

Minutes of the Union Executive Meeting

Wednesday the 2nd of December 2020

Present: Temi, Akeem, Jess, Shian, Ade (at the gym)

In Attendance: Ed, Rhiannon, Stevie and George (Minuting)

1. Welcome and Introductions

TA welcomed all to the meeting

2. To receive apologies for absence

None for this meeting.

3. AOB

EM: Board Papers

4. Minutes from last meeting (date)

The minutes were approved.

5. Campaign Expenditure Proposals

None were raised for this meeting.

6. University Committee Updates:

A00 provided an update to the Partnership Steering Group.

A00 stated that the PSG meetings are greater embedded into the workings of the Students' Union and the University relationship.

A00 highlighted the importance of said meeting in mapping what teaching and learning will look like in the new academic semester in 2021.

EM agreed with the statements made by AOO. Although, EM did highlight that the space should be more collaborative than a formalised committee. That may come with time when such spaces aren't structured solely on Teams.

TA informed the group that they and AOO attended University Council.

TA fed back that the student experience area of the agenda was positively received.

TA highlighted that subject matter relating to Equality and Diversity, following the Black Lives Matter movement, was not on the agenda as a standing item when it should be. This was raised with other council members, and it will be addressed.

SW approved of the TA update that 'the Dyson guy' was no longer appropriate for an Honorary Graduate.

TA informed the group that Jackie Kay, the Chancellor of the University, would be stepping down after the end of their term. TA will therefore be working with Council to appoint a new Chancellor.

AO informed the group that they were invited to the Institute and Advisory Board. TA welcomed the invitation.

EM informed the group that, through the support from TA, the University Council have expressed their concern with progress on the Black Awards Gap. Greater pressure is now on the University to address the concerns. This is encouraging for pushing this work further.

TA informed the group of a separate meeting with Helen Marshall and EM. TA informed the group that information relevant to the new academic semester may have available in the next few days/next week.

TA stated there will be future conversations on the 'post-COVID experience' for students.

JW queried the phase return in January; dates are slightly different for H&S students.

TA outlined that practical courses will be returning in different phases, most likely the first groups to return, outside of the general phased return.

7. Sabbatical Officer Updates:

TA updated the committee on the new structure for Sabbatical Officer update.

TA reiterated that this section should focus on barriers to objectives, rather than overall updates. Much more on collaboration than individual updates.

JW updated first:

JW stated that there has been great development in regard to feedback in the personal tutor programme objective. From this, JW put forward the query as to whether the Sabbatical team felt if there were any areas of change that they would like to see.

JW also informed the group of their wellbeing support project. Mindfulness sessions are well attended but are very staff heavy. JW queried what more can be done to entice students to attend.

JW also opened the query if there were any other areas to actively engage students.

AO stated that many international students are not aware of who their personal tutor is, what they are there to do and how they can access support from them. AO felt it was important to highlight the individual issues international students face when accessing this support stream.

AO provided an update:

AO stated that the objective in regard to accommodation support will be brought to the committee once further conversations take place between AOO, VE and GC.

AO was content with the work that is currently being carried out.

SC update:

SC stated that further progress has taken place regarding assessment feedback. No current barriers are taking place.

SC informed the group that feedback from the A&M school, in reference to the BAME Awards Gap, has changed. SC queried what more can be done here.

TA agreed that no further work has been done on the BAME Awards Gap for a long period of time.

SC stressed that this objective should be a priority, yet the University do not seem to see this.

SC stated that the dissertation framework objective will start properly in second semester.

AOO expressed it is important that the University identify who leads on certain areas of the BAME Awards Gap.

TA stated that the challenge with this approach is that certain contacts in the University go off and carry out projects with no clear strategy or approach.

RR informed the group that possibly the next phase of the Students' Union is to apply political pressure to ensure the University understands the significance of this project.

SW agreed with previous comments – the BAME Awards Gap now sits with multiple actors across the University, which has lost control of the direction and momentum. Therefore, the Students' Union has lost a grasp on the project. Work needs to be done to bring the BAME Awards Gap into the hands of the SU where greater strategic direction can be made.

AO AOO and stated that there has been a series of good practice across academic schools. It's important to bring all forces together to avoid the issues that have eventually come to the surface recently.

AOO provided an update:

AOO stated that the opportunity for engagement could possibly be greater as we enter the second semester. This could be a result of the measures currently in place to tackle COVID-19 and protect individuals.

AOO queried what physical engagement could look like in 2nd semester.

EM stated that our actions of engagement will vary depending on the current tier system when students are due to return in the New Year, Risk assessments will be circulated again as the safety of Sabbaticals and staff members come first. Likewise, all activities will have to follow the similar structure.

EM informed the group that the impact of the Christmas period 'freedom' will not be known until early and mid-January.

EM put forward that ideas for engagement opportunities will be reviewed with the hope to carry out as much as is safely possible for both staff and students; in line with current restrictions/measures.

AOO thanked the feedback and stated further planning of Sabbatical engagement will take place in the New Year.

RR informed the group that Beat The Blues will be altered for second semester with further activities, much that is similar to pre-COVID opportunities i.e. more physical and face-to-face activities.

AO informed the group and SLT that they are more than happy to be reassessed, as situations have altered from previous systems.

TA update:

TA informed the group of all relevant updates in relation to quality of teaching and recorded lectures.

TA stated there are no further barriers, aside from the BAME Awards Gap.

AOO felt it appropriate to formally minute the thanks and gratitude they have from Marcia Ody (MO) in terms of further development and Sabbatical objectives.

TA echoed AOO's points.

EM thanked SW for bringing MO into the Students' Union.

EM stated that there will be further opportunities for MO to be involved in sabbatical development over the remainder of the academic year. Plus, future thoughts as to where MO can work with staff team members, including managers.

8. VO Spotlight:

TA welcomed Hope Bragg (HB) to the meeting – the Community and Wellbeing Officer.

HB Updates:

- Salford IAG
- Projects with JW in reference to tutor support
- Rafiki support work
- Collaboration with BSL and the Disability Support team
- Collaboration with the Trans* student campaign with Ben Hodge
- SAG support
- Student collaboration with Union Council

HB stated that it would be helpful for further support of the student leadership team on social media, specifically the VO team.

AOO stated that this is an example of how the Sabbatical Officer team need to work more closely with the VO team as well. The VOs should be promoted on social channels as much as the Sabbatical Officers. More can be done.

Action: AOO and RR to speak with BA and the marketing team regarding further promotion and online support for the VO team.

TA outlined the further 1-2-1 and group support that will be provided to the VO team moving forward. This hopefully will filter down into departmental work in the Students' Union.

TA gave thanks to HB regarding the work they have put in over the past 6 months.

9. Partnership Steering Group

This was addressed earlier in the committee.

10. COVID Update

EM updated the group.

EM informed the Sabbatical Officers of the positive reception of COVID testing before the Christmas period, launched by the UK government.

Conversations will take place over the next few weeks, before the Christmas break, to address what re-freshers/welcome will look like as students return in January.

EM stated that there has been further communication organised regarding the safety net policy. This will also go out to all staff.

AOO queried about AKB.

RR stated there is no change from the last meeting. AKB will not open today (2nd of December 2020).

RR reiterated that opening periods will most likely be in mid-January. All staff are currently on furlough and wages are topped up from the Students' Union.

EM expressed that the next few months will be a test for the University and also the HE sector. There is no guarantee that changes to current structures will be made by March. Rather, softer measures may still be present in the new academic year; 2021/22.

11. AOB

EM provided an update in regard to the Students' Union Trustee Board:

The trustee board agenda will be different to previous meetings, with the aim to have longer to discuss bigger strategic areas.

Further detail outlined in the update from EM will not be detailed in these minutes, as the confidential papers set out in the agenda are yet to be approved and published by the Trustee Board

Meeting Closed at 12:00