UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee held on 21 September 2021.

PRESENT: Dr Mairi Watson (Chair)
Karen Barton        Neal Geach        Geri Ward
Rhiannon Ellis     Dr Sherael Webley   Bethan Adams
Dr Ivan Phillips   Dr Stephen Kane    Sharleni Inbanathan
Alison McLauchlin  Professor Helen Barefoot Anna Levett
Dr Cheryl Holman   Professor Frank Haddleton Laide Bissessar
Karen Robins       Catherine Rendell  Scott Isaacs
Dr Andrew Maunder  Lisa Uttley

IN ATTENDANCE:
Syeda Zara Haram      Associate Professor Sarah Flynn      Stephen Owen
Mohammed Ilyas        Leire Caselles Vallejo        Simon Hume
Karen Omisore

APOLOGIES:
Katie Morton        Brian Jukes        Muhammed Saad Raees
Dr Susan Grey       Dr Ciara Meehan    Maria Banks

1 IN ATTENDANCE
The Committee noted that Sally Hardwicke and Karen Omisore would be in attendance for items 10 and 14, respectively. Simon Hume would be in attendance for item 18.

2 CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS, IF ANY
2.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented on what had happened since the Committee last met on 29 June 2021.

2.2 The University had improved in both The Guardian and The Times league tables, which had been published in the previous two weeks. Particularly, The Times league table results showed significant improvement for the University in most areas. The exception was entry criteria, which the University was already working on.

2.3 The Committee noted that a subgroup of the Chief’s Executive Group (CEG) had been convened to look at all the external performance measures the University was subject to. The subgroup would identify common themes which were often discussed by this Committee and facilitate directing resources, energy and effort to priority areas. The Chair would bring a report on the findings of this subgroup to the Committee for discussion.

2.4 Timetables had been released to students in advance of the impending start of the academic year. The context for timetabling this year was one of greater sensitivity about the balance between face-to-face and online teaching.

2.5 This was a transitional year for the University, with the first group of courses going through the KPI 3 transforming process for September 2022. Work was ongoing to ensure that the University met both students’ expectations and its own commitments.
2.6 Some of the biggest challenges and questions in 2021-2022 would be about teaching and learning. Therefore, the importance of this Committee was even more elevated than in previous years. It was pivotal that members understood and effected their roles and disseminated the information discussed and agreed at this Committee to the groups they represented. It was equally pivotal that members shared and brought to the attention of the Committee any issues they were working on or concerned about so they could be discussed and resolved.

2.7 The Chair would continue to meet and work with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Advisory Group, the Student PVC Advisory Group, whose composition had been amended recently to more broadly represent the student body, and the Associate Deans of School (Learning and Teaching) to advance the business of the Committee. Individuals were encouraged to use these groups as an additional vehicle to bring issues to the attention of the Committee.

3 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no new declarations of interest.

4 ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING ORDERS

The Committee noted the Academic Board Standing Orders, effective from 1 December 2018, which could be found at the following link:


5 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION

5.1 The Committee considered and approved, subject to final approval by the Academic Board, proposed amendments to its Terms of Reference and Composition aimed to strengthen and clarify its remit in respect of the University’s apprenticeship provision.

5.2 The proposed changes included:

- inclusion of a reference to the definition of ‘student’ in the University Policies and Regulations to clarify that the term ‘student’ encompassed apprentice learners;
- inclusion of a commitment to take appropriate consideration at each meeting of matters relating to the University’s apprenticeship provision;
- creation of a new membership category to be filled by the Chair of the Apprenticeship Academic Group.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

6 MEMBERSHIP

6.1 The Committee noted its current membership and welcomed new members from the Hertfordshire Students’ Union Rhiannon Ellis, Syeda Zara Haram and Katie Morton, under categories three (3) and four (4).

6.2 The Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Mohammed Ilyas, was also welcomed as an Officer in Attendance.

(Agenda Paper 7, refers.)

7 MINUTES - 29 JUNE 2021

The Minutes of 29 June 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the business conducted.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 8, refers.)
MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (NOT TAKEN ELSEWHERE)

8 SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee noted a schedule of actions arising from the Minutes.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 9, refers.)

9 ENGAGEMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION - MINUTE 214.5, REFERS

9.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, Karen Barton, and Business Analyst Sally Hardwicke, on the implementation of the new engagement policy.

9.2 The Committee resolved that proposals for the operation of the Engagement Monitoring process as set out in the report be approved.

9.3 The Committee agreed that letters issued to students as part of the new engagement policy should include a link to the Hertfordshire Students’ Union wellbeing resources.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 10, refers.)

10 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no other matters arising from the Minutes not taken elsewhere on the agenda.

NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

11 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

11.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Chair on important matters for members to note.

11.2 Most of the issues for report by the Chair had already been discussed as part of the Chair’s opening remarks.

11.3 The Chair reiterated that the approach to Start of Term and Induction this year had changed significantly. ‘Central welcome talks’ were an example of the new initiatives and would run all through welcome week.

11.4 In terms of approach to teaching and learning, it was important to monitor the student experience and have as much face to face time as possible while the KPI 3 project was being implemented.

12 CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND NEW DMD TEMPLATE

Minute 12 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers.)

13 PILOT ON TRANSFER OF MARKS FROM CANVAS TO QUERCUS

13.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, Karen Barton, and the Director of Student Administration, Karen Omisore, on the pilot on transfer of marks from Canvas to Quercus.

13.2 The Committee considered the information and recommendations contained in the report, which included a proposal to extend the scope of the pilot project in 2021/22 to include all modules from all Schools which met the agreed assessment configuration.

13.3 The pilot had been going well and it was time to move to the next stage, which included all Schools. Staff working in the Ask Herts Hubs would need retraining and the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Champions in each School would need to be involved to ensure assignments had been set up correctly.
The Committee resolved that the recommendations in respect of the pilot on transfer of marks from Canvas to Quercus, as set out in the report, be approved.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 14, refers.)

STUDENT VOICE

HSU PRIORITY CAMPAIGN

The Committee received an oral report from Hertfordshire Students’ Union (HSU) representatives Rhiannon Ellis (President) and Syeda Zara Haram (Vice-President Education).

The Committee noted that the main priorities for HSU this year were to advocate for more face-to-face teaching in addition to strong online teaching, to ensure that Study Needs Agreements were being implemented correctly, to improve the pastoral side of personal tutoring, and to increase digital capacity through digital skills and equipment.

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Director of Academic Quality, Catherine Rendell, on the National Student Survey (NSS) results for 2021.

There were some significant leaps in the 2021 results, clearly showing that the work done had been worthwhile, particularly in the areas of student community and student voice. Working online had allowed the University to have a stronger impact in those areas, however, it was important to guard carefully the ground already gained. The return to campus would not necessarily translate into better scores in student community and voice next year.

Action Plans in response to the NSS 2021 results had been prepared during August. This year, all Strategic Business Units, and not just Schools, had been asked to complete an action plan.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PTES)

Minute 16 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

FOCUS GROUPS ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Insight and CRM, Simon Hume, on the focus groups on student experience and teaching and learning.

The focus groups had explored students’ views on the following key areas:

- Timetabling;
- Flexible learning;
- Technology and delivery;
- Syllabus and curriculum;
- Assessment and feedback.

The Committee noted that the recommendations contained within the report would be taken forward by a subgroup of the Chief Executive’s Group.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENTS

There were no matters to report.
WORKING GROUPS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

19  BAME STUDENT SUCCESS WORKING GROUP

19.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Deputy Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre, Professor Helen Barefoot, on the activities of the BAME Student Success Working Group.

19.2 The Committee noted that individuals responsible for sections of the Institutional BAME Action Plan (IBAP) had been updating their actions in readiness for the next academic year.

19.3 An online event would take place the following day to look at the progress made since the launch of the IBAP. The session would include discussions from the BAME student advocates and showcase their work with black academics, including a video that had been made about their experience.

19.4 New BAME student advocates had been appointed through a different process this year in which School members were involved. The recruitment process was completed earlier than previously so they could be well in place before the start of Black History Month in October. However, this meant that no advocates would be newly arrived students.

19.5 The Group had done training with the HSU executives, with the School Community Organisers (SCOs) and the BAME student advocates regarding the awarding gap. Student Reps would also receive training once they were in post.

19.6 The Committee also noted that the University’s application for the Race Equality Charter Mark Bronze Award had been successful. The feedback received so far on the University’s application had been very positive about the student side. Further feedback from Advance HE would be received shortly.

LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE

20  ITEMS OF REPORT FROM THE LEARNING AND TEACHING INNOVATION CENTRE

20.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Director of the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre.

20.2 The Committee noted that the Herts Learning project was well underway.

20.3 A student version of the Data for Learning Dashboard would be available imminently so students could see their engagement with each module. Further development of the dashboard will be considered with the help of the Hertfordshire Students’ Union.

20.4 Digital capabilities were a priority this year. Students could access information and guidance at the following links:

https://ask.herts.ac.uk/digital-skills


https://www.studynet2.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ask.nsf/0/E77B8512A4A0D83580258730002AF83C/$FILE/Herts%20Digital%20Learner%20Profile.pdf

20.5 The digital capability resources included a checklist for students to get through and tick off to ensure they had acquired the necessary digital skills.

21  ITEMS OF REPORT FROM WIDENING ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

21.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Widening Access and Student Success (WASS) on the support offered to estranged students.
The Committee noted the information contained in the report.

WASS had already identified as estranged more students than planned for. This would need to be taken into consideration for future years’ planning.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 22, refers.)

APPRENTICESHIPS PROVISION

The Committee received and noted a report authored by the Academic Registrar, Julie Kelly, on the University’s progress to get ready for the changing compliance arrangements for the apprenticeships provision at the University.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 23, refers.)

FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered and approved proposals to ensure compliance with both Ofsted and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 24, refers.)

ACADEMIC REGISTRY

Minute 24 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 25, refers.)

STUDENT WELLBEING

The Committee received and noted a report from the Dean of Students, Geri Ward, on student wellbeing.

(Tabled Confidential Agenda Paper 26, refers.)

LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES

This item was not taken. An update would be shared at the next meeting.

COLLABORATE PROVISION

This item was not taken. An update would be received at the next meeting.

SCHOOL ACADEMIC COMMITTEES (SACS)

There were no items referred from School Academic Committees.

Members were asked to relate the matters discussed at this Committee to their respective School Academic Committee; in particular, from this meeting, the matters related to the engagement policy, which would require proactive and significant action by the Schools.
GOVERNANCE

30 CLERK’S REPORT

30.1 The Committee noted a current list of its working groups and sub-committees.

30.2 Schedule of meetings 2021/22

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 23 November 2021
Tuesday 18 January 2022
Tuesday 8 March 2022
Tuesday 17 May 2022
Tuesday 28 June 2022.

(Agenda Paper 31, refers.)

31 PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

There were no people development matters that had not been discussed earlier on the agenda.

32 RISK

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

33 EMERGENCY BUSINESS

There was no emergency business.

34 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee would be held on Tuesday, 23 November 2021 from 09:30 hours in the Central Committee Room - MacLaurin Building.

Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Leire Caselles Vallejo (‘e’-mail l.caselles-vallejo@herts.ac.uk) by 2 November 2021 and reports submitted by 9 November 2021.