

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of a meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee held on Monday 04 February 2019

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), Dr J Bryan (Student Engagement Co-ordinator (Faculty of Social Sciences)), Professor A Clark (Academic Director (Undergraduate Studies)), Professor G Cooke (WIHEA Fellow, School of Engineering), Dr W Curtis (Academic Director (Partnerships)), D Da Silva Lopes (Student Representative, Faculty of Social Sciences) from minute 39/18-19, Dr R Freeman (WIHEA Fellow, Head of Student Engagement and Recruitment, Life Sciences), Dr C Hampton (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Arts), Dr C MacLean (Academic Representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences), J Mellor (Student Representative, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine), Dr L Plath (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Arts)), Dr K Simecek (WIHEA Fellow, Department of Philosophy), Professor C Sparrow (Academic Representative of the Graduate School), 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), E Worrall (Student Representative, Faculty of Arts)

Apologies: Professor L Gracia (Dean of Students), Professor C Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)), E King (Students' Union Postgraduate Officer), Dr K Owen (Student Engagement Coordinator (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), Dr E Thonnes (Student Engagement Coordinator (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine))

In Attendance: Dr A Awesti (WIHEA Learning Circle Co-Convenor) for minute 39/18-19 only, K Aziz-Kamara (WIHEA Fellow, Warwick Anti-Racism Society) for minute 39/18-19 only, P Blagburn (Head of Widening Participation and Outreach) for minute 39/18-19 only, D Derricott (Secretary), C Gray (Assistant Registrar (Assessment)) for minute 38/18-19 only, K Gray (Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality)) for minute 39/18-19 only, N Howell-Manning (Student Communications Officer), Professor D Lamburn (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)) for minute 38/18-19 only, Dr M Ono-George (WIHEA Learning Circle Co-Convenor) for minute 39/18-19 only, K Shergill (Director of Social Inclusion) for minute 39/18-19 only, K Stratford (Assistant Secretary), T Thiele (Widening Participation Evaluation and Evidence Manager) for minute 39/18-19 only

31/18-19 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.

32/18-19 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes from the meeting held on 04 December 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) held on 04 December 2018 be approved.

33/18-19 Terms of Reference and Membership (minute 17/18-19 refers)

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

That Senate Steering Committee, on behalf of Senate, approved the addition of the Academic Director (Undergraduate Studies) and the Academic Director (Partnerships) as ex-officio members of the Committee, and that Roberta Wooldridge Smith had been appointed to the role of Director of Student Opportunity from March 2019 and would join the Committee's membership from the next meeting.

34/18-19 WIHEA Learning Circle Updates

(a) Learning Analytics

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

That she has been tasked to develop a brief for the Student Personalised Information Programme towards ensuring that departments have better data, particularly around continuation and progression, and were working closely with students regarding the ethics of collecting and using their data, as well as considering good practice in the sector.

(b) Module Evaluation

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

(i) That following input from SLEEC in 2017/18, the policy proposal had been confirmed by Education Committee and Senate and the policy principles were now available on the Teaching Quality [website](#), with guidance and examples of good practice to follow.

(ii) That the policies covered Module Evaluation, including using Student Module Feedback to inform module evaluation.

- (iii) That the questions posed to students and the Moodle-based service for collecting Student Module Feedback were being evaluated by ITS, including by collecting feedback from academic departments, and this would be reported to SLEEC's meeting in April or May 2019.

35/18-19 Strategies Updates

(a) Employability Strategy

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

That the Employability Strategy had been received at all Faculty Education Committees and would next be presented to the Faculty Boards, Education Committee and Senate.

(b) Education Strategy

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

That the Education Strategy and associated case studies were now available to download from the University [website](#) and that it was recommended all members familiarise themselves with the Strategy, particularly as changes had been made since the last shared version following extensive consultation.

36/18-19 Students' Union Updates

(a) STEPfest

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

That the Students' Union's STEPfest (Students Transforming Education Programme) would take place on Friday 08 February 2019, which included sessions where students help to shape University policies, with policy outcomes brought to SLEEC and other relevant committees.

(b) Joint Honours Students

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

That the Students' Union were undertaking a survey to better understand the experience of students on joint honours courses, and noted that recommendations would be shared with SLEEC.

37/18-19 Peer Observation and Review of Teaching

CONSIDERED:

A paper and verbal report from Dr Jane Bryan, Co-Convenor of the WIHEA Learning Circle on Peer Observation, recommending a series of principles to inform policy on peer observation and review of teaching (SLEEC.12/18-19).

REPORTED:

(by Dr I Tuersley)

- (a) That while some academic colleagues had embraced the process enthusiastically others had been reluctant due to the perceived lack of benefits or outcomes, and so the recommendation for teaching staff to have to option to draw on outcomes as CPD evidence was welcomed, as would be further explicit clarification of the benefits to teaching staff.

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

- (b) That as well as dialogue taking place, it was important that best practice was then collated and shared with the department, including to PGR students to enhance their teaching, and to students to demonstrate that peer observation is taken seriously.
- (c) That the Learning Circle would contact SLEEC members to gauge the feasibility and likely reception of proposals in their own departments.

(by Dr C Hampton)

- (d) That an effective model exists in the Department of English, where the dialogue remains confidential but key lessons learned are shared formally, such as via the Best Practice Teaching Forum.

(by Dr R Freeman)

- (e) That Life Sciences emphasise the benefits of observation to incentivise participation, such as evidence for fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, and use termly meetings to share best practice.

(by Dr K Simecek)

- (f) That observations give an opportunity to celebrate excellence including through the nomination of peers for WATE teaching awards as currently nominations tend to be provided by students.

(by Dr J Bryan)

- (g) In response to a question from Dr L Plath, that the guidance would give careful consideration to where peer observation identifies unacceptable practice, as the dialogue would be confidential and in junior-senior pairings discussions could be difficult.
- (h) In response to a question from Dr C MacLean, that a recommendation was for peer observation to be included in departmental workload allocation as it was acknowledged that academic workloads are already high and observation currently relied on goodwill.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the scope, principles and process for consultation for developing policy on the peer observation and review of teaching be approved.

- (j) That a revised version of the paper and a draft policy document would be discussed at the April meeting of SLEEC, following consultation with academic departments and prior to being recommended for approval to Education Committee and Senate.
- (k) That the committee discussed the merits and unwanted connotations of the terminology 'peer review' and 'peer observation' as well as alternatives such as 'pedagogical dialogue' and that it would be helpful to consult with departments on the most appropriate terminology.
- (l) That SLEEC additionally recommended that it should be emphasised that the outcomes of peer observation should remain formative, not a measure of performance.

38/18-19 Review of Assessment

RECEIVED:

A paper and verbal report from Professor David Lamburn, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), and Claudia Gray, Assistant Registrar (Assessment), on the progress made by the University's Review of Assessment with a particular focus on proposals arising from the assessment strategies strand of the review (AQSC.21.18/19, AST.8.18/19, MCRA.02.18/19 and EBP.1.18/19).

REPORTED:

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (a) That the Students' Union supported diversification of assessment types.
- (b) That the Students' Union was strongly opposed to the removal of students' choice of assessment type within modules as it would not give students the opportunity to excel by drawing on their individual strengths; that there may be implications for mental health if students could not choose the most suitable types for their circumstances; and the SU had concerns regarding workload if examinations were used more extensively.

(by J Mellor)

- (c) That there was concern amongst some students that the university may include financial considerations, such as different marking costs for different assessment types, when setting assessment types.

(by Dr K Simecek)

- (d) That the work so far should be commended, particularly the move to deadlines being within office hours, though it should be borne in mind that some staff often finish earlier on Fridays; and specifying effort, which is of particular use for assessments over the holiday periods, and which had potential to help joint honours students navigate assessments in each department.

- (e) That it was suggested that formative assessments should be linked more closely to the summative assessment, which would assist students to develop experience in less-familiar assessment types.

(by Dr I Tuersley)

- (f) That Friday deadlines allow students submitting late to gain the whole weekend whilst technically considered only one day late, potentially giving an unfair advantage.
- (g) That his own department has become aware that over-assessment takes place, which also complicated assessment scheduling, and suggested that departments should regularly review their own assessment diet to ensure it remains appropriate.

(by Professor D Lamburn)

- (h) In response to comments from J Mellor, that the University assured students that assessment types were set based on sound academic reasons, not financial or administrative convenience, and this was ensured via formal processes such as Course Approval.
- (i) In response to comments from K Simecek, that advice discouraging setting of assessment deadlines on Fridays would be considered.
- (j) In response to comments from Dr I Tuersley, that over-assessment was prevalent across the university and had the potential for adverse impacts on staff and students, from a mental health viewpoint and also time available for teaching and learning, and that a department was considering drastically reducing exam lengths.
- (k) In response to a question from Dr I Tuersley regarding a request from a School of Engineering SSLC to set some deadlines during the vacations to avoid deadline clustering, that fairness to students in paid employment during vacations must be retained, but that the question would be discussed further outside of this meeting.

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

- (l) That it was recommended that the policy make explicit that decisions on assessment type would be made for pedagogical reasons not financial.
- (m) That SLEEC notes the issues around students' choice of assessment within modules and that all concerns would be considered, including student welfare and the importance of pedagogical interests.

(by Professor P Tissington)

- (n) That diversification of assessment type would be welcomed from an employability perspective to broaden the traditionally narrower skill sets developed by Warwick's students; that students were very receptive and complimentary where such practice already exists; and that the guidance was very welcome to help colleagues to look beyond the use of exams.

(by Dr C Hampton)

- (o) That should some assessments remain negotiated by students, such as in IATL, guidance would be welcomed to ensure that sufficient pedagogical diversity of assessment is assured.

39/18-19 The Black Attainment Gap

CONSIDERED:

A paper collating several contributions on the work underway by staff and students to understand, raise awareness of and tackle the attainment gap that exists for Black students (SLEEC.13.18/19), with verbal introductions from Larissa Kennedy, SU Education Officer and Co-Chair of SLEEC, and student and staff colleagues joining the meeting for this item.

REPORTED:

(by the Co-Chair, L Kennedy)

- (a) That the aim was to understand work currently underway and identify gaps in the work, enabling the University to expedite closing the gap and to take a leading stance in the sector.
- (b) That a disproportionate amount of unpaid work was undertaken by BAME staff and students in order to address inequality and that this should be recognised and addressed to ensure that they are not further disadvantaged.

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

- (c) That it should be clarified that, as per discussion in the previous SLEEC meeting, that the University should seek to implement structural change rather than working to a deficit model of mitigating gaps once they exist, though temporarily both may need to exist until change is embedded.
- (d) That it was key for the University community to understand and accept that the current practice of assuming a group is different in comparison to 'the norm' was fundamentally flawed and this causes groups to be excluded, and that instead 'the norm' and expectations associated with it should be redefined.
- (e) That a wealth of previous discussion on the size and nature of the gap had previously taken place, including at the 2018 Education Conference, and that this effort would not be duplicated by SLEEC.
- (f) That it was encouraging to see so many lines of work already active and that SLEEC now had the opportunity to identify where greater collaboration would be beneficial and to consider formalising outcomes in policy and/or guidance.

(by K Shergill)

- (g) That the Social Inclusion Strategy was aiming to bring together strands from across the University, and that key areas of relevance to SLEEC were:
 - (i) That Inclusion is one of the four pillars of the University Strategy
 - (ii) That diverse role models are important, especially in senior academic and administrative staff, and bring greater appreciation of the differences in student experiences.
 - (iii) That institutional culture is crucial, particularly shared values and behaviours, which can be enhanced e.g. through decolonising the curriculum, and that how a student feels will impact attainment.
 - (iv) That the University aims to become a leader in social inclusion, and so will consider how to consolidate its academic and practical experience and to develop a voice in regional and governmental policy.

(by Dr A Awesti)

- (h) That the Learning Circle on Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Process in HE was creating guidelines to inform institutional conversations in three key areas:
 - (i) Adapting best practice in the sector in enhancing the BAME student experience.
 - (ii) Promoting anti-racist pedagogy, including reviewing Warwick's current curricula and delivery, and drawing on literature.
 - (iii) Delivering anti-racism training for academic and professional services staff to embed and 'mainstream' practices that narrow the black attainment gap.
- (i) That best practice across the sector for monitoring would be considered, for instance Kingston University London's monitoring framework.
- (j) In response to Dr R Freeman's suggestion of a Strategy Away Day to expedite progress, that the Learning Circle had planned to dedicate 2-3 days to drafting guidelines and a strategy, and welcome support from SLEEC.

(by Dr M Ono-George)

- (k) That it was important to refer to "anti-racist pedagogy" specifically rather than using the too-general term of "equality and diversity".
- (l) In response to a question from Dr D Wood who expressed concerns that a common response in sciences to "decolonising the curriculum" was that it was not possible to give alternative viewpoints, she noted that further explanation and guidance would be provided to departments highlighting that the term reached beyond course content, to how it is taught and students are engaged with, ensuring a critical understanding of the unsaid values and assumptions, and through reading lists.

(by K Aziz-Kamara)

- (m) That spaces for students of colour on campus should be emphasised, such as that provided by WARSoc since safe spaces, environment and culture were also of great importance to help students navigate within the predominant whiteness of the University, and that further work is needed with student-led societies to integrate the BAME voice more effectively.
- (n) In response to discussion on a strategy away day to define actions for progress, that the away day would be valuable at the appropriate time, but for any actions to be effective the culture would need to first change, with assumptions challenged and the reasons for change widely understood else too much resistance would be met, and that the Learning Circle was working on strategies to educate.

(by D Da Silva Lopes)

- (o) That the discussions on anti-racism must be inclusive of the whole university community in order to broaden the understanding and visibility of challenges faced by Black students and staff.

(by K Gray)

- (p) That the changing regulatory structure should also be considered as universities are now accountable to the Office for Students for addressing all attainment gaps, and that transparent and public data was a requirement for OfS registration.

(by P Blagburn)

- (q) That the Access and Participation Plans as required for OfS registration specifically must consider black attainment gap data as well as intersectionality of groups (including across departments), and that the focus has shifted over recent years from widening access to attainment throughout the whole student lifecycle.
- (r) That the University is committed to addressing access for BAME applicants, and discussions in fora such as SLEEC help to make further progress.

(by T Thiele)

- (s) That a strategy was currently being developed for gathering the student voice to inform the University's approach, including a focus on intersectionality.

(by the Secretary)

- (t) That the resulting changes to curricula would fit well with a refresh of undergraduate curricula over the next few years arising from the Review of Assessment and the review of the Credit and Module Framework; and that, in response to a question from Professor A Clark regarding

review of implementation, that the ITLR in 2022 and annual TEG meetings before then may be appropriate platforms.

- (u) That the University should first articulate and agree the change it wishes to pursue before focusing on implementation.

(by Professor C Sparrow)

- (v) That while it was valuable that these discussions were taking place, there had been a disappointing lack of momentum across the University in recent years and so it was crucial that action must be taken well before the 2022 ITLR process, and that black attainment gap discussions were not yet mainstreamed, with no presence at curriculum review meetings, nor committees with the exception of SLEEC, however with active input there was the opportunity for change.

(by Dr R Freeman)

- (w) That she had a productive visit to Sheffield Hallam University with L Kennedy and Dr M Ono-George to gain insight into practices at other institutions, where good progress with cultural change was being made, with commitment required from staff at every level.
- (x) That the University needed to facilitate the step from discussions to deciding concrete actions, such as instigating discussions at departmental staff meetings, perhaps through a Strategy Away Day.

(by Dr C MacLean)

- (y) That she was considering how pedagogy could be used to increase the criticality of students' thinking, both generally and in particular modules such as Critical Issues in Management which discusses power.
- (z) That there are likely to be voices in all academic disciplines which have not traditionally been collected and so may not be immediately apparent but may be revealed upon deeper investigation.

(by Dr D Wood)

- (aa) That while it was acknowledged that action was required for the purposes of government metrics, it should be explicitly noted that the University was committed to making changes for the benefit of students, regardless of metrics.

RESOLVED:

- (bb) That the Committee's thanks were given to all involved, particularly guest speakers, for a very productive discussion.
- (cc) That both Co-Chairs would meet with K Shergill, Dr M Ono-George and Dr R. Freeman to establish how the student voice could be heard more deeply in their work.

(dd) That the Co-Chairs would consider the steer given by the Committee and propose areas for action or more detailed exploration at a subsequent meeting this academic year.

40/18-19 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:

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

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