****

**Student Experience Committee**

**SEC 12 –M2**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 June 2012**

**Members**: Professor Morag Bell (Chair), Professor Chris Backhouse, Ms Rebecca Bridger, Ms Val Blackett, Professor John Feather, Mr Tim Garfield, Ms Debbie Grant, Mr David Haines, Dr Jennifer Nutkins, Mr Nigel Thomas, Ms Caroline Walker (ab)

**In attendance:** Mrs Joanne Arno (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Caroline Walker

**12/12. Minutes** SEC12- M1

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2012 were approved.

**12/13. Matters arising from the minutes**

**12/6 Provision for off-campus students**

The Committee noted that there will be a survey of study space in the autumn which will confirm whether or not there is sufficient provision. In relation to storage space (lockers) and use of food preparation space it was agreed that it is very difficult to find sufficient resource at present. The concern of students was noted but, at this point in time, it will not be possible to progress the issues due to resource and space implications.

ACTION: Director of Student Services to conduct dialogue with students on this issue and explain why the issue cannot be given priority at present.

**12/14. Presentation on work of the Student Sport Engagement Team**

The Committee received a presentation from Tim Garfield on the work of the Sport Engagement Team. The Lifestyle project is led by the sports development centre in partnership with the students union with the intention of creating recreational space and opportunities for student sport. It is funded by the University and Sport England through the 'Active Universities' themed round –National Lottery funding identified to address gaps in participation in sport.

It was noted that given the strength of sport at Loughborough many students will not be able to join the teams of their choice and, in the past, this has led to a negative, disheartening experience. If they were not selected for the first team there were very few other routes into actively engaging with sport at Loughborough.

As well as active sport participation it offers opportunities for volunteering and coaching both of which have a significant impact on student employability.

The Committee agreed that the project was highly successful and greatly valued. It was felt that it should be promoted via Marketing and Communications for inclusion into the University prospectus as it presents a unique selling point and it should be communicated to colleagues in Admissions. Many students chose Loughborough because of their interest in sport, not necessarily at elite level but a strong desire to be part of the Loughborough campus community and share in the sport ethos.

It has integration not only with Student Union but also the Careers and Employability Service and other sections of the University. It offers personal and professional development opportunities under the strap line ‘My Lifestyle – where my lifestyle begins’. It mirrors the work experience and work placement opportunities and it was noted that the terminology could be dovetailed.

Opportunities for the participation of overseas students were discussed and it was noted that the initiative could also provide coaching opportunities for students and former students to run summer sport schools, camps etc overseas but this would require the appropriate skills and resources from staff to develop and harness the skills of the student volunteers.

It was agreed that to date the University does not do as well as it should under the personal development opportunities headings of the NSS given what is on offer. Students do not seem to be aware of the number and variety of opportunities available to them under the personal and professional development headings and the University needs to be better at prompting what is offered.

It was noted that ‘My Lifestyle’ is part of the Loughborough sport branding and gives students choices and the chance to build their portfolios. The Committee expressed their support for the achievements to date and their gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the Student Sport Engagement Team.

**12/15. Promotion of Recreational Reading (SEC12–P8)**

The Committee noted that this item was discussed at Student Experience Team and the links to academic performance and wellbeing had been noted. However there was some debate at the Committee as to merits of the case and some concern that recreational reading was not the remit of the University and detracted the library from its core purpose. It was explained that a donation had been given to the Library to purchase novels; it had not come from core funding. It was noted that the initiative provided an excellent opportunity to bring international students together and improve their English as well as providing a social network.

It was noted that the initiative may reignite a previous interest in reading for pleasure but the Committee queried what would be done to reach students who have never read for pleasure.

The Committee supported the initiative and approved its inclusion on the Implementation Plan. Student Experience Team to take this forward.

ACTION: The Secretary to add to Implementation Plan

**12/16. Review of Strategic Risk Register.(SEC12 –P9)**

It was noted that inappropriate use of social media has been added to section c in relation to critical comments about other students and the University. It is impossible to monitor all such risk but it is being assessed by the Marketing & Communications team.

It was agreed that students should be reminded that there are proper forum for raising their concerns and that these are taken very seriously by the University. It was noted that an annual report is submitted to Senate and Council reviewing student complaints and it would be helpful for Student Experience Committee to receive this too.

ACTION: Secretary and Academic Registrar

It was suggested that the risk of poor financial management of the hall committees can now be reduced as training has been provided by Finance.

It was noted that the Secretary has been asked to update a ‘survey of university surveys’ initially produced two years ago. The Committee expressed concern that the University is no longer obtaining a clear message of what students want and may have become complacent; it is not keeping up with competitors who actively seek the views of students prior to the NSS so that any problems identified can be ironed out in advance of the survey. Departments are conducting their own individual surveys but there is no co-ordination of the findings and without this there is only limited impetus for change on a University-wide basis.

It was agreed that the risk of Loughborough slipping behind competitors is much greater now that the University does not conduct igraduate and, at the same time, student expectations are increasing. The limitations of igraduate were noted in terms of academic credibility, excessive length and low participation rates but it was agreed that it provided a very useful indication of student views in relation to the non-teaching aspects of their experience at Loughborough.

It was agreed that once the ‘survey of surveys’ has been updated, a paper would be written for ALT in the autumn with a view to re-establishing igraduate to ascertain student views, particularly on the non-academic experience of being a student at Loughborough.

ACTION: Secretary, Director of Student Services and Chair of Student Experience Committee

It was noted that the Student Union conduct a substantial annual survey at the end of the academic year and the results are presented to the Student Experience Team. In future this could come to Student Experience Committee as well. It was noted that focus groups might complement this survey and target specific groups such as postgraduates, international students etc who may be less likely to complete surveys.

The Student Union representatives stated that they would be happy to deliver a presentation in relation to students’ experience of the non-academic aspects of life at Loughborough. It was felt that many non-academic staff have no real appreciation of this and have no regular contact with students. It was agreed that a presentation would be made by the Students Union to Services Working Together to analyse what is unique in the student experience at Loughborough as well as to increase awareness amongst non-academic managers.

ACTION: Director of Student Services and the Academic Registrar to facilitate this. Tim Garfield to attend the Services Working Together meeting.

**12/17. Implementation Plan (SEC12 –P10)**

The Committee noted progress against a number of priorities on the 2011/12 plan. It was agreed that priorities for the next academic year could to be more strategic with overarching headings with smaller, specific action points beneath these. An example being ‘personal and professional development’ as a new broad heading with internships, work placements, work experience etc as sub headings.

Committee members were encouraged to put forward broad headings for inclusion on the next plan. Recommendations from the Student Union were particularly encouraged and health and wellbeing plus the postgraduate experience were noted as possible broad headings. As an operational detail, the selection of course representatives was suggested and whilst it was noted that variance is unavoidable given the number on campus (450) it was agreed to consider this.

It was agreed that Student Experience Team will produce a draft implementation plan for 2012/13 at their July meeting and bring it to the first Student Experience Committee meeting in the autumn.

ACTION: Secretary and Director of Student Services

**12/18. Terms of Reference and Membership (SEC12 –P11)**

The changes affected by the disbandment of the Residential Provision and Management Sub-Committee were noted and approved. Changes to be ratified by Senate and Council.

ACTION: Secretary

**12/19. Review of Effectiveness of the Committee and Student Experience Team**

It was agreed that the discussions under 12/16 and 12/17 had covered this item and it was noted that the implementation plan for 2012/13 should include more strategic headings.

**12/20. THES League Table**

It was noted that Loughborough lost the top position to Dundee in relation to best student experience. Categories of relevance to the Committee are ‘good security’ and ‘cheap bars/shops’. It was felt that the restructuring of the security department over the last year and one or two incidents may account for this. In relation to cheap bars and shops it was agreed that Loughborough still scored well in this category and the rating does not cause undue concern.

In general it was noted that other universities have caught up rather than Loughborough fall behind. It was also noted that there were only 124 respondents and with such small numbers the outcome can be significantly affected by a tiny minority.

**12/21** **Student Experience Team (SEC12-P12 (a) and (b))**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on 27 March and 22 May 2012.

**12/22 Financial Hardship Sub-Committee (SEC12-P13(a) and (b))**

The Committee noted reports on the current financial situation of the ALF and EPF.

**12/23. Date of the next meeting**

2pm on Tuesday 23rd October 2012

**12/24. Any other Business**

None

Author – Joanne Arno

Date –June 2012

Copyright © Loughborough University. All rights reserved.