UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee held on 24 November 2020.

PRESENT: Dr Mairi Watson (Chair)

Karen Barton  Dr Andrew Maunder  Julie Kelly
Muhammed Saad Raees  Dr Phil Porter  Claire Hartridge
Kayleigh Malone  Dr Stephen Kane  Bethan Adams
Dr Ivan Phillips  Professor Helen Barefoot  Shelby Loasby
Rosemary Allen  Dr Susan Grey  Judith Baines
Dr Karen Atkinson  Professor Frank Haddleton  Dr Julie Vuolo
Karen Robins  Catherine Rendell  Scott Isaacs

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Ciara Meehan  Maria Banks  Sarah Flynn
Stephen Owen  Leire Caselles Vallejo  Nick Howell
Danielle Bradford (item 13)  Jo Ahlberg (item 33)

APOLOGIES:

Neal Geach  Dr David Ford

47  CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS, IF ANY

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

48  NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no new declarations of interest.

49  IN ATTENDANCE

The Committee noted that Nick Howell, Widening Access Manager, was in attendance as an observer. Danielle Bradford, from the Hertfordshire Students’ Union, would be in attendance for item 13 and Jo Ahlberg for item 33.

50  MEMBERSHIP

50.1  The Committee considered its membership.

50.2  Category 5: A representative of the research students nominated by the Research Degrees Board

The Committee noted that the Director of the Doctoral College, Dr Susan Grey, had received several expressions of interest from research students to fill this vacancy, which was expected to be filled by the time of the Committee’s next meeting.

50.3  Category 18: Head of Widening Participation and Outreach

50.3.1  The Committee welcomed Dr Julie Vuolo, recently appointed Deputy Head of Widening Access and Student Success (WASS), to its membership as named alternate for the Head of WASS, Laide Bissessar.
50.3.2 The Committee agreed that the Clerk would correct the role title in this membership category from Head of Widening Participation and Outreach to Head of Widening Access and Student Success.

(Agenda Paper 5, refers.)

51 MINUTES - 29 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Committee confirmed the minutes of 29 September 2020 as an accurate record of the business conducted.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (NOT TAKEN ELSEWHERE)

52 SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

52.1 The Committee received the current schedule of actions arising from the Minutes.

52.2 The Committee agreed that the action regarding minute 143.6 could be taken out of the schedule as the Inclusive Student Journey had been included as part of other projects.

52.3 The Committee noted that all other actions due were being dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 7, refers.)

53 WITHDRAWAL RATES - Minute 139.4.1, refers

Minute 53 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 8, refers.)

54 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no other matters arising from the Minutes that were not being dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

ESEC ACTION PLAN

55 ESEC ACTION PLAN

55.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Chair.

55.2 The Committee noted the education and student experience strand of the University’s strategic plan, which would inform the ESEC Action Plan:


55.3 The Committee further noted that work on the ESEC Action Plan was ongoing.

56 NEW KPI ON BLENDED LEARNING

56.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Chair on a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on blended learning.

56.2 The Committee noted that the Board of Governors had approved a new KPI at their last meeting that all students would have access on their programmes to blended flexible learning.
56.3 The Committee acknowledged that, due to the lockdowns brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, all students had had access to blended learning since March 2020. However, the KPI was a way to articulate a sustainable Hertfordshire way of delivering flexible blended learning that fitted with the University's business model and properly integrated with campus resources. The project, which was to be carried out in a three-year timescale, was an opportunity to gather together all the work and progress already happening and work collaboratively to articulate what blended flexible learning was at the University.

56.4 The Committee also noted a draft slide showing the project scope. The slide would be developed further and taken to the January 2021 meeting of the Board of Governors, together with background information on progress and milestones to be met.

56.5 As part of this piece of work, a number of school level targets and institutional level targets would be set. The first step was distilling the experiences over the previous six months and this was already underway in the form of workshops with each School.

(Tabled Confidential Agenda Paper 11, refers)

57 PRIORITY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

57.1 The Committee received an update from Hertfordshire Students’ Union (HSU) Sabbatical Officers Kayleigh Malone and Saad Raees on progress with the HSU Priority Campaign.

57.2 The Committee noted that this year’s Priority Campaign centred around ensuring students succeeded through Covid-19. Four HSU officers were working together on the following areas to improve the student experience:

- mental health and wellbeing;
- placement support;
- societies and community;
- BAME students;
- international students;
- academic impacts.

57.3 Regarding student wellbeing and student support, work was ongoing to create a student wellbeing toolkit. The toolkit was currently with the marketing team and it was expected to be published in January.

57.4 HSU officers were also involved with asymptomatic testing and collating feedback on how this was impacting students positively or negatively.

57.5 HSU was working with the Dean of Students to launch reporting support, including the use of Instagram Live in Semester B and other social media.

57.6 Progress was also being made with the study/social spaces and security aspects of student experience. For example, a forum with students had taken place involving the Head of Security, the Dean of Students and HSU’s Head of Operations.

57.7 Regarding placement support, HSU was working with Schools who had students on placements and were exploring the possibility of introducing check-in sessions while students were on placements.

57.8 Regarding societies and community, a toolkit for societies had been created so they could better use the spaces available for either face-to-face or virtually run events.

57.9 HSU was also working with the Widening Access and Student Success team to contribute as much as possible to the BAME student experience and success.

57.10 Regarding timetabling, issues with registration had been resolved; however, it was now important to release the Semester B timetable as soon as possible.
57.11 Other areas HSU had been involved in as part of their Priority Campaign were:

- implementation of the personal tutoring framework across Schools;
- access to equipment;
- quarantining of international students;
- bullying and harassment;
- access to hardship funds;
- housing and guarantorship.

58 HSU - STUDENT ACADEMIC SATISFACTION SURVEY

58.1 The Committee received a report on the results of the Hertfordshire Students’ Union (HSU) Student Academic Satisfaction Survey from Dani Bradford, HSU Research Coordinator.

58.2 The Committee noted the findings and recommendations within the report. Further analysis of data was ongoing and, once completed, the final report would be accessible in the HSU website.

58.3 HSU acknowledged that not all the recommendations could be implemented or, at least, not immediately and that some put additional pressure on academic staff workloads. HSU were happy to support implementation where possible.

58.4 The Committee agreed that the report contained valuable data that would help inform decision making and thanked HSU for this work.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers.)

59 NSS 2020 ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND PROCESS FOR NSS 2021

59.1 The Committee received a report from the Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance, Catherine Rendell, on the National Student Survey (NSS) Action Plan.

59.2 Regarding the NSS 2020 Action Plan, the Committee noted the themes that had emerged at programme level as set out in the report. The action planning would now be incorporated into the Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (AMERs).

59.3 It was further noted that, as part of the Academic Quality Review, the University would move away from AMERs in favour of a form of continuous monitoring with the NSS action planning being a part of that.

59.4 Regarding NSS 2021, the Office for Students (OfS) were conducting a review of the NSS. There would be a first report on this expected by Christmas; however, a decision had already been made that NSS 2021 would run. At this stage it was unclear whether the survey results from 2021 would be published as OfS wanted any published results to be aligned to the results of the review.

59.5 Even though it was not an OfS requirement, the University would promote NSS 2021. The NSS was a good opportunity for the University to get a good response rate from students as the response rate for internal surveys was not as high. OfS had confirmed that the rules around inappropriate influence would continue to apply.

59.6 Nationally, NSS 2021 would open on 6 January 2021, however, the University was planning a later start date of 8 February 2021 to start promoting it. This was in response to negative feedback from Schools in 2020 regarding an early start.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 14, refers.)

WORKING GROUPS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

60 BAME STUDENT SUCCESS WORKING GROUP

60.1 The Committee received a report from the Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching, Professor Helen Barefoot, on the Institutional BAME Action Plan.
The Committee noted the results and recommendations of an internal audit on the University’s approach to addressing the awarding gap, and initial data on the awarding gap for 2019/20.

As set out in the report, the University had made good progress in 2019/20 in reducing the awarding gap from 21 percentage points to 15 percentage points.

The BAME Student Success Working Group would bring a further paper to the May 2021 meeting regarding how the Plan was being carried out and met.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

DATA FOR LEARNING WORKING GROUP

The Committee received an oral report from the Director of Learning and Teaching, Karen Barton, on the work of the Data for Learning Working Group.

The Committee noted that tweaks and improvements to the dashboard continued to be made as necessary to ensure all the actions arising from the Group’s final report were followed through. However, the purpose of the Working Group had now effectively been fulfilled and there was no further need for the Group to continue to meet.

SHAPE OF THE YEAR WORKING GROUP

The Committee received an oral report from the Director of Academic Quality Assurance, Professor Frank Haddleton, on the activities of the Shape of the Year Working Group.

The Committee was reminded that the recommendations of the Working Group were approved in September 2020 by both this Committee and the Chief’s Executive Group, including the introduction of graduation ceremonies on campus in July from 2022 onwards. The latest feasibility work had shown that holding ceremonies on campus was possible with College Lane being the preferred location.

The Committee noted, however, that in early October the Government had announced a delay to A level exams and publication of results to 24 August 2021. Accordingly, universities had decided to delay the start of the 2021/22 academic year. At its last meeting, the Academic Board had approved a delay to the start of the 2021/22 academic year of two weeks by reducing Semester A from 13 to 12 weeks and by withdrawing the inter semester week. Unfortunately, these adjustments meant a delay in introducing July graduation ceremonies to 2023. Other recommendations of the Shape of the Year Working Group would be implemented as planned.

The Academic Year 2021/22 calendar could be accessed in the University website at the following link:

https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-calendar

ANNUAL REPORTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Committee considered the Hertfordshire Business School’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee resolved that the Hertfordshire Business School’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be received.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 18, refers.)

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

The Committee considered the School of Creative Arts’ Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.
The Committee **resolved** that the School of Creative Arts’ Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 19, refers.)

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The Committee **considered** the School of Education’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the School of Education’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 20, refers.)

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK**

The Committee **considered** the School of Health and Social Work's Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the School of Health and Social Work's Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 21, refers.)

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES**

The Committee **considered** the School of Humanities’ Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the School of Humanities’ Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 22, refers.)

**HERTFORDSHIRE LAW SCHOOL**

The Committee **considered** the Hertfordshire Law School’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the Hertfordshire Law School’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 23, refers.)

**SCHOOL OF LIFE AND MEDICAL SCIENCES**

The Committee **considered** the School of Life and Medical Sciences' Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the School of Life and Medical Sciences' Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 24, refers.)

**SCHOOL OF PHYSICS, ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE**

The Committee **considered** the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21.

The Committee **resolved** that the School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science’s Education and Student Experience Action Plan 2020/21 be **received**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 25, refers.)
LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE

71 REPORT FROM THE APP WORKING GROUP - Minute 41.3, 26 November 2019, refers

71.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Learning and Teaching, Karen Barton, on the progress in fulfilling the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) following their approval of the University’s Access and Participation Plan (APP), 2020/21-2024/25.

71.2 The Committee noted that the OfS had recently communicated to the University their intention to remove the requirement for Enhanced Monitoring set out when the APP was approved in November 2019. Monitoring would now take the form of a yearly ‘Impact Report’, the first of which would be submitted in March 2021.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 26, refers.)

72 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES REFRESH PROJECT OUTLINE

72.1 The Committee received a report from the Associate Director of Learning and Teaching (Workplace Learning and Degree Apprenticeships), Sarah Flynn, on the Graduate Attributes refresh project.

72.2 The Committee noted that a small steering group was driving this forward. The Graduate Attributes would be refreshed to ensure a clear alignment with the University’s Strategic Plan and to support the expansion of the Go Herts Award.

72.3 The Committee further noted the proposed process for carrying out the refresh of the Graduate Attributes as set out in the report.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 27, refers.)

73 LTIC ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

73.1 The Committee considered the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre’s Annual Report 2019/20.

73.2 The Committee resolved that the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre’s Annual Report 2019/20 be received.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 28, refers.)

74 WIDENING ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS BIENNIAL REPORT 2018-20

74.1 The Committee considered the Widening Access and Student Success Biennial Report 2018-20.

74.2 The Committee resolved that the Widening Access and Student Success Biennial Report 2018-20 be received.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 29, refers.)

75 ACADEMIC SUPPORT/STUDENT SUCCESS

75.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Director of Learning and Teaching, Karen Barton, and the Head of Library and Academic Support Services, Beth Adams, on activities around academic support and student success.

75.2 The Committee noted that activities around academic support and student success had grown organically overtime. A review was now taking place to integrate these activities into the Herts Pedagogy project. The aim was to move to a much more cooperative model of providing resources for academic support and student success.
APPRENTICESHIPS ACADEMIC GROUP ANNUAL REPORT - Minute 134.7, 7 July 2020, refers

76.1 The Committee considered the Apprenticeships Academic Group Annual Report 2019/20.

76.2 The Committee noted that the apprenticeships provision was expected to grow and that Ofsted were increasing their oversight to all levels of apprenticeship provision.

76.3 The Committee resolved that the Apprenticeships Academic Group Annual Report 2019/20 be received.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 31, refers.)

EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENTS

UPDATE FROM THE DOCTORAL COLLEGE

77.1 The Committee received and noted a report from the Director of the Doctoral College, Dr Susan Grey, on the activities of the Doctoral College.

77.2 The Committee also noted that recruitment of research degree students was going well despite the pandemic.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 32, refers.)

A CHANGED WORLD - POST-GRADUATE INVOLVEMENT

78.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Project Coordinator for A Changed World, Jo Ahlberg.

78.2 ‘A Changed World’ invited both students and staff to share and showcase their academic and creative activity relating to the Covid-19 lockdown and current global pandemic. The website could be accessed at the following link:

https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/a-changed-world

78.3 The Committee noted there had been good engagement with postgraduate students with some collaborating together with staff to produce content.

78.4 The experience was being very positive, with good turnout for the workshop and many hits to the website.

78.5 The deadline for submissions would be set for mid-December and staff were asked to encourage students to create content as a way to support their mental health, develop themselves professionally, get involved with the graduate attributes, etc.

STANDING REPORTS

ITEMS OF REPORT FROM STUDENT WELLBEING

79.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Deputy Dean of Students, Claire Hartridge, on student wellbeing.

79.2 The Committee noted that the Disability Team were busy supporting academic staff to get assessments online and to complete study-needs agreements.

79.3 The Counselling Service was managing the increased workload effectively with most appointments still being online. There would be some messaging soon around face to face services still available to ensure students were aware that there was still a physical presence if needed.

79.4 A lot of online content had also been made available to students, such as podcasts, that had been well received.
Messaging about asymptomatic testing would also be going out to students soon.

**ITEMS OF REPORT FROM THE LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES**

80.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Library and Academic Support Services, Beth Adams, on broad trends of student engagement with Library and Computing Services resources at the start of Semester A, 2020.

80.2 The Committee noted information about student use of key resources during Semester A as compared to a similar time period in 2019, as set out in the report. It was worth acknowledging that occupancy numbers and PC logins reflected the numbers of students on campus.

80.3 It was also worth noting that the remote desktop setup whereby students could access University software had had lower take-up than expected, however, this may change later in the year.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 35, refers.)

**COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**

81 **UK COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

81.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of UK partnerships, Scott Isaacs, on UK Partnership related matters.

81.2 The Committee noted the information and recommendations contained within the report. The Committee was particularly pleased to note that UK partners had reported receiving ongoing communications and high levels of support and guidance from the University throughout the pandemic.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 36, refers.)

**OTHER BUSINESS**

82 **ITEMS REFERRED FROM SCHOOL ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

There were no items referred from School Academic Committees not discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

83 **ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO SCHOOL ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

There were no items to be referred to School Academic Committees not discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

84 **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD**

The Committee considered and approved the Annual Report to the Academic Board for 2019-2020.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 39, refers.)

85 **CLERK’S REPORT**

(Confidential Agenda Paper 40 and minutes 86 to 88, refer.)

86 **CHANGES TO UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS (UPRS)**

86.1 The Committee noted that a new version of UPR SA06 ‘Student Attendance Regulations’, effective from 27 October 2020, had been published and was available from the University website at the following link:

[https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/233100/SA06-Student-Attendance-Regps.pdf](https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/233100/SA06-Student-Attendance-Regps.pdf)
The Committee noted that the new Engagement with Learning Code of Practice’ had been published, effective from 27 October 2020, as Appendix I to UPR SA06 and was available from the University website at the following link:


The Committee noted that a new version of UPR SA01 ‘Student Code of Conduct’, effective from 1 September 2020, had been published and was available from the University website at the following links:

UPR SA01: https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/233102/SA01-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf


The Committee noted that proposed changes to the Committee, including a change of name from Student Educational Experience Committee (SEEC) to Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC), agreed at the meeting on 29 September 2020, had been approved by the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of the Academic Board, on 8 October 2020. These changes had been formally noted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 18 November 2020.

All meetings were scheduled to be held at 09:30 hours via Microsoft Teams unless advised otherwise, in which case the meeting would be held in the Central Committee Room:

Tuesday 19 January 2021
Tuesday 2 March 2021
Tuesday 18 May 2021
Tuesday 29 June 2021.

There were no specific matters for referral to the Learning and Organisational Development Facilitation and Support Team Manager, Jill Lees, concerning matters relating to People Development.

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

There was no emergency business.

The next meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee will be held on Tuesday, 19 January 2021 from 09:30 hours via MS Teams.

Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Leire Caselles Vallejo (‘e’-mail l.caselles-vallejo@herts.ac.uk) by 29 December 2020 and reports submitted by 5 January 2021.