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# Student Experience Forum (SEF)

**Chair’s Minutes of the Seventh meeting held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 via Collaborate**

**Present:**

Shan Wareing (Chair)

Simone Apel

Michelle Chodyniecki

Kate Coulson

Brendan Fawcett

David Fitzgerald

Simon Ford

Beth Garrett (SU)

Rob Howe

Peter Jones

Sally Laurie

Angela Rushton

Genine Taylor (SU)

Hayley Tomlin

Liz Vokes

Steve Wood

**Apologies:**

Nick Allen, Annette Devine, Wray Irwin, Cathy Smith

**In attendance:**

Matthew Watson (Officer)

**M82/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**M83/22 Actions from the meeting held on 19 October 2022**

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

*M75/22 Digital Capabilities Survey and Action Plan*

This will be taken forward onto the agenda of a future meeting.

**M84/22 Chair’s matters**

There were no Chair’s matters.

**M85/22 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**M86/22 Revised Terms of Reference and Membership for 2022-23**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 41/22). The Chair informed the Forum that the Senate meeting of 26 October 2022 had requested that changes be made to the SEF Terms of Reference and the membership. References to ‘super-supportive’ have been removed. The focus on the NSS and other surveys such as the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) has been enhanced. The membership of the Forum has been enhanced to include more representation from students, the Student Experience leads in the faculties, the Chief Information Officer (or nominee), representatives of partner institutions and at least one Black Student Advocate. It was noted that the job title of the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement needs correcting. **Action: Officer**

The Forum considered what the nature of the partner representation should be. It was agreed that both international and UK partners should be represented on the Forum. The decision was made that there should be three partners represented on the Forum initially: an international partner, a UK large private partner and a UK local public partner. Representation from the University of Northampton International College (UNIC) should also be considered.

**Action: Chair and Academic Partnerships Office**

**M87/22 National Student Survey (NSS) 2023**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 42/22). The Head of Planning informed the Forum that the NSS in 2023 will change to include more direct questions and how the questions are asked and interpreted will also change. A four-point item specific response scale will be used, replacing the five-point Likert response.

The University’s NSS base population will potentially significantly change in 2023 with the loss of 184 students from Chiswick College. The online survey will be open from 11 January 2023 to 30 April 2023 (the University will have a fieldwork start date of 6 February 2023). The University has opted to promote the NSS via posters sent to the Students Union and messages added to screens. It was confirmed that all NSS population students will receive a GDPR pre-notification email from the Marketing Communications Team within the next two weeks.

The Forum agreed that notifications to staff regarding changes to the NSS should be communicated via both Unify and updates from the University Leadership Team (ULT). It was confirmed that refresher sessions will be provided to relevant staff and that the University’s own internal module surveys and annual surveys will be aligned with the NSS.

The Forum was informed that module evaluations will be run this academic year using the previous question set before being piloted using new questions. It was agreed that working group will look at this involving representation from the Students Union, the Business Intelligence Management Information (BIMI) department, faculty representation from the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society, and the Head of Learning Technology.

**87.1 Verbal updates actions from the faculties and departments**

The Forum was informed that the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) has established a Faculty Student Experience Committee which has met once to date. This is constituted of representatives of the subject groups as well as Library and Learning Services (LLS) and student records representatives. The Faculty Student Experience Committee had considered the Programme Operational Plans (PROPs) for the first time. BIMI and relevant staff in FBL were thanked for making the data easier to access. The first student support team members in the Faculty have started and making positive use of Instagram to support their work.

The Associate Dean for the Faculty of Health, Education and Society (FHES) reported that a timeline of surveys has been circulated to the Faculty as a padlet. A Student Experience lead in FHES has now been appointed and will commence their role in January 2023. The first Faculty Student Experience Forum is due to meet on 28 November 2022 and this will help to provide a holistic view of the student experience in FHES. A Dean’s lunch for students had been well attended and was another mechanism for providing good quality student feedback. Based on the outcomes from this, FHES is planning a ‘You Said, We Did’ type activity for January 2023. The mid-module evaluations are currently in the process of being returned.

The Associate Dean for the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology (FAST) reported that no Student Experience lead has yet been appointed. The student representatives are in place for the majority of programmes. Data is being collected by Heads of Subject and Programme Leaders to enable a ‘You Said, We Did’ activity. The new NSS questions are being shared with the Heads of Subject and Programme Leaders.

In relation to Library and Learning Services (LLS) it was reported that the first student forums on student induction and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) have taken place. The JISC Digital Capabilities Survey is going to be rolled out for the fifth consecutive year and this may provide an early insight into possible NSS outcomes. The Forum was content for the Survey to be sent out in early December 2022. The Forum was informed about Digital Northampton which will help link UON with employers across Northamptonshire.

The Forum was informed that IT is undergoing a significant transformation with several major projects underway. It had been identified that the Development Hub has no direct IT support in location. Therefore, IT is in the process of establishing a physical presence in the Development Hub twice per week. This will be promoted fully once installed. Plans are in place to make the Changemaker area into a more welcoming space. An online suggestion box has been set up to help identify how customer service can be improved.

The University currently has consultants looking at how the social spaces on the Waterside Campus can be enhanced. This is particularly in relation to the Creative Hub and the Engine Shed.

The representatives of the Students’ Union reported that a meeting of the NSS Working Group had taken place on 23 November 2022. This will look at more ‘shout outs’ for third year students on their understanding of the NSS.

The Head of Student Services reported to the Forum that there is continuing promotion of the mental health support available. It was stated that there is a need to understand more fully the reasons for students withdrawing, with an increasing number withdrawing in their first year of study. ‘Together All’ is continuing to be promoted in relation to mental health support.

The Academic Partnerships Office (APO) Manager reported to the Forum that a Partnerships Enhancement Officer had been appointed earlier in the year to look at data which will assist with early interventions. APO is working with BIMI on module evaluations with partners and is seeking dates of Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLCs) so that whenever possible an APO representative can attend these.

**M88/22 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 43/22). The Deputy Vice Chancellor informed the Forum that this national exercise was being run for the second time, the first TEF being in 2017. The TEF was being based on a series of metrics in relation to student outcomes – primarily continuation, completion, and employability. The University will be required to provide an institutional submission which will articulate the University’s approach to an excellent student experience. This institutional submission will be a 25-page narrative and will be supported by an independent student submission of 10 pages. The final submission date is 24 January 2023, and the University aims to submit by 20 January 2023.

A Working Group has been established to oversee the production of the institutional submission and this has now met twice, with the aim of having the first draft ready by 2 December 2022. From 15 December 2022 the first draft will be available for all staff to comment on it and this part of the process will close on 13 January 2023. The Vice Chancellor will give final approval before the submission on 20 January 2023. The outcomes of the TEF will be made public in September 2023 (the University will be initially informed in June/July 2023). It was confirmed that as the outcomes are not made public until September 2023, it will not be possible to use them in marketing exercises in the Summer of 2023. The Chair explained to the Forum how the institutional submission will be divided into four sections: an overall summary, a section on outcomes, a section on the student experience, and the references (which will be where the evidence is provided).

**M89/22 Defining Educational Gain for UON in the TEF**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 45/22). The Head of Planning explained to the Forum that ‘Educational Gain’ is not defined nationally and, therefore, the University is looking at how to define it. This is being led by the Director of Enterprise and Employability in liaison with the Head of Planning. The Forum welcomed the work that is being carried out on this. The Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement welcomed the paper and explained that she is leading on a project looking at student grit and resilience. It was suggested that outcomes from these projects could be brough together at the next Learning and Teaching Conference. The Chair requested that Educational Gain be made a standing item on the SEF agenda. **Action: Officer**

**M90/22 Black Student Advocates programme – an update**

The President of the Students Union informed the Forum that the interviews had been completed to recruit a full-time member of staff to support the Black Student Advocates Project and they will start on 29 November 2022. The successful candidate does not come from an HE or Students Union background but has highly relevant experience and is very passionate about the role. Seven black advocates out of nine vacancies have been appointed to date. They will commence their roles in late November/early December 2022 and a reporting mechanism will be in place for them. It was suggested that whilst the UON Black Student Advocates programme was not necessarily unique in the UK, such initiatives are not particularly widespread.

**M91/22 Updates from BIMI**

**91.1 Undergraduate Good Degrees 2021**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 46/22). The Head of Planning reported that the number of Good Degrees and Firsts had declined as had been expected following the return to a more ‘normal’ situation after the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that during the pandemic, the use of additional compensations within regulations may have led to a rise in the number of Good Degrees and Firsts. The Forum was reminded that the Office for Students (OfS) will be looking at HEIs which have unexplained rises in Good Degrees and Firsts. All the data in relation to Good Degrees and Firsts will be available on Qlikview by the end of November 2022. The sector trend will not be available until March 2023.

**91.2 Progression Data 2022**

The Forum received the paper (Annexe 47/22). It was explained to the Forum that once the outcomes of Project Clover are fully embedded, then there will be a move to a project on retention. The intention will be to identify those students at risk and to intervene at an earlier stage. This will be an institution-wide project. The Academic Partnerships Office (APO) Manager reassured the Forum that APO is aware of low progression rates for some partners and is looking at intervention plans to deal with these.

**92/22 Student Voice updates**

The Forum received a verbal update. The Vice President (Education) of the Student Union reported that the Education Policy Forum took place on 22 November 2022. There are now more than 270 student representatives in place and training sessions are completing in the next couple of weeks. The possible impact of forthcoming industrial action was considered. The Chair confirmed that she will oversee a communication to the students in relation to the industrial action. Discussions have also been held in relation to the football World Cup in Qatar and to counterbalance against the controversies surrounding it, there will be various events at the Waterside Campus to raise awareness and donations to appropriate causes.

**M93/22 Availability of papers**

No papers were deemed confidential to the Forum

**M94/22 Any other business**

The Forum confirmed that it is content for the JISC Digital Capabilities Survey to be issued to staff and students in December 2022.

**M95/22 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 2:00pm on Wednesday 11 January 2023 via Collaborate.

*SEF – 23 November 2022 – M Watson*

*Draft: 2 December 2022*

*Chair’s: 8 December 2022*

*Confirmed:*

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**Actions from the meeting of the Student Experience Forum held on**

**23 November 2022**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference** | **Person(s) responsible** | **Action (or title of policy for dissemination)** | **Update on outcomes** |
| M86/22 | Officer | To make the final corrections to the Terms of Reference and membership as requested in time for consideration at Senate on 7 December 2022. | This action has been completed. |
| M87/22 | Chair and APO Manager | To identify which partners will be represented at the SEF. | This action is ongoing. |
| M89/22 | Officer | To add ‘Educational Gain’ as a standing item for SEF agendas. | This action has been completed and is on the agenda for the meeting on 11 January 2023. |