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## Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 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)
Mr J Cooke	Head of Student Engagement (SUBU)
Dr F Cownie	School Student Experience Champion (FM&C)
Dr A Diaz	Student Engagement & Co-creation Theme Leader (CEL)
Dr B Dyer	School Student Experience Champion (HSS) & Chair of the Student Voice Committee
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)
Dr A Main	School Student Experience Champion (SciTech)
Ms E Mayo-Ward	Vice President (Education) of the Students' Union (SUBU)
Prof J Parker	Member of the Professoriate (HSS)
Mr R Pope	Vice President (Welfare), Students' Union (SUBU)
Prof E Rosser	Deputy Dean – Education & Professional Practice (HSS)
Dr G Roushan	Associate Dean (Education) (FM) and Chair of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum
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:

Mr B Abra	BU Postgraduate Taught Student
Ms Z Stovell	BU Undergraduate Student

### In attendance:

Dr J Murphy	Associate Professor (HSS)
Prof S Page	Acting Deputy Dean (Research) (FM)
Ms K Pichlmann	Head of Admissions (AS)

### Apologies:

Ms M Barron	Head of Student Support Services (SSS)
Associate Prof G Esteban	Member of the Professoriate (SciTech)
Prof V Hundley	Member of the Professoriate (HSS)
Ms A Lacey	Student Rep Champion (HSS)
Mr S Laird	Director of Estates
Canon Dr B Merrington	University Chaplain
Dr S Minocha	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)
Prof K Phalp	Deputy Dean – Education & Professional Practice (SciTech)
Ms J Quest	Senate Representative
Dr P Ryland	Deputy Dean (Education & Student Experience) (FM)
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 2 February 2015

### 2.1 Accuracy

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with the exception of Prof J Parker who was listed as giving his apologies. Prof J Parker was in attendance at the meeting of 2 February 2015.

**Action: MF**

### 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:** SUBU has completed its review of the current Student Charters at BU, including a review of the national picture and advice received from a recent national report. The summary of the research and review was attached to the Actions Log as Appendix 1. A Working Group has been convened for 31 March 2015 to consider the next steps, according to the best practice recommended. The Working Group includes SUBU, academics, Professional Services and students.

#### 2.2.2 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.

**Action Ongoing:** The Working Group continues to meet to shape the new student induction format, this work is ongoing. The last meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. The group has identified a proposed set of mandatory events to be held within Week 1 and has also identified the activities that should take place during the transition period (Weeks 2 to 12). This includes appropriate contact at the key touch points during this period. The group are currently working to produce a plan/spreadsheet representation of the proposed activities in Week 1 for proposed sessions/activities to build consistency across BU. The group has considered the Study Skills Workshops and it is proposed that this will be part of the library induction (by framework or programme) in Week 1 and again as part of a tutorial in Week 5 (w/c 19<sup>th</sup> October) 'refresher week and start to think about assignments, use of the library and enhanced/review of study skills'.

#### 2.2.3 Minute 3.4.2 – BU/CEL Employability

Ms Mack circulated the BU/CEL Employability document to the new Employability Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement). The group will consider how the document is used as a structure to inform work of the group.

**Action Completed:** The Working Group would continue to meet and establish the best approach to move forward.

#### 2.2.4 Minute 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

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

**Action Completed:** The updated HSS Academic Advisor Policy was circulated to DDEPPs and ADSEs on 17 February 2015. Although this is linked to 2.2.5 below.

#### 2.2.5 Minute 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

A clear set of expectations/guidelines/indicative content for the Academic Advisor sessions to be agreed between the DDEPPs and ADSEs, and that guidelines then be distributed to academic staff expediently.

**Action Ongoing:** A meeting took place on 18 March 2015 to progress the action and agree a way forward in order that all Faculties work to the same standard. Dr Roushan advised that each Faculty would prepare their Academic Advisor guidelines based on the HSS guidelines and these would be agreed via electronic circulation between DDEPPs. The next meeting is yet to be arranged, but would take place before the end of the academic cycle.

**Action: DDEPPs**

2.2.6 Agenda Item 3.2 – International Mobility of Students Update

*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 Completed:** DDEPPs and ADSEs confirmed that low level mobility information was being captured within Faculties and would continue to be monitored. IUPC had recently discussed how to capture mobility information. An update of the progress made by IUPC would be provided by Ms Symonds at the next meeting so that members could be assured that Faculties were capturing the activity.

**Action: CS**

2.2.7 Agenda Item 3.2 – International Mobility of Students Update

*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. A revised Global Horizons Fund framework was being compiled for submission to IUPC in March 2015 to help address the timing of payments. The revised framework would be made available to ESEC when it has been considered by IUPC.*

**Action Completed:** IUPC approved the Global Horizons Fund framework in March 2015. A paper detailing the current arrangements would be circulated to ESEC in due course.

2.2.8 Agenda Item 3.2 – International Mobility of Students Update

*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 Completed:** Dr Morrison had updated International Mobility of Students report and was listed on the agenda for discussion under Agenda Item 3.3.

2.2.9 Agenda Item 3.3 – Annual Report: Appeals and Complaints

*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 Completed:** PG Appeals: The data for the report was drawn from Unit-e, thus it is not possible to explain why the number of PG appeals was higher than expected. This will be monitored for the 2016 report and further questions would be asked from the Faculties in this respect. AECC: The main ground of appeal was mitigating circumstances (65%) while issues of academic judgment and appealing against assessment error/procedure made up 36% each of the total AECC appeals.

2.2.10 Agenda Item 3.3 – Annual Report: Appeals and Complaints

*The information contained within Table 7 did not correspond with the information stated within Section 5.1.4 regarding Mitigating Circumstances. The information would be clarified with the Chair via email.*

**Action Completed:** This action had been discussed with the ESEC Chair. Table 7 in the amended report (post ESEC meeting) stated correctly that the grounds for appeal in 33% of cases were mitigating circumstances. As noted in footnote 14, students often use more than one ground of appeal, therefore it was not possible to separate each ground discretely and thus a judgement needed to be made on a case-by-case basis. This is an issue for how data was recorded and this would be considered for the 2016 report to ensure that reporting (and recording accuracy) is improved.

2.2.11 Agenda Item 3.4 – Mid Cycle Unit Evaluation Report – Initial Findings

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

**Action Completed:** The updated paper was circulated to ESEC members on 18 February 2015.

2.2.12 Agenda Item 3.4 – Mid Cycle Unit Evaluation Report – Initial Findings

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

**Action Completed:** Within the email to ESEC members, which included the updated Mid Cycle Unit Evaluation Report, DDEPPs were required to take this information forward within their Faculties.

Dr Main advised that 10,033 responses had been received in the Semester 2 deployment of MUSE which was a good response. Reports had now been sent to Faculties and it was anticipated that student experiences would now improve through responses to concerns raised. A complete set of documents would shortly be available for members to view and the results would be discussed with students within various cohorts. It was anticipated this would be complete after the Easter break. It was noted that no offensive/unprofessional comments had been received.

2.2.13 Agenda Item 3.5 – SUBU President's Report

*Members were requested to email any suggested improvements for the SUBU President's Report to the SUBU President direct.*

**Action Completed:** ESEC members were reminded on 18 February 2015 to advise the SUBU President of any suggested improvements to the SUBU President's Report which is presented to ESEC.

### 3 PART 1: FOR DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Annual Report: Widening Participation (WP) 2013/14

Ms Pichlmann introduced the Widening Participation Annual Report which contained information relating to the most recent statutory return to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Director of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), as well as the current Access Agreements.

The key points from the latest monitoring return were:

- BU's financial spend and activities in 2013/14 exceeded the predictions in the Fair Access Agreement (FAA). Total expenditure, as a proportion of a higher fee income was 18.5% higher than predicted. This was due to a change in reporting, informed by HEFCE, where activities were previously apportioned to the HEFCE WP allocation and were now moved across to OFFA. This practice has continued for 2013/14.
- Five of the statistical milestones included in the FAA, form one of the University's performance indicators. Four of the milestones had been met with one requiring further investigation. This was an improvement on the 2012/13 monitoring return where three of the five milestones were met. The milestone to increase enrolments from lower socio-economic groups had continued to be problematic and had dropped below the baseline data which was disappointing and would now be investigated further.

Ms Pichlmann was now in the process of writing the 2016/17 Fair Access Agreement which would be based on the 2015/16 Agreement. This was due to be submitted to OFFA at the end of April 2015. A major research project had been started to look at WP applicants and determine whether there were lessons to be learned. The findings would also help increase the research base on WP.

Prof Page questioned whether the University conducts outreach in inner city areas. It was confirmed that this was carried out by the Marketing & Communications Team who have a targeted set of criteria to work with in Schools and Colleges. Prof Page suggested that the University should focus its outreach in inner city areas and conurbations. Ms Pichlmann agreed to look into this suggestion.

**Action: KP**

The Committee **considered** the report. No further comments were raised.

3.2 International Mobility of Students - Update

At the February meeting, the Committee requested that the Recommendations made within the report be revisited to include a timeline to show the anticipated completion date for each item. The updated report was re-presented to members for information.

The Committee **endorsed** the report.

3.3 SUBU President's Report

An overview of the current activities of the Students' Union was given.

- Following feedback received from the 'Student Shout' activity regarding prioritising maintenance loans over tuition fees, Colette Cherry recently assisted Ms Schendel-Wilson to have an article posted in the Huffington Post regarding the subject.
- Work had taken place with the opening of the Student Centre and the launch of the Engine Room in The Old Firestation to provide refreshments during the day. A soft launch of the Engine Room would take place in September 2015 when the new academic year starts.
- The SU VP (Education) has been working with the Education Council to develop ideas for the library, primarily extending the opening hours and providing short term log-in computers just for printing.
- The SU VP (Welfare) has been working with the Access Manager to evaluate how SUBU represents WP students. This has resulted in the creation of student forums for those students who were the first in their family to attend University, so that SUBU can fully support these students.
- The SU VP (Lansdowne) has been working with HSS students to send texts to students who were on placement (some students are on placement for 50% of their study time). It was felt that this contact helped to ensure students still feel part of the University.
- The charity hitchhike "Lost" was a huge success and had raised £4,000 over a weekend.

Members agreed that the opening of the Engine Room at Lansdowne was an excellent idea as it was important for students at Lansdowne to have a Student Union bar due to the significant number of students based at Lansdowne. Moving forward, a number of events would take place at the Engine Room.

Students had recently advised they would like an increased number of smoking shelters around the campus. Ongoing discussions were taking place with the Estates Department. It was noted that Manchester Metropolitan University had recently become a non-smoking campus and this could be replicated on Talbot Campus. The results of research carried out by Manchester Metropolitan University would be examined to see how well the proposal had been received and implemented.

**Action: SUBU**

Dr Roushan commented that within the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) results, Course Quality appeared to be positive. However, Personal Development results had decreased quite significantly, therefore further work would be carried out to look at the results in further depth. It was noted that Level H students were much more satisfied with their own personal development. It was identified that first year students may be less satisfied as their expectations were raised and this related to £9,000 tuition fees. A Task Group was in the process of looking at induction and it was suggested that students' personal development could be enhanced during this period. It was agreed that students should be encouraged to use the tool Mahara as it would clearly reflect their own personal development. Dr Diaz commented that LinkedIn was also a useful tool to engage students, and for students to use both Mahara and LinkedIn would benefit students hugely. Members agreed that all staff should be supporting students with their personal development and reinforcing cohort identities from year one of their journey at BU through to Level H.

A discussion took place regarding Academic Advisors and it was agreed that students would value having the same Academic Advisor who would support their journey through their years at University and this had been shown to work well in HSS. Students receive a lot of assistance in their final year with their university work, placement assistance and help with their future career. Academic Advisors should be someone that each student feels is approachable and they are comfortable talking to. Members noted that the introduction of Academic Advisors into all Faculties was currently progressing and was a priority. It was noted that not all students require assistance from Academic Advisors, however it was agreed that these sessions should always be made available to students. Members agreed that further consideration to the introduction of Academic Advisors should be discussed by DDEPPs.

**Action: DDEPPs**

Within the Arrivals section of the report, it was noted that there had been inappropriate use of social media by sales companies who masqueraded as BU or SUBU Fresher's Week resulting in students being defrauded. Ms Schendel-Wilson advised that the arrivals process was currently disjointed as new students received emails and logins from different sources within BU which can be confusing. An Induction Group met recently and agreed that the processes themselves may be open to exploitation from outside companies. Therefore, the group would start to streamline the whole induction process. Ms Mack advised that meetings would be held with all stakeholders in order to mitigate this risk.

**Action: JM**

#### 3.4 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum Update

Dr Roushan advised that the Vision 4 Learning project was progressing well. Feedback had been received from the consultant employed to support BU as the project moves forward to review the current VLE. Work was being carried out to improve and support a new platform, but also provide support to staff and students for the current system, Blackboard, whilst it was still in use.

Prof McIntyre-Bhatty advised that upon examination of historic copies of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum minutes, full attendance was very often not achieved, which was of concern as it was possible the meetings were not receiving input from the intended broad spectrum of University staff. The ESEC Clerk would provide Prof McIntyre-Bhatty with an analysis of attendees.

**Action: Clerk**

Prof McIntyre-Bhatty would follow up to encourage attendance with those TELSf members.

**Action: TMB**

### 3.5 Debate Item: Anonymous Marking

Prof Rosser opened the debate and advised that Anonymous Marking was a system of assessment where the student's name was unknown to the marker. This system of marking had received continuous endorsement by the National Union of Students (NUS) as it ensured perceived fairness to all students. Feedback was hugely important to students and was essential to HEI business. The quality of feedback was very closely monitored by the very students BU assesses via the National Student Survey (NSS).

The University demands copious amounts of feedback from students, and recently students have become extremely vociferous in their feedback. Some have questioned whether higher marks were awarded to those students who were known to staff as being industrious, respectful and courteous.

From a student's perspective, Anonymous Marking was seen to be important to boost a student's confidence and some students have actually stated that they believed they would have received higher marks if the staff member did not know whose work they were marking. It was suggested that possibly staff members were unaware of any unconscious bias, although it was noted that it was human nature to possibly favour interested students than those who were less interested.

Not all assignments can be anonymised e.g. presentations, vivas and practice assessments. It was suggested that those pieces of work which could be anonymised should be given consideration for Anonymous Marking as students could now submit work through Turnitin with just their Student Number.

Prof Rosser advised that without Anonymous Marking, HEIs were susceptible to accusations of prejudice. In order to create an excellent student experience, BU needs to share Fusion, professional practice and research to enrich its students. Fairness should be the foundation of each student's experience at University.

Dr Cownie countered that Anonymous Marking did not support the ability to produce individual feedback and suggested that Anonymous Marking depersonalises staff and student relationships and tutorial support, which students value. Anonymous Marking could also undermine feedback on transferable skills and peer to peer assessment would not be possible. Dr Cownie also suggested that academics would have a good sense of who wrote each assignment anyway and therefore Anonymous Marking may be 'pretend anonymity' and questioned whether Anonymous Marking would imply a lack of trust of the integrity and professionalism of academic staff. Dr Cownie suggested that given that students were experiencing anonymous marking to different extents largely due to the proportion of their assessment which was conducted by examination, perhaps the way forward may be to remove Anonymous Marking completely including examinations (which were all currently anonymously marked).

A comment was raised regarding the possibility that the data provided for Anonymous Marking may be slightly outdated as other recent data implied that students like to receive personalised feedback and for tutors to use their names in feedback. It was also noted that other members had not received any requests from students requesting Anonymous Marking.

Members were advised of the amount of research available stating the pros and cons of Anonymous Marking. An example was given regarding the NUS website, which included a lot of information regarding Anonymous Marking, and that they did not agree that Anonymous Marking produces fairness to students. Members were asked to reflect upon the fact that there would be no benefit to change as BU already had a good set of practices in place.

The Committee were advised that Anonymous Marking had been used for the Social Work programme in HSS although it was phased out some time ago. Since Anonymous Marking ceased, student satisfaction had in fact increased. A concern raised was the possibility of human error and the incorrect inputting of student numbers if the system was manual.

It was identified that further debate would be required on the subject of Anonymous Marking to look at its principles and the pros and cons and that Anonymous Marking could protect staff from accusations of unfair marking. Moving forward, the University needs a sound set of principles which are fair and in which students will have faith, in turn backed up by their own personal relationships with academic staff.

From a historical perspective, members were advised that when BU agreed that exams would be Anonymously Marked approximately seven years ago, a lot of discussion took place with the Students' Union, DDEs and staff of an equivalent level, as there appeared to be no clear steer towards Anonymous Marking. Ms Symonds had carried out a considerable amount of work regarding this issue and a recommendation from the work was that the subject should be revisited in the future. The related papers were available to members if required. It was noted that although three comments had been received from External Examiners, within HSS, regarding the introduction of Anonymous Marking, this was not a common feature of the External Examiner reports received within EDQ (n=181).

Some members believed a robust process was already in place and were happy with the mixed approach to marking. All students need help to develop individually and for students to receive wider feedback was considerably easier when academic staff know the identity of a student. All staff members have to strive to be professional and help students engage in their university experience. Members also believed that a small number of students may feel they would be unfairly treated or marked down if they complained.

Prof McIntyre-Bhatty thanked members for their valuable points raised and for the enthusiasm the debate provoked both for and against Anonymous Marking. The discussion had received full participation by committee members and had provided a valuable academic debate. Moving forward, further work could be carried out to look at the principles of demonstrating fair marking and assessment.

#### **4. PART 2: FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT**

4.1 There were no items for approval and endorsement.

#### **5. PART 3: FOR NOTE**

5.1 Centre for Excellence in Learning Update

The paper was **noted**.

#### **6 REPORTING COMMITTEES**

6.1 Student Voice Committee Minutes of 11 February 2015

The minutes were **noted**.

6.2 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Forum (TELSF) Minutes of 10 March 2015

The minutes were **noted**.

#### **7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 There was no other business.

#### **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 12 May 2015, 1.00pm to 3.00pm in the Board Room