

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022

Ex-Officio: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Education) Professor Emma Sutton-Pavli (Chair), Associate PVC Student Inclusion (Professor Helena Gillespie), Associate PVC Employability and Opportunities (Dr Matt Aldrich), An Associate Dean (and member of their Faculty Executive) from each Faculty (Dr Neil James (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 Campaigns and Democracy Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Serene Shibli-Sexton), the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Aaron Campbell).

With: The Holistic Student Insight Manager (Johanna Hardy), the UEA SU Assistant Director of Charitable Services of the UEA Students (Claire Boothby-Barnbrook), Associate Director of Student Services (Jane Amos), the Associate Dean for Employability SCI Faculty (Richard Bowater), and the Graduate Success Administrative Assistant (Caitlin Dawkins).

Secretary: Head of Student Employability (Antony Cotterill) deputising for the Associate Director of Graduate Success (Careers Service)

16. MINUTES

Confirmed

the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

No declarations of interest were made.

SEC22M002

18. MATTERS ARISING

From Minute 7*, regarding Faculty Action Plans in response to the NSS results. The Chair confirmed that detailed conversations have continued at LTC and the appropriate FLTQCs. The Associate PVC of Education and Curriculum is currently collating the detail of the school level action plans and progress reports and through the FLTQCs will share these with Faculty and School conveners, and the SU Sabbaticals will have access to the final reports.

From Minute 8, an update of Alumni engagement activity, a strategy group has met twice since the last SEC meeting, and the committee will welcome a report in due course.

From Minute 9, the action confirmed that a paper on the Cost of Living has been written and that paper will be discussed at this SEC Meeting.

From Minute 10, the Director of Student Services confirmed that the Director of Governance and Assurance had received the views of the SEC regarding Non-Academic Student misconduct. The approach discussed that had been adopted by Durham University was not to be adopted at UEA due to the perceived significant risks raised and concern that there was no value added by undertaking this approach.

19. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

- 1) Dates of industrial action have been notified to the University and guidance for students has been circulated which has included signposting to FAQs developed by the Student Communications lead and the University Executive Team. The Chair has been in conversation with the SU SABs to develop a shared understanding of each other's positions. Heads of School are responsible for maintaining oversight of the impact of the industrial action and put into place mitigating equivalent learning activity. There is a systematic process to capture information related to industrial action to; ensure that student learning is not unduly compromised, to reassure students, and to offset any impact on our student community. Following this period of industrial action there is a concern about potential future action which may lead to disruption during the assessment and marking period. However, there is significant work being done both at a university and national level to seek a resolution. A paper will be presented at the next Learning and Teaching Committee and there will be substantive conversations about ensuring business continuity around learning and assessment. The Chair reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that student education and the student experience are protected over this period.

SEC22M002

- 2) Following the University's Governance review there has been a revision to the Terms of Reference for the SEC which means the Committee will no longer be required to have a sitting member who is part of University Council. Therefore Jeremy Clayton has stepped down from membership of SEC. On behalf of the committee the Chair extended thanks to Jeremy for his advocacy and helpful contributions over the years.
- 3) With regard to Student Voice Insight the Chair noted that, unless there is a substantive issue that arises and requires a paper, SEC will receive an annual summary report from The Holistic Student Insight Manager which captures the overarching work of Student Voice Team. Papers that are received by SEC should have Student Voice insight embedded into them and that contributors should work with the Student Voice Team as appropriate.
- 4) The NSS consultation has been concluded. As a result of the outcome of the consultation there will be no comparable data next year and no overall satisfaction score. A more substantive item to SEC will follow in due course.
- 5) Data for the PGT pilot survey has been received and is now being analysed. The University will now not participate in the PTES but will continue to undertake the PRES.
- 6) There are emerging insights from OfS regarding B3 conditions and how they will be applied. There are no areas of concern at present as the UEA is above threshold for many of the subject and demographic groups that OfS are focussing on. Information is given in the report in Section C and this topic will be discussed in more detail at LTC.

20. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION

A Chair's action to approve the Safeguarding Policy. There are no substantive changes, but it was felt to be timely to make some important revisions which were carried out by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Education), the Director (and the Associate Director) of Student Services. The updated policy is available for reference in Section C.

21. EMPLOYABILITY PLANS

Noted
the report

Received
the Faculty Employability Plans

SEC22M002

Considered and advised
any further aspects to be included in the plans or planning process

Confirmed
how Student Experience Committee would govern implementation. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D010)

The APVC Employability and Opportunities confirmed that a paper on Graduate Outcomes (GO) has been submitted to the upcoming LTC. The paper outlines the need to review internal data reporting and QA processes concerning GO. It is recommended that the annual School Employability Planning process implemented over the last year will be the mechanism through which this reporting and QA should happen in the future. In the upcoming Employability Planning process there may be some changes to the internal and external data used by Schools compared to that used in the 21/22 cycle.

In this year's planning process the School Employability Plans were discussed by each Faculty Employability Executive and the ADE's compiled overarching Faculty Employability Plans identifying common themes and priority areas and scrutinising Faculty level data to identify cross-faculty initiatives. Compared to school level, at a Faculty level there is more data which often allows a more robust gap analysis. Through their plans, all Faculties have committed to undertaking investigation and taking further action into, and on, issues related to disadvantaged groups that either make up a significant proportion of their student body or where there are known gaps in performance in targeted areas.

The report highlighted two important constraints to progress in this area. First that there was variation between academic role holders time allocation to their employability remit. Because this is agreed at a school level there is currently significant variation across all Schools and Faculties. Secondly, it was noted that the current University freeze on recruitment would have an impact on delivering aspects of the Faculty Employability Plans, currently this is having an effect on CareerCentral's Placement and Internship team.

There was a discussion regarding the focus of TEF on demonstrating student educational and learning gain, which highlighted the need to map educational gain against the development of employability competencies. This approach was suggested as the progressive way to ensure that learning gain related to employability and outcomes are measurable across the University in a systematic and consistent way. There is currently work taking place to link careers engagement data with GO data to understand this within the context of the student experience lifecycle. In addition there is a module mapping exercise underway to identify experiential learning activities and in time this will become a useful data set to further assess the impact of an enhanced

SEC22M002

curriculum on graduate outcomes and gain a comprehensive understanding of the student lifecycle.

The ADE (SCI) described their view of the valuable process they had gone through to create the Employability Plans and recognised the benefits to be gained in the planning process by working with the Directors of Learning and Teaching to share best practice.

Members commented positively on the consistency of format across the different Faculty plans. It was noted by the ADE SCI that there was a challenge in aligning the planning process with the timing of releases of both external and internal data and metrics.

The use of the term 'positive discrimination' in the SSF Employability Plan was discussed and clarified. Both Positive Discrimination and Positive Action are legal terms used in EDI legislation. Notwithstanding legal definitions, the principle of this aspect of the SSF plan was to aim to encourage positive action that supports student awareness of the opportunities available to them.

It was acknowledged by the committee that more recognition needed to be given in the plans to the role of students in the planning process through school SSLCs for example.

To be actioned

The APVC Employability and Opportunities is to disseminate the plans to the SSLCs.

22. STUDENT COST OF LIVING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION

Noted

the strategic framework

Agreed

to support the cross-institutional prioritisation of approaches and adaptations in support of student retention and success during the cost-of-living crisis.

Agreed

that the committee was assured that an appropriate approach to creation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of a cross institutional plan is in place

Agreed

frequency of updates on implementation that SEC would like to receive. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D011).

The Director of Student and Graduate Success outlined that due to the ongoing and emerging nature of the issue that there were already some updates since the paper was circulated to the committee. Work is

SEC22M002

continuing with SU colleagues to develop warm social spaces on campus, outside of commercial spaces, and the SIZ will look to use the SIZ Annex and loan warm items as part of the Warm Banks project.

The Director of Sport and Commercial Services outlined the extension of opening hours of the main catering building from Monday-Friday, the provision of a new cost price menu offer in these times, and continuation of using the 2good2go app to provide students with discounted products which become available at the end of the day. It was noted this would be funded from the S&C budget and not the Student Cost of Living budget outlined in the paper.

The Committee heard that communication has been sent to Heads of Schools from the APVC of Education and Curriculum to reiterate the considerations around the cost of courses in relation to the cost of living.

It was also outlined that ARM colleagues are working on a strategy to communicate to students all the available sources of help, support and resources through bulletin items, communications in The Square and a dedicated web portal. Colleagues will be asked to ensure links to this are included in any relevant communications.

The Committee heard from UEASU colleagues on their manifesto aims. The Campaigns and Democracy Officer spoke to the request for UEA to remove monetary fines as a disciplinary action. On behalf of the Director of Governance and Assurance (who leads student discipline work group) it was reiterated by the Chair that fines should only be used in very critical circumstances, that they are not a substantial part of the disciplinary process, and have only been used on a very small number of occasions.

The Director of Student Services outlined that educative outcomes are far more predominant as an approach to discipline. In the rare circumstance that a fine is levied these are fed back into hardship funds for students. The Chair supported that fines would only be used as a last resort, and often if the students have shown disregard for their behaviour or conduct in the disciplinary process and have not taken alternative sanctions. It was outlined that in the situation where a fine was suggested, students would always have the opportunity to submit mitigating factors or declare that they would be disproportionately impacted by a fine due to financial hardship. The Committee heard that the Library does not issue any fines.

The Activities and Opportunities Officer spoke to the request for UEA Catering to review prices and provide hot meal options for students under £1. The Director of Sport and Commercial Services clarified this would fall under the provision of the reduced price menu option when the main catering building is open for longer into the evening and a hot meal would be available for around £1.50 and that this will begin after the winter break. It was discussed, as part of the monitoring of these initiatives and potential risks, how the 2good2go app should be

SEC22M002

assessed and the best ways of communicating the app to the UEA community. It was highlighted that promoting the app would generally be beneficial as it can be used at other retail and food outlets off campus. It was reiterated by the Director of Commercial Services that they have, and will, continue to aim to hold prices at low levels despite significantly rising supplier costs.

Action

The Director of Sport & Commercial Services to inform the Director of Student and Graduate Success of the other initiatives taking place in relation to cost of living, and to provide a regular update of the implementations.

There was an update given around the cost-of-living budget outlining that there was an initial £30k from APP provision, with a commitment from ET to match fund a further £30k where impactful interventions and need indicate this. It was noted it will be important to monitor student uptake and impact of initiatives and to capture where other investments have been made across the institution especially where SLTs and departments have taken action to support students with the cost of living crisis within their current budgets.

The UEASU outlined that it has so far been difficult to identify price cuts in their services due to the nature and unpredictable use of their services by students and they were already some commercial implications of the cost of living and they are seeing some declining demand. The UEASU outlined that their focus was in the provision of warm spaces, the provision of a warm items loan service (already running), and creating communities where students can engage in spite of financial limitations and raising awareness of access to grants and funds. *Since the meeting of SEC it has been clarified by the Director of Student and Graduate Success that the warm item loan scheme is being run by the SIZ, and this has been further supported by the Union Council motion in lobbying the University for this provision.*

It was outlined that academic colleagues should be reminded during student advice meetings to sensitively initiate conversations around the impact of the cost of living crisis on the student, their engagement and studies. To support this there will also be a staff communication on the cost of living, including where to signpost students from ARM, and that will need to work in tandem on advice and guidance being issued by People and Culture department for staff about their cost of living concerns.

Action

For the 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.

23. PREVENT ANNUAL REPORT

Considered

- (1) the contents of the report
- (2) whether members were satisfied that the Prevent Duty was being appropriately followed at UEA and could provide the assurances required by the Chair of Council that the University
 - a) has had due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty).
 - b) has provided to the OfS all required information about its implementation of the Prevent Duty.
 - c) has reported to the OfS in a timely way all serious issues related to the Prevent Duty, or now attaches any reports that should have been made, with an explanation of why they were not previously submitted.
 - d) had reviewed, and where necessary updated, its Prevent risk assessment and action plan. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D012)

The Committee heard the observation raised by the Associate Dean of SSF and shared the concern around the threshold for reporting of external speakers, however the Director of Student Services advised the Committee that due to the legislative constraints placed upon us there is no flexibility in the reporting format. It was noted that there was also an upcoming Freedom of Speech Bill and that this may have an impact on this area of work.

Action

For the Director of Student Services to notify the Secretary should there be a need to revisit this item in response to any implications from the new Freedom of Speech bill.

The SU Campaigns and Democracy Officer questioned as to why certain SU-led events such as the Stop the War Protest are mentioned in the paper.

The Committee heard that the threshold trigger to be included in the report is anything regarded as a controversial political issue from external speakers and it's a requirement of Prevent to look at SU activity.

Action

the SU Campaigns and Democracy Officer and the Associate Director of Student Services to liaise before the next Prevent Leads meeting, and OfS Regulatory meeting respectively to discuss further.

SEC22M002

There was a discussion regarding IT use and the Prevent guidelines. The Committee discussed how certain roles might have to view sites which could present concerns. The Director of Student Services outlined to the committee that where access is automatically blocked, these websites could often still be accessed with permission. It was outlined that there is no systematic monitoring of individual access unless there is a requirement to do so as part of a Police enquiry, or in a situation where, for example, a staff member is absent for a long period of time and it may be necessary to access their account. It was noted that Prevent sits under the University's Safeguarding framework.

*24. CONDITION B3: STUDENT OUTCOMES

Received

a confidential report and its recommendations (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D013)

25. HOLISTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE SLT MINUTES

Received and noted

the minutes of discussions and agreed actions. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D014)

26. GRADUATE OUTCOMES SURVEY 2019/20: BRIEFING NOTE

Noted

the inclusion of this briefing, which was verbally noted in September SEC and circulated for reference to members. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D015)

27. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Noted

the contents of the Policy. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEC22D016)

28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported

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

Wednesday 25 January 2023 at 2pm