

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of a meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee held on Tuesday 04 December 2018

Present: L Kennedy (Co-Chair, Students' Union Education Officer), Professor G van der Velden (Co-Chair, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Learning Experience)), A Brewerton (Head of Academic Services, Library), Professor G Cooke (WIHEA Fellow, School of Engineering), D Da Silva Lopes (Student Representative, Faculty of Social Sciences) from minute 24/18-19, Dr R Freeman (WIHEA Fellow, Head of Student Engagement and Recruitment, Life Sciences), E King (Students' Union Postgraduate Officer), J Mellor (Student Representative, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine), H Pennack (Director of University Marketing), Dr E Riva (Academic Representative of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL)), A Thomas (Head of Academic Technology and Digital Transformation, IT Services), E Worrall (Student Representative, Faculty of Arts).

Apologies: Dr J Bryan (Student Engagement Co-ordinator (Faculty of Social Sciences)), Professor A Clark (WIHEA Fellow, Academic Director (Undergraduate Studies)), Dr W Curtis (Academic Director (Partnerships)), Professor L Gracia (Dean of Students), Dr C Hampton (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Arts), Professor C Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)), Dr C MacLean (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Dr K Owen (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Dr L Plath (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Arts)), Professor C Sparrow (Academic Representative of the Graduate School), Dr E Thonnes (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Professor P Tissington (Academic Director (Employability & Skills)), Dr I Tuersley (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Dr D Wood (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine)

In Attendance: D Derricott (Secretary), J Hughes (Head of Information and Operations, Careers & Skills for minutes 25/18-19 only, J Humphreys (Senior Academic Developer) for minutes 25/18-19 only, J Kirkwood (Apprentice HE Manager, WIHEA), Professor D Lamburn (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)) for minute 24/18-19 only, C O'Leary (Assistant Director, ISO) for minutes 28/18-19 only, Dr K Simecek (WIHEA Fellow) until minute 24(b)/18-19, K Stratford (Assistant Secretary), R Saunders (Student Communications Officer), R Wooldridge Smith (Deputy Academic Registrar) for minutes 15-24/18-19 only.

15/18-19 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

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:

That no conflicts of interest were raised.

16/18-19 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes from the meeting held on 16 October 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) held on 16 October 2018 be approved, noting amendments to minutes 08(g)/18-19 and 11(b)/18-19 as follows (additions underlined, deletions struck through):

- (a) Trans Inclusivity in Teaching and Learning (minute 08(g)/18-19).

~~That attendance at Trans awareness workshops had been much lower than anticipated and so additional sessions would be held;~~

- (b) Survey Strategy Steering Group (minute 11(b)/18-19)

That the Student Barometer survey had been rebranded as the Warwick Student Experience Survey, with the ~~Be Heard~~, Join In, Be Heard campaign launching on 5 December 2018 and departments have been urged to promote and support the survey;

17/18-19 Terms of Reference and Membership (minute 06/18-19 refers)

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

- (a) That on 17 October 2018, Senate ratified amendments to the Committee's membership agreed at the last meeting, detailed in paper SLEEC.01/18-19;
- (b) That further requests would be made to Senate to add the Academic Director (Undergraduate Studies) and the Academic Director (Partnerships) as ex-officio members at the next meeting;
- (c) That Jonathon Mellor, Dalila Da Silva Lopes and Emma Worrall had joined the Committee as Student Representatives of the Faculties of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Social Sciences, and Arts, respectively;
- (d) That Dr Karen Simecek would join the Committee as a Fellow of WIHEA in place of Professor Andrew Clark.

18/18-19 Student Academic Representation

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

- (a) That the role of Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) was being evaluated and evolved through a Students' Union-led project in conjunction with Student Engagement Coordinators;
- (b) That any changes to the function of SSLCs would be brought for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

19/18-19 Library Refurbishment and New Building

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

- (a) That the lower floors of The Library would be refurbished over the next two to three years;
- (b) That a new Library building (“Library 2”) was planned to be built within six to ten years, and that consultations with stakeholders including students had begun to shape the plans for this.

20/18-19 Review of Assessment

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

- (a) That the four sub-groups were beginning to report on proposed policy changes to the Review of Assessment Group and these proposals would subsequently progress through committees for approval where required;
- (b) That the recommendations will comprise a mixture of some that can be implemented immediately and others which would require a longer-term implementation.

21/18-19 Module Evaluation

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

- (a) That the guidance for academic departments had been produced ahead of the University-supported module evaluation system running for the first time this term and was now available online (<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/categories/feedback/moduleevaluation/>).

22/18-19 Peer Observation of Teaching

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

- (a) That university policy on peer observation of teaching was being developed by a WIHEA Learning Circle for the Committee’s consideration in the New Year, and that this would be accompanied by case studies to illustrate different approaches taken by departments.

23/18-19 Students’ Union Updates

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

- (a) That as part of the Student Transforming Education Programme, the Students’ Union would be holding an event in March 2019 called ‘STEPFest’, which would enable students to collaborate in developing policies that improve their educational experience;

(by E King)

- (b) That the Students’ Union had supported the Employability Working Group, led by the Academic Director (Employability and Skills), in developing the University’s draft Employability Strategy and had created online materials to help students to articulate skills they had gained;
- (c) That the Students’ Union’s upcoming Futures Festival would include workshops on employability skills and breaking perceptions of traditional Warwick graduate jobs.

RECEIVED:

A paper and verbal report from Professor D Lamburn, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), and R Wooldridge Smith, Deputy Academic Registrar, on work underway to review, simplify and harmonise the Credit Framework (SLEEC.07/18-19).

REPORTED: (by Professor D Lamburn)

- (a) That the current Credit Framework was complex, with multiple tariffs in use across courses and years;
- (b) That through feedback from a number of sources, including the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review, the University had been asked to make changes;
- (c) That the current Credit Framework had compromised relationships with some overseas institutions who had struggled to understand it, which had the impact of not only reducing the number of incoming students, but reducing the opportunities for overseas placements for Warwick students;

(by R Wooldridge Smith)

- (d) That wide consultation was underway with senior academic committees at university and faculty levels, and through Town Hall meetings open to any member of the University community;
- (e) That the current phase of consultation was focussed on developing guiding principles and identifying broad areas for change, in conjunction with stakeholders including students;
- (f) That the University was mindful of balancing different disciplinary contexts with the desire to reduce significant overheads incurred in managing disparate tariffs at present;
- (g) That these principles would be considered at Faculty Education Committees in the summer term, with a view to presenting them to Senate by the end of the academic year;

(by Dr E Riva)

- (h) That a new framework was essential to facilitate increased interdisciplinarity across the university and to move away from delivering the same module with multiple credit values, which was challenging for both staff and students, and therefore IATL strongly welcomed the proposal;

(by A Thomas)

- (i) That standardisation would bring the potential for a wealth of improvements to online student interfaces, thus improving the student experience, and so the proposal was welcomed;

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

- (j) That the revised framework would enable clearer routes through a course and would simplify requirements for progression, thereby enabling students of all backgrounds to be successful;

(by J Mellor)

- (k) That the proposal was welcomed from a student's perspective, having personally experienced the inconsistency of the current system;

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

- (l) That, in summary, the work was supported by the Committee.

25/18-19

Using Student Survey Results in Professional Services

RECEIVED:

A paper and verbal reports on the Survey Action Plans developed by four professional services in response to student feedback collected in the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (SLEEC.08-18/19)

REPORTED: (by the Secretary)

- (a) That the University's approach to survey action planning was evolving to become more impactful, including rethinking the way in which professional services engage with this process;
- (b) That the Committee would receive action plans from other professional services that directly impact the student learning experience at a future meeting, including from Space Management & Timetabling, the Academic Office (namely the Graduate School and Examinations), the International Student Office and Wellbeing Support Services;
- (c) That further discussion would take place outside of the meeting with the Library, IT Services, Student Careers and Skills, and the Learning and Development Centre to evolve the ways in which professional services engage students in survey action planning;
- (d) The Library.

(by A Brewerton)

- (i) That the design of the Survey Action Plan template was effective for professional services as well as academic departments;
- (ii) That students tended to be less likely to highlight strengths than suggestions for improvement to the Library however it was emphasised that the Library has a good relationship with students;
- (iii) That as the Library does not have student representatives, the SU Education Officer had agreed to fulfil the role of Lead Student Rep and that consideration would be given to including student Library Associates in action planning;
- (iv) That access to study spaces had been a prominent issue in feedback previously but this had improved in the short term

through the book-a-desk programme and live updates on available spaces at peak times, and would improve in the medium term through the remodelling of the existing Library, and in the long term through the new Library 2 building;

- (v) That significant investment had been made in response to student feedback, including providing power points at the majority of desks in the Library and improving the availability of academic resources through the More Books campaign and Talis Aspire reading lists;

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

- (vi) That student engagement with the Library was welcomed and it was suggested that models of student engagement at other universities be researched, for instance Student Boards in the Library or ongoing relationships with the Students' Union;
- (vii) That the provision of flexible learning spaces were being considered in any new building work;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (viii) That further engagement between the Students' Union and the Library would be welcomed, including collaborative working on topics such as Black History Month;

(by J Mellor)

- (ix) That work underway to increase study space in departments was both visible and welcomed;

(e) IT Services

(by A Thomas)

- (i) That feedback from students on IT resources was generally positive and this would be built through strengthened relationships with departmental IT leads and clearer routes for SSLCs to escalate concerns;
- (ii) That students were strongly supportive of lecture capture and would welcome wider usage, requiring collaboration with LDC given the dependence on the lecture design;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (iii) That students requested wider use of lecture capture each year, and suggested a quick win of being more transparent to students on the complexities and limitations of lecture capture so that they can see their feedback is being considered;

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

- (iv) That greater collaboration between information system providers in receiving student feedback through a single point of contact would enable issues to be swiftly escalated without the need for students to understand the organisational structures and operational responsibilities of different departments;

- (v) That it was important for professional services to commit to engaging students in the design and development of their service provision;

(f) Student Careers and Skills

(by J Hughes)

- (i) That Student Careers and Skills (SCS) was effective in gathering feedback and acting upon it, but needed to focus on feeding back the changes made to close the loop;
- (ii) That paid student representative positions had been created and would form a student engagement group and transform the current approach to action planning;
- (iii) That SCS was aware of issues with the visibility of the service and the perception of a narrow focus of careers options, which would be addressed via clearer marketing of the service;

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

- (iv) That the new Employability Strategy would instigate a great deal of change in the service once embedded;

(by the Secretary)

- (v) That the University was aware that NSS, and to some degree PTES, were less helpful to SCS due to the nature of the questions, however it was anticipated that the Warwick Student Experience Survey would yield richer data for the service to inform planning;

(g) Learning and Development Centre

(by J Humphreys)

- (i) That the Centre had been reviewing how it supports teaching and learning and how it collaborates with departments, and that showcasing good practice across the university would be prioritised;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (ii) That LDC's work on internationalisation and decolonisation of the curriculum was strongly welcomed by the Students' Union;

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

- (iii) That departments were sometimes unsure of how best to elicit useful feedback from students, particularly in using probing qualitative questions (for instance where an issue is identified but the cause is unknown), or how best to interpret the data;

(by A Thomas)

- (iv) That the opportunity for departments to involve students in the co-design of modules and learning materials, with appropriate

support in good learning design had been suggested at Teaching Excellence Group meetings;

(by Dr E Riva)

- (v) That IATL were working closely with LDC and welcome ongoing dialogue in this area.

26/18-19

The Black Attainment Gap

CONSIDERED:

A paper and verbal report on the strands of work underway to research, understand and address the differential attainment and experience of Black students at Warwick, and how the Committee can contribute to this work (SLEEC.09.18/19).

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

- (a) That the issue of Black students entering university at a similar level to their peers but graduating with lower outcomes was widespread across the sector, and that work was being led by Universities UK and the National Union of Students to explore the reasons for this;
- (b) That the February meeting of Committee would focus on the Black Attainment Gap with speakers invited to update on the key areas of work across the university, and so in preparation members' input was sought to ensure the next meeting would be focused and productive;
- (c) That discussions should remain within the remit of the Committee and while some aspects would be important to the University, such as the role of the Wellbeing Support Services, they would be beyond the scope of the Committee's current involvement;
- (d) That tackling the root causes and making systemic changes should be the end goal rather than purely mitigating the consequences, but it may be helpful to take such mitigating actions in the interim to ensure that current students were fully supported;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (e) That the focus should be on tackling the structural barriers in place as a result of the way the University operates, rather than on a deficit model targeting students themselves;
- (f) That there was potential to consider additional demographic attainment gaps arising from other institutional barriers at a later stage;

(by D Da Silva Lopes)

- (g) That the Committee was in no way devaluing issues faced by other groups by focussing on the attainment of Black students;
- (h) That there tends to be a nervousness around these discussions but it is important to consider individual student viewpoints in a safe space and without blame;

(by A Brewerton)

- (i) That this was an issue which tended to be shied away from but it was essential to understand and measure the impact of structural barriers, which can only be achieved through honest and non-judgemental conversations;

(by Professor G Cooke)

- (j) That good practice should be identified to help colleagues fully understand the issues and possible solutions to them;
- (k) That the discussions and outcomes should be applied more widely to benefit other groups where an attainment gap exists, such as female or disabled students in Engineering, to give all students the opportunity to excel;

(by A Thomas)

- (l) That student outcomes data split by demographic factors was not yet widely shared or understood in the University;
- (m) That some institutions formally implement positive interventions such as flagging students of particular demographic groups in Exam Boards enabling particular these students to be given the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases;

(by E Worrall)

- (n) That it should not be assumed that all students' attainment is comparable on entry, since students may receive lower offers through Clearing, putting them at risk of further disadvantage.

RESOLVED:

- (o) That the Committee supported the intention to explore the Black Attainment Gap and it was suggested that the following questions should be the focus for guest speakers to provide a basis for the discussion:
 - (i) An outline of the work that relates to the student learning experience, progress made to date and current priorities;
 - (ii) Proposals for structural and strategic interventions that would tackle the causes of the attainment gap for Black students.

27/18-19

Directors of Student Experience and Progression

CONSIDERED:

A presentation on work being established to understand, harmonise and champion the role of Director of Student Experience and Progression (DSEP) in academic departments.

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

- (a) That DSEP role existed at departmental and faculty level, and that in some departments the role was subsumed into other roles such as Senior Tutor, Director of Studies or Director of Education;

- (b) That existing roles would not be subject to change, but rather the intention was to establish broad themes which should be covered within each department;

(by Dr R Freeman)

- (c) That the nature of individual DSEP roles varied depending on departmental priorities, with the focus being strategic, developmental, operational or a combination of these;
- (d) That the roles often covered the full student lifecycle from pre-recruitment (including Widening Participation) through to alumni;
- (e) That despite the breadth, there were commonalities across the roles such as being empowered to develop and embed projects, persuading colleagues and managing upwards, articulating rationales for policies and practices to students, and developing a collaborative community between staff and students;
- (f) That further exploration of the role would take place at the upcoming meeting of the Student Experience Network and through discussions with the Students' Union, Heads of Department, Directors of Undergraduate Studies and Directors of Education;

(by Professor G Cooke)

- (g) That the work was welcomed and it was clear that positive steps were already being made;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (h) That the involvement of the Students' Union in this work was welcomed;

RESOLVED:

- (i) That SLEEC supported the current approach to understanding, harmonising and championing the DSEP role;
- (j) That L Kennedy (SLEEC Co-Chair) and Dr R Freeman (Chair of the Student Experience Network) would collaborate and report back to the Committee once substantive progress had been made.

28/18-19

Planning for Welcome 2019

RECEIVED:

A paper and verbal report on the evaluation and impact of Welcome 2018 and on the plans subsequently being developed for next year's Welcome (SLEEC.10.18/19).

REPORTED: (by C O'Leary)

- (a) That the nine-day programme of 1900 events had been successful, and was based on the core aims of community building, finding your way, independence, and integration;
- (b) That a deeper evaluation was underway including with focus groups and one-to-one meetings with academic and professional services staff;

- (c) That a variety of areas were identified for refinement in 2019/20 including airport transfers, ensuring that the Welcome effectively prepared students for their course, supporting joint honours students, and avoiding repetition of information between departmental and university-wide sessions;
- (d) That the Welcome Steering Group would explore issues such as expanding the Welcome experience for PG students; determining student opinion on introducing a more detailed academic introduction; and looking at the role of the Students' Union;
- (e) That a Welcome Week conference in March 2019 would set out more detailed plans for 2019 and include speakers on key themes including building a learning community, while ongoing conversations would continue to take place, coordinated by a dedicated member of staff;

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (f) That Welcome 2018 had been an overwhelming success and thanks were given to all involved;

(by D Da Silva Lopes)

- (g) That although the academic induction was useful, there was too much information was given in the first week for students to be able to fully appreciate and understand it all;
- (h) That it would be useful to have support from current students who were able to give advice from a student's viewpoint;

(by Professor G Cooke)

- (i) That thanks were given for the useful and insightful report, which had inspired ideas for 2019 in the School of Engineering;

(by the Secretary)

- (j) That Welcome 2018 was a good first step in developing a stronger learning community, a priority area for consideration by SLEEC, and the Committee would welcome further discussion on how the academic and institutional inductions link together;

(by E King)

- (k) That postgraduate feedback had been very positive overall and that the induction session on behaviours had been well received by students;

(by J Mellor)

- (l) That widening the Welcome programme to postgraduates would be strongly supported;

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

- (m) That it had been a substantial achievement to deliver such a high quality Welcome in only a year, and thanks were given to the Welcome Team for their hard work;
- (n) Thanks were also given to the Students' Union, from where the project originated, for ensuring it was implemented by the University.

29/18-19 Employability Strategy

RECEIVED:

A paper on the University's draft Employability Strategy (SLEEC.11.18/19).

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

- (a) That the draft Employability Strategy would be considered at the next meeting of the Education Committee and any feedback should be sent to directly Professor Tissington in advance of that meeting.

30/18-19 Dates of Meetings in Academic Year 2018-19

REPORTED:

That further meetings of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) will take place as follows:

Monday 04 February 2019, 10:30 - 12:30, CMR 1.0

Wednesday 10 April 2019, 09:00 - 11:00, CMR 1.0

Wednesday 22 May 2019, 09:00 - 11:00, CMR 1.0