UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Student Educational Experience Committee (SEEC) of the Academic Board held on 22 January 2019.

PRESENT: Dr S M Jarvis (Chairman)

Ms B Adams  Mr N Geach  Dr I J Phillips
Ms R Allen  Dr S Grey  Dr P Porter
Ms J Baines  Dr F L Haddleton  Ms C A Rendell
Mr T Baker  Ms Z Hakim  Mr S Issacs  Ms K Robins
Dr H C Barefoot  Dr M Lilley  Ms J Vuolo
Ms K Barton  Dr A Maunder  Ms G Ward
Mrs L Bissessar

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs B Lyons  Mr A Mitchell  Dr R Napiwotzki
Mr D Phillips  Mr S Owen  Ms L Uttley

APOLOGIES:

Mr A Aman  Dr J L Collett  Mrs S D Harrison-Barker

33  MEMBERSHIP

33.1  Noted: the Committee’s current membership (Confidential Agenda Paper 2.1 refers).

33.2  Head of UK Partnerships

Noted: that Mr S Isaacs, Head of UK Partnerships, would attend all future meetings. Mr Isaacs was welcomed to the meeting.

33.3  In attendance

33.3.1  Noted: that Mr D Phillips, Head of Learning & Teaching Spaces, Library and Computing Services (LCS), attended for item 10.2.

33.3.2  Noted: that Ms L Silva de Mattos, Supported Distance Learning Programme Leader, attended for item 11.

33.3.3  Noted: that Mr A Mitchell, Educational Technologist, School of Health and Social Work, attended as an observer.

33.3.4  Noted: that Mr S Owen, Hertfordshire Student’s Union, attended as an observer.

34  MINUTES – 27 NOVEMBER 2018

Confirmed and signed the minutes (Confidential Agenda Paper 3 refers).

35  MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

35.1  Received: the summary of actions to date (Confidential Agenda Paper 4.1 refers).
35.2 Noted: with thanks, the communiqué of the meeting of 27 November 2018 prepared by Dr I J Phillips (Agenda Paper 4.2 refers).

35.3 Agreed: Mrs G Ward would produce the Communique for today’s meeting. GW

36 CHAIR’S COMMENTS

36.1 Received: an update report from the Chair on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Additional Agenda Paper 5.1 refers).

36.2 Noted:

i the latest provider level TEF metrics had been received. Subject-level metrics for all providers were expected by the end of January 2019;

 ii is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only

 iii on a more positive note continuation was healthy and metrics overall had continued to improve;

 iv a paper on student withdrawals had been received at CEG on 21 January 2019. This indicated an improvement in full-time undergraduate withdrawals which showed 155 fewer than at the same point last year. This was an early indication that the work being carried out was effective. The School of Education was currently undertaking a review of personal tutoring across all programmes in the School. One of the findings of the review was that feeling part of the community was most likely to encourage students to persist;

 v data on attendance monitoring was being prepared by Ms E Hedges, Assistant Registrar (Student Administration), to provide an additional understanding of attendance and engagement on programmes;

 vi an independent review of TEF had begun, headed by Dame Shirley Pearce. The review would make recommendations for change, including taking location into account when considering employment figures.

36.3 Received: an update report from the Chair on the development of the University’s new Strategic Plan.

36.3.1 Noted: the updated Strategic Plan would be presented to the Board of Governors at its meeting on 26 February 2019. A high level of consultation had already taken place. A student advisory group would be set up to gather views on the early direction of the plan. The effects of the current political uncertainty were being taken into consideration.

36.4 SEEC Away Day 2019

36.4.1 Noted: the date proposed for the Committee’s Away Day was Tuesday 9 July 2019, immediately following the SEEC meeting.

36.4.2 Agreed: the clerk would circulate the date to Members of the Committee to confirm their availability. BL

36.4.3 Potential themes for the Away Day were considered. Suggestions included differential attainment rates, Subject-level TEF, BAME issues; the inclusive curriculum, student presentation skills (to tie in with the work being carried out by Dr T Gilbert and to celebrate his success in winning the Times Higher Educational Supplement Most Innovative Teacher of the Year award), the Strategic Plan and the student experience, personal tutoring models, how Schools celebrate their communities.

36.4.4 Agreed: the theme of the Away Day would be subject-level TEF and BAME issues.
37 ITEMS OF REPORT FROM HERTFORDSHIRE STUDENTS’ UNION – Minute 16 refers

37.1 Received: a report from Ms Z Hakim, Vice-President (Education) of the Hertfordshire Students’ Union (Confidential Agenda Paper 6 pt01 refers).

37.2 Noted:

i more than 2,000 responses had been received to date on the student-wide research project which focussed on students’ attitudes towards community on campus. This included safety, mental health, friendships, feelings of belonging and attitudes towards drugs and alcohol. Further responses were expected before the survey closed on 25 January 2019;

ii a Wellbeing Walk took place on 21 January 2019. The Vice-Chancellor, Secretary and Registrar and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) all took part;

iii Chinese New Year celebrations were planned for February.

37.3 Received: a report detailing the work of the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre for December 2018 (Confidential Agenda Paper 6p02 refers).

38 STUDENT SURVEYS – Minute 912 refers

38.1 Module Feedback (MF) – Minute 18 refers

38.1.1 Received: a report from Ms C A Rendell, Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance, concerning Semester A mid-module feedback (Confidential Agenda Papers 7.1 pt01 and pt02 refer).

38.1.2 Noted:

i the results shown in Paper 7.1 pt01 were for non-standard window 3 and indicated an improvement in all four questions. The results for Schools in non-standard windows taking place later were less positive;

ii the challenge was to engage students and increase the response rate. The cross-sector response rate was not unreasonable at mid-20s but still needed to be improved;

iii Semester B was always more challenging due to the timing of the National Student Survey (NSS), Module Evaluation Feedback (MEF) and individual lecturer feedback questionnaires;

iv although the response rate was low the data from completion was rich and would enable early identification of any major issues;

v modules with outstanding feedback would be examined to identify areas of good practice;

vi feedback was also received from students in other formats and a formula was needed to link the data;

vii paper 7.1 pt02 analysed the results of the individual lecturer questions for Semester A 2018/19. In order to remove any concerns over the perception of the anonymity of retained answers in future the student number would be removed from the Invitation to Complete form;

viii the response rate of 14.4% was disappointing. However, the results showed a marginal improvement overall for all individual questions.
38.2  Dean of Students Report

38.2.1  Received: an update report from Mrs G Ward, Dean of Students.

38.2.2  Noted:

_Minute 38.2.2, i is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only

i  the campus Christmas programme had been very successful. There were 260 students on Christmas Day. For the first time there was an increase in the number of home students with a 60:40 split with international students;

ii  all priority student wellbeing cases had been assessed and allocated appropriate support.

38.3  2019 National Student Survey

38.3.1  Received: an oral report from Ms Rendell concerning the launch of the 2019 NSS.

38.3.2  Noted:

i  the 2019 NSS would launch 28 January 2019;

ii  briefing sessions for programme leaders and student reps would be held and a good practice guide circulated.

38.2.3  Received: oral updates from the Associate Deans of School (Learning and Teaching) concerning their School’s campaign plans for the 2019 NSS.

38.2.4  Noted:

i  programme leaders would be briefed this week. Leaderboards would be used and launch events, publicised on social media, would be held offering refreshments to encourage attendance;

ii  in some Schools events had a limited effect as students were focussed on their final project work. It was more effective to approach students at the start of lectures and work closely with School Community Organisers (SCOs);

iii practical sessions would be held with student reps;

iv  posters were being printed by Marketing & Communications;

v  student societies would be engaged and final year project meetings used to promote the survey;

vi  response to the HESA survey on graduate outcomes for last year’s leavers was poor. It was suggested that all leavers should register on social media and messages would be sent through the University’s social media platforms to encourage leavers to participate.

38.2.5  Agreed: Ms L Uttley, Assistant Registrar (Academic Services), would re-circulate NSS guidance.

39  LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE (LTIC) – Minute 913 refers

39.1  Received: an update report from Ms K Barton, Director of LTIC.

39.1.1  This year’s Learning and Teaching Conference on the theme of Staff:Student Partnership would be held on 7 June 2019. Further information would be circulated shortly.

39.1.2  The peer review of teaching was underway. Mr D Bygate would be invited to the SEEC meeting on 9 July 2019 to provide an update.

SEEC, Minutes, 22.01.19
39.1.3 LTIC had been allowed to conduct panels for Principal Fellows of HEA. Five members of staff had been successful this year. They were Ms C Bryan, Dr P D’Sena, Ms S Flynn (all LTIC); Ms A Roberts (EDU and LTIC); Mrs J Petty (HSK).

39.2 Received: an update from Ms Barton on University Guidance on the use of Text Matching Software (Confidential Agenda Paper 8.2 refers).

39.3 Noted: the guidelines had been updated based on feedback and added guidance around Postgraduate Research students.

40 WIDENING PARTICIPATION

40.1 Received: a report from Mrs L Bissessar, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach, (Confidential Agenda Paper 9 refers).

40.2 Noted:

i engagement figures for outreach for this academic year were good so far. The OfS had changed the postcode parameters to assess eligible learners resulting in additional work to be carried out on the data;

ii exam breakfasts and accommodation had been offered to commuting students. Thirty-six students had taken up the offer of a hotel rooms. 180 refreshment vouchers had been given to Herts Success students;

iii at the start of the academic year there were 135 students on the lower tariff without English or Maths GCSE. This was now down to 81 students. There was concern over the levels of engagement with target groups and a telephone campaign would be launched shortly;

iv the team was working with Student Information and Planning to examine the data and set up codes on the student system by disadvantage and OfS target groups. An option to self-declare was being considered;

v the School of Humanities, the Careers and Employment Service and BAME advocates were facilitating a careers conference to be held on 12 March 2019 for Schools on the de Havilland campus. Two hundred places were available.

41 LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES (LCS) – Minute 20 refers

41.1 Received: a report from Ms B Adams, Head of Library and Academic Support Services, concerning any matters for consideration (Confidential Agenda Paper 10.1 refers).

41.2 Noted:

i the Wifi upgrade project was now 75% complete;

ii the automated recording of teaching and learning project had reached the next phase of the pilot;

iii the time was approaching for the annual review of journal and software subscriptions.

41.3 Review of the timetable

Mr D Phillips, Head of Learning & Teaching Spaces, Library and Computing Services (LCS), attended for this item (Confidential Agenda Paper 10.2 refers).

41.3.1 The existing methodology had been in use since 2012. The current system would be superseded by a new cloud-based version in the next two years.
41.3.2 2017/18 NSS results satisfaction levels were slightly below sector average. 166 negative comments had been received, mostly relating to the number of timetable changes, early starts, gaps in timetables and compact timetables with no breaks.

41.3.3 In particular part-time and commuting students and new courses provided challenges to timetabling.

41.3.4 A number of processes and systems were now reliant on timetabling data such as Check-In and Lecture Capture. Quality of data was crucial for those systems to operate effectively.

41.3.5 CEG had supported a review of the timetable. Working in partnership with stakeholders, LCS was proposing to develop a plan of improvements for further consideration by CEG. If agreed the improvements would be implemented in the summer of 2019 in order to influence the creation of the 2020/21 timetable. The final scope of the project was yet to be agreed.

41.3.6 Feedback was sought from the Committee on matters to be included in the scope of project, in particular how consultation with students within Schools could most effectively be carried out to understand the different demographics of students in each School.

41.3.7 Collaboration between Schools regarding the use of rooms would be welcomed.

41.3.8 Choice should be reintroduced to allow more flexibility for students and for Schools to decide between online teaching or choice of location. Stakeholder consultation was important.

41.3.9 Schools would be consulted about a 9.30am starting time and the personalisation of timetables. There would be a fixed maintenance schedule for every bookable room.

41.3.10 The student allocator system, which had been trialled and deemed unsatisfactory when in its infancy, should be re-examined.

42  

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION - Minute 25 refers

(NOTE: Ms L Silva de Mattos, Supported Distance Learning Programme Leader, attended for this item.)

42.1 Supported Distance Learning Partners

Received a presentation from Ms Silva de Mattos on Supported Distance Learning Partners. The presentation would be circulated to members after the meeting.

43  

WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF SEEC

43.1 Noted: the sub-committees and working groups of the Committee, their Chairs and convenors (Agenda Paper 12.1 refers).

43.2 Noted: the terms of reference and composition of the Data for Learning Working Group (Confidential Agenda Paper 12.2 refers).

43.3 Noted: the report of the Assessment Working Group on proposed changes to the regulations (Confidential Agenda Paper 12.3 refers).

43.3.1 The group had examined how the University could support Schools in terms of improvement in performance, particularly in respect of fairness and clarity. The report had been well received at CEG and would be presented to the meeting of ASAC on 29 January 2019. The changes would be implemented by September 2019.
PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Noted:

43.1 People Development had moved under the umbrella of Human Resources.

43.2 There were no matters for referral to Mrs J Lees, People Development Manager, concerning matters relating to People Development.

RISK

45.1 Noted: any risks inherent in the matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting but not discussed when the item concerned was taken.

45.1.1 Certain elements of the data arising from the Student Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG) posed a risk.

45.1.2 Measures had been put in place to ensure risk regarding data protection in relation to lecture capture remained low.

AGENDA - PART II

Noted and approved: Part II of the Agenda.

ANNUAL SCHOOL ACADEMIC COMMITTEE (SAC) REPORTS

47.1 Received: the Annual School Academic Committee (SAC) Reports from the Deans of School, as follows:

47.1.1 Hertfordshire Business School, from Professor D Ward (Confidential Agenda Paper A.1.1 refers);

47.1.2 School of Computer Science, from Dr R Day (Confidential Agenda Paper A.1.2 refers);

47.1.3 School of Engineering and Technology, from Dr R Day (Confidential Agenda Paper A.1.3 refers).

EMERGENCY BUSINESS

48.1 Received: the SPMG report from Ms Rendell (Additional Confidential Agenda Item 16.1 refers).

48.2 Noted:

i this was an interim report using internal data which had been produced to allow Schools to use the information to update their Action Plans. The definitive version of the report would be presented to ASAC;

ii Appendix 1 listed the areas where Schools should focus their actions. External data would be available in February to allow comparison with the sector;

Minutes 48.2, iii - xvi are confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

Noted: the schedule of meetings for the remainder of the academic year 2018-2019:

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

Tuesday 12 March 2019, at 09.30 hours, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building.

Items for the Agenda, together with supporting papers, should be lodged with the Clerk, Mrs B Lyons (e-mail: b.lyons@herts.ac.uk, telephone extension: 4372), B204, College Lane, Hatfield, by Tuesday 19 February 2019.