

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on **Wednesday 25 January 2023**

Ex-Officio: Associate PVC Student Inclusion (Professor Helena Gillespie) (Deputy Chair), Associate PVC Employability and Opportunities (Dr Matt Aldrich), An Associate Dean (and member of their Faculty Executive) from the Faculties Professor Susanne Lindquist (FMH), Professor Simon Lancaster (SCI), Amanda Williams (SSF)), Director of Student Services (Dr Jon Sharp), Director of Student and Graduate Success (Becky Price), Director of Sport and Commercial Services (Phil Steele), the Activities and Opportunities Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Evie Drennan), the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Aaron Campbell).

With: Associate PVC Doctoral College (Professor Sam Fountain), The UEA SU Assistant Director of Charitable Services of the UEA Students (Claire Boothby-Barnbrook), Associate Director of Student Services (Jane Amos), the Head of Postgraduate Research Service (Dr Vivien Easson), the Head of Student Employability (Antony Cotterill), the Postgraduate Officer of the Unions of UEA Students (Elise Page), and the Graduate Success Administrative Assistant (Caitlin Dawkins)

Secretary: Associate Director of Graduate Success (Careers) (Evan Hancock)

29. MINUTES

Confirmed
the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

31. MATTERS ARISING

From Minute 21, Employability plans to be disseminated at the SSLCs was confirmed as being underway.

SEC22M003

From Minute 22, actioned the Director of Sport & Commercial Services had informed the Director of Student and Graduate Success of the other initiatives taking place in relation to cost of living, and will provide a regular update of the implementations.

From Minute 22, the action was confirmed for SEC to receive a standing verbal update on the key headlines from the implementation of the cost-of-living strategy and any monitoring of engagement impacts and risks.

From Minute 23, the new Freedom of Speech bill is ongoing and will be interpreted by the OfS. The Director of Student Services will notify the Secretary should there be a need to revisit this item.

From Minute 23, confirmed the SU Campaigns and Democracy Officer and the Associate Director of Student Services are meeting in February to discuss Prevent.

32. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

1. Emma Sutton-Pavli needs to focus on the Strategic Programme Review (SRP) so Helena Gillespie will deputise in the Chair for SEC initially for the January and March meetings.
2. Noting thanks to Professor Neil James for this contribution to SEC and welcome to Professor Susanne Lindquist, Associate Dean for FMH.
3. With regards to the acceleration of the SRP, there has been communications to Staff and Students, and there are Vice Chancellor forums next week. Staff can direct students to the SIZ or We're Listening (online anonymous portal) where the insight themes are regularly reported into the SRP leadership to ensure they inform the student FAQs.
4. Notified by UCU of the 18 Industrial Action dates. Working on mitigation measures and support plans, particularly around ensuring students can undertake their assessments.
5. The Director of Student and Graduate Success gave an update on the Cost of Living highlighting the key points:
 - i) The Cost-of-Living online hub is active, noting thanks to the cross-institutional effort.
 - ii) Pause on reintroduction of charge for replacement campus cards.
 - iii) The Warren has opened providing a cost neutral social and warm space with high student footfall.
 - iv) The Pick up Point in the SIZ continues to be well accessed by students and launch of wider borrow bank.

SEC22M003

- v) SIZ interview clothing drop and loan scheme, however low amount of donations.
- vi) Roll out of period product provision across campus just awaiting EST response to installation timeframes. Thanks to STS and SU colleagues.

There are elements that remain under observation in order to take agile action if needed but no over demand at this stage, including the demands for on campus computing, wireless network and library services.

The Director of Sport and Commercial Services outlined key points from the Section C2 report such as, the introduction of a Direct Debit Sports Park membership, and the Zest supper club has started although numbers not as high as anticipated due to students having online assessments in first two weeks. The Committee was informed that impact updates would be passed to the Director of Student and Graduate Success on a weekly basis. The supper club is being advertised in the first two Squares, Cost of Living hub, and noted will be in Holistic comms and department social channels.

- 6. UEA's TEF has been submitted (provided to SEC as C4 on the agenda). The Committee heard there were 13 features of Excellence and a clear underpinning of the Inclusive Holistic Student Experience. Planning to respond to the TEF 2027 will begin this week.

To be actioned

The UEASU to provide their TEF submission as a Section C report to the March SEC

- 7. A request for members to accurately disseminate documents to other areas so agreed information can reach relevant parties. There will be clear statements when documents can't be shared and any questions please contact the Secretary.

To be actioned

The Secretary to find out and clarify more information about this request.

33. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION

A Chair's action to approve the update on the 'Opt In' scheme, which can be found for reference in Section C.

34. PGR STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT

Noted

the issues discussed in the report and considered appropriate recommendations. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D017)

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(The Committee heard some of the issues for PGR students over the last year, arising from the paper; the changes of workspace brought about by the CDP, and PGR Mental Health support where the focus is to continue to make structures more accessible. But also the positive impact of mitigations (such as extending submission timelines from 4 to 5 years) and adaptations by all in the PGR community and UEA throughout the difficulties of COVID, and HUM's positive response to the changes brought about by the CPD.

The Committee heard that the UK Research Council increased the PGR stipends by 10%, ET agreed to match this for the PGRs that are funded by the University. There are however PGRs who are self-funded where this does not apply, or "other" funders who have been contacted to request to match the increase.

Members heard that a possible consequence of the University's financial situation is pressure on budgets for Associate Tutor work. The Doctorial College Executive made the decision to allow more flexibility on the hours that PGR could work.

Members noted if there are Academic redundancies due to the University's financial situation that might affect the PGR supervision arrangements then there is a student protection plan to ensure every student has what they need to finish their degree.

The Committee heard that an email has been written to the VC and the PVCs about the importance of PGR, research culture and research attainment. The Postgraduate Officer of the Unions of UEA Students noted thanks for the PGR advocacy and expressed concern that the areas of high risk are drop-outs due to changes to supervisory teams, changes to UEA's reputation in light of implications from the SRP (noting PG education is accessible in Norfolk and Suffolk because of UEA), and that the Student finance loan amount is set at the year of joining.

The Committee heard there will be a meeting in February to discuss PGR Reasonable Adjustments. It was noted how the student experience is critically linked to the REF attainment and the PGRs authored 11% of the output considered by REF. There is a direct correlation between the number of PGR completions as a ratio of ATR staff and GP attainment in REF which is a financial incentive for the University. Noted, the important contribution of PGR students to the UG education programme.)

To be actioned

the Head of Postgraduate Research Service to disseminate this report to the ADs PGR, and to put as a Section C paper in the next Doctorial College Executive.

SEC22M003

35. WELCOME 2023 PLANNING

Noted

the evaluation outcomes for Welcome 2022.

(The Director of Student and Graduate Success gave an executive overview of the approaches for Welcome 2023, including reference to:

Approach 1 - merging into a "Holistic Welcome" all the strands (Pre arrivals, Week -1, Week 0, Week 1, and Winter Welcome and Welcome Back).

Approach 2 - making it "business as usual" via attaining more cross-institutional support by nominated leads particularly to note this year to have an Academic lead from each School.

Approach 3 – developments to the Winter Welcome and Welcome Back, particularly to note the positive feedback from the Welcome Back student insight supporting this.)

Agreed

the proposed approaches for planning content and delivery of Welcome 2023 to respond to student voice and measures of impact against Welcome objectives.

Agreed

the proposed roll out and governance approaches, including for cross institutional representation, to ensure consistent and strong delivery. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D018)

(The Committee heard there will be a rapid review undertaken. The main governance will happen through the Holistic Student Experience SLT and a Steering Group with items by exception coming to SEC.

The committee heard the request for Welcome Academic Leads to be nominated from each School.

To be actioned

The Secretary to ensure this request is disseminated amongst the faculties (in relation to Chair's statement 6.)

It was suggested joining up with the Faculty Coordinators to support Course reps from the SSLCs who can provide insight and a way to promote the course rep system early on.

The Committee raised the issue of PGT students not being in focus and those who start at different times not receiving the same Welcome experience. It was acknowledged there has been no extension of budget for PGT, and the content is not tailored to them but they can attend.)

SEC22M003

36. NON-ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS (ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22)

Noted

the work that was ongoing, across the University, to gather information and learn from complaints in order to take appropriate actions to improve services and the student experience. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D019)

(The Committee heard an executive summary of the table of 11 Non-Academic complaints (1 of which was an Academic complaint), 7 of which were resolved informally at a pre-panel stage. The data suggests it is likely a communication breakdown or, students not knowing where the procedures are for raising a concern within their department, has led to the formal complaints process being used. Work has been undertaken with Student Services to make the websites clearer, and it was acknowledged that finding a way to facilitate these discussions earlier could reduce the formal processes being taken. It was discussed how capturing data around complaints that are resolved locally or where students have found it hard to navigate the complaints process would be useful for supporting students further. It was discussed how many more similar activities are dealt with locally before formal reporting and escalation was required.)

To be Actioned

The Director of Student and Graduates Success to consider the Pulse survey as a mechanism for gathering this data (particularly informal trends in student complaints), closing the feedback loop and along with the SIZ can raise awareness of the processes, and gather thematic evidence through its drop-ins.

37. ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Noted

The outcomes of the internal audit of access and participation planning and approach to address the recommendations

(The Committee heard an outline of the current plans. Outcomes of the audit included the UEA were discussed as being seen as sector-leading for APP Evidence and Evaluation, governance and expenditure monitoring).

SEC22M003

Noted

Our revised Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25 which is now agreed by the Office for Students with two recommendations for strengthening our future approach

(The Committee was reassured that some of the recommendations have already had action against them and others will be priorities for the new Head of Widening Access and Participation once the new APP has been submitted.)

Noted

An update on the Office for Students requirement of a new Access and Participation Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28 to be developed and submitted by Spring 2023.

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D020)

(The Committee heard that the revised APP approved by SEC at a previous meeting has now been approved by the OfS and is now available on the website. The new APP will include developing an Equality and Opportunity risk register. The full project planning is being rolled out and some colleagues will be asked to be on the project working groups. There will be direct student consultation through an informal drop-in session in April. The draft APP will come to the Committee to be formalised for going forward, as will a monitoring report on the impact of the targets for last year (OfS data dependent).

Agreed

If the formal data monitoring report is not available, then the Committee will receive a report on the UEA's internal data.

The Chair noted that related to the statement around disseminating of information to the faculties, one of the objectives for understanding the new framework for regulation will be to build confidence in looking at the different sorts of data within faculties/schools because that will need to feed into the equality assurance and changes to the TEP and other quality assurance processes.

38. UPDATE ON THE UEA 'OPT IN' SCHEME FOR CONTACTING STUDENTS NOMINATED EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Received

the accompanying documents detailing the revised procedures and guidance notes relating to the Opt-in Scheme which had been approved as a Chair's Action for timely implementation. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D021)

*39. SPORT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES – MID-YEAR UPDATE

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

SEC22M003

40. HOLISTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE SLT MINUTES

Noted

the minutes of discussions and agreed actions. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D023)

*41. NEW SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM - TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported

the date of the next meeting of the Student Experience Committee was:

Wednesday 1 March 2023 at 2pm