
Meeting: COUNCIL/SENATE/STUDENTS' UNION COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 21 April 2020 at 2.15pm

Venue: Via Teams

Present:

Professor I White (Chair)	Vice-Chancellor
Miss E Alcock	President, Students' Union (SU)
Professor P Lambert	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching)
Professor C Mitchell	Elected by Senate
Miss R Osman	Education Officer, SU
Mr Alex Robinson	Student Representative
Ms K Robinson	Appointed by Council

In Attendance:

Ms E Day	Secretary
Dr J Harris	Director of Academic Registry
Mr T Hollingsworth	Appointed by Council
Mr J Ingram	Bath Amnesty Society (for minute no 1224 (2))
Miss A Lobo	Community Officer, SU (for minute no 1224 (1))
Mrs J Loveys	Director Accommodation & Hospitality Services
Mr A McLaughlin	Chief Executive, SU
Ms J Medland	Executive Officer
Mr A Payne	Director of Student Services
Dr J Troyer	Elected by Senate
Mr R Tyrrell	Student Representative
Dr C Wilson	Vice-President (Student Experience)

Apologies:

Professor A Heath	Academic Director, CLT
Mr Z Truscott	Student Representative

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1219. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which was held via Microsoft Teams. Mr Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive of Sport England, was welcomed to the meeting as his first CSSU since his appointment by Council. Mr James Ingram, Chair of Bath Amnesty Society was welcomed to the meeting.

- 1220.** The Chair invited the Director of Student Services (DoSS) to provide a brief update to the Committee on Student Services provision during the public health issue of the Coronavirus pandemic which is ongoing, which had been detailed in

Paper CSSU19/20 - 024. The DoSS explained that overall, the transition to providing virtual services had gone smoothly which was a credit to the Student Services team who were delivering roughly the same level of service which would have been provided prior to the pandemic, other than hardship fund services of which requests had doubled. The DoSS noted that students had adapted well to a virtual platform of support. The SU President queried whether more staff would be trained to work in the hardship fund services to prevent a bottleneck in requests to which the DoSS responded that operational staff across Student Services were being trained to ensure that could take on roles to support where it was needed. The DoSS explained that the Easter break had allowed the service to recalibrate and stabilise. The DoSS highlighted the offers of support from other services such as the finance team and acknowledged the financial contribution from University Alumni who had raised over £40,000 for the hardship fund. The DoSS explained that now things had stabilised, Student Services would be able to look ahead at developing preventative programmes to address issues of student mental health, students experiencing abuse, students in vulnerable situations alongside the responsive support and do this with the SU and the Communications Team. The Chair thanked the SU for the work they had done over the last few weeks to support students and it was noted that the donations from alumni had exceeded £45,000. Mr Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive of Sport England, commended all the work undertaken so far but suggested that there should be caution in rushing to what a new normal would look like, and time should be taken to absorb the situation as it happens because what we thought we knew two weeks ago could look very different in two months. The Chair agreed that it was important to keep agile in the important work being undertaken at this time.

1221. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members confirmed that they had no declarations of interest to declare.

1222. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020 (Paper CSSU19/20-025) were APPROVED as a correct record of proceedings.

1223. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee received a report of actions (Paper CSSU19/20-026), which had been compiled by the Secretary.

Minute 1211 (2)

The SU requested an update on the monitoring of learning outcomes with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) (PVC (L&T)) informed the Committee that although it was a more complex situation, the overall impact was being monitored closely and in the same way as had been undertaken for the two periods of industrial action in Semester 1 and 2 of the 2019/20 academic year. This was through auditing by department whether academic standards had been maintained and learning outcomes met. Some departments were still being chased.

Minute 1215 (2)

The Director of Accommodation & Hospitality Services (DoAHS) explained that with the current situation, the water fountain progression had slowed but liaison

with Estates was ongoing. The DoAHS would provide a paper to the first CSSU of 2020/21 to update on the issue.

1224. STUDENTS' UNION BUSINESS**(1) Development of the Muslim Prayer Room**

The SU Community Officer introduced Paper CSSU19/20-027 which had been worked on jointly with the Islamic Society with a great deal of research and time having been given to the paper. The SU Community Officer highlighted the success of the introduction of Ramadan guidance for the University which had been created last year and the hosting of an Iftar on campus which produced a large turnout from the community. An overview was given that from tangible results demonstrated in the paper from the survey results, alongside the numbers from Registry and the want for the University to become increasingly diverse, the expansion of a Muslim Prayer Room was something the University could provide to the active and growing Muslim Community on campus. The SU Community Officer opened the room to comments and discussion.

The Chair thanked the SU Community Officer for the paper and invited the PVC (L&T) to respond.

The PVC (L&T) acknowledged that the SU Community Officer and SU Education Officer had significantly and successfully raised the profile of the Islamic community on campus in the last year. The PVC (L&T) raised the main barriers of space and the timeframe. It was queried where this issue would be placed in terms of a priority for the SU to which the SU Community Officer responded to explain that as a diversity need and escalating issue this would not be considered as being part of a priority ranking, it was a standalone fundamental issue.

A discussion was had on whether the Chaplaincy could be utilised, but this space was felt by students to be predominantly Christian even though it was described as a multi-faith space and this was why teaching rooms were being booked out for Friday prayers which was not felt to be appropriate and the space was not always guaranteed.

The Vice-President (Student Experience) (VP(SE)) explained that although considering the issue as being a priority or not may not be the right way forward, an acknowledgment was needed that space was at an absolute premium and there was likely not to be a quick solution. The VP(SE) stated that the paper was informative and could now be taken forward to the Space Management Group for consideration.

The DoAHS suggested that some space was available in Norwood House which was underused by first year undergraduate students who lived off campus who had the space reserved as a social space. It was agreed that the SU Community Officer and the DoAHS would look at whether this space could be used in the short term.

Dr John Troyer reiterated that in his role as Director of the Centre for Death & Society, with the current pandemic it was more important than ever to be considering the impact Covid-19 would have on different communities and how the University would support these communities. A dedicated space would ensure

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that the Muslim community had the space for reflection and prayers for the dead and be a real long-term benefit for Muslim students and colleagues.

The SU President commented as a wider point that as an institution, she felt there was sometimes a habit of considering what would work for the majority and not what would work for the more vulnerable groups and rolling that out for the many, which would ensure it worked for everyone. The SU President noted that there was no student representation on the Space Management Group.

The Chair thanked everyone for their comments and confirmed that the University Executive Board had supported the issue to be referred to the Space Management Group. It was noted that the Space Management Group would consult with the SU Community Officer who could feedback from members of the Islamic Society. The Chair explained that although with the current pandemic it was challenging to solve long-term problems, the situation had also provided the University with an opportunity to undertake an analysis of how space could be used differently. The secretary would share the minutes noted to the Acting University Secretary to escalate the paper to the Space Management Group.

SEC

(2) Scholarships for Undergraduate Displaced People

The Committee received Paper CSSU19/20-028. The Chair of University of Bath Amnesty Society, Mr James Ingram, provided an overview of the paper drawing attention to the significant work undertaken in the last four years at the University to make Higher Education more accessible for displaced people but reiterated that this now needed to be taken forward. Mr Ingram explained that the paper had been produced from in-depth research across other institutions, with experts in the field and in collaboration with other groups including UCU. Mr Ingram highlighted that the idea of scholarships being supported and financed across faculties was so that this was a shared responsibility and shared investment across the University to demonstrate what the University could do for marginalised groups. Mr Ingram reflected on the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic as being a prime opportunity to increase capacity to welcome all groups in the United Kingdom.

The Chair thanked Mr Ingram for the detailed paper and invited the PVC (L&T) to respond.

The PVC (L&T) welcomed the paper and the initiative within it and thanked Mr Ingram, the Amnesty Society and the SU for all the work they have done.

The PVC (L&T) explained that there was a real issue of cost and the figures produced by the Director of Undergraduate Admissions were the most accurate. With the current reduction in income due to the pandemic, any additional funding would have to come from diverting away from existing provision. In liaising with the Director of Finance, as an immediate request this issue would be difficult to address but it could certainly be looked at as a longer-term project. Mr Ingram responded to say that the tuition fee waiver proposed by the Amnesty Society of £0 within the paper had been researched and discussed with Dr Rebecca Murray, author of the Mapping Opportunities' report (2019). Mr Ingram highlighted that academic success was the real benefit of supporting displaced people to access education at the University and this should be considered above anything else when looking at the cost of another student potentially missing out. Mr Ingram

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requested that the University commit to setting out a roadmap that would lead to the introduction of the scholarships and produce figures to show where the money would be taken from existing provision so that all involved could be fully informed.

A discussion was had on an affordability study being undertaken by the University to test the idea in the current climate with the significant income gap which the University will face due to the pandemic caused by Covid-19.

PVC(L&T)

It was agreed that the PVC (L&T) would liaise with the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and respond at the first CSSU of the 2020/21 academic year with an affordability study focussed on undergraduates, taking into consideration the expertise from Dr Rebecca Murray and other institutions with similar schemes.

Mr Ingram was thanked for presenting the paper.

1225. OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee noted the SU Officers for 2020/21. The Chair congratulated the officers who had been elected and thanked the other officers for their service.

1226. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked members of the Committee for their service over the previous year.

The Chair thanked Dr John Harris, Director of Academic Registry for his service to the Committee as he will retire this month.

1227. DATES OF MEETINGS

The programme of meetings for 2020/21 was noted as being as follows (all meetings at 2.15pm):

- Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 2.15pm
- Thursday 3 December 2020 at 2.15pm
- Thursday 18 February 2021 at 2.15pm
- Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 2.15pm

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm
