UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Confirmed minutes of a meeting of the Student Learning
Experience and Engagement Committee held on Friday 27 April 2018

Present: L Jackson (Co-Chair, Students' Union Education Officer), Professor G van der
              Velden (Co-Chair, Academic Director of Warwick International Higher Education
              Academy (WIHEA)), A Brewerton (Head of Academic Services, Library), Dr J
              Bryan (Student Engagement Co-ordinator (Faculty of Social Science), Professor A
              Clark (Academic Director (Undergraduate), WIHEA Fellow), A Delameilleure
              (Student Representative nominated by SU), E Dunford (Students' Union
              Postgraduate Officer), Dr R Freeman (WIHEA Fellow, Head of Student
              Engagement and Recruitment, Life Sciences), Professor L Gracia (Dean of
              Students), Dr C Hampton (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Arts) from
              minute 53/17-18, Dr J Heron (Academic Representative of the Institute for
              Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL), Dr C MacLean (Academic
              Representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Dr H Nolan (Academic
              Representative of the Faculty of Medicine), Dr K Owen (Student Engagement
              Coordinator (Faculty of Medicine), H Pennack (Director of University Marketing),
              Dr L Plath (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Arts), A Thomas (Service
              Owner, Academic Technology, IT Services), Dr E Thonnes (Student Engagement
              Coordinator (Faculty of Science), Professor P Tissington (Academic Director,
              Employability & Skills), Dr D Wood (Academic Representative of the Faculty of
              Science).

Apologies: Professor G Cooke (WIHEA Fellow, School of Engineering), Professor C Hughes
              (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)), R Saunders (Student Communications Officer),
              Dr I Tuersley (Student Engagement Coordinator, Faculty of Science).

In Attendance: D Derricott (Secretary), G Connelly (Acting Assistant Secretary), J Wale
              (Academic Manager, IATL) for minute 53/17-18 only.

43/17-18   Conflicts of Interest

              REPORTED:

              (a)   That, should any members or attendees of the Committee have any conflicts
                     of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in
                     accordance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education
                     Code of Governance (2014), available online from
                     http://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/publications/.

              RESOLVED:

              (b)   That no conflicts of interest were raised

44/17-18   Minutes

              CONSIDERED:

              The minutes from the meeting held on Friday 16 February 2018.

              RESOLVED:

              (a)   That the minutes of the meeting of the Student Learning Experience and
                     Engagement Committee held on Friday 16th February 2018 be approved.

45/17-18   Matters Arising

(a)   Teaching Room and Student Space Developments (minute 36/17-18 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(a)   That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling) will be asked to present at the May meeting of SLEEC on plans to engage students and staff in the identification and prioritisation of works to improve teaching and learning spaces;

(b)   That the Teaching and Learning Spaces Development Group will incorporate both academic and student representation to ensure a range of views are covered;

(c)   That the Co-Chairs and Academic Director (Undergraduate) are currently undertaking 'space walks' to identify spaces across the University campus that require improvements;

(by Dr E Thonnes)

(d)   That any consideration of learning spaces should recognise that different disciplines makes use of spaces beyond their own buildings and need to be accommodated when changes are proposed;

(by Professor A Clark)

(e)   That centrally timetabled rooms will be targeted in the first instance, but there need to be holistic consideration for the development of locally timetabled rooms.

46/17-18   Committee Membership

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Secretary updating the Committee on the current membership (SLEEC.20/17-18).

REPORTED:

(a)   That following an open call to academic staff, appointments have been made in each Faculty to the new role of Student Engagement Coordinator as follows:

(i)   In the Faculty of Arts: Dr Lydia Plath, Senior Teaching Fellow and Director of Student Experience in the Department of History;

(ii)   In the Faculty of Medicine Dr Kate Owen, Principal Clinical Teaching Fellow in Warwick Medical School;

(iii)   In the Faculty of Science, a joint appointment of Dr Elke Thonnes, Principal Teaching Fellow in the Department of Statistics, and Dr Ian Tuersley, Principal Teaching Fellow in WMG and the School of Engineering;

(iv)   In the Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr Jane Bryan, Principal Teaching Fellow and Director of Student Experience in Warwick Law School.

47/17-18   Chairs' Business

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(a) That the University's new Education Strategy had been approved by Senate;

(b) That the revised criteria for academic promotion, that included recognition for personal tutoring activity, had been approved by Senate and that forthcoming sessions would help staff to understand the new criteria;

(c) That the Review of Assessment is currently underway with several members of SLEEC involved in its various strands and that this will feature as an item of business at a future meeting of this Committee;

(d) That the National Student Survey (NSS) response rate was currently at 76% and colleagues involved were thanked for a successful campaign;

(e) That the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) has opened for completion and the University was aiming for a response rate of 40%–45%;

(f) That members will receive a questionnaire on the effectiveness of SLEEC which will inform a discussion on this at the next meeting of the Committee;

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, L Jackson)

(g) That following the Students' Union elections:

(i) They would take up to the role of Students' Union President in 2018-19;

(ii) Larissa Kennedy had been elected as Education Officer and would become Co-Chair of SLEEC in 2018-19.

48/17-18   Module Evaluation

CONSIDERED:

A paper and verbal report from Professor G van der Velden, Academic Director of WIHEA, proposing a revised approach to module evaluation, including the introduction of a University-supported service to collect student feedback on modules (SLEEC.21/17-18).

REPORTED: (by Professor G van der Velden)

(a) That specific thanks was given to Amber Thomas for leading the technology group and securing funding for the development;

(b) That conversations across the three working groups had been broad but focused in particular on student feedback on modules;

(c) That there had been several in-depth meetings of a cross-disciplinary learning circle to develop the academic case;

(d) That Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) will consider how this is best embedded in the University's policy and regulatory framework before it is submitted to Education Committee for consideration and approval;

(e) That the implementation stage, including the testing of questions with students and managing minor revisions to the question set where nomenclature varies locally, will focus on working with departments to adopt the solution;

(by A Brewerton)

(f)   That concerns remained regarding the absence of questions about the provision of learning resources;

(g)   That feedback should be obtained from professional service departments as well as academic departments when reviewing the implementation of the revised approach to module evaluation;

(by Professor A Clark)

(h)   That issues surrounding resourcing are not limited to single modules and other fora are useful means of obtaining this feedback, including Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs);

(by Dr R Freeman)

(i)   That is was important to retain and emphasise academic ownership of module evaluation data in order to drive improvements to the learning experience, including through a greater focus on best practice in using this data locally;

(j)   That the ability to be able to amend questions to ensure they are appropriate to each department would be required;

(k)   That testing questions with students will be pivotal to developing our understanding of how they are answered;

(by Professor P Tissington)

(l)   That modules should be designed to develop the employability of students, with confirmation of this achieved through module approval processes and evaluation of this achieved through module evaluation;

(m)   That where employability was not already embedded into modules, the inclusion of a question in module evaluation would raise awareness among students and staff;

(by E Dunford)

(n)   That including a question on employability suggests each module should explicitly develop certain skills whereas this is more appropriately planned and delivered across the course as a whole;

(by Dr C MacLean)

(o)   That it would be important to mitigate the concerns of academic departments that student feedback data would be published without the necessary contextualisation;

(by the Secretary)

(p)   That module evaluation was just one part of an evolving framework for collecting student feedback, which includes other mechanisms, such as SSLCs and the National Student Survey, more appropriately suited to gauging students' views on course-level issues;

RESOLVED:

(q)   That the policy recommendations on student module feedback are <u>agreed</u> by the Committee.

(r)   That Heads of Department and Directors of Study in each academic department be consulted on the policy recommendations endorsed by the Committee.

(s)   That authority to make minor amendments to the policy recommendations be delegated to the Co-Chairs before they are presented to Education Committee.

(t)   That the implementation of module evaluation be reviewed by this Committee towards the end of the 2018-19 academic year, including consideration of how the priorities around employability & skills in the University's Education Strategy might be supported by module evaluation.

RECOMMENDED (to Education Committee):

(u)   That the proposal for a revised approach to module evaluation be approved, subject to minor changes agreed by the Co-Chairs following consultation with Heads of Department and Directors of Studies.

49/17-18   Student Barometer and International Student Barometers Results

RECEIVED:

A paper from C O'Leary, Assistant Director of the International Student Office, on the actions arising from the Student Barometer and International Student Barometer surveys conducted in term one (SLEEC.22/17-18).

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, L Jackson)

(a)   That a detailed presentation summarising the results of the surveys and where the University ranks in the sector can be accessed on the International Student Office's website: https://warwick.ac.uk/study/international/students/internationalstudentbarometer/autumn2017staffrequest/.

(b)   That the Survey Strategy Steering Group who consider which Student Surveys run and when, are currently considering that the Student Barometer should next take place in Autumn 2018;

(c)   That this would prove to be a useful tool to evaluate the impact of Welcome Week 2018.

(by the Secretary)

(d)   That lessons had been learnt about what is effective in achieving strong response rates and these were being factored into planning for future surveys;

(by the Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(e)   That the Student Strategy Survey Group are looking into the distribution of the results data and considering how these can be shared across departments;

(by Professor P Tissington,)

(f)   That this was a valuable survey, with useful data on employability, and efforts should be harnessed in order to achieve a stronger response rate.

50/17-18   PGR Student Feedback Action Planning

RECEIVED:

A paper from L Sutcliffe and S Neophytou, Postgraduate Student Development Officers in the Graduate School, on the themes and institutional recommendations arising from action plans developed by academic departments in response to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2017 and other feedback collected from PGR students (SLEEC.23/17-18).

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, L Jackson)

(a)   That following the establishment of the Survey Strategy Steering Group, oversight of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey's operation and of the use of results has been delegated to the Group;

(b)   That the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) have primary responsibility for the PGR student experience and consideration of these plans;

(by E Dunford)

(c)   That the paper had been considered at BGS on the 26 April 2018;

(d)   That the Graduate School would be updating the action plan template to ensure the analysis is as useful to departments as possible.

51/17-18   Student Academic Representation Transformation

RECEIVED:

A paper and verbal report from L Jackson, SU Education Officer, on the aims and progress of the Student Academic Representation Transformation Project (SLEEC.24/17-18).

REPORTED: (by the Co-Chair, L Jackson)

(a)   That the project seeks to empower students to have an informed and impactful voice in their learning experience and to build an academic community which seeks to enhance learning and teaching at Warwick through reciprocal engagement and representation;

(b)   That the following four work streams had been identified in order to address the projects aims and objectives:

(i)   Enhancing student representation in university governance structures;

(ii)   Bettering support for Course Reps and SSLCs;

(iii)   A digital transformation;

(iv)   Better their core representation provision;

(c)   That there will continue to be updates provided on the development of the project throughout the year;

(by A Thomas)

(d)   That it is important to support student representatives in addressing student concerns by clarifying key contacts within and responsibilities of professional services;

(by Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(e)   That it would be useful to have the timescales for the project clarified;

(f)   That it is essential for the credibility of the student voice that student representatives are truly representative by being democratically elected;

(g)   That creating Academic Councils would be a welcome addition;

(By Dr J Heron)

(h)   That a commitment to strengthening the representation of students on joint honours courses and students taking modules outside their department should be welcomed;

(i)   That better representation will lead to a better understanding of what is required to change in order to offer support to these students;

RESOLVED:

(j)   That the Students' Union would engage interested members of the Committee outside of the meeting in more closely informing and supporting the project.

52/17-18   Student Research Working Group

RECEIVED:

A paper from C Gibson, IATL Academic Manager, on the work of the Student Research Working Group in growing student research activity (SLEEC.25/17-18).

REPORTED: (by Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(a)   That the work of the Student Research Working Group is well-established and it is proposed that an informal reporting line to SLEEC be established in order to provide updates and make recommendations around student research at Warwick;

(by Dr J Heron)

(b)   That this as a strong area of work with strategic importance that should be endorsed and supported further;

RESOLVED:

(c)   That although not a formally constituted sub-group of this Committee, it was agreed that an informal reporting line would be established from the Student Research Working Group and regular engagement by the Group in the Committee's business would be encouraged.

53/17-18   Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning and Impact on the Student Experience

RECEIVED:

A paper from J Wale, IATL Academic Manager, on the development of and engagement with IATL's interdisciplinary modules (SLEEC.27/17-18).

REPORTED:

(by Dr J Heron)

(a) That consideration of similar issues had previously been within the remit of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the Board of Undergraduate Studies, but in the new Academic Governance Framework, responsibility for oversight of optional interdisciplinary learning now rests with SLEEC;

(by J Wale)

(b) That the paper outlines a number of challenges faced by the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) and across the wider institution with regards to interdisciplinary learning;

(c) That there is wide variation in practice across departments with regards to engagement, delivery and teaching on interdisciplinary modules administered by IATL;

(d) That IATL's priority is the recommendation that SLEEC considers updating the guidance to departments on awarding appropriate departmental teaching credit in workload models to staff teaching on IATL modules;

(by Professor A Clark)

(e) That the limited teaching capacity within some academic departments constrains their ability to release staff to teach on modules in other areas;

(by Co-Chair, Professor G van der Velden)

(f) That the proposal aligns with the aims of the University's Education Strategy;

(g) That the Committee has no remit for financial allocation and so caution must be taken when making recommendations outside of academic matters;

RESOLVED:

(h) That the Committee accepts the following recommendations and will action them through the Co-Chairs and Secretariat:

  (i) That departments be encouraged to promote the availability of IATL modules to their students, where appropriate (Recommendation 2 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

  (ii) That the University looks to include information on interdisciplinary learning opportunities to prospective and arriving students so that students are already aware of what the University offers before starting their degree programme (Recommendation 4 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

RECOMMENDED (to the Course Proposal Scrutiny Panel):

(i) That following consideration by SLEEC, the Panel considers whether departments should be encouraged to apply a consistent approach to allowing their students to take IATL modules (Recommendation 3 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

RECOMMENDED (to the Education Executive):

(j) That following consideration by SLEEC, the Executive considers and advises on the steps that could be taken to harmonise practice across academic departments in releasing staff to teach on IATL modules and recognising this in local workload models. (Recommendation 1 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

(k) That following consideration by SLEEC, the Academic Registrar be asked to consider IATL's specific needs in using student records and corporate reporting systems (Recommendation 5 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

RECOMMENDED (to the SPI Programme Board):

(l) That following consideration by SLEEC, the respective Project Boards be asked to engage IATL to ensure the needs of interdisciplinary modules are taken into account with regard timetabling and module registration (Recommendation 6 in paper SLEEC.27/17-18).

54/17-18   Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED: (by the Secretary, D Derricott)

(a) That the date and venue for the next meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee for the academic year 2017/18 is 1.00pm to 3.00pm on Monday 21st May in CMR 1.0, University House.

(b) That a first version of the University's Committee Timetable for 2018/19 has been published by the Governance Office, however the dates listed for this Committee will be amended and should not yet be diarised by members.

(c) That the Secretariat will issue Outlook diary invites to members for each meeting of the Committee.