

# Student Experience Forum (SEF)

**Chair’s Minutes of the Fourth meeting held on Thursday 7 April 2022 via Collaborate**

**Present:**

Shan Wareing (Chair)

Michelle Chodyniecki

Annette Devine

David Fitzgerald

Beth Garrett (SU)

Philippa Hinks

Wray Irwin

Ivna Reic

Angela Rushton

Cathy Smith

Kate Williams

Steve Wood

**Apologies:**

Zoe Boyer (SU), Becky Bradshaw, Kate Coulson, David Cousens, Brendan Fawcett, Rob Howe

**In attendance:**

Matthew Watson (Officer)

Sam Wong (for item M38/22)

Annette Devine was welcomed to the Forum as the Interim Academic Registrar.

**M31/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**M32/22 Actions from the meeting held on 10 March 2022**

Actions have been addressed, are in hand or addressed elsewhere on the agenda. The following actions were noted:

*M017/22 MSc Counselling students*

The possibility of MSc Counselling students on placement being able to provide student-led clinics still needs to be followed up. It was noted that the Additional Needs Manager is leaving the University at the end of April 2022, and this will be taken forward by the Head of Student Services.

**M33/22 Chair’s matters**

The Chair informed the Forum that Sammy Massiah has joined the University as its first Chief Information Officer. His remit will include IT Services, records, the Business Intelligence Management Information (BIMI) unit and matters related to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Chief Information Officer will be looking at the new Student Records Systems to ensure that it will deliver what the University needs.

It was reported to the Forum that Timetabling will be reporting to the Executive Director of Estates and Campus Services, which will include the consideration of the utilisation of rooms. This is particularly important to help address issues in relation to the imminent large cohorts of international students. The Head of Student Services will be reporting to the Director of Library and Learning Services (LLS) for the interim.

**M34/22 Matters arising**

The Chair informed the Forum that sadly a student death had taken place in Halls of Residence in the Autumn of 2021. The coroner’s report is being awaited but it appears that the death may have been due to a contaminated drugs dose. The parents had contacted the University who requested a review to ensure that all that could have been done to support the student had been done. The review will be led by someone in the Faculty of Business and Law and all staff involved (both academic and professional services) will be spoken to by the investigator to ascertain the extent to which the support provided was appropriately joined up. It is the intention that there will be institutional learning emerging from the outcomes of the review which can be taken forward into the 2022-23 academic year. The Forum wished to know who will see the outcomes from the review. In response it was explained that the parents of the student will be the primary stakeholders. Whilst some sections of the report will be confidential, it will be circulated (minus the confidential sections), to the Forum in the Autumn Term of 2022, and any actions required as a result will be planned.

**M35/22 Student Experience and National Student Survey (NSS) Improvement Action Plan – update**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 17/22). The Chair provided an update the Student Experience and NSS Improvement Action Plan. It was noted that the Action Plan had been discussed in detail at the last meeting of the Forum on 10 March 2022. It has also been presented to the Board of Governors. The purpose of the Action Plan is to ensure that the student experience is improved and in doing so leading a return to the previously high NSS metrics experienced by the University.

The Action Plan will also play an important role in informing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission in the 2022-23 academic year. It was reported that the University’s response to the Office for Students (OfS) consultation on the TEF has been submitted. The OfS response is likely to then be published in May or June 2022. It is possible the TEF submission may have to be made as early as December 2022+ although it may extend into early 2023. The Chair expressed confidence that the Action Plan demonstrates good progress in all areas, with many actions now completed. It was suggested that the relaunch of LEARN is not yet complete and should be recategorized from green to amber. **Action: Chair**

**M36/22 HESA Performance Indicators 2019-20 entrants – non-continuation**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 18/22). The Chair informed the Forum that continuation levels were not where the University would like them to be. Continuation is key to the students and the mission of the University and demonstrates that the University is doing its job properly. However, at the current time the focus needs to be on embedding good practice for recruitment via Project Clover. It is important that recruitment is sound first before moving to continuation.

An observation was made by a representative of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society that there appears to be more of a focus on supporting students at Levels 4 and 6 than there is at Level 5 and this needs to be addressed. It was suggested that there should be induction for students at Level 5 as data does suggest that there can be a high drop out rate at this point for students.

The Reporting Development Manager explained to the Forum that the data covers full-time entrants in the 2019-20 academic year, therefore the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst non-continuation rates at the University have fallen, the University is closer to the median for institutions with university status. The University performs better than its benchmark for young entrants, but worse than its benchmark for mature student. There was no data for resumption of study after a year out of Higher Education, but this may have been due to the pandemic. The Forum agreed that is useful to have these metrics in place in advance of the TEF submission. Retention needs to be treated as a holistic project and taken forward in the Autumn 2022 term.

**M37/22 #ExamStruggles – resources for students**

The above item was **deferred** until the June 2022 meeting.

**M38/22 Global Student Living Index – Wave Findings**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 20/22). The Residential Services Manager provided the Forum with a presentation on the Global Student Living Index – Wave Findings. It was explained that the survey had been carried out between 11 October and 30 November 2021 and had been completed by 150 students, which represents less than 10% of the students at the University living in Halls of Residence (a response rate of 8.3%). It was noted that a total of 98% students found accommodation either somewhat or very important when choosing a university/programme. The following five factors were identified as the main reasons for making a decision about accommodation: travel time/proximity to study; feeling safe and secure; kitchen size and facilities; condition and quality of accommodation; and availability of en-suite. A smaller proportion of students (31%) described the University accommodation as being very good compared to 43% across the East Midlands institutions. The overall rates for the application/booking process and the moving-in process being described as very good were lower for the University than across East Midlands institutions. It was explained to the Forum that this is being addressed by improving communications and information such as increasing the number of ‘Accommodation FAQs’ threefold on the accommodation website. It was agreed that there is a need to integrate the Accommodation and Residential Services teams to create a more joined-up approach to enhance the students’ sense of well-being. New residents will be sent regular communications in the early weeks to increase the welfare support. There will be more transparent service level agreements and key performance indicators. The Forum did note that, for some Halls, the responses were very small, so the outcomes statistically needed to be treated cautiously. It was agreed that the full report and presentation will be circulated to the Forum membership. **Action: Officer**

**M39/22 Digital Capabilities Staff and Researcher Survey March 2022**

The above item was **deferred** until the June 2022 meeting.

**M40/22 Online and Digital Exams and TCAs – an update**

The above item was **deferred** until the June 2022 meeting.

**M41/22 Student Voice update**

**41.1 National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 Response Rates**

The Forum received a verbal update from the BIMI Reporting Development Manager. As of 6 April 2022, the University of Northampton NSS response rate was 57.4% which is comparable to the same point in 2021. 36 programmes are now above threshold with 26 programmes still needing to meet the threshold. Information on the response rate will be provided on a weekly basis to the Faculties.

**41.2 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022 Response Rates**

The Forum received a verbal update from the BIMI Reporting Development Manager. The PTES opened on 21 March 2022 and will close in mid-June 2022. To date there is a 16% response rate (14 to 17% across the Faculties).

**M42/22 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) – an update**

The Chair explained to the Forum that the institutional response to the OfS consultation in relation to the TEF has been submitted. The timeframe for the TEF submission is likely to be short but confidence was expressed that the University will be in a strong position to submit a commentary when required. It was noted that there will also need to be an independent Students’ Union submission.

**M43/22 Project Clover – an update**

The Chair reminded the Forum that Project Clover is a three-year project to increase on-campus home students to the full campus capacity experienced in the period 2014-17. It is important to focus on this area of recruitment as such students are with the University for three years and represent a ‘stable’ source of income which will help the University to be able to invest in its estate. Project Clover has so far enabled the University to reach the halfway mark in recruiting the 600 extra students needed. The decision to remove the majority of the Joint Honours provision was felt to be the correct one as it simplifies the University’s offering and reflects that student satisfaction with Joint Honours was not so positive as Single Honours.

The Forum welcomed the very positive international student recruitment for June 2022 which may have to be capped at 600. It was recognised that this will also present a challenge for supporting students on placements and addressing academic misconduct.

**M44/22 Availability of papers**

No papers were deemed confidential to the Forum.

**M45/22 Any other business**

The Forum recognised the discussions on ‘super-supportive’ are on-going at Faculty level and this will be brought back to the Forum in the Autumn Term of 2022.

**M46/22 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 10:00am on Thursday 30 June 2022 via Collaborate.

*SEF 7 April 2022 – M Watson*

*Draft: 12 April 2022*

*Chair’s: 21 April 2022*

*Confirmed:*



**Actions from the meeting of the Student Experience Forum held on 7 April 2022**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference** | **Person(s) responsible** | **Action (or title of policy for dissemination)** | **Update on outcomes**  |
| M35/22 | Chair  | To recategorize the action in relation to LEARN to amber from green on the NSS and Student Experience Improvement Action Plan.  | This action has been completed.  |
| M38/22 | Officer  | To circulate the full report and presentation on the Global Student Living Index – Wave Findings – to the members of the Forum.  | This action has been completed.  |