

Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29th April 2015, 2 – 4pm PG10 (Talbot)

Present: Barbara Dyer (BD) (Chair), Gillian Bunting (GB) (Clerk), Jacquie O'Brien (JOB), Andrew Main (AM), Liam Sheridan (LS), Darrell Felton (DF), Peter Briant (PB), Jane De Vekey (JDV), Reece Pope (RP), Jay Nugent (JN), Chris Fowler (CF), Tracey Digby (TD), Amy Blackham (AB)

1. Welcome / Introduction

2. **Apologies:** Cathy Symonds, Philip Ryland, Fiona Cownie, Ellie Mayo-Ward, Ella Say, Gelareh Roushan, Kathryn Cheshir, Susanne Clarke, Joff Cooke, Charlie Annear, Yeganeh Morakabati

3. Accuracy of minutes / matters arising from notes of 11th February 2014

3.1 **Minute 3.1** JC provided SUBU feedback with regards to student activity over the last term; the review showed that activity/engagement has dropped off massively. 'How's SUBU For You?' had approx. 500 responses, compared to over 2000 for the last 2 years. It was acknowledged that students are feeling the impact of semesterisation & final projects due at this time. SUBU may look at running the survey in January, as students should have more time to engage before Easter. JC will provide SVC with details of the SUBU review. **Action: JC** – Review in progress; expected Jan 2015 – **survey now due end of March 2015 – Roll over to June meeting.**

3.2 **Minute 8.1** A review of the Student Charters was requested at ESEC by Anita Diaz. JC apologises for the late start on the project but the review is now in progress. A BIS report will be circulated which proposes a more practical framework; if in agreement, we can move forward with the process. Student Charters around the country are very mixed; BIS recommend a single charter for each HEI and each level of student. EMW met with the Student Reps to review each School Charter; these mainly cover general behaviour principles and it was recommended that they should move to a higher level. We need to raise awareness amongst students and to re-iterate the Charter's importance each year. BU needs to look at when and how this is presented to students i.e. should this be when they receive their offer? The document should also provide signposting and links to further rules and regulations i.e. this should act as a 'front page'. Members agree that social media use, lectures and general behaviour expectations are key. JC will form a working group to take this forward; SC, EMW, YM, TD. JDV, DF. **Action: JC. Agenda item 8**

3.3 **Minute 10.5** AM added that MUSE Q1 regarding IT resources data will be sent to DF & LS. **Action: AM – completed**

4. NSS update from sub group

4.1 The survey has one day left to run; BU is currently ahead of where we were at this point last year, BU - 75%, national rate – 69%. BD reported that HSS had targeted low completers and that the Faculty had moved up to 2nd. AM informed that FST had promoted the usual number of talks and encouraged students to take the survey. No other SECs were available for comment.

5. UK Engagement Survey update from sub group

5.1 Members discussed whether to continue with the survey due to the low completion rates; the response rate was lower than last year at 491. Plus points being that it is cost neutral, but it was questioned how useful the results are. The survey encourages students to reflect on their BU experience prior to exams, but is it worth the time spent on promotion and running it? What value is it to BU? How will results be used nationally alongside other institutions? UKES does enable us to fill gaps in other surveys which we currently use, and to bench mark with other institutions. JDV advised that the analysis proves more useful than the results, as students may feel that it repeats questions from other surveys. SUBU would like to include more engagement questions i.e. Clubs & Societies, Volunteering. The

analysis is due to be presented at the Sept/Oct SVC meeting, members agreed to await JDV analysis and SVC can then decide on the options for next year. **Action: JDV**

6. MUSE sub group update (AM/BD)

- 6.1** The survey has now run over two semesters with 11,500 responses from Semester 1, and 10,500 responses from Semester 2. This has provided a really valuable set of data, although more in-depth analysis is needed which will inform future MUSE surveys. Members agreed that the questions need to be consistent across the board, year on year in order to show the overall picture, and will need to run for approximately three years to enable an impact. Students will be expecting institutional improvements following feedback and actions from this year's surveys. This could lead to an improvement in BU's NSS score from 2016 onwards. It was noted that other universities show MUSE scores on students' individual units; members agreed it would be good to be able to do this in the future.
- 6.2** Staff feedback has been encouraged via myBU; this is an important part of the process as we need to empower staff to bring them on board and show that the survey is being used positively. The results will link to appraisals and pay/promotion boards. Survey scores can vary but the flexibility of MUSE means that any issues can be picked up quickly and resolved.
- 6.3** After this year's pilot we can now go out to tender for next year's software providers. AM advised that he was happy with EvaSys, but this will be reviewed over the summer.
- 6.4** BD advised that the Faculty of Media & Communications has requested to add a question around the clarity of assignment briefs; members agreed this would be valuable and to review at the next meeting. **Action: All**

7. MUSE and SOS - potential merger? (All)

- 7.1** Members discussed the benefits of merging the surveys, or keeping them separate; SOS has allowed the progression to MUSE which has a high number of responses using paper based surveys compared to SOS. AM advised to keep both surveys separate, SUBU could use the EvaSys software for their future surveys. JDV advised that SUBU are happy to use EvaSys and potentially change the SOS survey, as long as it will fit SUBU's Representative function. The only issue with the software is that qualitative data on scanned copies will not be able to be read as easily as the current SOS survey. JN added that the data from PTES and PRES is richer, but International students are only here for a year, so it can be difficult for them to understand the need or point of doing the surveys. There is potential around using the software in public areas and lectures, but there are issues around QR codes which are not generally used by students. The iBU app could be an alternative. Members agreed a sub group would be useful – roll over for action at next SVC meeting. **Action: Sub group**

8. SUBU items

- 8.1 SUBU Review (JC)** Roll over to next SVC meeting

8.2 Student Charters working group update (JC)

The sub group have discussed using a generic whole BU Student Charter and agreed that this would work well; the Faculties could then expand the Charter as needed. Previously the Media School Charter was used as a template for BU. The aim is to move away from telling students what to do, instead to highlight expectations and mutual respect. The Charter needs to be published on the main BU website, it could also be included in pre-arrival information for students to be made aware of it prior to coming to BU. Members were in favour of a general charter for BU, but discussed the overuse of charters and steering away from using it as a marketing tool. BU needs to follow through with expectations once students are at BU and to embed a culture of feedback. It was noted that JC was tasked by ESEC with reviewing current Student Charters. Plus Jacky Mack is currently working on Student Contracts which could have some crossover with Student Charters. Members agreed to discuss at the next SVC meeting. **Action: Sub group**

9. Student communications (GB/AB) (paper)

9.1 Introducing the 'Your BU Weekly' email for students and a re-design to the Faculty Update dot mailer newsletters, both of which aim to streamline student communications from BU. The weekly email will be based on the staff 'BU This Week' email and will feature University wide news and information relevant to the upcoming week. Faculty Updates will be used for more specific content and sent approximately once per term. There is a need to encourage departments to use these key comms channels and to encourage students to use feedback channels via the emails and newsletters. The weekly emails will be sent to students' BU email addresses; there are a few issues which need to be ironed out as students receive a lot of bulk emails and survey requests. AB & GB are working with IT to confirm timing, group email addresses on Outlook. Members agreed they are happy for the new emails to go ahead. Mock ups will be circulated to SVC for SECs to comment on discussion points. Faculty Updates will re-start in the new academic year. **Action: GB/AB**

10. Members' items for future agendas

10.1 JDV advised that work is being done on a pilot survey for PhD students by SUBU, which will enable SUBU to fit PhD students into their representative system. A report has been sent to the Graduate School and is also due to go to ESEC, which will then be shared with SVC.

10.2 AB advised that the Arrivals activity for new students is being prepared; a CEL paper is due out this week.

11. A.O.B.

11.1 AM informed that there is a need to make Student Reps more visible so that students feel that they can raise issues with their Reps direct. The students' view is that nothing will change; but they need to be aware that we want to hear their issues/views. Reps can be poor at feeding back information to students from Faculty forums, RP advised that SUBU are working on these issues for next year's Rep training. Members agreed that Reps need to attend all Faculty forums. AB suggested SECs can use the new Faculty Updates to promote Reps and forums.

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