



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

### NOTES of the THIRD meeting of the STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

in the 2019-2020 academic session held on Thursday 23 January 2020,

in G104, Avery Hill Campus

#### Present:

Karen Bryan, DVC (Academic) (Chair)  
 Paul Butler, DILS  
 Simon Leggatt, DSE FEH  
 Iain Morrison, HMC  
 David Watson, Acting DSE FLAS

Colin Allen, DSE BUS  
 Christine Couper, DSP, PAS  
 Mike McGibbon, DSE FES  
 Chris Shelley, DSAS

#### In Attendance:

Heather Doon, GSU  
 Mayo Femi-Obalemo, GSU  
 Gedmintė Mikulenaite, VCO  
 Lynne Savage, (Secretary) SAS  
 Tania Struetzel, GLT

Simon Earp, EF  
 Abbia Maraiah-Andog, UGIC  
 Sara Ragab, AD SAS  
 Jono Smith, GSU

#### Apologies:

Marianne Boyle, HoSS  
 Christopher Forster, DEF  
 Henry Setter, Pres GSU

Christopher Bustin, HIR  
 John Schless, CEO GSU

**SEC19.15** The minutes of the meeting held 27 November 2019 were **approved**.

#### Actions Arising

##### *SEC19.P008 President's Report*

GSU (Jono) for Pres GSU reported that the winter break activities had gone well, with over 150 goodie bags distributed, and he wanted to thank everyone for their hard work and support. Chair asked that he prepare a 1-page report on the impact of what GSU did, along with any recommendations, to take to VC group. Chair also thanked Bilal for organising the events, full credit to him.

**ACTION:** GSU (Jono) to prepare review of winter break activities for VC group.

This **closed** the agenda item.

##### *SEC19.P009 NSS Support 2020*

DSE's had been reminded to contact GSU with dates for NSS input.

This **closed** the agenda item.

##### *SEC19.P012 Registration and Welcome – review*

Chair had held further discussions around the registration review with DSAS, and planning work was ongoing.

This **closed** the agenda item.

*SEC19.P014 Fire Safety in Residences*

Chair had advised DSAS that SEC were not supportive of implementing fines for disciplinary breaches in University accommodation.

This **closed** the agenda item.

*SEC19.P015 Proposal to Amend Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)*

A meeting to discuss the suggested amendments to the policy was due to be held. Chair asked for an amended document to be brought to next SEC.

**ACTION:** HOSW to bring updated Exam Access Arrangements policy to March SEC.

## **SEC19.16 GSU PRESIDENT REPORT**

GSU (Jono) for Pres GSU, presented *SEC19.P018 GSU President Report January* and outlined the main points. GSU were in the middle of the NSS push. The report gave details of each officers' main campaign, but they were of course involved in many more campaigns. GSU were delivering Stress Busters, and the SU elections were coming up. Wellbeing checks had been run for January starters, and registration had been supported. He highlighted an issue around the production of new ID cards for students who had lost theirs, and needed one to enter exams, and said they had to be pulled from the long queues to come to the front to get their card quickly. However, DSAS said that the fact they were being identified and brought to the front, proved the triage system was working. Varsity was taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

GSU reported that 19 NSS lecture "shout outs" had been booked, which the Chair felt was quite low, and reminded DSE's of the importance of getting the sessions booked. DSE BUS reported a couple of "no shows" of GSU officers, and GSU agreed to investigate this. DSE FES said they had their first "shout out" this morning.

The report mentioned Global Week and the Chair asked that Bilal advise the Secretary of the date, so SEC could be aware. Staff could be reminded to encourage students to attend.

Chair thanked GSU for their work, and particularly for the Stress Busters.

DOLLS advised that the Varsity Day clashed with LQSC being held at Medway. Chair agreed to move LQSC to Avery Hill to enable more members to attend.

SEC **noted** the report.

**ACTION:** GSU (Bilal) to advise Secretary of dates for Global Week to be distributed to SEC.

**ACTION:** Chair to speak to Donovan Synmoie, GLT, to move LQSC meeting to Avery Hill.

## **SEC19.17 KEY PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROCESS FOR WITHDRAWAL AND INTERRUPTION**

GSU presented *SEC19.P019 Key Principles for the Process for Withdrawal and Interruption*

Chair advised that this report arose from concerns expressed last year by SEC around differing withdrawal and interruption practises in Faculties, and two task and finish groups had been looking into the matter. She felt the policy was fine, but implementation was not consistent. Pres GSU and VC Policy officer had put together the feedback. VC Policy Officer explained this was a first draft, and comments were welcomed.

The report suggested 4 stages, and some quick fix solutions, plus some longer-term objectives. They needed to discuss the draft further with the RSO's (Retention and Success Officers) Currently Stage 1 appeared to suggest that students should agree to terms before they knew what those terms were. The Chair said the process should be more positive, and students were encouraged to stay on programme, rather than being an efficient method of withdrawal and interruption.

DSE BUS said he had looked at the suggestions and didn't see how they would work without an effective CMS (Casework Management System). GSU agreed that it would be a struggle without an electronic system in place. Chair said that it was important to identify any process improvements in the shorter term given that we do not have such a system.

DoLS said ILS were already looking at implementing a Student Relationship Management CMS and this report added value to the business case, which was welcomed by SEC. DSAS was advised that the University wanted to go ahead with this without the system. The Chair felt the University could do better than they were doing, even without a system. Communications could be reworded more positively, without delay. She was happy if the report added to the business case for a new CMS. DSAS said we needed to have procedure with systems as they currently existed.

DPS said that the system had been managed before, via spreadsheet, so it could be done. However, she was more concerned about the numbers of withdrawals of students who completed their first year, and then did not return, as these were a more significant number. DSAS said there were two issues, and both needed to be addressed. AD SAS felt the guidance needed to give people the capacity to turn withdrawals into interruptions and make it a positive intervention. VC Policy Officer stressed the language would be more positive and people would be trained appropriately.

DSAS said that the keys to success were the RSO's. The DSE's agreed but said they were not in place in all Faculties, and the guidance did not match the reality of what the RSO's were doing. There was some concern about their workload, and the different approaches of each RSO. The Chair agreed they were the key, but that academic staff had to communicate with the students too – the RSO's could ensure those communications took place. DSE FEHHS agreed with DPS about the students who just never came back being a concern. AD SAS felt that her team could help if financial issues were part of the problem. VC Policy Officer said it was a first draft, and a sense check was required of what the journey should look like. Acting DSE FLAS agreed that academic involvement was needed, and that sometimes difficult personal circumstances were raised during discussions, which would need addressing. It was generally agreed that further talks were required, and VC Policy Officer and Pres GSU should meet with DSE's to take this forward.

Chair said there was no intention to criticize current work of the RSO's and felt this needed to be emphasised.

SEC **noted** the report.

**ACTION:** Pres GSU, VCPO and DSE's to meet to discuss further the process for Withdrawal and Interruption.

## **SEC19.18 MEDWAY BUS SERVICE REVIEW**

Transport Manager (TM) presented *SEC19.P020 Medway Bus Service Review* which had been prepared following negative feedback received from users during the autumn term. He outlined the key points – although there had been a 7% increase in student headcount, bus users had increased by 42%. On occasions, people had been left behind as the buses were full, which was obviously a concern. This was the first term of the new service. There were two issues – firstly capacity. Alterations needed to be made to the timetable, but TM was not sure where, and wanted to consult the student body. Extra times could be put in, e.g. buses at 4.00 and 4.30, instead of one at 4.15. These significant increases would obviously cost money. Of the 90 Greenwich-Medway departures, 21 had been increased in capacity, a total of 151 extra vehicles across the term. There were difficulties matching capacity to demand, and some buses are running with no, or very few, passengers.

The second issue was quality - as part of the new contract the University had gone for top of the range coaches but not all had been received yet – they would be in place by the end of March. There had been issues with the Wi-Fi, but DoLS said some of this was about managing expectations – students may not all be able to download large quantities of data on the buses, e.g. to watch Netflix. DSE FES said they were all important issues – he had listened to numerous complaints from students about the old coaches, disagreements with drivers, timetable etc. and was worried about the impact these complaints would have on the NSS. TM said the new coaches were being used on the route from Medway to Avery Hill and the Wi-Fi was working well. He was awaiting results of the bus survey before further decisions were made – the survey would be publicised more, once he was happy with the URL.

GSU (Mayo) reported that there were huge concerns amongst Medway students about the buses – she had consulted with them but had not yet evaluated the results. There were similar issues to those raised by DSE FES – too hot, the timetable, Wi-Fi etc. The students had made suggestions for the revised timetable, which she would pass to TM. The Chair asked whether there was a pattern emerging and whether the high usage at the beginning of term could have been predicted? The TM said it could, in part, and arrangements had been made, but some of the usage was not as predicted. VCO asked if it was students, or staff as well, as class sizes were known. However, DPS said that if students were up 7% and usage up 42%, you would never be able to predict that from systems.

CMO said that some research was being done into this, and significant numbers of International students were staying with friends and family in London and travelling to Medway. Mayo, for GSU, said that some students did not realise they were studying in Medway before they came, and thought they would be in London. Another issue the students didn't like was paper tickets, which the TM agreed that although they were trying to resolve it – probably via the Greenwich Gateway card – it was not yet deliverable. Smart tickets were a big project which they didn't currently have the resources to implement. CMO said there had been a big improvement in the numbers who realised they were attending Medway, and the website was being

made clearer. DSE FES felt that some agents were misleading students with this, and other information, but he understood this too was being investigated.

The Chair said it was good to know that extra vehicles were being used, and that she understood there had been some unusual hot spots, which were being addressed. The Chair also asked whether extra vehicles were being put on when social and sports activities were taking place – she was assured they were.

Increased traffic problems were mentioned, but it was realised this was not within control of Transport.

The Chair asked what the timeframe was for improvements and was advised that the new buses would be in place by end of March. Once student feedback had been received then changes would be considered. GSU also asked that when changes were made suitable communications were needed, not just via Twitter, but the TM assured her that signs were always put up, but not always taken notice of.

In summary, the Chair said this was a big issue, which could impact NSS and she would like an update at the next meeting. The Chair thanked TM for attending.

SEC **noted** the report.

**ACTION:** GSU (Mayo) to send student feedback about buses to TM.

**ACTION:** TM to liaise with Timetabling team regarding bus timetables.

**ACTION:** TM to bring update about Medway buses to March SEC.

## **SEC19.19 BUDDY SCHEME**

DSAS presented *SEC19.P021 Buddy Scheme*. He explained it was now phase 2 of the roll out, following earlier pilots. The paper set out the progress made and the next steps. Buddies were available for each department and received training from ECS. It had gone very well where departments were engaged. Feedback would be obtained from Buddies. They had all been issued with green lanyards to identify them. The scheme was deliverable as it was light on administration, and some departments didn't need the buddies. DSAS was taking the report to LQSC next week. It would work well when this year's 1st years became 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years.

DSE FES advised that GCU at Medway also had a Buddy scheme, and links could be made, which DSAS agreed to look in to. The Chair felt it was important to provide evidence that good quality support was in place before opting out of this Buddy scheme. GSU (Jono) said it would be good to get the Buddies carrying out the Wellbeing checks, and the Buddies could also offer to go with students to activities. DSAS said GSU would be involved with any training and feedback. Once the report had been approved by LQSC it would be taken to VCG.

SEC **noted** the report.

**ACTION:** DSAS to take updated report to LQCS for approval, and to VCG.

## **SEC19.20 INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

AD SAS presented *SEC19.P022 Inclusive Language* and *SEC19.P022a Mind abbreviations and Glossary of Terms*. She explained this had come following development of the Wellbeing Strategy, and had been developed following consultations with colleagues in HR. The recommendations were being included in various policies e.g. the Bullying policy. The idea was not to be prescriptive, just to issue helpful advice, and give an indication of what was acceptable. PO VCO asked if it was just for staff and was advised that it was.

The Chair asked if the language could be made more positive – in a couple of places “don’t” could be replaced. Members of SEC expressed surprise at some of the recommended terminology, for instance “elderly”. PO VCO felt it would be good to include something in the preamble to the effect that sometimes views on certain terminology differed. AS SAS acknowledged that the language could be fluid, and that GSU had been consulted. DSAS was also unsure about referring to “people with a disability”. GSU (Heather) said that it was up to individuals, for example LGBTQ+ students held different views. The Chair asked if the advice was consistent with GSU advice and was assured it was. CMO said that on occasion he struggled with what to say but stressed it was always ok to ask people, and if the wrong thing had been said, to apologise and ask what was appropriate. GSU (Mayo) said that not all people liked the term BAME. The consensus was that if in doubt it was better to ask, rather than to cause offence.

SEC **noted** the guidance.

### **SEC19.21 STUDENT GUIDANCE ON ASSISTANCE DOGS ON UNIVERSITY PREMISES**

AD SAS presented *SEC19.P023 Student Guidance on Assistance Dogs on University Premises* and in response to a query explained that the document was necessary to formalise arrangements already in place but contained in various documents such as the Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP). The Chair asked if the list of dogs in Appendix 1 could be linked to Item 3, to make it clearer. She also felt that “request permission” was not the right phrase and it was agreed to use another phrase. DPAS asked if something could be put in around people with allergies, and this was agreed.

SEC **approved** the guidance, subject to suggested amendments.

### **SEC19.22 GREENWICH INCLUSION PLAN (GIP) FOR WORK PLACEMENTS**

AD SAS presented *SEC19.P024 Report – Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP) for Work Placements* on behalf of Head of Student Wellbeing (HoSW). She explained it had been updated, by the addition of the final paragraph, which incorporated work experience. The Chair expressed concern that the document needed to ensure compliance with Professional Body requirements, in particular for FEHHS, and DSE. FEHHS said the policy also needed to be in line with work they were doing around Occupational Health screenings. The Chair felt it was important that HoSW and DSE FEHHS worked together on the proposal, and that GSU (Heather) talked to HoSW too.

SEC **noted** the proposal

**ACTION:** HoSW to discuss proposal further with DSE FEHHS and GSU.

### **SEC19.23 HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY UPDATE**

DSAS presented *SEC19.P026 Health and Wellbeing Strategy Update* and the link to the Mental Health Charter

[https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/191208\\_umhc\\_artwork.pdf](https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/191208_umhc_artwork.pdf)

DSAS explained that this was now Phase 2 of the strategy, the report outlined progress made in Phase 1, and detailed actions for Phase 2. The main progress was the delivery of the Mental Health First Aid training programme, which was proving very successful, with 30 Mental Health First Aiders now in place. The recommendations in the report required some resources and a business plan was currently being prepared. Sector news was encouraging, and Student Minds were launching a new Mental Health Charter. The University would be able to apply for the new Award available under this charter. Other projects were in the early stages, but in general the strategy was going well.

SEC **noted** the report.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- Minutes of Faculty Student Experience Committees  
FES 13.11.19 (approved); FEHHS 3.12.19 (draft)

FEHHS minutes – the Chair asked about the harassment of staff through Mentimeter and advised that the GLT had provided guidelines around anonymity. She had met with UCU and they were happy with the guidance. Guidance to be disseminated.

**ACTION:** Guidance around anonymity to be disseminated by DSEs.

FES minutes -Chair asked if the information about the less than positive experience for some apprentices had been passed to the Apprenticeship committee and was assured by DSE FES that it had.

Chair also noted that on page 4 there was an item about the support for students on Sports Scholarships, and that SEC had seen an earlier draft from Head of Sports Strategy – she asked that an update be brought to SEC.

**ACTION:** DSAS to liaise with HoSS regarding update to Sports Scholarship support proposals and report back to SEC.

Minutes of Student Survey Sub-Committee

SEC **noted** the reports.

## **SEC19.24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

DSAS reminded SEC members that the “One University “initiative, the new modular choice project, would come into place this term. The speed of the changes might catch some people out, although communications had been sent out. He asked the DSE’s to ensure teams were ready.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Thursday 19 March 2020 at 2.00 pm, in QA075, Greenwich Campus