

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

NOTES of the SECOND meeting of the STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE in the 2019-2020 academic session held on Wednesday 27 November 2019, in QA075, GREENWICH MARITIME CAMPUS

Present:

Karen Bryan, DVC (Academic) (Chair)
Christine Couper, DSP, PAS
Simon Leggatt, DSE FEH
John Schless, CEO GSU

Colin Allen, DSE, BUS
Corinne Delage, DSE, FLAS
Mike McGibbon, DSE FES
Henry Setter, VP (Welfare), GSU

In Attendance:

Abbia Maraiah-Andog, UGIC
Richard Mendez, ECS
Stephanie Robinson, HoIC, MC
Jono Smith, GSU

Pauline McFarlane, SAS
David Puplett, HoLS
Lynne Savage, (Secretary)SAS
Tania Struetzel, GLT

Apologies:

Marianne Boyle, HoSS
Paul Butler, DILS
Chris Shelley, DSAS

Christopher Bustin, HIR
Iain Morrison, HMC

SEC19.06 The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2019 were **approved**.

Actions Arising

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the change of date and venue. She welcomed Abbia Maraiah-Andog to the meeting, as a representative from UGIC, and introductions were made.

SEC19.P003 President's Report

DSE's had considered the best way to ensure that all new on-campus students had an introduction to GSU within 1 month of starting.

This **closed** the agenda item.

SEC19.P005 Progress on Key Issues Raised in the International Barometer.

GSU(Jono) had sent update to DSE FES on Sports societies to include in the progress report.

HoSS had sent update to DSE FES on "ActiveGre" to include in the progress report. GSU (Bilal) met with DSE FES to discuss the results of the arrival survey and to involve FES in the implementation plan.

Medway Chaplains report had been distributed to SEC for information.

DSE FES had added updates as above and re-circulated the plan to SEC and Chair to circulate to Provost Group.

Hol had investigated better contact with the Medway banks.

This **closed** the agenda item.

SEC18.P061 HoSW had made minor amendments to the Examination and Assessment Regulations for Students with Disabilities, SLD and long-term medical conditions. These had been circulated to SEC.

This **closed** the agenda item.

SEC19.07 GSU PRESIDENT REPORT

Pres GSU presented *SEC19.P008 GSU President Report - November* and drew attention to the key areas: Christmas break activities; developments at Avery Hill campus; Transport (especially to Medway); meetings with each Head of School or Head of Departments; and elections. The conversations with Heads had been very positive, and there was a varied programme for the winter break. The Chair asked if staff were being made aware of the proposed activities. HoIC reported there was a meeting later today to discuss further ways to publicise the programme, and the Chair asked if a short paper could be prepared for the VC's group on Monday and was advised it could.

The Chair also said that although the activities were GSU led, would other staff be given the opportunity to contribute? Pres GSU said leaflets were being prepared, and other staff were welcome to add any information to them. DSE FES said they should add the Winter Ball, happening at Medway. The Chair felt that GSU meetings with HoS had been very positive, and thanked GSU for their input into NSS review meetings and the TEF work.

ACTION: HoIC to prepare briefing around winter break activities to present at VC's group.

SEC19.08 NSS SUPPORT 2020

Pres GSU presented *SEC19.P009 GSU – NSS Support 2020* for the information of SEC members. This detailed how GSU were supporting the delivery of the NSS, and the consistency of the message. He felt it was most important that students see correlation between the questions and what GSU were doing, and asked DSE's to let him have dates when their message could be delivered. The DSE's advised they were still in the planning stages but would let him know. Chair reported that there had been problems last year with late requests and wanted this to be avoided this year.

CEO GSU advised that there were various support materials available, if any members required them the contact person was Sam Mujunga, Academic Representation Manager S.Mujunga@greenwich.ac.uk, on 0208 331 9184. He also advised that at this point they still hoped to deliver the message to all. DSE BUS agreed, but said that various negotiations with staff had to be made. The Chair understood but said the DSE's would be able to manage that message. In response to a query, CEO GSU said they could be a bit flexible, but Chair advised that a cut-off date should be set – 16 December was agreed upon.

Pres GSU said they were also doing some showcasing around societies etc, not just classroom-based talks. The Chair said the link to academic communities was important.

PAS advised that although the NSS opened on 27 January students would not get an email until the 30th.

The Chair asked HoIC to co-ordinate the communications plan, and information about various initiatives, and share it with Faculties. There would be signage around campus. The Chair asked the Secretary to remind the DSE's on the 9th December.

ACTION: Secretary to remind DSE's on 9th December to contact GSU with dates for NSS input sessions by 16th December.

SEC19.09 SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION

The Chair presented *SEC18.P011 Allocation of Accommodation – short term housing* on behalf of DSAS. She advised this report had come following a request from SEC to make more short-term university accommodation available to students who were finding commuting hard, especially around exam times etc. Although spaces had been available last academic year, they had not been promoted, so take up was limited. This year there would be more of a concerted effort, via marketing, to ensure students were aware of the service. Students would have to bring their own equipment e.g. bedding and crockery to keep the costs down.

The Chair asked the DSE's to assist with the promotion of the temporary accommodation service to students.

DSE FES felt the University should tread with caution, as this might be tied in by students who had issues with the University bus service, but the Chair felt it could be promoted as an opportunity.

Following several comments, the Chair asked that a paper about the Medway buses be brought to the next meeting.

Pres GSU said there was a meeting planned for this week to review the service and recommend some changes, but it was difficult to predict bus uptake.

DSE FES said that a poor opinion of the bus service might influence some NSS outcomes.

SEC **noted** the paper.

ACTION: Chair to contact COO to request update on the Medway bus service to be brought to January SEC.

SEC19.10 REGISTRATION AND WELCOME – REVIEW

The Chair presented *SEC19.P012 Registration and Welcome – review* on behalf of DSAS, which were notes of a registration wash up meeting which had taken place. The Chair took SEC through the main points – that there

were still some process issues, that the increased SU Health checks had gone well, and queue management had been better. However, further consideration needed to be given to the process as some had commented that the latter part of the week had felt flat. DSE BUS and DSE FLAS felt this was unavoidable, due to students having designated slots for registration and giving them time to sort out other issues they may have.

DSE FLAS felt that although it was a good thing that students got their ID cards more quickly, sometimes before they had shown all their qualifications, this had led to students thinking they were fully registered, and therefore increased reinstatements. DSE BUS thought the later start to registration might have been an “own goal”, leaving Student Centre teams not enough time to deal with qualifications. The paper listed some concerns and proposed actions. SEC didn’t necessarily share the view of the latter part of week being “flat”. DSE FES felt there were different stories on different campuses – next year would be very different at Medway as the University of Kent were registering their students a week later.

Other issues were highlighted around the lack of ambassadors – GSU confirmed this had been a problem. Pres GSU also said that some ambassadors only receiving their rota the day before had added to the problem. The Chair agreed they needed more notice. CEO GSU felt that there was a lack of ownership of Wayfinding, which also affected the ambassadors. He also said the GSU had got some funding for wayfinding from SAS, but it was not properly resourced.

Volunteer staffing was another problem – there were issues with limited training, with them not showing up or dropping out at the last minute. SEC were supportive of the proposal to employ a pool of agency staff to assist with registering students.

Students had sent in their qualifications in good time, but time constraints had meant that Student Centre staff had not had time to remove all the qualification holds before registration started – this was not acceptable, the process needed to be started earlier.

Chair asked SEC to approve the proposals on the paper. However, SEC members were not happy with the proposal to halt the lift at the first floor. SEC felt there needed to be a better use of Dreadnought, maybe having registration on the ground floor, although GSU said they really needed that space for Welcome etc. HoLS said this could go to the Dreadnought user group. DSE BUS said that it was important to give students a good first impression, which he didn’t think it did now. CEO GSU felt the way to go was better use of Way finders, managing queues etc.

DoPS said that she had been at the meeting and felt that overall the review had been positive, with registration being much better than last year, and although there were some problems these were being addressed, and mainly resulted from staff and students not taking notice of the schedules they had been given, but it was agreed that this had to be proactively managed as it was inevitable. The group did not accept that being better than last year was adequate.

Chair suggested a small Task and Finish group of decision makers be set up to look at the issues raised.

Chair reported that in respect of Medway, GKU had given some feedback, that the environment in Blake for registration had been poor, and there had been bad reviews on social media. CEO GSU had spoken to Ali Chambers from GKU. DSE FES reported there would be local discussions to sort out registration for next year at Medway.

The suggestion to move registration at Avery Hill to the Dome was supported.

Chair also reported that Market research had been commissioned to find out why non-arrivals had changed their mind.

Chair said she had been advised that some International Students would not register until the last possible date – so this would probably be much earlier next year, with the DSE's support. DSE FES advised SEC that there was a feeling that agents had been providing International Students with mis-information – causing time consuming issues, and much distress. The International Office were investigating this.

The Chair said she would discuss the report further with DSAS.

CEO GSU said that the health checks were of great value and reaching 1400 students with limited ambassador support which had been planned. Moving forward a decision will need to be taken about resourcing Wellbeing Checks as a capacity has been reached and to become core activity a next step is needed to integrate fully into registration is the ambition.

The Chair asked Abbie, representing UGIC, for her thoughts. Abbie outlined an issue where student's money took a long time to come, as they were unable to register as their grades had not been input into the main system. DSE BUS said this was a known issue, which was being addressed.

SEC **noted** the report.

ACTION: Chair to have further discussions with DSAS about registration wash up report.

SEC19.11 GSU OUTCOMES

CEO GSU presented *SEC19.P013 The Big Impact – highlights for 2018/19*. He advised SEC it was a summation of the work they had been doing and was in the main positive. The democratic changes and student input, in particular, were welcomed. Relationships with the University had strengthened, and the GSU Employability strategy fed into the University strategy. The Chair asked how this linked up with the University Employability agenda and was advised that links had been formally made but there was more to do.

CEO GSU also reported that 75% of students agreed that being an active member of a student group had a positive impact on their mental health. The student communities were holding up well, and the usage statistics for Dreadnought in its first year were incredible.

The Chair thanked him for a very positive report and said she would send it to Jonathan Gascoigne and take it to the Provost Group for information. HoIC agreed to publicise the report. Following a suggestion to table the report at Leadership Forum, it was agreed instead for HoIC to highlight links to the report to the Leadership Forum.

SEC **noted** the report.

ACTION: Chair to take report to Provost Group for information.

ACTION: HoIC to highlight links to the report in the update to the Leadership Forum.

SEC19.12 FIRE SAFETY IN RESIDENCES

The Chair presented *SEC19.P014 Fire Safety in Residences*. It was also noted that a Government Minister had written to all Universities previously seeking assurance that the buildings used by students, including residential buildings, are compliant with building and fire safety regulations. The University's Head of Health and Safety is conducting such a review. Two minor incidents recently had brought the issue into focus. It was noted that staff and students responded appropriately, and fire safety always remained high on the agenda. Issues which had been highlighted last year were being addressed, and regular checks were all happening.

One suggestion had been made to fine students if they did not comply with all fire safety regulations, but most SEC members were not so sure this worked or was appropriate. Pres GSU had been advised that fines didn't work as a deterrent, and that student's behaviour had improved following Grenfell. It was felt that more fire safety information should be included in the Welcome communications to residents.

SEC were not supportive of fines being introduced but felt that a more robust "welcome" event should happen and be made mandatory. Failure to follow regulations could then be treated as a disciplinary matter – there were two clauses which covered this.

DSE FES reported issues with student living at Liberty Quays in Medway, where many University of Greenwich students lived, but it was difficult to take action for any incidents, as the premises were not covered in a data sharing agreement. This was noted by SEC.

SEC **noted** the report.

ACTION: Chair to advise DSAS that SEC were not supportive of implementing fines for disciplinary breaches in University accommodation, but that DSE's were willing to use the existing student disciplinary route if instances involving particular students occurred.

SEC19.13 EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

HoSW presented *SEC19.P015 Proposal to Amend Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)* This followed discussions at the Exams Operational Group and with the Exams Scheduling team and related to inconsistencies between Faculties around allowing extra time during exams. The aim was to simplify them, and ensure the Faculties were consistent.

The proposal was to calculate the amount of extra time allowed and give some flexibility around how it was taken. Not all students wanted to take it. The invigilator would let them take 5 minutes when needed, and then adjust the amount of time remaining accordingly. The new system would start in January.

The Chair felt the title of the paper was slightly misleading, as it related to extra time only. She asked the DSE's for their views.

DSEs agreed that there was a need for a consistent approach but it was not sufficiently clear what should happen after the five minutes? The Chair and SEC members felt a limit needed to be set, and agreed that otherwise there would still be room for inconsistencies. HoSW agreed to adjust the proposal accordingly.

The Chair said SEC were very supportive of a fair and equitable process for all students but felt this document needed some further development.

SEC **noted** the proposal.

ACTION: HoSW agreed to adjust the proposal to include detail around the overall process and the maximum time available and re-submit to SEC.

SEC19.14 ANNUAL REPORT EMPLOYABILITY INTERVENTIONS

HoECS presented *SEC19.P010 Employability Interventions: Annual Report* on behalf of PVC BUS.

The Chair reported that the numbers in the report were going up, but they were still a relatively small proportion of the available cohort. The key question was what more could be done? HoECS reported that work was being done on communications, the move to Queen Mary was helping to raise ECS profile, and the team now included a Careers Mentor and PG mentoring work.

The Chair also reported that the outcomes were now KPI's in the Accessibility and Partnership plan. She asked how GSU could link their employability to the University offer and include both in the report. She also felt FEHHS could capture some of their employability-based student events in the report, especially for their professional programmes.

The Chair reported that the TEF and other Impact reports around accessibility would be considering the Employability statistics, and it wouldn't matter where in the University they came from, so asked if GSU and the Faculties could work together. HoECS reported he was already in conversation with GSU to consider data, and promotions, and work with the Faculties was in progress.

DSE FEHHS felt they could do better to collect the relevant data, and DSE FLAS agreed.

The Chair asked HoECS to work with the DSE's to see how relevant data could be included in the report.

SEC **noted** the report.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair asked Abbie, representing UGIC, if it had been helpful being able to attend, and if there was anything she wanted to ask. Abbie reported that it was helpful and would like to attend again. CEO GSU commented that it was usual for any students who attended SEC to be elected, but UGIC did not have any elected students. UGIC were advised to refer a specific Moodle query to the Moodle team.

Pres GSU informed SEC he had been accepted onto the Student Advisory Board for MIND.

Chair advised Pres GSU that he would be asked to nominate a Charity for donations raised from the NSS survey, as it was custom for GSU to be asked to choose one.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- Minutes of Faculty Student Experience Committees

FEHHS 10/10/19; BUS 7/11/19; FES 25/9/19

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Thursday 23 January 2020 in Grey 104, Avery Hill Campus