

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

NOTES of the THIRD meeting of the STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

in the 2020-21 academic session held on Friday 5 February 2021, via Teams

Present:

Martin Snowden PVC FES (Chair)
Karen Brough, AD SAS-Registry
Paul Butler, DILS
Robert Hartley, HoES & PD
Niel U Lewis, GSU Officer
Mike McGibbon, DSE FES
John Schless, CEO GSU
Tania Struetzel, GLT
David Watson, DSE FLAS

Colin Allen, DSE BUS
Christopher Bustin, HIR
Mark Crittenden HoSC
Simon Leggatt, DSE FEH
Sara Ragab, AD SAS-Student Services
Stephanie Robinson, ICO
Chris Shelley, DSAS
Katarina Thomson, PAS

In Attendance:

Simon Lewis, Director of Strategic Planning
& Business Intelligence
Sharon Perera, ILS
Norma Powell, (Secretary) SAS

Apologies:

Bilal Ijaz, Pres GSU
Heidi King, DoC&R

The Chair welcomed Simon Lewis, the new Director of Strategic Planning and Business Intelligence, to the meeting. Simon introduced himself to members.

- SEC20.14**
- i) The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 3 December 2020, via Teams, were **approved**.
 - ii) **Actions Arising**
 - *SEC20.02 Review Membership and Terms of Reference*
 - Chair, DSEs and GLT to meet to look at the BAME Attainment Gap Project to see how SEC could move the agenda forward.

Completed. A paper on the BAME Attainment had been discussed at a meeting of the Academic Council. The Chair had approached the Vice-Chancellor to discuss an appropriate location for oversight of the project. She would like the project to sit under the SEC umbrella going forward and it was agreed that BAME Attainment Gap Project should be a standing item on the SEC agenda going forward.

Action: Item to be added as a standing item to SEC agendas.

Head of Student Centres to bring paper outlining remit of Student Engagement Team to next SEC.

Completed. Agenda item 5 refers.

- *SEC 20.07 University Survey Policy*

The University Survey Policy to be presented for approval to the Academic Council.

Completed. Academic Council approved the Policy at a meeting on 20 January 2021.

Action: KT to arrange for the updated policy to be uploaded to the University website.

- *SEC 20.12 ISB Outcomes - update*

DSEs to consider report and come back to next SEC with an action plan for their Faculty as to how they would address the main issues.

Completed. Faculties had provided action plans for their respective faculties.

Chair and HoI to approach VC and CFO to raise SEC concerns over ISB – namely accommodation and ownership of the International Student Experience. It had been confirmed by the Vice-Chancellor that this committee should consider the international student experience. Concerns over the condition of accommodation had been passed to the Director of Estates and Facilities and asked that this could be added to the schedule of works as a high priority. HIR said that positive publicity is needed and that he had looked at the Faculty action plans and identified the items which need to be communicated to students.

There was some discussion as to when the next ISB should take place. This usually runs on a 2-year cycle with the next one due in 2022. There is no budget identified to fund running the report. HoIR thought it would be beneficial to run the survey in 2021 to reflect the changes which have been implemented during the pandemic. However, it was agreed to wait until 2022 as the current situation is atypical due to the pandemic and there would be a different perspective from those joining in 2021.

Action: Chair agreed that representations would be made to central finance to request that a budget would be made available in order to run the survey in 2022.

- *SEC 20.15 Moving student email to Exchange online.*

DoLS to take SEC suggestions around timing of Moving Student email project back to IT Strategy Board.

Completed. The move to Exchange for students has been moved to the third weekend in May.

SEC20.15 GSU PRESIDENT'S REPORT - DECEMBER

Niel Lewis presented the GSU report to Council on behalf of the President GSU. He said that the Welcome 2021 programme had been run virtually this year due to the current situation but had still included events and activities planned to be as inclusive as possible – including Stressbusters, GSU Moves, building better communities, and hearing directly from GSU Officers.

The University had commissioned a Retention project to be run by the GSU, which ran to the end of term one and was based on the original GSU Wellbeing checks.

These were moved online and extended. As a result, 25000 calls were made and 6,000 wellbeing checks completed. The project had provided a touch point for students and raised awareness of services available.

The GSU's partnership with the University has included:

- Green week 2020 – discussion around climate change and how can we lead more sustainable lives.
- work on decolonising the University to ensure our institution addresses all aspects of diversity and celebrates inclusivity.
- Working on the coronavirus task & finish groups which were set up to assess, plan and action provision for the impact of Covid_19.
- Disability history month.

Student Voice – Two student assemblies had taken place in term one with active turnouts.

The Chair thanked Niel for the report and for presenting on behalf of the President GSU.

SEC **noted** the report.

SEC20.16 GSU (INCLUDING MEDWAY) TERM 1 MEMBERSHIP DATA AND LOOKING AHEAD

CEO GSU presented a report on membership data relating to the GSU and the GKSU. He said that a formal report will be presented to a future meeting of the SEC. All aspects of work by GSU and GKSU have been ongoing and successful and group memberships have grown. Sports have been unable to take place for most of the recent months. He said the retention project had been very successful in making students feel part of the University despite not being on campus and its success will hopefully be reflected in retention statistics. He will provide a detailed report to a future meeting of SEC.

The Vice-Chancellor has agreed funding for a second phase of the project to take place week beginning 15 February 2021.

With effect from 1 August 2021 GKSU will be incorporated into GSU. A formal board has been set up to look at all aspects of the transfer. A balanced GSU will be offered to students across all campuses.

Action: CEO GSU to present formal report on the retention project to the next meeting of SEC.

SEC **noted** the report.

SEC20.17 UPDATE ON PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Niel Lewis presented a report on programme committee meetings to the committee. He said that this is a key part of the representation strategy and the strategy had been presented to the joint meeting of the LQSE/SEC. Terms of reference will be agreed and an agenda template will be created. Agendas will be prepared in collaboration with at least 2 programme representatives. Meetings will take place once per term with dates being proved to the GSU academic representation team. by 1st October each year. PCM minutes will in future be presented to the FSEC meetings who will note the progress to date and note the actions and minutes from the meetings.

TS said the paper was presented in order for it to be noted that the student voice continues to be recorded in this exceptional year and that minutes will go to FSEC with students being able to view the minutes.

Students set agendas and lead the meetings which ensures actions can be taken as soon and as effectively as possible. It is a crucial forum which gives a reasonable timeframe for issues to be settled although issues raised are often historical and need to be in 'real time'. A formalised system to deal with student issues as they arise needs to be found so that they can be dealt with quickly by the University.

The Chair welcomed the report but commented that it seemed not to be the best way forward to deal with these issues and asked members to meet to discuss and return to the next meeting with a proposal for the best way forward.

Action: NL/TS/DSEs to continue the conversation and report back to the next meeting.

SEC **approved** the report on the Programme Committee meetings.

SEC 20.18 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TEAM

HoSC introduced a paper on the Student Engagement project. He explained that this is a new provision being developed by Student & Academic Services for which funding resources have been secured. The team is a separate provision to the Student Centre team, neither will it replace retention and success officers. There are both operational and project strands. Recruitment is ongoing for two roles and it is hoped that interviews will take place shortly. An engagement forum has been set up to share knowledge and best practice.

Members welcomed the development and agreed that it would be important to work with faculties and retention and success officers to ensure integration of services. Members also agreed that Student Engagement would be a standing item on SEC agendas in future.

The Chair thanked the HoSCs and said it was an exciting and welcome development.

Action: Student Engagement to be included as standing item on future agendas.

SEC 20.19 DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

Sharon Perera attended the meeting to present on the work of the Digital Champions. She explained that funding for the Champions was obtained from the Teaching and Learning project and runs from December 2020-March 2021. Their objectives are to provide peer assisted learning mentoring and to promote the digital learning agenda through coaching, teaching and online learning strategies. The six champions offer bookable digital 1-2-1 support sessions, workshops and curriculum embedded sessions etc. They will develop student led support sessions and undertake commissions from academic staff. As part of the University's digital strategy the champions will help to roll out JISC discovery tools.

The group welcomed the initiative and felt it was very important as a contribution to the student experience.

SP said it was difficult to get the message out and asked SEC to help raise its profile and to explore the long-term possibilities of the project. The Chair said he would be

happy to raise at VC level as its benefits are obvious and asked SP to let the committee know what would be required to help move the project forward.

Action: SP to advise Chair/Committee what is required to move the project forward and Chair agreed to raise at VC level.

SEC 20.20 UPDATE FROM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAS, REGISTRY

AD SAS-Registry updated the group on activity in the Registry area.

- All aspects of Interruptions and Withdrawals are to be revisited and she will keep members informed on any developments.
- The 'Major Disruption Complaints Procedure' has recently been re-introduced with the agreement of the Vice-Chancellor. This will be effective from 5 January 2021 until the end of the second week after the end of the current term when it will be reviewed.
<https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/student-major-disruption-complaints>
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) has introduced a new procedure within its Good Practice Framework to include 'additional considerations' (extenuating circumstances) following consultation. The University must be compliant by September 2021 therefore a mapping exercise will be undertaken by the Academic Registry and meetings will be held to identify any risks.
[Good Practice Framework: Requests for additional consideration \(oiahe.org.uk\)](https://www.oiahe.org.uk/good-practice-framework-requests-for-additional-consideration)

Action: The Chair expressed concern about where, as an institution, we are going with ECs and **asked to meet with AD SAS-Registry** to discuss. He invited others with an interest to join the discussion.

SEC 20.21 UPDATE FROM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAS, STUDENT SERVICES

AD SAS-Student Services updated the group on activity in Student Services.

- The Live well hub is a new initiative for students at AH and Greenwich and provides 45 minute coaching sessions for students.
<https://www.gre.ac.uk/articles/student-and-academic-services-sas/launching-our-live-well-greenwich-hub-for-students-studying-and-living-at-greenwich-and-avery-hill-campus>
- New funding from the Government has been introduced for students living in private rented accommodation. There are very few restrictions on who is eligible for the funding, but the criteria must meet Government requirements. The funds must be used by 31 March 2021.

The Chair commented that this was hugely welcome and will make a huge difference to some of our students in private rented accommodation. NL asked how much of the funding had been accessed?

Action: AD SAS-Student Services to provide details of funds provided for students living in rental accommodation.

- UKVI regulations for sponsored students under 18 year of age have changed and students must submit a signed Parent/Guardian consent. This had to be implemented by law and the Chair reviewed what was sent and agreed Chair's Action to fast track the procedure.

SEC 20.22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) STREAMLINING STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

DSE BU presented a paper requesting the streamlining of communications to students, on behalf of DSE FEHHS. Faculties receive many ad hoc requests from various areas of the University and the GSU asking for information to be passed on to students. This often leads to too many communications on the same subject being sent to students and can mean that the message is diluted.

Members agreed that a working group should be set up to look into this and to come back to SEC with recommendations.

Action: DSEs to set up working group to look at streamlining student communications, and report back to SEC.

ii) STUDENT SURVEY SUB-COMMITTEE

KT informed the meeting that the active phase of the NSS will be launched week commencing 8th February 2021 and PTES and PRES will be launched in late March. It has been decided by senior management not to run the Greenwich Student Survey (GSS) this year due to considerations that it might overload students on surveys.

SEC 20.23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Minutes of Student Survey Sub-Committee.

Minutes of Faculty Student Experience Committees:

- FES, 11 November 2020
- FES, 6 January 2021
- FEHHS, 8 December 2020
- FLAS, 7 October 2020

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 18TH March 2021, 2.00 pm (via Teams)