UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Student Educational Experience Committee of the Academic Board held on 8 May 2018.

PRESENT: Dr S M Jarvis (Chairman)
Ms B Adams  Dr M Lilley  Dr I Phillips
Ms R Allen  Ms K Barton  Ms C Rendell
Ms J Baines  Ms J Bradley  Ms K Robins
Mr T Baker  Mr N Geach  Ms J Vuolo
Dr H C Barefoot  Dr S Grey  Mrs G Ward

IN ATTENDANCE:
Mrs J H Allen  Ms S Flynn (Item 9.4)  Dr K Smith (Item 10)
Mr D Bygate (Item 9.3)  Dr R Napiwotzki

APOLOGIES:
Dr J L Collett  Mr M Hakimyar  Ms R Miko
Mr S Farenga  Mrs S Harrison-Barker  Dr P Porter
Dr F L Haddleton  Ms S Kwedi  Dr S Sharma

959 MINUTES – 13 MARCH 2018

Confirmed and signed: the minutes of 13 March 2018 (Confidential Agenda Paper 2, refers).

960 MEMBERSHIP

960.1 Noted:
960.1.1 the Committee’s membership (Agenda Paper 3.1, refers);
960.1.2 the appointment of Mrs L Bissessar as Head of Widening Participation and Outreach; Mrs Bissessar would be invited to her first meeting on 10 July 2018.

960.2 In attendance

Noted:
960.2.1 Mr D Bygate, Learning and Teaching Specialist, Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, attended for Item 9.3;
960.2.2 Ms S Flynn, Associate Director of Learning and Teaching (Workplace Learning and Degree Apprenticeships), attended for Item 9.4;
960.2.3 Dr K Smith, Principal Lecturer in Collaborative Research and Development, School of Education, attended for Item 10;
960.2.4 they were all welcomed to the meeting.
CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

961.1 *Received*: the Chairman’s comments.

961.2 *Noted:*

961.2.1 the National Student Survey 2018 had now closed; the response rate was 74.12%, slightly lower than in the previous year but still very encouraging, reflecting strong engagement by students. The results would be available by the end of July 2018 for publication mid-August 2018;

961.2.2 Mrs G Ward, Dean of Students, reported that an outline timetable for the week of the Inter-Semester Break in January 2019 had been put together. Mrs Ward and the Chairman would consider this further;

961.2.3 demand for the services of the office of the Dean of Students continued to be high;

961.2.4 contrary to speculation that counselling services were full, a triage system was in place to ensure that all students in need were seen;

961.2.5 the Students’ Union Academic Support and Advice unit also provided counselling support and had some spare capacity;

961.2.6 there was a significant lack of knowledge within the Institution of the services provided by the Students’ Union and there would be benefit in raising awareness among staff.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

962.1 *Summary of Actions*

962.1.1 *Received and noted*: the summary of actions to date (Confidential Agenda Paper 5.1, refers).

962.2 *Student surveys - Minute 947.3 refers*

962.3 *Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre*

962.3.1 *Clarification concerning Inter-semester week and structure of revised academic year - Minute 949.3 refers*

962.3.2 *SEEC Working Group on recording of taught sessions - Minute 949.4.2 refers*

962.4 *Annual School Reports on Academic Quality and Student Experience and updated School Action Plans - Minute 944.1.4 refers*

962.5 *Communiqué*

962.5.1 *Noted*: the Communiqué of the meeting of 13 March 2018, for which Ms R Allen was thanked (Agenda Paper 5.5, refers).

962.5.2 *Agreed*: Dr M Lilley would produce the Communiqué for the meeting of 8 May 2018. ML
ITEMS OF REPORT FROM HERTFORDSHIRE STUDENTS’ UNION

Noted:

Agenda Paper 6.1, a report from Ms S Kwedi, Vice-President (Education), was not received;

Agenda Paper 6.2, a presentation from Ms Kwedi concerning value for money, was not taken. The matter would be deferred to 2 October 2018 and Ms R Hobbs, Director of Engagement and Communications, Hertfordshire Students Union, would be asked to present the paper.

STUDENT SURVEYS

Module Feedback Questionnaire (MFQ), Semester B 2017-2018

Received: a report from Ms C A Rendell, Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance, concerning the Module Feedback Questionnaires (MFQs) for Semester B, academic year 2017-2018 (Confidential Agenda Paper 7.1, refers).

Noted:

i the overall response rate of 24% had been lower than that for Semester A, though the range of results was broadly similar;

ii the range of results in respect of Question 3, ‘I am interested and engaged with the learning on this module’, had been greatest with a span of approximately 10% and there would be benefit in investigating this result further.

Individual lecturer survey, Semester B 2017-2018

Received: a report from Ms Rendell concerning results of the individual lecturer survey (Confidential Agenda Paper 7.2, refers).

Noted:

i the results for Semester B were disappointing with a response rate of 19.1% in comparison with 30.4% for Semester A;

ii although certain module groups of students were more willing to engage than others, problems with email links to EvaSys had been experienced;

iii comment had been received from EvaSys that the University of Hertfordshire was their only client whose students did not use a university email address;

iv there were plans to change this survey for 2018-2019 to avoid reliance upon the use of email; some students had commented that links to the survey had not been identical for all students and had also expressed concerns in respect of the system’s security;

v the information from the current survey should be used in conjunction with data from past surveys, to build reliance;

vi Section 5 of the report contained combined results for both Semesters A and B;

vii although responses were overwhelmingly positive it was possible that the scale of the response indicated a predominance of either strongly positive or strongly negative views by students;

viii Level 7 students had responded most positively to Question 2, ‘the member of staff makes the subject interesting’.
964.3 **Student survey approaches - Minute 947.3 refers**

**Noted:**

964.3.1 overall, responses were overwhelmingly positive;

964.3.2 there was a need to encourage greater student participation and Ms K Barton, Director of the Learning and Teaching, and Ms Rendell would consider this;

964.3.3 in seeking to improve the standard of education, it was important not to overlook the significantly positive attitude by students;

964.3.4 responses to surveys tended not to reveal new information, for example the University was aware of the value students placed on the expertise and knowledge of staff;

964.3.5 there was a pattern in terms of the sort of comments made by students on particular types of module such that, rather than introducing ‘expert’ speakers, students would appreciate greater consistency in delivery;

964.3.6 poorer comments also often reflected the quality of the conditions in which lectures were delivered, which included the degree of engagement by lecturers;

964.3.7 the key role of module leader in the successful delivery of a module was acknowledged and there was a risk that MFQ results might affect motivation by the module team to perform and/or to encourage students to participate in feedback surveys;

964.3.8 there was a need to consider carefully the closing date for surveys at a time when students might be preparing for examinations.

964.4 **In-house alternative to EvaSys**

**Noted:**

964.4.1 in respect of the continued use of EvaSys, used by one-third of universities, although the company was investing in improvements to its service, there would be benefit in exploring the possibility of embedding EvaSys surveys into Canvas;

964.4.2 the provision of a student portal with log-in facility for students to provide their ID number would obviate the need to rely on use of email;

964.4.3 this process would allow members of staff to monitor response rates and feedback could be provided to students and channelled into Tableau more quickly;

964.4.4 following successful conduct of a test module, a pilot would be run in respect of Semester C teaching and online modules;

964.4.5 the Chairman thanked members for their work in respect of the survey results that had been achieved.

965 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENTS – Minute 948 refers**

965.1 **Received:** an oral report from Dr S Grey, Director of Research Degrees, concerning the student experience of research degree students.

965.2 **Postgraduate Research Student Survey (PRES)**

**Noted:**

965.2.1 Associate Directors of the Doctoral College were coordinating the activities of focus groups in presenting the results of the PRES to research students;

965.2.2 Associate Deans (Research) were also in the process of discussing the results with their respective School Executive Groups;
965.2.3 proposed actions would be considered by the Research Degrees Board at its May and June 2018 meetings, following which Dr Grey would present a report with recommendations for discussion on 2 October 2018

965.3 Postgraduate student conference

Noted: the conference would take place during October 2018, on a date yet to be agreed, on the theme of 'breakthrough'.

966 LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE (LTIC)

966.2 SEEC Working Group on Recording of Taught Sessions at UH - Minute 949.4.2 refers

966.2.1 Received: a report from Ms Barton concerning proposed changes to the University's regulations in respect of the recording of taught sessions for recommendation to the Academic Board (Agenda Paper 9.2, refers).

966.2.2 Noted:

i in excess of 70% of British institutions were engaged in recording lectures;

ii a pilot had been conducted during 2017-2018 and feedback from both staff and students had been positive;

iii following discussion by the Chief Executive's Group, it was proposed to extend the provision to the whole University, over a period of time, commencing from 1 September 2018 when it was hoped to have 50-100 teaching rooms appropriate fitted with recording equipment

iv the proposed UPR related not only to the principles to be followed in recording lectures but also addressed the provision for students for whom English was not their first language;

v the proposed text of the UPR had been drawn up in consultation with Mr I T Hanahoe, the University's Data Protection Officer, Ms Rendell, Mrs S C Grant, Secretary and Registrar and Mr P Clarke, Head of Human Resources;

vi the text of the UPR would also be considered at a meeting of the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC);

vii the need for support for staff, particularly in the initial roll-out, was recognised and guidance on the process to accompany the UPR would be provided in addition to training on use of the equipment;

viii the nature of the recording equipment was such that in certain rooms the style of delivery of lectures might need to be adjusted for the lecturer to remain near the dias for adequate sound pick-up; suitable, portable recording equipment would help to address this potential problem.

966.2.3 Decision: the Committee recommended the proposed UPR for approval by the Academic Board.

966.3 Peer review of teaching - Minutes 908.3 and 935.2 refer

966.3.1 Received:

i a report prepared by Mr Bygate and Ms C, Bryan Learning and Teaching Specialist, Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, concerning the peer review pilot (Agenda Paper 9.3.1, refers);

ii a presentation from Mr Bygate (Addition to Agenda Paper 9.3.1, refers);
iii an oral report from Dr H Barefoot, Deputy Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre.

966.3.2 Noted:

i the new arrangements were now being piloted;

ii trialling had commenced in the School of Life and Medical Sciences with a group of clinical practitioners in Dietetics and in the School of Humanities with modern languages;

iii the Excel spreadsheet method for recording the necessary information to enable matching to take place had proved challenging and consideration was being given to using Office 365;

iv Bristol Online Survey (BOS) had been used successfully for data input but difficulties had arisen when transferring the data to Excel, causing errors which impacted on the matching process;

v matching was a manual procedure and matched pairs would be sent an online form confirming the match (slide 3 of Addition to Agenda Paper 9.3.1, refers);

vi in the School of Humanities it had been decided to identify seven skills for observation which had been found to be manageable;

vii the experience in the School of Humanities was that the process had been flexible but the logistics of the matching process was of concern;

viii a whole-School pilot would take place shortly in the School of Creative Arts;

ix there would be benefit in identifying a different set of skills annually for the process to remain beneficial;

x in respect of whether in future years matching might be devolved to programme leaders or module teams, it was agreed that it was not necessary to adopt a University-wide model; however the larger the number of staff to be matched, the lower the level at which this could be more comfortably managed, with the risk of losing the benefit of sharing the range of skills across a School;

xi it was planned to produce a guidance video in readiness for the implementation of the new arrangements from 1 September 2018;

xii there would be benefit in establishing a small group, possibly from those who had been on the original working group, to work with Dr Barefoot during Semester A in 2018-2019;

xiii the Committee was content that the process should continue, particularly given the flexibility of UPR HR11, ‘Peer Review of Teaching’, which offered scope to address any difficulties;

xiv Dr Barefoot and Mr Bygate were thanked for their work in piloting the new arrangements.

966.4 Degree apprenticeships: e-portfolios

966.4.1 Received: a report from Ms Flynn concerning e-portfolios in relation to degree apprenticeships (Agenda Paper 9.4, refers).

966.4.2 Noted:

i in considering the solution to how a portfolio or electronic portfolio (‘e-portfolio’) might be assembled as a requirement of a degree apprenticeship, it was proposed to use Class Notebook, part of MS Office 365, with particular reference to the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship programme in the Hertfordshire Business School;
ii it was recognised that this solution might not necessarily suit every circumstance but the current student record system was not suited to the administration of degree apprenticeships;

iii the use of Class Notebook had been agreed following discussions with Learning and Computing Services, educational technologists and Academic Services, as well as investigation into products available commercially and discussions with the University of Central Lancashire;

iv Class Notebook had the facility to enable staff to view their students' material as well as a 'parent link' to enable employers to see how students were progressing;

v discussions had taken place with the Centre for Academic Quality Assurance (CAQA) concerning the ease with which the necessary material could be made available for validation. Given the likely requirement in the case of some apprenticeships for the portfolio to be submitted to an external body, the material needed to be exportable;

vi in addition to Class Notebook having similar characteristics as other Microsoft products, the student would have the benefit of being able to store files in one place. Training for students in the Hertfordshire Business School had been straightforward;

vii the use of Class Notebook would be extended to Level 5 students in the Hertfordshire Business School in Semester A in 2018-2019 and nursing associates due to commence shortly. All those commencing a degree apprenticeship in 2018-2019 would also be given access to Class Notebook;

viii the suitability of Class Notebook for those going on placements would be considered in due course.

967 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

967.1 Received:

967.1.1 the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Transnational Toolkit, authored by Dr Smith, recently launched by the HEA to support teaching staff with responsibility for delivering degree-level education transnationally (Agenda Paper 10.1, refers);

967.1.2 a presentation from Dr Smith (Agenda Paper 10.2, refers).

967.2 Noted:

967.2.1 Dr Smith's research began following her own observations on the lack of support for those required to deliver transnational teaching and an opportunity to undertake empirical research for the Institute of Research into Higher Education;

967.2.2 whilst guidance had been available from the Quality Assurance Agency and also in the USA and Australia, Dr Smith's research addressed the concept of a more collaborative approach and the need to understand cultural differences in the delivery and receiving of teaching;

967.2.3 it was also clear that administrative staff in partner institutions required support and in 2016 the Higher Education Academy invited Dr Smith to write a 'toolkit';

967.2.4 the toolkit, published in 2017, provided not only practical assistance but was reflective of the research that had been undertaken; it focussed on the delivery of teaching by UK institutions on the basis of 'fly-in faculty' and provided support for Collaborative Partnership Leaders (formerly link tutors);
the toolkit concentrated heavily on quality assurance. In this respect there was a need to understand the quality systems used by collaborative partners in comparison with practice in the UK;

the toolkit showcased work on professional development for partner institutions and joint professional development undertaken in conjunction with colleagues at the University of Greenwich;

logistical aspects of transnational teaching were a key consideration in managing the work on a sustainable basis as all staff involved still had teaching responsibilities at their home institutions;

in respect of teaching, learning and assessment, the nature of the delivery of transnational education was often different given the cultural differences in learning techniques and students in partner institutions did not always have access to the same learning materials and resources as those in the UK. The University was considering its provision of resources to transnational students.

beyond learning resources, the responsibility for the provision of additional services such as wellbeing, also required consideration as did the continuing support of administrative staff once ‘fly-in faculty’ staff had returned home;

the importance of building relationships and developing a sense of association with an institution for transnational students was similar to that for home-based students who commuted; the same applied to staff at partner institutions;

the benefits of transnational relationships were mutual and there was a risk that home institutions did not make or learn more from these relationships, for example how transnational students received support from staff in their institutions and the sort of services to which transnational students might want access;

there would be scope in extending the ‘Flare’ competition to help transnational students and alumni launch new businesses or develop innovative concepts;

there was very little publicity concerning the institutions with whom the University was partnered and there would be benefit in maximising this within the University. There was a link to the toolkit on the CAQA website but there would also be benefit in raising awareness of its existence, particularly among new staff engaged in transnational education.

968

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND UPDATED SCHOOL ACTION PLANS - MINUTE 944.1.4 REFERS

968.1 Received: the Annual School Reports on Academic Standards and Student Experience, comprising the relevant section of the School Business Plan and updated School Action Plan, from Associate Deans of School (Learning and Teaching):

968.1.1 School of Computer Science, from Dr M Lilley (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.1, refers);

968.1.2 School of Creative Arts, from Dr I J Phillips (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.2, refers);

968.1.3 School of Education, from Ms R Allen (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.3, refers);

968.1.4 School of Engineering and Technology, from Mr T Baker (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.4, refers);

968.1.5 School of Health and Social Work, from Ms J Vuolo (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.5, refers);

968.1.6 Hertfordshire Business School, from Ms K Robins (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.6, refers);
968.1.7 Hertfordshire Law School, from Mr N Geach (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.7, refers);
968.1.8 School of Humanities, from Ms J Bradley (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.8, refers);
968.1.9 School of Life and Medical Sciences, from Dr S Sharma (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.9, refers);
968.1.10 School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics, from Dr J L Collett (Confidential Agenda Paper 11.10, refers).

968.2 **Noted:**

968.2.1 at this stage, the two-page Part 1a of the business plans had not yet been discussed in the annual Planning Round and the School Annual Reports did not include information on online or transnational courses;
968.2.2 members had appreciated the structuring of the Part 1a reports with sub-headings for ease of navigation and consistency across the reports, though the need for flexibility in the choice of headings was recognised;
968.2.3 in considering Section 1a of the Reports, the Committee noted:
   i strong focus on student support mechanisms and the value of attendance monitoring in this
   ii work to further reduce the BME attainment gap;
   iii increased use of data and Teaching Excellence Framework metrics;
   iv work to support student engagement;
   v focus on different student groups, including commuting students;
   vi focus on employability, including for international students;
   vii work to secure grade improvement for under-performing groups, while ensuring that grade inflation is avoided.

968.3 **Agreed:** the Action Plans would be reviewed on 2 October 2018.

969 **COLLEGIATE CAMPUS LIFE GROUP AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT – Minute 950 refers**

969.1 **Received:** an oral report from Ms G Ward, Dean of Students, concerning the Collegiate Campus Life Group and student engagement and communication.

969.2 **Noted:**

969.2.1 applications for School Community Organisers for 2018-2019 were currently being received and there had been a good response rate;
969.2.2 training was scheduled to be undertaken as a residential event on 3-10 September 2018;
969.2.3 it had been planned to hold the Course Representatives Conference during the week commencing 17 October 2018, however this might be changed given the clash with a careers event;
969.2.4 within the Collegiate Campus Life initiative, it was hoped to introduce a small grant scheme to encourage greater engagement;
969.2.5 plans for the forthcoming Go-Herts awards were under way and the closing date was 10 June 2018.
PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Noted:

970.1 there were no matters for direct referral to Ms J Lees, People Development Manager, Department of Planning, Development and Change, concerning matters relating to People Development;

970.2 the provision of support for staff in respect of the introduction of the recording of lectures would be addressed by the LTIC.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION – Minute 933 refers

971.1 Received:

971.1.1 an update report on Widening Access and Student Success prepared by Mr S Farenga, Deputy Head of Widening Access and Student Success (Agenda Paper 14.1, refers);

971.1.2 a draft Access and Participation Plan 2019-2020, formerly known as the ‘Access Statement’, which would form part of the registration paperwork to be sent to the Office for Students (Agenda Paper 14.2, refers).

971.2 Noted:

971.2.1 staff in Schools were considering their access plans/processes in line with the University’s Access and Participation Plan;

971.2.2 funding had been made available on a pilot basis to Schools from central resources for an initial year and it was hoped to continue the initiative in 2018-2019;

971.2.3 there was a possibility that funding might not be available each year which might have impacted on spending strategies within Schools along with lack of guidance. It was noted however that there was provision within Schools’ budgets for extra funding for student support.

LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES (LCS)

972.1 Received: a report from Ms B Adams, Head of Library and Academic Support Services, concerning any matters for consideration from LCS (Agenda Paper 15, refers).

972.2 Noted:

972.2.1 consideration was currently being given to the level of service that could be provided in the Learning Resources Centre on the College Lane Campus during the Summer, given the proposed programme of improvements; the service provided would be further impacted by the demolition of an adjacent building;

972.2.2 extra services would be offered around the Campus where feasible and contractors would be required to cease noisy work during the examination resit period.

RISK

Noted: there were no further risks inherent in the matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting but not discussed when the item concerned was taken.
WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Noted: the sub-committees and working groups of the Committee, their Chairs and convenors (Agenda Paper 17, refers).

EMERGENCY BUSINESS

Noted: there was no emergency business.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2017-2018

09.30 hours, Tuesday 10 July 2018, Room E, Fielder Centre.

2018-2019

Tuesday 2 October 2018, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room
Tuesday 27 November 2018, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room
Tuesday 22 January 2019, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room
Tuesday 12 March 2019, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room
Tuesday 21 May 2019, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room
Tuesday 9 July 2019, 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - SEEC AWAY DAY

Tuesday, 10 July 2018, at 09.30 hours, Room E, Fielder Centre.

NOTE: Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

Items for the Agenda should be lodged with the Clerk, Mrs J H Allen (e-mail: j.h.2.allen@herts.ac.uk ) telephone extension: 4902), B204, College Lane, Hatfield by Tuesday, 19 June 2018, and supporting papers should be submitted by Tuesday 26 June 2018.