Impact award. Mr Ricci also gave feedback on the Student Advice Centre's housing campaign, where students ranked local letting agents. The Committee noted the report and the Chair welcomed the very positive and productive progress made by SUBU during the year.

## **5. PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

5.1 The Committee noted this report and the Chair highlighted the figures in relation to the 3-week turnaround target for assessments and the widening participation targets. Mr Darnton suggested that the need to measure added value would become increasingly important as this was a key metric in the production of the Guardian league tables. Ms Jenkin agreed to consider this further with Mr Darnton out of committee with a view to introducing this as a future performance indicator.

**JJ**

5.2 Members also asked whether further detailed data could be provided on the withdrawal rates, for example whether these were due to failure to meet academic requirements or where due to self withdrawal by students. Ms Jenkin agreed to investigate this further.

**JJ**

## **6 ACCESS AGREEMENT**

6.1 Ms Gutiérrez informed the committee that, following consideration by the Fees Board, there would be no changes to the Access Agreement this year. Members noted that applications for the Citizenship Scholarship had to be made by March and that this potentially discriminated against those students starting in June. Ms Gutiérrez agreed to consider this further with Ms Barron.

**AG/MB**

## **7 REPORTS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **7.1 Student Service Report**

7.1.1 The report was noted. Due to a printing error some pages of the report had been accidentally omitted from the meeting papers and these will be circulated separately for the information of members (attached at annex B). In future a single report for SAS would be presented for the information of the Committee. Chaplaincy and Counselling services, however, would continue to submit separate reports as needed.

## **8 PROPOSED THEME FOR NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The Committee agreed that the IT and Estates Strategies should form the theme for the next meeting. Following discussion it was agreed that the IT Strategy would form the focus of the discussion, with a report on the Estates Strategy also being provided for information. Dr Humphreys would discuss the reports with SUBU prior to the meeting to ensure that they met the Committee's requirements and formed an appropriate basis for discussion.

**MH/SUBU**

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 Mr Bellamy tabled a report on concerns over the relationship between research and teaching at BU which followed on from concerns which had been raised at the previous meeting of the Senate. The report summarised research findings on the relationship between research and teaching in Higher Education. The Students' Union concluded that the University should review its provision for Postgraduate Research students teaching other undergraduate students as this appeared to lower the student learning experience. Also, greater involvement by the Students' Union in the recruitment of lecturers could help to improve the student experience by ensuring a better balance between a candidates research portfolio and their ability to teach and communicate.
- 9.2 The Committee discussed the findings and the Chair confirmed that improved arrangements were now in place to monitor teaching quality. It was suggested that this might be considered as the basis of a performance indicator for future monitoring by the Committee.
- 9.3 The report will be sent to Senate for consideration as that was the forum where the issue arose.
- 9.4 Members also discussed concerns regarding the cancellation of lectures at short notice. It was noted that an SMS messaging system was being introduced which would help to notify students immediately if a lecture was going to be cancelled.
- 9.5 Dr Palfreman-Kay informed the Committee that the BU Gender Equality Scheme & Action Plan GES 2010-13: Achieving Equality for All had been published on-line.

**Clerk**

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Wednesday, 24 November 2010, 2.15pm Executive Business Centre

Geoffrey Rayment  
Committee Clerk  
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Approved as a true and accurate record:	
<p>.....</p> <p>Prof J Vinney (Chair)</p>	<p>Date:.....</p>