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# Student Experience Forum (SEF)

**Chair’s Minutes of the Sixth meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2022 via Collaborate**

**Present:**

Shan Wareing (Chair)

Michelle Chodyniecki

David Cousens

Annette Devine

Brendan Fawcett

David Fitzgerald

Beth Garrett

Gergana Georgieva

Rob Howe

Peter Jones

Angela Rushton

Liz Vokes

Steve Wood

**Officer**

Judith Allibone

**Apologies:**

Kate Coulson, Sally Laurie

**In attendance:**

Jay Baughan (for item M??/22)

Nick Allen (for item ??/22)

**M64/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**M65/22 Actions from the meeting held on 30 June 2022**

Actions have been addressed, are in hand or addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

**M66/22 Terms of Reference and membership for 2022-23**

i) The Forum received the paper (Annexe 30/22). It was agreed that reference to Educational Gain should be added to term of reference 2. While the Office for Students (OfS) had not provided a definition of Educational Gain, universities have the opportunity to provide their own definition and evidence their success in relation to it in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission.

ii) Several enhancements to membership were suggested, the inclusion of:

* Faculty Learning and Teaching and/or Student Experience Leads;
* An IT Services representative;
* Student representatives from the representation system;
* An Estates Services representative.

It was agreed that this would be progressed between the Chair and Officer.

**Action Officer**

**M67/22 Chair’s matters**

None to note

**M68/22 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**M69/22 Annual Report on Forum Business 2021-22**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 31/22) and noted the Annual Report.

**M70/22 National Student Survey (NSS) 2022**

i) The Forum received the paper (Annexe 32/22). It was noted that the results had already been discussed by University Management Team and the Board of Governors. It was noted that results had increased markedly upon the previous year. Some areas such as Student Voice and Learning Community were recovering faster than others internally while some had improved more quickly than for the rest of the sector. Quite a few areas remained significantly below the benchmark and none were significantly above benchmark. The pandemic, cyber attack and academic strikes were the key issues affecting outcomes. Learning Resources and Learning and Teaching Opportunities had emerged as areas requiring the most attention. The results had been brought to the attention of the Chief Information Officer to inform the ongoing developments intended to improve the performance of IT Services.

ii) It was agreed that Faculties should be investigating patterns of poor performance and looking at individual programmes for support needs as well as at where there were examples of best practice to be shared. In response Faculties confirmed that the Quality Improvement Plan (QuIP) process was underway for those programmes with disappointing results. Other supportive processes were being used, for example Business and Law was using Programme Operational Plans (PROPs) setting clear and measurable actions for all programmes. Data was being considered carefully and institutional level issues together with local contextual matters being taken into account when identifying the source of students’ concerns. For example there were residual issues over resources for one subject associated with campus moves.

iii) Other influences upon outcomes were discussed such as the grouping together of IT and Library and Learning Services in the survey. The library had performed exceptionally well and would do even more so if IT improved. It was also suggested that the strong performance of Learning Community should be investigated in order to fully understand how the University had improved students’ sense of belonging and to measure it. It was agreed that as IT improved other scores would increase. Institutional resilience would be a useful focus going forward in order to better manage incidents that might occur during the academic year and affect perceptions. The importance of Faculty interventions was reiterated and it was agreed that a more holistic approach to annual monitoring and enhancement than could be provided by QuIPs was needed.

iv) It was noted that the Chair had written to congratulate programme teams where outstanding results had been achieved. This showed that even where there had been exceptional challenges and underlying issues some programmes had still managed to achieve an excellent student experience.

**M71/22 Student Experience and National Student Survey (NSS) Action Plan**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 34/22). It was noted that most of the actions for 2021/22 had been completed and the plan would be updated for 2022/23. The Committee discussed the actions yet to be completed:

i) MyEngagement (formerly LEARN)

The update on implementation was noted. It had been used by 161 staff and 900 students with more analysis needed to establish which if any were repeat visits. IT issues had impacted on attendance monitoring but the NILE feed was showing engagement levels. The Library and Learning Services feed was being adjusted. Overall, it had been established that the system was aggregating data correctly and a report on Personal Academic Tutor allocations had identified where gaps remained to be filled. The software used would be reviewed before the current licence expired but the most important consideration was the quality of data being fed in and Student Records had identified ways to review and improve this. Also the implementation of the new student records system (SITS) would help.

ii) Flagship (re-named Beacons) developments

It was noted that the process had not identified any areas that met the criteria for excellence across all three dimensions of education, research and enterprise, despite evidence of considerable strengths in one or two dimensions in many subjects. In the new year subjects that just missed meeting the criteria in all three dimensions will be revisited and supported in order to achieve beacon status.

iii) Electives

The exploration of the introduction of electives had paused for the moment.

iv) Review of timetabling

The timetabling and space utilisation project had produced a detailed report with 45 recommendations for improvement, some of which will be immediately taken forwards, with others taken forwards through longer term planning. Some IT issues for systems integration should now be addressed through SITS.

v) Semesterisation

The review of the first year of operation would shortly be submitted to University Management Team.

vi) Review of enrolment and re-enrolment activity

The effective use of SITS to support the process would be a priority. Some pilots would be undertaken with early, smaller cohorts. The additional delays for some programmes such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks had been factored into SITS.

vii) ‘Super Supportive’

The term would not be included in the next Strategic Plan; however, the effective support of all students will remain a key principle.

viii) Student Information Desk Project

The re-configuration and training of support teams should be completed in time for the September 2023 intake.

Members were invited to volunteer via the Officer to contribute to a group updating the plan.

**M72/22 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) data – presentation**

The Forum noted the presentation. It was noted how the metrics for the TEF Indicators of Student Experience and Student Outcomes were arrived at and how this differed from internal methods. UON’s metrics are broadly in line with the benchmarks . Expect in the areas of Learning Resources and Student Voice, and in some areas with small numbers of students (such as part time students, and the MEng programme. It was pointed out that the TEF Submission would need to explain why the Library was a strength in Learning Resources but was negatively affected by IT. The trend, however, did show an improving picture for Learning Resources. It was noted that completions for the Free School Meals (FSM) indicator would require exploration. Finally, it was explained that the size restriction for the submission (25 pages) would prove a challenge for much subject level content and case studies of excellence would probably be the approach.

**M73/22 TEF submission guidelines**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 36/22). It was noted that the guidelines had been received at the end of September and that the deadline for submission was 24 January 2023. A steering group has been established and a timeline will be distributed shortly. The University might base its approach to Educational Gains on its strategic aim of Social Impact. Apprenticeships might not be included as this was optional and the University’s provision was small. The Students’ Union would decide independently whether to make a submission. It would be collaboratively involved in the steering group and have full access to data and supported to understand the full gamut of the University’s provision.

**M74/22 Proposals for Work-Based Learning (social impact)**

The Forum received the presentation. It was noted that in 2021 the Changemaker Incubator was developed through which the University of Northampton had provided a mechanism for Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise organisations to access dedicated support; aligning focus, building alliances and driving joined up activity for measurable social impact. It provided a dedicated structure which supported the county’s Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to deliver their services and projects. The Social Impact Matrix® has been designed and deployed to provide a countywide picture of evolving social impact achieved by these VCSE services and projects. Now the data-base was being developed for students and staff to be able to identify work experience and volunteering opportunities across the County. Organisations could approach Unitemps with their needs. Students could then find an organisation with a role that interested them and also gain the Changemaker Certificate as an outcome of the experience. The process was currently being trialled to assess how much value could be added for students engaging with the sector and awareness was being raised in Faculties.

**M75/22 Digital Capabilities survey March – sector comparisons 2022**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 38/22). It was noted that the survey presented the first opportunity for the University to compare itself with other universities and had resulted in a range of useful actions across a number of areas including IT. The Forum welcomed the analysis and it was agreed that the Head of Planning would support the further refinement of the data which would provide a valuable source of information for TEF. The action plan would be presented to a future meeting.

**Action Officer**

**M76/22 Welcome Week Survey 2022 Report**

i) The Forum received the paper (Annexe 39/22). The response rate had been 17% involving 527 students. The following actions had been identified from the results:

* Consider how Welcome Packs could be promoted to students in pre-enrolment communications;
* Consider how pre-enrolment welcome webinars or course-related sessions are promoted to students;
* Review the timing or way in which the introduction to NILE is delivered;
* Reintroduce welcome week and consider activities which support commuting students;
* Consider the welcome and induction experience for those entering into years 2 and 3;
* Review staffing levels for key services to avoid bottlenecks;
* Review timetabling communications to students.

In response to the NILE action it was pointed out that students are automatically enrolled onto the NILE Induction site. There had been a minor issue for some students which had been quickly addressed. The process would be made even more user friendly in the future.

ii) It was agreed that a return to the usual dedicated time for Welcome Week in the next academic year had been identified as an important factor for the student experience. This year the activities had been alongside the first week of learning due to the impact of timetabling the first year of semesterisation, and in recognition of the fact that many students either cannot, or choose not to, participate in a separate Welcome and Induction period. The Welcome and Induction Working Group would meet to progress the actions and refer any back to the Forum as necessary.

**M77/22 Black Advocates programme**

The Forum received the verbal report. It was noted that the programme had started from an identification of gaps in the student voice. The Access and Participation Plan had helped to establish that African and Caribbean students faced particular challenges and were not well-represented in the Students’ Union student representation system. It had been apparent that a targeted intervention was needed that did not apply to all ethnic groups represented in the broader category of Global Ethnic Majority Students (GEM). Nine advocate roles had been established and advertised and interviews would take place shortly. These would be paid positions in recognition of the nature of the role. Applications had been from across the Faculties and levels of study. It was intended that the work of the advocates would ensure that there was not a tokenistic approach to the black student voice but rather that it would be increased and lead to understanding the barriers to learning and progressing. It was hoped that the advocates would be active throughout the University’s committee structure. The Forum welcomed this development and requested an update to the next meeting.

**Action Officer**

**M78/22 Module Monitoring and Programme Survey update**

i) The Forum received the paper (Annexe 40/22) and noted the feedback from the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Pilot Steering Group (PMEP). It was noted that while the pilot Northampton Student Review (NSR) had been conducted at programme level on a sample of programmes, module review had used approaches ranging from online discussion boards (e.g. Padlet) followed by allocated time in a lesson to discuss; Class discussion; MS forms and collation of Feedback from Course Advocates. Responses to this approach had been positive due to the sense of immediacy and ownership at module level. The overall response rate for the NSR was 37% which was in line with internal surveys but below that of the NSS. The NSR was modelled on the NSS and would be used for Level 4 and 5 Undergraduates with Level 6 left to the NSS. Level 7 programmes had been included in the NSR but it would be considered if a different approach based on the PTES would be more appropriate.

ii) BIMI would operate the NSR for the 2023/24 academic year. The new approach to module evaluation would take place mid-module and further consideration was needed of the mechanism by which the outcomes of mid module evaluations were shared with Programme/Subject leaders and wider university services to become a key part of the Programme Evaluation and Quality Process. It had been proposed that that the Staff Student Liaison Committees could be used as an existing structure to capture this information in a way that did not add additional administrative burden. The module evaluation process would be further refined in 2022/23 with a view to implementation in 2023/24. The Forum approved the Group’s outcomes.

**M79/22 Availability of papers**

None were deemed confidential to the Forum.

**M80/22 Any other business**

Contacting relatives/a trusted contact where there is serious concern regarding a student’s Mental Health:

The Forum noted the Universities UK guidance. The University Management Team was considering the proposal due to the GDPR implications.

**M81/22 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would take place at 2:00pm on Wednesday 23 November 2022 via Collaborate.

*SEF 19 October 2022 – J Allibone*

*Draft: 25 October 2022*

*Chair’s: 28 October 2022*

*Confirmed:*

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**Actions from the meeting of the Student Experience Forum held on 19 October 2022**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference** | **Person(s) responsible** | **Action (or title of policy for dissemination)** | **Update on outcomes** |
| M66 | Officer | Terms of Reference and membership for 2022-23 – consider with Chair the suggestions made | This action is ongoing and will be discussed further at the SEF meeting of 23 November 2022. |
| M75 | Officer | Digital Capabilities survey and action plan – include on a future agenda | This action is ongoing. |
| M77 | Officer | Black Advocates programme – update on next agenda | This item has been added to the agenda for the SEF meeting of 23 November 2022. |