SEC/12.P04

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the FIRST meeting of the STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE in the 2012-2013 academic session, held on 11 April 2013, 2pm in 159, Queen Mary Building, Greenwich Campus**

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| **Present:** |  |  |
|  | Judith Burnett (Chair), PVC ACH | Colin Allen, BU |
|  | Sally Alsford, EDU | Richard Blackburn, DLQ, SCI |
|  | Dean Brander, VP Education & Welfare, SUUG | Alex Brooks, student ACH |
|  | Will Calver, PDV | Christine Couper, Head of PAS |
|  | Jenny Greenfield, CEO, SUUG | Christopher Hallas, Director, OSA |
|  | Kazi Haque, President, SUUG | Ginny Malone, ILS |
|  | Christopher Powner, Director, FM | Norma Powell, OSA, minute taker |
| **In attendance:** |  |  |
|  | Peter Fotheringham, Head of Estates, FM | Felicity Hilditch, Head of Primary Education, ED |
| **Apologies:** |  |  |
|  | Sarah Greer, Dean, HSS | Debi Hayes, Director, PDV |
|  | Simon Leggat, DLQ, ED |  |

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| **SEC/12.1** | **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**The Chair introduced herself to members and welcomed them, noting that this was the inaugural meeting of the Student Experience Committee. It was noted that a committee looking at this aspect of university life had not existed previously within the university committee structure and the formation of this arose from the governance review conducted in 2012.The Chair explained that her remit is both a core responsibility for the faculty of ACH, and the cross University responsibility of ‘student experience.’‘Student experience’ is high on the agenda of government and all stakeholders in higher education including the university and students. This is a a moment of change at the university with regard to the setting up of the faculty structure, the new governance structure, the election of new Students’ Union sabbatical officers and the wider context of change in higher education, so this was an opportune moment for the committee to come into being. The SEC will report to Academic Council, meetings of which are due to be held on 1st May and 19th June. It was agreed that an additional meeting of the SEC should take place during w/c May 13th in addition to the meeting already arranged for June 5th. The Director of Student Affairs informed the group that this meeting was the first meeting of one of the new Academic Council committees. Meetings of these committees are set in the university calendar of meetings and displayed on the university website.Members introduced themselves and agreed that, at this inaugural meeting, discussion should focus on membership of the committee, its terms of reference, on areas of work and items for future agendas. |
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| **SEC/12.2** | **MEMBERSHIP: TO NOTE THE CURRENT MEMBERSHIP** The Chair asked members for comments on the membership as agreed at a recent meeting of Academic Council. It was agreed that the inclusion of senior members of university staff in the membership demonstrated that the university was serious about looking at this area of work, but that it was premature to think about extending or changing the membership at this stage. Speakers could be invited to future meetings if it was thought that this would inform the work of the committee and the Committee would periodically invite members of staff to be in attendance, in order to achieve a full range of representation of all aspects of student experience. However, it was agreed that the SUUG representative should be re-named in the membership list as the ‘President of the SUUG (or nominee)’ and that more than one representative from SUUG would be in attendance as appropriate. |
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| **SEC/12.3** | **TERMS OF REFERENCE: TO NOTE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**The Chair asked for comments, queries or proposals for amendments to the terms of reference.The Director of Student Affairs responded to a query about the remit of the group with regard to item 5 *–‘to consider reports on student performance and outcomes’* – by explaining that the SEC was expected to receive high level reports on degree attainment as well as reports on all aspects of performance of student engagement, including for example participation in societies and SUUG activities alongside external activities where students represented the university working with the University as partners. Matters referred to the SEC (item 8) will also include reports on buildings, accommodation and facilities, both sports and social and will include the experiences of students not on campus. The SEC will take an holistic approach to student experience for example in the case of the KPI on retention, where it was noted that a number of variables might affect the retention outcome. It was thought that item 2 - *‘oversee strategic developments relating to UK and international access to university programmes’ –* concerned much of the work carried out by the Recruitment and Admissions team who are not represented in the membership. The SEC could set up specific work streams and sub groups to address these particular issues as appropriateThere was discussion about the reporting line of the SEC in relation to item 9. The Director of Student Affairs explained that the items in question were covered within the Memorandum of Association of Academic Council but that the committee could maintain some flexibility and make decisions on reporting, case by case.The Director of Learning and Quality (Medway School of Science) is involved in the Medway Campus Student Experience Group which includes all universities on the Medway campus, and will provide various papers relating to the group for circulation to the SEC members, for information. The Chair and the Director of Student Affairs agreed to consider the discussion relating to the terms of reference and bring their findings to the next meeting. |
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| **SEC/12.4** | **INTRODUCTORY PAPER (PRO VICE CHANCELLOR)**The Committee began by addressing the question ‘What is the student experience?’ which led to a discussion of ‘How do we know?’ The Director of Student Affairs stressed the importance of the SEC being well informed and said that much of the information relating to the student experience comes from various surveys carried out by different offices of the university. These include general university wide surveys driven nationally, for example the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey: these are derived from audit requirements and are targeted at particular groups of students. The PVC noted that the SEC needs to look at all groups of students and try to find out what interventions would make a difference/improvement to their experiences: recording the data is only the first step**.** Going around the Committee revealed that the student body is relatively highly surveyed. Surveys undertaken included:**FM** – transport, catering, accommodation**SUUG** – focus groups, outlets, NSS (question 23), the direction of the SUUG**EDU** – New Arrivals (October and January), **School (SCI)** - Course evaluation, NSS, University Student Survey (USS), programme committees**School (EDU)** – specifically Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision – very many surveys due to external demands from OfSTED, course evaluation, NSS, USS. Programme committees**ILS** – NSS (questions 16,17,18 – feedback on services has led to pilot schemes (24 hour opening)**PAS** – NSS, USS, International students, PRES (research student survey), ad hoc surveys such as how students would like to receive bursaries**OSA** – DLHE, focus groups – Matrix, acceptors’ portal, OSA serviceIt was generally agreed that too many surveys can lead to negative results and survey fatigue/blindness and that they can lack nuance. They are driven by different needs:* For audit purposes
* To advance and understand the student journey
* To evaluate projects
* Because of national or external pressures
* Ad hoc surveys

The SUUG and PAS suggested that care needs to be taken in the planning and in the giving of feedback and evidence needs to be provided that the University has listened and responded. Possibilities of communicating our response include:* Feeding responses and interventions through the governance structure
* Building the ‘You said, we did’ web pages (an NSS/Marketing initiative)
* Developing a central location for reporting good news and positive outcomes: these should include high achievers understood in a range of ways for example students who had overcome challenges in order, for example, to complete their studies
* It was specifically suggested that ‘stories’ should be directly reported to Academic Council regarding outstanding student achievement including for example prizes and awards won by students such to ensure recognition at the highest level of the university academic governance structure

The Chair noted that the role of the SEC is to develop policy and make recommendations relating to themes arising across the university. It is important that student voices are heard via the governance structure:* What is their experience?
* How can they tell us about their experience?
* How can they become involved in the running of the institution via the governance structure?
* How can we work together to create an outstanding experience?

The Chair raised with the Committee the situation of the student body who are both students of the University and employees. Members agreed that one of the best sources of improving the student experience and of engaging students with the university community is when students are employed by the university and that there is a lot of untapped potential with the use of internships and paid opportunities as well as opportunities for involvement for example through the representation and advocacy systemThe SUUG explained that although there has been an increase in the number of students attending university meetings, some students can be alienated at high level meetings by, for example, the language used, the length and perceived ineffectiveness of meetings, and training may be required or expectations discussed by all parties, in order to encourage greater student involvement. Students could also become involved via email or video diary for example and yet were seldom invited to do so. The Chair suggested that buddy systems with different Unions might be advantageous and that the presence of the SUUG on this Committee, like others, is vital to the wellbeing of the student experience. |
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| **SEC/12.5** | **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**It was agreed that the next meeting should take place on the Avery Hill Campus and the agenda will include:Reports as requested by the Chairthe minutes from this meetingmembership of the CommitteeNew Arrivals School reporting arrangementsCourse Representative development Information on the Medway Student Experience Group.NP to circulate meeting request and advise members of arrangementsThe meeting closed at 4pm. |