

SENATE (with Board Representation)

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2010

Present: Ms J Jenkin (Chair)
Mrs J Dawson; Dr B Dyer; Mr S Fletcher; Ms K Leach; Ms A Gutierrez; Mr F Homberg; Dr M Humphreys; Mr A Ireland; Mr A James; Mr P Kneller; Mr C McIntyre; Mrs F McMillan; Rev Canon Dr B Merrington; Dr J Palfreman-Kay; Mr J Ricci; Prof J Roach; Mr P Ryland

Student Representatives

In Attendance: Ms N Kett; Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk);

Apologies: Ms M Barron; Mr I Carter; Mr C Elder; Dr A Main; Mrs H McCarthy.

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (12 May 2010)

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

1.1 Matters Arising

Minute 3.6: The Chair updated the Committee on progress with the development of the Student Experience Strategy. Implementation would be based around three themes: student voice; student journey and student communities and Groups had been formed to take forward these different aspects. The draft strategy had been endorsed by ULT in June 2010 and Student Experience Champions had been appointed. A programme management structure had been defined and the programme reported to the Change Management Board. Further details were provided under Item 3 (below).

Minute 5.1: The Chair explained that she was continuing to explore options for measuring performance with the University Executive Team (UET) and would provide further updates to the Committee in due course.

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Minute 5.2: The Chair informed the Committee of an ongoing national project which aimed to contact students who had withdrawn from courses to obtain further data on their reasons for leaving and offer support to help them return to Higher Education where appropriate.

Minute 9.1: Mr James reported that progress had been made in increasing student involvement in the recruitment of academic staff, including recent Dean and lecturer appointments.

Minute 9.3: The SUBU paper on the relationship between education and research at the University was presented to Senate on 9 June 2010. As a result the Academic Standards Committee was undertaking a review of the use of research students for teaching (the final report was expected to be received in December). The Education Enhancement Committee were also considering the use of peer observation among teaching staff which would report back to Senate in due course.

2. THE BROWNE REVIEW AND COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW (CSR)

- 2.1 The Chair provided a brief verbal update on developments concerning Government Higher Education policy and funding arrangements. The full details of the impact of the CSR on the University were not yet known but it was generally felt that our financial position was resilient and the University was well placed to adapt to future changes. The University Leadership Team (ULT) was undertaking a series of special meetings to discuss key themes and work was taking place to engage staff and students in the debates around the University's future direction and strategy. Mr Horner informed the Committee that the University Board had explicitly asked that student representatives be involved in their future discussions on the University's strategy.

3. UPDATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Committee noted the Student Experience Programme update report. The Chair explained that the detailed development of the Student Experience Strategy was being undertaken by the Student Experience Steering Group and all projects reported to the Programme Board. Prof Roach assured the Committee that the structure provided the flexibility for projects to be prioritised as necessary and to take account of the complex inter-relationships between different strands of activity.
- 3.2 The re-drafted Student Experience Strategy would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting before being submitted to ULT and Senate.

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4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIGNITY, DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY STEERING GROUP (DDESG)

- 4.1 Dr Palfreman-Kay presented the 2009/10 Annual Report of the DDESG in respect of student activity and highlighted some of the key activities undertaken during the year. These included the re-refresh of the BU DDE policy and the Steering Group's Terms of Reference; the 'Respect' postcard campaign; staff development activities and the embedding of the Equality Impact Assessment into the change management process. The report included information on promotion and engagement activities with staff and students as well as work being undertaken to meet the requirements of the forthcoming Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 The DDE work programme for 2010/11 focused on 5 strategic themes (mental wellbeing; student experience; communication, engagement and promotion; legal compliance and 'other') and the Committee noted the details of the work programme set out in the DDE Action Plan. There was a discussion about the recent mental health campaign which was run during October to mark World Mental Health day. The Chair felt the campaign had helped to raise the awareness of mental health issues at the University. Dr Palfreman-Kay offered to present the evaluation report he would be presenting at the December DDESG meeting at a future SEC meeting. Dr Palfreman-Kay thanked SUBU representatives for their support and engagement with DDE activities during the year.
- 4.3 Members discussed the data accompanying the report and noted that the ethnicity profile was consistent with the region. The Committee also discussed how the activities and achievements in respect of DDE were communicated and it was suggested that the Head of Communications (Paul Breakwell) may be able to offer advice on how the information on the Portal could be given more prominence and better communicate the achievements of the Steering Group. The Chair thanked the DDESG for their work during the year.
- 4.4 Dr Palfreman-Kay confirmed that each School and Professional Service are represented at DDESG, and that they were currently seeking new members from two Schools and one Professional Service. It was also confirmed that Dr Janet Scammell was the HSC representative.

5 STUDENT VOICE STEERING GROUP (SVSG) REPORT

- 5.1 The Committee noted the minutes of the SVSG meetings and Mr Ireland presented an overview report of the Group's activities (tabled). Work had focussed on three main activities: replacing SUE for Unit level feedback; developing an online student experience strategy; and overseeing the National Student Survey (NSS). New academic guidance on unit level feedback had been rolled out to all Schools and would be reviewed by the SVSG in due course. ULT had supported proposals for the Student Experience Survey which will be deployed in April. This aims to replace a number of existing surveys and will not duplicate the NSS. The SVSG was also reviewing the optional questions available through the NSS and will report to the VC and IPSOS.
- 5.2 Three additional strands of work were being considered by the SVSG. These were how best to provide responses to students on the feedback they have given; the creation of a central depository of student feedback from different sources; and further consideration and evaluation of how Schools' Student Forums operate.
- 5.2 Members discussed the current surveys being undertaken and how these might be streamlined. Mr James offered to provide SUBU input into the discussions on the optional questions for the NSS.

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6 STUDENT EXPERIENCE KPIS

- 6.1 Ms Gutierrez presented the report on the 6 KPIS delegated to the Committee by the University Board and monitoring against the 3 week assignment turnaround targets. Two of the KPIS were rated as 'red'. Graduate employability in graduate jobs had decreased, but it was noted that this followed the current national trend. The target for 3 week assignment turnaround for postgraduate students was 85.1% against a target of 100% for 2009/10. The report also provided data on the NSS results of overall satisfaction which had reduced to 77% in 2010 from 79% in 2009, although it was noted that there was wide variation between Schools, with two Schools having increased their overall satisfaction score. Further analysis of this data was being undertaken to provide information for individual frameworks. The Chair noted that an analysis had been undertaken of the qualitative feedback received and this would be shared with the Committee.

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7 REPORT FROM THE SUBU PRESIDENT

- 7.1 The Committee viewed the video produced by SUBU (presented previously to Senate) in which students gave their views on the student experience. Key points were:
- The need for adequate and appropriate contact time;
 - Better lecture spaces with appropriate seating and facilities for all students;
 - The need for teaching staff to have good communication skills;
 - The retention of good teaching staff and achievement of a good balance between academic qualifications and teaching skills;
 - Good Library facilities with adequate supplies of course materials;
 - An efficient on-line timetable system;
 - Environmental factors such as better air conditioning/heating systems and more economical use of these facilities;
 - Deadlines for assignments can be short and sometimes coincide, putting additional pressure on the students.
 - Any changes to courses should be carefully planned so that they do not disadvantage the student (for example, when courses are discontinued)
 - Develop a single student engagement centre, bringing together all the sources of information and facilities for students into one place;
 - Consider changes to fully utilise the estate available to students, in particular by

bringing together the Students' Union and Sports BU facilities in Poole House.

- 7.2 Mr Horner gave a presentation on SUBU activities. Membership of clubs and societies and the number of students undertaking volunteering activity had increased. The 'NERVE' media project had received an overwhelmingly positive response and the TV launch was due to take place on 26 November. Interest in leadership training was increasing with more students enrolling on workshops. Over 400 student representatives had received training and a programme of GOAT/GOAL ('Go Out and Talk/Listen') sessions was ongoing and recently included sessions on graduate employment. Consideration was being given to holding a Student Representatives conference, possible to include Board and Senate members, to discuss high priority issues. The SUBU presence on the Lansdowne Campus had improved following the introduction of a new Lansdowne SUBU manager. Mr Horner reported on the findings from the visit to Boston. Key points were the successful way that they provided multi-use spaces and social spaces for students and how they installed a sense of belonging and pride in the institution, for example through merchandising. Finally Mr Horner informed the Committee of the BUnique SUBU campaign which would take place during the week 6-10 December. This would be a celebration of student involvement and comprise a wide range of events and promotional activity.

8 IT AND ESTATES STRATEGIES

- 8.1 Dr Humphreys gave a presentation on developments and planned activities in respect of IT and Estates, although the Committee noted that the respective strategies were likely to be reviewed in the light of impending changes to funding arrangements.
- 8.2 £400,000 had been invested in IT service improvements during the year, including improvements to the help services available and the creation of a new IT server room on Talbot Campus. Recent new IT systems included student e-mail; the student portal and online PG applications and timetables.
- 8.3 In terms of planned activities, the Board had approved a funding envelope of £[Confidential] to implement the IT strategy over 5 years, but this figure may be revised in the light of current funding changes. Subject to these possible changes, planned activities include VLE enhancement; online assignments, student communications; enhanced timetables, online employment & placement; a wireless upgrade and upgrades to Windows 7 and associated applications.
- 8.4 Dr Humphreys outlined the current service provision in terms of estates. This included the provision of 2900 student beds in halls of residence and Unilet properties, the estates helpline and the Unilinx bus services.
- 8.5 Planned improvements to the estate, subject to possible budget revisions (as above) included the Kimmeridge House development, new seminar facilities in Tolpuddle House; 210 additional student beds; a building energy management system; improvements to the PG study area in the Sir Michael Cobham Library; renewal of the sports pitches and the askBU base in Poole House. Longer term objectives included the vacating of Bournemouth House (Lansdowne) which was currently home to the School of Health & Social Care and was nearing the end of its functional life; new 'exchange' buildings on both Talbot and Lansdowne campuses; additional student accommodation; improved sports facilities and carbon reduction programmes.
- 8.6 Members discussed the presentation and which projects should be treated as investment priorities in terms of improving the student experience. There was general agreement that the wireless upgrade was a priority as well as improved access to PCs and safe storage and sockets for laptops. The Committee considered other ways of improving access to facilities, such as 24/7 opening times, although the demand for this would need to be carefully assessed. Costs of extended opening might be reduced by using different models of provision (for example, considering whether the library would necessarily need to be fully staffed during these hours). Schools might also consider

whether their existing resources (such as computer labs) could be 'stretched' to provide greater access. Members noted, in particular, that the facilities available in the EBC might be opened-up to a wider range of students that just Business School postgraduates. The Chair agreed to raise this issue with ULT.

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- 8.7 Members discussed the issue of insufficient seating being available in some lectures. Dr Humphreys stated that the key to avoiding this was for Schools to be aware of space restrictions and to ensure that courses were not oversubscribed. Additional seating would be installed where possible, but only where it would not conflict with health and safety requirements. It was noted that the situation would improve once the new Kimmeridge House space become available for use. Dr Humphreys confirmed that annual checks were conducted of all rooms to identify any issues and ensure they were fully functional. In addition health & safety checks were carried out by individual Schools.

9 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEBATE TOPIC FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was agreed that employability and placements would be the debate theme for the next meeting.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no other business.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday, 23 February 2011, 2.15pm

Geoffrey Rayment
Committee Clerk
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