

Minutes of the Union Executive Meeting

Wednesday the 4th of November 2020

Present: Temi, Ade, Jess, Shian

In Attendance: Ed, Rhiannon and George (Minuting)

1. Welcome and Introductions

TA welcomed all to the meeting

2. To receive apologies for absence

TA accepted the apologies of SW and AO

3. AOB

None

4. Minutes from last meeting (date)

TA will follow up with NF regarding the action from the last meeting.

JW informed TA that no formal meeting has been organised as of yet but communication has taken place.

GC provided an update regarding the Transgender Day of Remembrance activities.

5. Campaign Expenditure Proposals

TA raised the training from MEND regarding Islamophobia Awareness Month.

TA put forward a vote to the Sabbatical Team to recommend such training to SLT.

The vote was passed and so forth is the recommendation.

TA put forward thanks to the Sabbatical Team and the wider SU team for their support in BHM. TA continued to celebrate the work of University staff members and the great support we have received from BHM engagement.

6. University Committee Updates:

TA updated the committee of the Extraordinary Senate meeting. Main contents were focused on the definition of antisemitism at the University. Further information regarding School updates was also discussed.

JW attended AEC.

JW informed the committee that issues within the H&S are being raised regarding the experiences of students who are on NHS courses, as challenges with COVID is affecting their overall academic experience.

7. Sabbatical Officer Updates:

TA began:

TA informed the committee of the joint engagement with SS and AOO in Recorded Lectures.

Due to the Copy Right Laws, there may be issues regarding implementing a mandatory policy for Recorded Lectures. Yet, NF reiterated that now is the best time to try and include this policy, as the University already has an agreement due to the current learning environment.

TA expressed their optimism on the policy as there is Trade Union backing.

TA stated that as SELTEC is in two weeks-time, it might be wise to bring forward a stronger approach once further details are gathered; to then be brought at the meeting after next.

TA informed the committee that the BAME Awards Gap will now be reporting to JM; the committee are still waiting to hear back from NF regarding the 'shopping list'.

EM informed the committee that staff allocation needs to be addressed back at Council as there are a number of concerns for the effectiveness of this appointment.

EM has also spoken with Tara Leech (TL) and put forward Students' Union support on addressing the institutional barriers affecting Black students, furthering support on Sabbatical engagement and also staff team support.

TA has not worked directly with OS on the individual objective with Sports and Societies engagement, as other projects have taken precedence between OS and TA; mainly as a result of the changes to national lockdown rules etc.

TA is working with MC regarding a review of whether programmes are fit for purpose and how they are ran; greater scrutiny at the processes.

SC updated:

SC, TA and AOO will be working with the Library to contribute to the support for the BAME Awards Gap. Further work will be done with the department to support further objectives; Dissertation Framework and Assessment Feedback.

SC agreed with the updates from TA regarding Recorded Lectures.

SC also reiterated the information regarding the BAME Awards Gap, alongside the information TA provided.

JW:

Further updates will take place at next UE as the next meeting regarding placements will be on the 10/11.

JW informed the committee of the work taking place with the focus on pastoral support from academic tutors and a joint meeting will take place soon to address this concern.

JW stated that there has been greater support from the H&S school regarding contribution to activities of the Beat the Blues opportunities calendar.

AOO:

AOO reiterated the support on the BAME Awards Gap that has already been discussed.

AOO also echoed the information that TA has provided regarding the Recorded Lectures project.

AOO raised the concerns with their academic support staff regarding the feedback from Course and School Reps; the quality is relatively poor for online teaching and this needs to be addressed.

AOO has worked with communication staff to circulate information to students regarding the benefit of creating academic societies to improve their prospects after University. AOO has also coordinated with MC to disseminate this information to the wider rep network.

AOO posed a question on how we can further engage with students as restrictions have increased quite dramatically.

TA, SC and JW discussed the barriers between online engagement (many students do not turn up if there is no 'purpose' to engage on the live chat) and the further barriers for student and Sabb engagement when physical events/activities are no longer possible or highly unlikely.

RR updated the committee that sporting activity is most likely not taking place, whilst there is a small possibility of scheduled physical activities, with a greater focus on virtual opportunities for students.

AOO stated that the live chat function for engagement should be continued for another week and then further conversations need to take place soon to ensure there is a plan for Sabb and student engagement.

TA welcomed BH and OS to the meeting.

TA firstly raised the queries of support with Salford Pride and the sponsorship for Transgender Day of Remembrance.

BH stated that the Trans Forum have discussed possible activities taken place, either on the Thursday the 19th or Friday the 20th (possible alternative days are considered).

BH will be working with Arron Pile (AP) to organise a joint event with the University and the Students' Union.

TA initiated a series of introductions for the benefit of everyone.

TA introduced the purpose of the VO spotlight.

BH provided an update to the committee of their objectives and activities:

- Trans* Participation in Sport Campaign; amendment to the policy structure of BUCS; circulating an open letter that unites Salford societies and sport clubs; badge campaign of visual recognition; working with further Students' Unions to implement this campaign on a regional or national scale
- Further Trans* Student Support
- Transgender Day of Remembrance

OS provided an update:

- Providing greater support for Sports and Societies regarding the challenges that COVID has created, specifically the physical barriers to student engagement
- Supporting the wellbeing and support, specifically supporting student mental health as opportunities are not as physically available

SC queried about a supportive space for Trans* students.

BH provided detail regarding the Trans* Forum and SU involvement.

Action: TA to thank BH and OS for their attendance.

9. Free School Meals:

TA informed the committee of the initial email from a student regarding the query.

JW stated that the response from the UK Government was incorrect but also queried what the Students' Union could actually do.

RR clarified that whilst the Students' Union is unable to use charitable funds to provide free school meals for students over vacation periods, there are options for the SU to provide support in working with local community organisations to support children over the Christmas period.

TA put forward that the Students' Union should support students who are wanting to provide greater support for community organisations and/or work with the University to create initiatives.

The Sabbatical Team agreed to put forward their support for student-led projects.

Action: GC to go back to the student and pledge Sabbatical support in a student-led project.

10. Sports and Societies Exec – Disciplinary Procedure

TA outlined the rationale behind this agenda item, as a result of former consultation with the Sports and Societies Exec and the proposed changes.

TA outlined the response from the S&S Exec and agreed to the stance made by the Exec. The Sabbatical Team were in agreement.

Action: TA to go back to SS with the next steps.

11. Partnership Steering Group

No update for this agenda item.

12. COVID Update

EM informed the committee of most recent update to the University regarding COVID and the national lockdown.

EM expressed that the University may be in a situation where teaching will be moved completely online if the situation escalates.

RR provided an update to the committee regarding the Christmas closure period. Whilst the University has extended the University closure period for staff reward, the challenges that students will face over the Christmas period may be greater as a result of continued COVID challenges.

RR outlined the initial conversations that are taking place regarding what this support looks like for students.

EM outlined concern for students who will be on campus in early January and therefore isolated until the new academic term begins.

EM stated that there are roughly 70 international students joining the University this month and over 300 joining in January.

RR informed the committee of the new proposed testing scheme for students in PPQ accommodation. Further information will be shared with the wider staff team.

EM reiterated that because HE exemption, no major changes will take place at the University.

EM informed the committee that AKB will close for the period of lockdown. The catering exemption that is available in schools is not available in HE settings.

TA queried when the building will reopen in the New Year.

RR stated that in previous years, AKB would not be open fully until term starts again in January. The possibility of several plans needs to be created for the variety eventualities.

13. AOB

None for this week.

Meeting closed at 12:17