
Meeting: COUNCIL/SENATE/STUDENTS' UNION COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Thursday 27 February 2020 at 2.15pm

Venue: 4 West Boardroom

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 Alex Butler	Chief Digital & Information Officer (for minute no 1214)
Mrs P Chesters	Chair of Council
Ms E Day	Secretary
Dr J Harris	Director of Academic Registry
Dr Nicky Kemp	Acting University Secretary (for minute no 1211, 1216 (1)(2)(3)(4))
Miss A Lobo	Community Officer, SU (for minute no 1207 (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 C Wilson	Vice-President (Student Experience)

Apologies:

Professor A Heath	Academic Director, CLT
Mr T Hollingsworth	Appointed by Council
Dr J Troyer	Elected by Senate
Mr Z Truscott	Student Representative
Mr R Tyrrell	Student Representative

ACTION

1211. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Dr Nicky Kemp, Mrs Pam Chesters and Ms Alex Butler were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chair invited the Acting University Secretary to provide a brief update to the Committee on the action from the University on the public health issue of coronavirus. The Acting University Secretary stated that the Emergency

Management Team (EMT) were continuing to meet daily and had been since the outbreak of the virus had become a public health issue. The EMT were planning for a variety of scenarios including considering supply chains, looking at the impact on pre-session recruitment, travel arrangements for staff and students and students on overseas placements. The Acting University Secretary explained that the University was following guidance from Public Health England, the NHS and the Foreign Commonwealth Office on a proportionate and appropriate response and that the overall picture was a fluid one. The University would continue to keep staff and students informed.

The Chair invited the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) (PVC (L&T)) to provide a brief update on the current industrial action being taken by the University and College Union (UCU). The PVC (L&T) explained that feedback had been received from many but not all departments on any disruption. However that information was expected from all by the next day. The PVC (L&T) informed the Committee that the overall impact was being monitored closely, professional services had been able to continue without disruption and that any complaints from students were being monitored and responded to. The PVC (L&T) reiterated how helpful it had been to dovetail key messages alongside the Students' Union (SU). The SU President added that through a recent referendum on strike action, students had voted not to support the current strike action. The SU were briefing academic representatives to support students in signposting to support, welfare and complaints information.

1212. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members confirmed that they had no declarations of interest.

1213. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 (Paper CSSU119/20-015) were APPROVED as a correct record of proceedings subject to the following changes:

To the third paragraph of minute 1207(1):

'...which came as strong advice and had been made clear that if the University got this wrong, the consequences would be catastrophic' amended to 'which came as strong advice and had been made clear that if the University got this wrong, the consequences would be detrimental'.

SEC

To the sixth bullet point of minute 1208(1):

'...due to external factors such as voids and the success...' amended to 'due to external factors such as unoccupied rooms and the success...'

1214. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee received a report of actions (Paper CSSU19/20-016), which had been compiled by the Secretary.

Minute 1169

Britain has now left the EU but there is a transition process until the end of the year whilst arrangements are negotiated and a deal (or no-deal) is decided. The University is continuing to engage with this process. It was also noted that the

ACTION

Office for Students (OfS) consultation on student protection plans had been put back to April and the situation was being monitored.

Minute 1185

The context of the revised web content from Academic Registry was queried by the SU Education Officer. The PVC (L&T) gave a brief overview that it would contain clearer guidance for students to be in place for the summer exams and that the SU would be consulted on the content.

Minute 1199

The PVC (L&T) noted that there were ongoing conversations with the SU Education Officer regarding NSS ranging.

Minute 1199

There was a deadline of today for comments from stakeholders regarding the draft policy on lecture capture. The draft would be taken to the March ULTQC.

Minute 1200(2)

The Vice-President (Student Experience) (VP (SE)) informed the Committee that initial steps had been taken towards a tender for a feasibility study regarding the 3G pitch.

Minute 1201

The Director of Accommodation & Hospitality Services (DoAHS) fed back that she had liaised with procurement and there was now an agreement in place that any contracts awarded in the future would have a sustainability requirement. No contracts had been awarded since the last meeting.

Minute 1207

The PVC (L&T) confirmed that an email had gone out to all affected students regarding attendance monitoring in December 2019 and further in January 2020. The University was still waiting for updated government guidelines from UKVI and once these had been received, further discussion would take place with the SU and the working group in place previously. The PVC (L&T) had invited the Chief Digital & Information Officer to the meeting for any further questions. The SU president explained that the concerns from the SU and students had been around the permissions needed to be granted to the mobile application in order for it to track attendance and the discrepancy between the location having to be turned on at all times rather than just when using the application. The Chief Digital & Information Officer (CDIO) offered reassurance that the only data collected was for the purposes which they had been explicit about and that the understanding from their own testing was that the permanent permissions should not have to be granted in order for the application to collect the necessary data. The CDIO explained that the Digital, Data and Technology Group (DDaT) were launching a review of their internal data governance and welcomed the opportunity to open the conversation with the SU and impacted students to look at the joint responsibility of the open visibility of how student data is used. The CDIO would liaise with the SU President and SU Community Officer to start the process.

CDIO

Minute 1209

The DoAHS fed back that she had liaised with the Estates Department around the issue of non-resident students being able to report hazards or maintenance issues. It has been recognised that all students should be able to report but the mechanisms and recharge responsibility process needs to be discussed further before this could be implemented. The Committee discussed the importance of this as a student experience issue as well as some ideas of making the process of reporting simpler including the submission of mobile photos. The DoAHS would

DoAHS

continue to liaise with the Estates Department and provide a further update at the next meeting.

1215. STUDENTS' UNION BUSINESS

(1) Top Ten Progress Report

The SU President introduced Paper CSSU19/20-017 which she explained had been provided in order to update CSSU on the current situation with the priority issues impacting on students established by the SU for the academic year. The SU President took the paper as read by the Committee and opened the room to comments.

The VP (SE) corrected 4.4.3 of the paper and explained that there was no review due of Quality Assurance code 33 (QA33) as it had been reviewed a year ago. It was instead highlighted that a consideration of necessary training and communication was being looked at as a result of the most recent review of QA33.

The PVC (L&T) emphasised that in relation to 4.3.3 of the paper, the funding for the Project Manager to the #NeverOK project had not ceased; the role had been resourced by additional Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding for a specific piece of work which had come to an end. The PVC (L&T) confirmed that the continuation of the work of the project was being embedded across various different roles at the University. The SU President reiterated that the concern from the SU was around a particular lack of resource specifically for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team. The PVC (L&T) referenced that that point was not specific to the work of the #NeverOK project and that the EDI team had grown over the last few years.

The DoAHS offered the idea of capacity at Cleveland's Building to build secure bike storage in line with the idea outlined in 4.2.4 of the paper. The DoAHS asked that the SU keep her informed of progress and to liaise on this specific point.

SU PRES

The Chair thanked the SU President for the paper which had provided a helpful comparison across the year and against other years.

(2) Water Fountains

The Committee received Paper CSSU19/20-017. The Student Representative, Mr Alex Robinson provided an overview of the paper drawing attention to the operational aspects which the SU have assessed could work in not only having a positive environmental impact but to also improve the student experience with improved access and availability of water fountains.

The DoAHS thanked Mr Robinson for the paper which had led her to further investigate some of the issues raised. The DoAHS had found there to be 122 individual water cooler contracts in place across the University which have a total cost of approximately £58,000 per annum. Of these 122 her team were only able to find 4 which were accessible to all in foyers of departments. The DoAHS was supportive of the ideas presented and would look to engage further with

ACTION

Procurement and the Energy and Environment Manager to explore the issues. The Acting University Secretary (AUSEC) would take the issue of the individual water cooler contracts to the next Climate Action Framework meeting for this to be raised as a practise issue.

AUSEC

The Committee discussed that clear, consistent signage for any water fountains was important as well as clear accessibility for students and staff.

Regarding the recommendations made in the paper, the Committee agreed that the Climate Action Framework would be consulted, and this could most appropriately be taken to the Operational Board or University Executive Board. The AUSEC would feedback to CSSU on the consultation with CAF.

AUSEC

The Chair thanked the SU for the paper which had started a useful discussion on an important issue.

1216. OTHER BUSINESS

- (1) Student Disciplinary Report 2018/19
- (2) Student Complaints Report 2018/19
- (3) Student Fitness to Study Report 2018/19
- (4) Student Fitness to Practise Report 2018/19

The Acting University Secretary presented papers CSSU19/20-019 – 022. Dr Kemp thanked those at the Committee for their significant input into revising the Student Complaints Policy, Regulations for Students 7 & 8 and the Dignity and Respect Policy with the accompanying processes. Dr Kemp highlighted that the catalyst funding used to launch the #NeverOK campaign had not stretched to the proportionate increase in reporting as a result of the campaign and that the resource would need to be balanced across all areas impacted by the increase. It was explained by Dr Kemp that significant efforts had gone into putting adequate training in place, specific email addresses to increase continuity of response, data capture had been improved and evaluated, processes had been improved and would continue to be revised in line with sector guidance. Dr Kemp proposed that good progress had been made in the last twelve months.

The following points were discussed:

- The terminology across the suite of policies should align with that of academic registry, for example appeal and review of an appeal. This could be considered by the task group continuing to look at these policies and any changes required;
- Reporting on small numbers brought up challenges to forming consistency across reports whilst maintaining protection of individuals; this could be particularly prevalent when looking at mental health cases or equality data;
- It was clarified that these reports were for the 2018/19 academic year. The revision of the detail of reporting would be considered for the 2019/20 report onwards. The data capture had to precede the ability to report on it;
- The Report & Support tool was discussed and the challenges of meaningful reporting on the use of the tool. The DoSS suggested that it

should not be linked directly to student discipline; it is a reporting mechanism and the student discipline data is reporting on a process. There is not currently a central repository of all of the information from Report & Support. It was agreed that this would continue to be looked at by those overseeing the policy and procedure;

- Consideration of being able to see all the different components before a critical point where had these been unpicked; it could have been avoided. It was highlighted that the components are known and there is a good awareness of the overall picture, but it is more challenging to report on this;
- The changes in policies and processes will mean a lack of continuity in reporting year on year so it will important to qualitatively report on the policies to give context;
- Financial risk of the consequences of student discipline decisions were discussed and it was agreed that there wasn't a financial risk due to the small numbers in relation to the size of student turnover;
- It was discussed that precedence was important in any sanctioning decisions;
- Areas of the University which have their own complaints processes to dovetail with the student complaints procedure where necessary, but these would need to be engaged with to ensure a comprehensive oversight.

The Committee recommended to Senate that the papers CSSU19/20-019 – 022 be noted.

The Committee agreed that these reports should be submitted to the first CSSU of each new academic year to allow for timely reporting, reflection and learning to be actioned.

(5) Student Academic Appeals and reviews 2018/19

The Committee considered Paper CSSU19/20-023 which was presented by the Director of Academic Registry. Dr Harris reported that it was difficult to make direct comparison of numbers of academic appeals with other institutions but through information from the OfS and internal testing against similar sized institutions, a slight rise is proportionate and good, in comparison.

Registry would continue to look at trying to address the causes of appeal in order that students feel more able to raise concerns at the time of assessment rather than retrospectively. Mental health as a mitigating circumstance often came up late in the process.

Dr Harris gave some detail on the three-year dataset provided within the paper which had looked at characteristics of students who had submitted a case. He highlighted that men were much more likely to submit an appeal than women. This was compared with data from a 2019 Equality & Diversity survey which showed that male students were less likely to seek support offered by Student Services compared with women. Dr Harris used this comparison to emphasise the importance of viewing questions and data together rather than isolated reports.

ACTION

The reporting of small numbers of students and the difficulties this raised was also discussed here.

The Committee recommended to Senate that the report be noted.

It was noted that this paper would still be submitted to the February CSSU.

1216. OTHER BUSINESS

The SU President reminded the Committee that SU Elections were being held next week.

1218. DATES OF MEETINGS

The programme of meetings for 2019/20 was noted as being as follows (all meetings at 2.15pm):

- Tuesday 21 April 2020

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm
