UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

STUDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Student Educational Experience Committee (SEEC) of the Academic Board held on 21 May 2019.

PRESENT: Dr S M Jarvis (Chairman)

Ms B Adams  Mr S Farenga  Ms C Jones
Ms R Allen  Mr N Geach  Dr A Maunder
Ms J Baines  Mrs S D Harrison-Barker  Dr I J Phillips
Mr T Baker  Mr F L Haddleton  Ms C A Rendell
Dr H C Barefoot  Ms Z Hakim  Ms J Vuolo
Ms K Barton  Mr S Issacs  Mrs G Ward
Dr J Collett

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr O Ashaye  Dr C Meehan  Ms L Uttley
Mrs B Lyons  Mr S Owen

APOLOGIES:

Mr A Aman  Dr S Grey  Ms K Robins
Mrs L Bissessar  Dr M Lilley  Dr P Porter

ACTION

72  MEMBERSHIP

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

72.2  Membership category 5 - a representative of the research students nominated by the Research Degrees Board – Minute 51.1 refers.

To note that the Hertfordshire Students’ Union (HSU) had been unable to fill the Postgraduate Officer position in the March 2019 election and planned to appoint to the role in an HSU by-election at the end of October 2019.

72.3  In attendance

72.3.1  Noted: Mr D Phillips and Mr P Hanna, Library and Computing Services, were in attendance for item 14.2.

72.3.2  Noted: Mr P Smith, Hertfordshire Business School, was in attendance for item 19.

72.3.3  Thanks were expressed to Ms Z Hakim and Mr Aman, HSU, for their service to the Committee and the impact they had made during their time in office.

72.3.4  Thanks were expressed to Mrs B Lyons, Governance Services Officer, for her service as Clerk to the Committee.

73  MINUTES – 12 MARCH 2019

Confirmed and signed the minutes (Confidential Agenda Paper 3 refers).
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

74.1 Received: the summary of actions to date (Confidential Agenda Paper 4.1 refers).

74.1.1 Noted: work on the University’s EVS requirements had been merged with other Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC) activities.

74.1.2 Noted: the student administration review (STAR) had reached the recommendation stage. A review and consultation document would be distributed to the university community by mid-June.

74.2 Noted: with thanks, the communiqué of the meeting of 21 March 2019 prepared by Ms K Robins (Agenda Paper 4.2 refers).

74.3 Agreed: Dr J Vuolo would produce the Communiqué of the meeting of 21 May 2019.

74.4 Any other matters arising from the minutes not taken elsewhere on the agenda

There were no further matters arising.

CHAIR’S COMMENTS

(Minute 75.1 is confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

75.2 The update of the Timetable Review was covered under item 14.2.

ITEMS OF REPORT FROM HERTFORDSHIRE STUDENTS’ UNION

Received: a report from Ms Z Hakim, Vice-President (Education) of the HSU (Confidential Agenda Paper 6 refers).

76.1 The Student-led Teaching Achievement Gold (STAG) Awards would be held on 22 May 2019. Although the number of nominations had increased from last year a change of strategy was required to encourage more submissions in the future. A link to the voting for the Vice-Chancellor’s Awards and the Student Union awards would be explored.

76.2 The new executive team had been welcomed and was settling in.

(Minute 76.3 is confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

76.4 Activities for the coming year would focus on student wellbeing, BAME attainment, commuting students and understanding what the HSU really does. A number of HSU priorities clearly overlapped with the access and participation plan.

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION – Minute 63.1 refers

77.1 Received: a report from Mr S Farenga, Deputy Head of Widening Access and Student Success, (Confidential Agenda Paper 7.1 refers).

77.1.1 One year remained of the old Access Participation Plan (APP). Focus was on the chronic issues surrounding BAME success and narrowing the gap between BAME/black/white student attainment.

77.1.2 Progression has been a success story with the gap between white and BAME students shrinking.
77.1.3 In the next year the opportunity would be taken to widen activities and build approaches towards a successful five-year plan and to continue to identify groups where gaps were prevalent and pilot new measures to get the new five-year plan up and running in 2020.

77.1.4 Discussion continued in breakout groups and areas of concern were identified and noted:

i the notion of embedding Progress Tutors in programmes of study to identify students at risk and take early action was discussed in respect of progression and working with students who were not engaging or attending from the start. However, students who did not attend classes would likely not attend meetings with tutors. Attendance requirements differed between Schools and should be standardised;

ii some students experienced timetabling difficulties and financial concerns around getting to classes. How could the curriculum be diversified and adapted, taking account of the difference between studio-based and distance learning courses;

iii a survey in the School of Engineering had found that 50% of students chose to study their course with others attending for reasons including cultural or parental pressure. Understanding student motivation was key and staff should be trained to understand the student body and develop a curriculum to meet the needs of such a diverse study body;

iv the Careers and Employment service encouraged students to consider future careers from the moment they arrived at the University in order to instil a sense of cultural and professional capital. Employers were already showing interest in students from the first year of study. The benefits of attending the University should be recognised and appreciated;

v the support that students need and ask for could look and feel subtly different in each School. Staff should be aware that terminology might mean different things in different Schools;

vi the overall aims of the APP could only be achieved by careful localised planning. Mrs Bissessar and Mr Farenga would meet with the senior leadership of each School to discuss targets in relation to local aims and find out how best to support students in the appropriate way. Not only did this align with the institutional vision and mission of transforming lives, but also with other initiatives in terms of government objectives. The sector had received huge investment to widen participation and ensure student success but this had not succeeded. If over-ambitious targets were set and not achieved there would be no further funding.

77.2 Received: the draft Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 (Confidential Agenda Paper 7.2 refers).

77.2.1 The plan would be presented to the next meeting of CEG and to the Board of Governors for approval at the meeting on 4 June 2019. The final version would be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) on 1 July 2019. Feedback was expected by September 2019.

77.2.2 The Theory of Change approach to achieving long-term goals had been used with a collaborative and inclusive community angle to reach a shared understanding and a personal commitment to act at all levels.

77.2.3 Workshops had been held to consider access into higher education and progression out of university into employment and to examine which groups needed the most support. The key area identified was to improve ways to make offers to students from under-represented groups.

77.2.4 Continuation and attainment for BAME students was still the biggest area of concern.

77.2.5 The number of students claiming mental health issues or communicative disorders as a disability had doubled and the gap between students who declared any other disability had grown.

77.2.6 The OfS long term expectations included eliminating the unexplained non-continuation gaps between the most and least represented groups by 2024/25 and eliminating the unexplained gap in degree outcomes between white and black students by 2024/25.
78  STUDENT SURVEYS

78.1 2019 National Student Survey (NSS) – Minute 56.2 refers

Received: a report from Ms C Rendell, Deputy Director, Academic Quality Assurance, on the 2019 NSS.

78.2 Noted:

i the NSS had closed at end of April 2019. The response rate had been 70.14%. The results would be published 3 July 2019 in time to feed into School away days and Learning and Teaching events;

ii on 3 July 2019 public data would appear on the NSS website presented in the common aggregation hierarchy which tied in with TEF methodology. It was hoped to offer training to Schools before then. Additional qualitative and quantitative data would be made available by student characteristic and specialist needs. Specialist software would be used to analyse comments. The NSS 2018 data would be available in same format before 3 July 2019.

78.3 Semester B MFQ report

Received: a report from Ms Rendell on the mid-module individual lecturer comments.

78.3.1 The response rate had been disappointing but the comments from the comparatively few respondents were detailed, constructive and insightful in the main. More work would be undertaken with Schools to improve the response rate. The results did not include consortium colleges.

78.3.2 the University overall showed a marginally increased score in most Schools.

78.3.4 The comments had been overwhelmingly positive. The message was getting through to students that they were expected to supply professional responses.

78.3.5 It would be useful to see redacted testimonials from the STAG awards nominations.

79  WITHDRAWAL RATES – Minute 57.2 refers

79.1 Received: a report from Mrs S Harrison-Barker, Academic Registrar, on withdrawal rates for 2019 (Confidential Agenda Paper 9 refers).

79.2 Noted: Some positive results had been achieved in reducing withdrawals, most of which happened at the start of the year. Humanities, Creative Arts and the Hertfordshire Law School had had fewer withdrawals this year and interventions were taking place in other Schools. The results would be monitored on an ongoing basis. Overall seven out of the nine Schools had seen a positive difference in terms of withdrawals.

80  STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENTS – Minute 60.1 refers

Noted: an oral report from Dr S Grey, Director of the Doctoral College, concerning the student experience of research degree students would be received at the next meeting. SG

81  ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND UPDATED SCHOOL ACTION PLANS

81.1 Received: 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 (Learning and Teaching) (Confidential Agenda Papers 11.1 to 11.9 refer).
81.2 The Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) were asked to identify the biggest success for their School in the past year and the biggest challenge going forward.

81.2.1 **School of Creative Arts (Dr I J Phillips)**

The greatest successes had been the careers fair and employability events, student forums and the assessment feedback guide. The greatest challenges had been the BAME attainment gap and Panopto.

81.2.2 **School of Education (Ms R Allen)**

The greatest success had been student engagement at every level. The Student Voice project and other engagement activities all had student representation. The greatest challenge had been BAME students and support they required.

81.2.3 **School of Engineering and Computer Science (Mr T Baker)**

The greatest success had been the joining together of two Schools. The greatest challenge had been student attendance.

81.2.4 **School of Health and Social Work (Dr J Vuolo)**

The greatest success had been that the NSS results in assessment were continuing to improve. The greatest challenge had been BAME attainment.

81.2.5 **Hertfordshire Business School (Ms C Jones)**

The greatest successes had been an improvement in the NSS results across the board and degree apprenticeships. The greatest challenge had been continuation rates.

81.2.6 **Hertfordshire Law School (Mr N Geach)**

The greatest success had been the reduction in withdrawal rates and the improvement in student wellbeing. The greatest challenge had been student engagement and human and physical resources.

81.2.7 **School of Humanities (Dr A Maunder)**

The greatest success had been the validation of five new degrees. The greatest challenge had been access to space.

81.2.8 **School of Life and Medical Sciences (Dr P Porter)**

This would be taken at the next meeting.  

81.2.9 **School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics (Dr J L Collett)**

The greatest success had been the curriculum review. The greatest challenge had been converting that into recruitment.

81.3 The plans would be considered again at the meeting on 1 October 2019.

82 **LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE (LTIC) – Minute 61.1 refers**

*Received:* a report from Ms K Barton, Director of the LTIC, regarding Data for Learning, Lecture Capture and the Guided Learner Journey.

82.1 The Data for Learning Working Group had met twice and had agreed on a dashboard which would bring together various aspects of student data including attendance, engagement with Canvas, missing assignments, library loans, etc. This would be piloted with one programme in every School in the next academic year. The pilot programmes would have to undertake to employ a support system and framework and ensure that
Canvas module sites were up to date so that data would be complete. The group would meet again on 11 June 2019.

82.2 Lecture Capture was now at the end of the pilot phase where automatic recording of sessions in Semester B were directly reporting in to Canvas. Student and staff feedback had been highly positive. An interim report was due in July 2019. A new Canvas interface would be available to all staff to enable opting out of individual sessions. Lights would be installed in rooms to clearly indicate when recordings were taking place. More training and guidance would take place over the summer with a further review in December 2019.

82.3 The rollover of modules for the guided learner journey would be taking place soon so the modules should be available now for the next academic year. A new grade book would be introduced over the summer. The assessment feedback working group would report to the next meeting. FH

83

DEAN OF STUDENTS REPORT

Received: a report from Ms G Ward, Dean of Students.

83.1 There had been a big drop in the number of students living in private rented local accommodation since the halls of residence were opened at College Lane.

(Minute 83.2 is confidential and available to members and Officers in attendance only.)

83.3 A new counselling system, Titanium, would be introduced next term enable drilling down into school data. At end of April 2019 the maximum number of appointments for counselling had been reached (3,000). From next term three new counsellors would be located on the de Havillard campus but as yet no dedicated space had been allocated.

83.4 No appointment had been made to the international support role due to budget restraints and a temporary member of staff was in place. It was hoped to recruit in the next few months.

84

LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES (LCS) – Minute 64.1 refers

84.1 Received: a report from Ms B Adams, Head of Library and Academic Support Services, (Confidential Agenda Paper 14 refers).

The timetable review had been launched, sponsored by Dr S Jarvis, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Professor I G Campbell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The review aimed to respond to student concerns about their timetables. It aimed to achieve a number of quick wins for the coming academic year with more significant developments for the following year.

84.2 Received: a presentation on the technical update of the timetable from Mr D Phillips and Mr P Hanna, LCS.

84.2.1 One of the tasks was to review teaching specifications and the technologies used within those spaces. Lecterns incorporated software and equipment but were costly and cumbersome and took up space within rooms. There were more than 200 teaching rooms so any changes would take place on a rolling programme of refurbishment and improvement.

84.2.2 Other institutions had been visited. Now there was a need to improve the understanding of how lecterns were being used and what changes could be made in the future in terms of Learning and Teaching delivery and what that meant for audio-visual equipment.

84.2.3 Members were invited to provide observations and suggestions.
COLLABORATIVE PROVISION – Minute 42 refers

Received: a report from Mr S Issacs, Head of Collaborative Provision, on the Consortium Executive Away Day.

Student numbers had been dwindling on the Foundation degrees over the last few years. A new financial model would be introduced for the next year to help make delivery more sustainable for colleges moving forward.

An away day had been held with College Principals and HE Managers. The legal agreement was due for review next year. The away day considered whether there was a future for the consortium or if working together should take a different format.

The Principals valued the consortium and felt it worked well and operated on trust. They were in favour of continuing but wanted more flexibility and more alignment with meeting the needs of their specific learners to provide a pipeline into high value jobs.

University bureaucracy often made procedures quite slow but QA processes were very robust and valued by partners.

Generally, the number of applications to foundation degree courses were in decline but extended degrees were more buoyant. Students coming through from the consortium colleges were of very high quality. These students could contribute to subject-level TEF metrics.

WORKING GROUPS AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF SEEC

Noted: the final report of the Working Group on Assessment from Mr F Haddleton, Director of Academic Quality Assurance, would be received at the meeting on 9 July 2019.

Noted and approved: a proposal from the Chair to set up a Working Group for the Inter-semester Break, as requested by CEG (Confidential Additional Agenda Paper 19.1 refers). Membership would include representatives from the Student Centre, the Dean of Students office, Deans of Schools and professional SBUs. The Working Group would consider extending the Semester A exam period and the assessment landscape.

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

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

RISK

There were no any risks inherent in the matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting but not discussed when the item concerned was taken.

EMERGENCY BUSINESS

(Admissible only with the consent of the Chair given prior to the meeting.)

Received a presentation on the TABSA BA (Hons) International Management and the IBSA MSc in Global Management dual awards from Mr P Smith, Hertfordshire Business School.
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2018-19
Tuesday 9 July 2019, at 09.30 hours, Room R215, de Havilland campus.

2019-20
Tuesday 1 October 2019, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building
Tuesday 26 November 2019, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building
Tuesday 21 January 2020, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building
Tuesday 10 March 2020, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building
Tuesday 19 May 2020, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building
Tuesday 7 July 2020, Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building

Items for the Agenda, together with supporting papers, should be lodged with Governance Services (Telephone: x4564; e-mail: s.3.brown@herts.ac.uk) by Tuesday 25 June 2019.