

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of a meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee held on Monday 21 May 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 G Cooke (WIHEA Fellow, School of Engineering), A Delameilleure (Student Representative), E Dunford (Students' Union Postgraduate Officer), Dr J Heron (Academic Representative of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL)), Dr K Owen (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Medicine) for minutes 55 to 60/17-18 only), H Pennack (Director of University Marketing), Dr L Plath (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Arts)), A Thomas (Service Owner, Academic Technology, IT Services), Professor P Tissington (Academic Director, Employability & Skills), Dr I Tuersley (Student Engagement Coordinator, Faculty of Science), Dr D Wood (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Science).
- Apologies: Professor A Clark (Academic Director (Undergraduate), WIHEA Fellow), Professor C Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)), 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), Dr C Maclean (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Dr H Nolan (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor C Sparrow (Academic Representative of the Graduate School), Dr E Thonnes (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Science)).
- In Attendance: D Derricott (Secretary), G Connelly (Acting Assistant Secretary), L Kennedy (SU Education Officer-elect), E Mundy (Head of Marketing Services) for minutes 60 and 61/17-18 only, R Saunders (Student Communications Officer).

55/17-18 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.

56/17-18 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes from the meeting held on Friday 27 April 2018, noting amendments to minutes 53(a) and 53(b)/17-18 as follows (additions underlined, deletions ~~struck through~~):

- (a) Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning and Impact on the Student Experience (minutes 53(a) and 53(b)/17-18)
 - (i) *'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;'*
 - (ii) *'That the paper outlines a number of challenges faced by the Institute of ~~Advance Learning & for Advanced Teaching and Learning~~ (IATL) and across the wider institution with regards to interdisciplinary learning;'*

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) held on Friday 27 April 2018, noting amendments to minutes 53(a) and 53(b)/17-18 as set out above, be approved.

57/17-18

Matters Arising

- (a) Teaching Room and Student Space Developments (minute 45/17-18 refers)

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

- (i) That the report to this Committee on plans to engage students and staff in the identification and prioritisation of works to improve teaching and learning spaces had been deferred to a future meeting.

- (b) Module Evaluation (minute 48/17-18 refers)

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

- (i) That the proposal for a revised approach to module evaluation was progressing through the planned stages of consultation before being presented to Education Committee for their approval on Tuesday 5 June and subsequently to Senate for their approval in the new academic year;
- (ii) That in addition to the planned consultation, the proposal was being considered by Faculty Education Committees;
- (iii) That a summary of the feedback received from other committees and from academic departments would be shared with members of this Committee by email.

- (c) Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning and Impact on the Student Experience (minute 53/17-18 refers)

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

- (i) That following the Committee's consideration of the recommendations from IATL, the Secretary was liaising with the relevant bodies and colleagues to ensure they are followed up on.

58/17-18

Chairs' Business

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

- (a) That a sub-group of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee had been established to consider the additional course costs incurred by students on different courses, including those students studying modules outside of their home department where the costs may not be immediately obvious;
- (b) That the University is developing its estates masterplan with particular consideration of how the student learning experience is supported by quality learning spaces;
- (c) That progress had continued to be made towards highlighting underutilised study space on campus to students, including through the MyWarwick app;

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

- (d) That the Learning and Development Centre team were to be congratulated on the delivery of a successful Education Conference, which had included a number of excellent keynote speakers and breakout sessions;
- (e) That one of the keynote speakers from the Education Conference, Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, Head of Research at Sheffield Hallam University's Institute of Education, had spoken on the attainment gap of Black and Minority Ethnic students, and was scheduled to visit Warwick again as part of an evolving collaboration between the two universities around the enhancement of teaching and learning;
- (f) That the University's Review of Assessment was resulting in a number of consultations, which members of this committee would be well-placed to engage with because of their relation to the student learning experience.

59/17-18

Peer Review of Teaching

REPORTED (by Dr J Bryan):

- (a) That a Learning Circle of the Warwick International Higher Education Academy is currently considering how the University's approach to peer review of teaching could be enhanced through the development of institutional policy;
- (b) That work had already been undertaken to map the different approaches adopted by academic departments at Warwick as well as those promoted at other universities and in academic literature on teaching and learning in higher education;
- (c) That the academic literature in this area favoured a developmental approach to peer review, typically based on a supportive dialogue between colleagues who had been paired, rather than a management-driven approach linked to appraisal and progression;
- (d) That outstanding issues still to be considered included whether staff would engage with peer review annually, whether established staff would be within scope as well as new staff, and how peer review would be framed to promote the benefits for the colleague reviewing as well as the colleague being reviewed;

(by Dr J Heron)

- (e) That peer review was often based on a reciprocal arrangement whereby the two colleagues paired would observe each other's teaching;

- (f) That the benefits of cross-disciplinary observations had been seen through the work of IATL;

(by Professor P Tissington)

- (g) That there would be benefit to broadening the scope of peer review beyond face-to-face teaching events to encompass the wider student learning experience, such as any online learning materials used in advance of an observation;

(by Dr L Plath)

- (h) That if peer review were to remain distinctly supportive and separate from quality assurance mechanisms, there would need to be a clear University position on what alternative approaches could be used by departments when responding to concerns about the quality of teaching;

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

- (i) That the needs of individual colleagues would vary and should be taken into account, depending on the length and breadth of their teaching experience;

(by the Secretary)

- (j) That peer review was helpful when focused on solving a specific challenge faced by a colleague in their teaching, such as conveying a particularly complex concept;

- (k) That peer reviewers are well-placed to elicit honest feedback from the students who have experienced the teaching that is being observed and to convey this constructively to the colleague delivering the teaching;

RESOLVED:

- (l) That draft proposals, together with four case studies illustrating how the proposals could be operationalised in different ways, would be presented to the first meeting of the Committee in the 2018-19 academic year.

60/17-18

Student Communications Strategy

RECEIVED:

A presentation from Emma Mundy, Head of Marketing Services, on progress made towards the implementation of the Student Communications Strategy and forthcoming priorities.

REPORTED: (by H Pennack)

- (a) That an increase in capacity and focus around student communications had enabled a shift from producing high volumes of news content to a more planned, strategic approach with a clearer narrative and set of themes in support of the Education Strategy;

(by E Mundy)

- (b) That the University's approach to student communications has evolved rapidly since the first steps towards a single portal, MyWarwick, and a student-

focused newsletter that allow content to be brought together and more carefully curated;

- (c) That more recently, the University Marketing team had been developing and organising its activity around five themes:
 - (i) Your place in the world;
 - (ii) Your knowledge at the next level;
 - (iii) Skills to take you places;
 - (iv) A frame of mind to succeed;
 - (v) Let's keep the dialogue going;
- (d) That each of the themes had been tested with student focus groups, which informed further refinement of the language and visual identity of each theme, and had identified the need for a sixth theme around community:
 - (i) Your place in the world;
 - (ii) Your ~~knowledge~~ learning at the next level;
 - (iii) Skills to take you places;
 - (iv) A frame of mind to succeed;
 - (v) Let's keep the dialogue going;
 - (vi) Connect to your community;
- (e) That the focus was now on how the themes would be introduced collectively to students, including through the redevelopment of MyWarwick to structure the content and navigation around the themes;
- (f) That the application of the themes would be further enhanced through the addition of more Warwick-specific imagery and through the development of a toolkit designed to enable the local use of themes in a consistent way;

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

- (g) That the University Marketing team had been especially supportive in progressing this work at pace as part of a wider strategic effort to reposition the University's relationship with students, and that this has started to influence how other professional services engage with students;

(by Professor P Tissington)

- (h) That the Student Barometer surveys would benefit from the application of the 'let's keep the dialogue going' theme and institutional support in the same way as the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey had;

(by A Brewerton)

- (i) That the additional 'connect to your community' theme was to be welcomed as student-led activity was particularly powerful;
- (j) That presenting the six themes together was also powerful, especially in demonstrating the University's values to students;
- (k) That it was relatively straightforward to structure existing communications around the six themes when thinking from the student perspective;

(by A Thomas)

- (l) That it was important to embed careful controls when devolving responsibility for curating messaging and content around these themes to academic and professional service departments so that the approach remains joined up;

(by A Delameilleure)

- (m) That caution would need to be applied to avoid overcomplicating the presentation of information to students by adding another layer to navigate;

(by L Kennedy)

- (n) That the community focus was especially welcome and would go some way to minimise the disconnect students felt towards the university.

61/17-18 Student Communications Steering Group

CONSIDERED:

A paper from Laura du Plessis, Associate Director – Communications, proposing the existing Student Communications Board be adopted as a sub-group of SLEEC (SLEEC.31/17-18).

REPORTED: (by E Mundy)

- (a) That the Student Communications Board had been operating for some time with a broad membership and this paper proposed bringing the Board under the remit of this Committee as the Student Communications Steering Group;

(by the Co-Chair, L Jackson)

- (b) That the Students' Union's Director of Marketing and Communications would be a valuable addition to the membership of the Steering Group.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the establishment of the Student Communications Steering Group as a sub-group of this Committee with Terms of Reference and membership set out in paper SLEEC.31/17-18, with the addition of the Students' Union's Director of Marketing and Communications, be approved.

62/17-18 Review of the Committee's Effectiveness

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Secretary on members' responses to a survey on the effectiveness of SLEEC at the end of its first cycle of business, and proposed actions to improve the effectiveness of the Committee (SLEEC.32/17-18).

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

- (a) That discussions on how the Committee might evolve had highlighted the need to look outwards at policy developments and best practice in other institutions, and the need to ensure the Committee's membership is inclusive, diverse and representative of the different student and staff voices across the university community;
- (b) That the nature of the Committee's membership, which predominantly comprises ex-officio members by virtue of their roles, may inherently create a

bias towards the views of teaching-focused staff;

- (c) That the voice of postgraduate students is intended to be represented by the Academic Director (Graduate School) and the SU Postgraduate Officer as well as being considered by the Committee as a whole;
- (d) That the Committee's remit was broad but focused only on the learning experience rather than the wider student experience, which left some student experience matters out of the scope of any academic governance committee;

(by Dr J Heron)

- (e) That it would be helpful to further clarify the respective responsibilities of SLEEC and the Board of Graduate Studies with regard to the experience of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students;
- (f) That postgraduate taught students required deliberate, focused attention to ensure that their experience was not overlooked;

(by E Dunford)

- (g) That recommendations being clearly presented at the beginning of committee papers was helpful;

(by A Thomas)

- (h) That the style of committee papers at Warwick did not make their circulation or status immediately clear and that it would be helpful to identify which papers should be consulted on with members' constituencies;

(by L Kennedy)

- (i) That it was important to remember that the student learning experience occurs in the wider context of university life.

63/17-18

SLEEC's Priorities and Schedule of Business 2018-19

CONSIDERED:

A paper and verbal report from the Secretary on business conducted by the Committee during 2017-18 and the proposed outline business to be considered in 2018-19 (SLEEC.33/17-18).

REPORTED: (by the Secretary)

- (a) That the previous item had highlighted the need to ensure the Committee's priorities were sufficiently clear and strategic;
- (b) That the draft Schedule of Business had been structured to more explicitly include and emphasise the items of business at each meeting that related to priority areas of business;
- (c) That a range of data would be available at the beginning of the new academic year to inform the Committee's priorities, including the results of the NSS and PTES, the themes arising from Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings in the previous year, and the implementation plan of the Education Strategy;

(by Professor G Cooke)

- (d) That planning committee business across the academic year and sharing this with members was a positive step and would be beneficial across committees;

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the Committee would be brought together before the first formal meeting of the 2018-19 academic year to review its scope and agree a small number of priorities for the year;
- (f) That the draft Schedule of Business 2018-19 be approved.

64/17-18

Vote of Thanks

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

- (a) That this was the last meeting that Emily Dunford would attend as SU Postgraduate Officer and that the Committee expressed its sincere thanks for their contribution to Committee's business over the academic year;
- (b) That this was the last meeting that Liam Jackson would attend as SU Education Officer and Co-Chair of the Committee, and that the Committee expressed its sincere thanks for being central to establishing the Committee and, in particular, demonstrating the value of student co-chairs through exemplary engagement and leadership.

65/17-18

Dates of meetings in academic year 2018-19

REPORTED: (by the Secretary)

- (a) That the dates and venues for meetings of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) for the academic year 2018-19 had been published by the Governance Office but were likely to change following a request the by the Secretary;
- (b) That the Secretary would write to members notifying them of the confirmed meeting dates and would send Outlook diary invites.