
Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015 at 10.00am in the Board Room

Present:

Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty (Chair)	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Ms D Sparrowhawk (Secretary)	Faculty Director of Operations (HSS)
Ms M Frampton (Clerk)	Policy and Committees Officer (AS)
Ms M Barron	Head of Student Support Services (SSS)
Dr F Cownie	Faculty Student Experience Champion (FM&C)
Dr B Dyer	Faculty Student Experience Champion (HSS) & Chair of the Student Voice Committee
Associate Prof G Esteban	Member of the Professoriate (SciTech)
Prof V Hundley	Member of the Professoriate (HSS)
Mr A James	General Manager of the Students' Union (SUBU)
Mr S Jones	Head of Facilities Management
Ms J Mack	Head of Academic Services (AS)
Ms E Mayo-Ward	Vice President (Education) of the Students' Union (SUBU)
Prof J Parker	Member of the Professoriate (HSS)
Prof K Phalp	Deputy Dean (Education) (SciTech)
Mr R Pope	Vice President (Welfare), Students' Union (SUBU)
Prof E Rosser	Deputy Dean (Education) (HSS)
Dr G Roushan	Associate Dean (Education) (FM) and Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum
Dr P Ryland	Deputy Dean (Education) (FM)
Ms C Schendel-Wilson	SU President 2014/15, Students' Union (SUBU)
Associate Prof C Shiel	Associate Professor in Education (SciTech)
Ms C Symonds	Head of Quality and Academic Partnerships (AS)

Student Representatives:

Ms M Dushime	BU Postgraduate Research Student
Ms S Hardy	BU Undergraduate Student

In attendance:

Dr N Hai	Quality and Enhancement Officer (Appeals and Academic Complaints) (AS)
Dr A Morrison	Partnership & International Development Manager (AS)
Dr M Vizcaya Echano	International Mobility Officer (AS)
Mr R Walsh	Residential Services Operations Manager (SSS)

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from:

Mr J Cooke	Head of Student Engagement (SUBU)
Dr A Diaz	Student Engagement & Co-creation Theme Leader (CEL)
Ms A Lacey	Student Rep Champion (HSS)
Mr S Laird	Director of Estates
Dr A Main	Faculty Student Experience Champion (SciTech)
Canon Dr B Merrington	University Chaplain
Dr S Minocha	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)
Ms J Quest	Senate Representative (FM&C)
Mr J Ward	Director of IT Services
Prof T Zhang	Head of the Graduate School (GS)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 19 November 2014

2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Minute 2.1 – Student Charters

SVC discussed the subject of the Student Charter in October 2014. SUBU stated a keen interest in looking more deeply at the concept of Charters and offered to co-ordinate a subgroup to look at the possible options for the future of the Charters at BU. Currently, a trawl of research papers and examples of Charters is being carried out by SUBU with a view to taking these for discussion at a meeting of the sub group before Christmas 2014. SUBU hope to produce some options for possible ways forward and possible options for evaluating the current BU approach to Charters early in 2015.

Action Ongoing: In the absence of Mr Cooke, Mr James agreed to progress the action if it was required, should any work needed to be carried out before the next meeting on 25 March 2015.

2.2.2 Minute 2.1 – Accuracy of the previous minutes of 23 September 2014

The last sentence of the fourth paragraph of the SUBU President's Report section, should have read "SUBU would be looking into ways of reducing the costs associated with clubs and societies".

Action Complete: The minute was updated accordingly.

2.2.3 Minute 3.2.1 – Arrivals and Induction Annual Review

Concern was raised regarding the statistics presented on page 27 of the meeting papers with some being particularly low; e.g. only 50% of SciTech students believed the Study Skills Workshops were useful. Ms Mack agreed to ask the Working Group to look into this further.

Action Ongoing: The Working Group had met twice and would continue to meet regularly. Ms Mack would provide the Committee with a more specific update at the next meeting of ESEC on 25 March 2015.

2.2.4 Minute 3.4.2 – BU/CEL Employability

The Academic Services Team would further consider the BU/CEL Employability document and assess how the contents could be used moving forward.

Action Ongoing: The Working Group had met twice and had been discussing the BU/CEL document written by Kelly Goodwin. The Working Group would continue to establish the best approach to move forward.

2.2.5 Minute 5.1 – Student Support Services Annual Report

Some areas of the report had lacked detail. It was noted that the number of students attending the Careers Fair had decreased, however there was no information included in the report to explain how attendance numbers would be increased upon moving forward. There was also some information missing from Table 6 of the report with regards to WP students. The table stated that there had been 1,124 student interactions with Grow@BU. A more detailed evaluation was required as this was seen to be a critical point within the report. Members requested the additional information be included in the report and re-presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

Action Complete: An updated paper was included in the meeting papers for the meeting on 2 February 2015 under Agenda Item 5.1.

2.2.6 Minute 5.3 – Student Counselling Service Annual Report

The report stated that the introduction of 'time limited therapy' which provides a limit of eight sessions of therapy had an impact on student satisfaction. Members queried whether this was positive or negative impact and requested that the implications of limited sessions be stated within the report. Members also requested additional information be provided, e.g. Level C, I or H students, what support mechanisms needed to be evoked, and the time of year the therapy was required. The updated information should be included in the report and re-presented to the Committee for further evaluation and discussion.

Action Complete: An updated paper was included in the meeting papers for the meeting on 2 February 2015 under Agenda Item 5.2.

3 PART 1: FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 Debate Item: The approach we are taking to discuss student performance at the end of semester 1 and what can be put in place to further encourage and support their learning

Past discussions at ESEC and within Faculties regarding student performance had often focused on the perspective of BU staff and had looked at summative issues rather than focusing on the student perspective.

Now that we are entering the time for academic staff to provide feedback on semester 1 coursework, it was important that students were fully prepared for their exams and further assignments into Semester 2. Regarding Exams, members agreed that students from a BTEC background may not be as used to taking exams as an A-Level entrant. Therefore discussions should be taking place to prepare students for exams and to advise them about revision sessions and how each they can be fully prepared. Providing joint feedback on exams from both first and second markers and a justification of how the mark given had been reached was important. Feedback generally provides reassurance to students of how well they are doing and also the opportunity to ask questions about their own progress, especially before the exam period.

Dr Roushan commented that some techniques for assessing students against their ability could be related to Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) and the ILO's could possibly be revisited, as marking criteria was normally aligned with ILOs.

Within the Faculty of Health & Social Science (HSS), exams have a limited place in programmes. HSS students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and feedback given on their work helps students to mature and look in depth at certain areas. Students are also advised of their strengths and weaknesses and what they should do to improve on their work. At the end of the first year, Programme Administrators gather information with regards to areas of strength and weakness for each student and each student then discusses this information with Academic Advisors. During the second year of study, the discussion becomes more detailed and students will be advised of academic staff expectations and the outcome they have achieved.

It was questioned whether a matrix should accompany the key generic assessment criteria which could help Academic Advisors obtain a view of how well the student was progressing.

The possibility of discussing skills development was suggested, to ensure that students were ready for the next three units/level at the end of Semester 1. An example of some good practice was to convert the unit criteria for the course into a checklist and then each item was ticked off as it was covered. The introduction of a checklist might be useful for consistency across BU.

Overall, members agreed that further discussion should take place within Faculties to look at the best use of Academic Advisor meetings with students and to ensure the best possible formative and summative discussions take place.

Within HSS, the meetings with Academic Advisors and students were more focused on academic support and it was suggested that the meetings now focus on areas that are strengths and weaknesses of students. The meetings would then support students for the second semester and each student would be aware of what the academic was expecting and the students' focus for the next set of assignments. It was important to clarify to students at their meetings the expectation of their assignments, to make designed/deliberative ambiguity transparent so that each student could use and develop their own creativity. Members were requested to disseminate the details of the discussion within their Faculties and to remind all staff to give personal attention to students between the end of semester 1 and the beginning of semester 2 to help students improve their performance as they go through their journey at BU.

It was agreed that details of the HSS Academic Advisor system be circulated again to Deputy Deans (Education & Professional Practice) and Associate Deans Student Experience for embedding the Academic Advisor system within BU.

Action: BD

Furthermore, it was noted that a clear set of expectations/guidelines/indicative content for the Academic Advisor sessions be agreed between the Deputy Deans (Education & Professional Practice) and Associate Deans Student Experience, and that the guidelines then be distributed to academic staff expediently.

Action: DDEPP/ADSE

In summary, good assessment strategies should be created and clear expectations should be set and be embedded within departments in order to capitalise on the opportunities available at the end of Semester 1.

3.2 International Mobility of Students Update

The Committee noted the report.

Accommodation issues were discussed. It was noted that historically there had been an overlap of the dates for incoming and outgoing students who required accommodation. This was now being addressed and work would continue to resolve the issue for short and long term lets.

It was noted that one of the main issues for students was that those who were successful in securing Erasmus funding did not have access the monies straight away and were having to personally pay for items such as flights and visas until the monies were received. This was not an ideal situation for those students who had no support to cover these costs in the short term. It was advised that some funds were available within the Fair Access budget and members were invited for their ideas on how best to use this money during the time-gap between a student have to pay for various items and receiving their Erasmus monies.

It was advised that many WP students did not believe they could study abroad and it was important for BU to ensure all students were aware of the opportunities and monies available at the beginning of the year.

Members noted that only 19 mobility places were taken up by students in 2013/14 out of a total of 136 places available, and it was questioned whether any additional work could be done centrally and within Faculties to promote the opportunities available to students.

It was noted that there was a lot of low level mobility which was taking place within Faculties which was not being captured, for example, students who go overseas for a short time as part of their placement. The Committee agreed that this type of activity should always be captured within Faculties.

Action: DDEs

Members were advised that the figures quoted within the report of the number of outgoing students supported by the Global Horizons Fund were comparable to 2013/14 and it was expected that the student exchange numbers would start to increase shortly. The Global Horizons Fund had so far supported 22 placements.

The Study and Work Abroad Festival had been successful in bringing together Student Exchange staff members and Professional Services staff members and it was important to continue to build on the success of the event with the Student Mobility staff members continuing to work closely with Study Abroad Co-ordinators.

Members agreed on the importance of promoting the range of opportunities available to students for their own subject areas. Each Faculty currently has its own statement regarding mobility, and it was suggested that possibly one consistent message/statement could be written to raise students' aspirations from the first term.

Members agreed that a co-ordinated approach should be made at induction to advise students of the mobility opportunities available. Further creative thinking should also be given to funding streams to eradicate the barriers to student mobility, such as student cash outlay prior to being able to claim support/funding from University sources. The Partnerships team should review the processes associated with types of barriers with a view to removal of such.

Action: JM

The Committee requested that the Recommendations made within the report be revisited and should include a timeline to show the anticipated completion date for each. Dr Morrison agreed to represent the requested information at the next meeting on 25 March 2015.

Action: JM/AM

3.3 Annual Report: Appeals and Complaints

The Committee noted the report.

The report had examined some issues in great detail, in particular working with partner institutions and the Students Union. Further work would be carried out in order to make the appeals and complaints processes more streamlined so that those students who did not complain were not disadvantaged.

It was noted that the numbers of appeals quoted within Category 1 of Table 7 of the report had increased for 2014. It was suggested that the categories could be reviewed for the purposes of clarification. Members agreed that issues generally arose around the mark given to a piece of coursework or feedback received from first and second markers that were not consistent.

It was questioned why the number of appeals received from postgraduate students was higher than generally expected. This information in response to this question was not available at the meeting but would be included in the report moving forward. Members would also like to understand whether there were inconsistent themes at AECC for their appeals.

Action: NH

It was noted that the information contained within Table 7 did not correspond with the information stated within Section 5.1.4 regarding Mitigating Circumstances. This information would be clarified with the Chair via email.

Action: NH

It was advised that within the last sentence of Section 2.1 the word 'submitted' should be replaced with 'resolved'.

Members were informed that HEFCE had written to BU in November 2014 asking BU to look at its processes so that we can identify student complaints for student cap numbers. It was noted that sufficient accurate information was already available and would be reported back to HEFCE in due course.

The Committee was reminded that all Faculties should remain open and transparent with regard to ensuring that students were aware they have opportunities to appeal or complain. It was positive to see that the numbers of appeals and complaints submitted at BU had decreased in 2014.

3.4 Mid Cycle Unit Evaluation Report – Initial Findings

The Committee noted the report.

The Mid Unit Student Evaluation (MUSE) was based on a feedback system which was successfully used elsewhere, which used standard questions that formed part of the NSS. The first deployment of MUSE took place during week commencing 10 November 2014 and the responses received totalled 11,555.

Members noted that the highest score (80%) related to access to general IT resources and the lowest scores (65%) related to feedback on coursework. These scores correlated with NSS data received. The main challenge appeared to be still focused around assessment and feedback, it was important to ensure that all staff continued to learn and ensure that feedback was returned to students in a timely manner. It was agreed that the exercise had been very useful, and that it had prompted reflection on practice and potentially on areas of staff development for tutors.

The diagram shown in Section 7 of the paper was agreed as helpful in clarifying responsibilities, although the diagram should include Head of Departments. It was agreed that the diagram should be amended to re-clarify responsibilities and Heads of Department and circulate paper as final.

Action: BD

The Committee agreed with the conclusions listed within the paper and that DDEPPs would take this forward within their Faculties.

Action: DDEPPs

3.5 SUBU President's Report

The Committee noted the report. An overview of the current activities of the Students' Union was given.

- Work was taking place with the Student Induction Group, looking at best practice and ways in which the arrivals period and students' first year at BU could be improved. The long term aims of improving the induction were a better student experience and increased retention.
- The rep re-engagement event would take place in February which would include workshops to re-engage reps after the Christmas break.
- A SUBU member had joined the communications subgroup of the Value for Money Steering Group and was in the process of producing a report which would highlight the value of SUBU's extra-curricular activities for both the student experience and BU's community relationships.
- A new initiative for HSS students had been implemented for students that go out on placement. HSS students would now receive a text message mid placement reminding them of ways that they can keep in contact with BU should any issues arise.
- The Volunteer Committee was in the process of preparing for the second Big Feed of the year and also involved with the organisation of the Re-fresher's Fair for new students who started at BU in January.
- LEGGIT took place in November 2014 and the total amount raised was £10,000.

It was agreed that if any member has any suggested improvements for the SUBU President's Report submitted to ESEC, please advise the Ms Schendel-Wilson.

Action: All

3.6 Teach@BU Update

The Committee noted the report.

Support staff were now able to apply for professional registration by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Any staff member who wishes to apply for HEA fellowship should contact Simon Lincoln in Organisational Development in the first instance. BU wishes to encourage as many academics and relevant support staff to gain HEA recognition in order to reinforce BU's commitment to a great student learning experience.

Two introductory sessions had recently been held with over 50 colleagues attending the sessions. The attendees of the introductory sessions will now be working together with the support of Teach@BU mentors and also attending drop-in sessions. Those staff members who were unable to attend the introductory sessions would receive an email shortly advising how to get started with their application and where to go for further guidance.

4. PART 2: FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT

4.1 There were no items for approval and endorsement.

5. PART 3: FOR NOTE

5.1 Student Support Services Annual Report (Updated)

The Committee noted the updated report.

Members noted all of the updates made to the report had been listed in the Actions Log on Page 12 of the meeting papers.

The top two reasons for students wanting to meet with the Student Engagement Team were for personal problems (36%) and academic issues (21%). Members agreed that this level of detail was valuable to the Committee and should be monitored moving forward.

It was queried whether the number of Lansdowne Campus staff/student gym memberships in comparison to Talbot Campus staff/student numbers could be disaggregated. This information would be included in the report moving forward.

5.2 Student Counselling Service Annual Report (Updated)

The Committee noted the updated report.

The information contained within the report had not altered vastly over the last twelve months, and as in previous years, the number of referrals for counselling were predominantly female (68%). Also the number of mature students referred for counselling had reduced, which suggested that BU acts appropriately for those students who require assistance from the counselling service.

Members noted that the report did not include information regarding the length of time students wait for appointments and the anticipated waiting times from 2014 onwards with the new service provider. Members also questioned what the service standard for an appointment was.

It was surprising to note that HSS students did not appear to use the service as much. It was suggested that the low numbers may be attributable by the presence of Academic Advisors within HSS or possibly HSS students are receiving counselling elsewhere (such as on placement).

5.3 Annual Report: Multi-Faith Chaplaincy

The Committee noted the report.

Members commended the Chaplaincy staff on the very important and valuable work undertaken by Canon Dr Merrington and his team. The service provided was critically important for the whole community and across the University.

5.4 Annual Report: Dignity, Diversity and Equality Steering Group

The Committee noted the report.

Members thanked Dr Palfreman-Kay for the valuable work carried out within the University and for the work undertaken in promoting BU's commitment to Dignity, Diversity and Equality.

6 REPORTING COMMITTEES

6.1 Student Voice Committee Minutes of 17 December 2014

The minutes were **noted**.

6.2 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum Minutes of 30 January 2015

The TELSf meeting had not taken place in early January as planned and had been re-arranged to take place on 30 January 2015. The TELSf minutes would be circulated by the ESEC Clerk for information.

[Post Meeting Note: The ESEC Clerk circulated the TELSf minutes of 30 January 2015 to members on 2 February 2015].

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 There was no other business.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 25 March 2015, 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the Board Room