

Minutes of the Union Executive Meeting

Wednesday the 18th of November 2020

Present: Temi, Ade, Jess, Shian, Ade

In Attendance: Rhiannon, Stevie and George (Minuting)

1. Welcome and Introductions

TA welcomed all to the meeting

2. To receive apologies for absence

TA accepted the apologies of EM

3. AOB

GC – Manchester SU and GMSA Campaign

4. Minutes from last meeting (date)

The minutes were approved.

5. Campaign Expenditure Proposals

None were raised for this meeting.

6. University Committee Updates:

JW provided an update for the committee.

JW attended the Research and Enterprise committee.

JW informed the team that further PGR support and engagement in University committees will take place, mainly through the incorporation of a University FAQ sheets; this will be provided for PGR students to ensure greater contribution is made available.

JW stated that initial discussions are taking place on the launch of a new enterprise scheme.

JW stated that research carried out at the University has unveiled that only 75% of 'teaching only' academic teaching staff are female. The concern is that career progression is not available for female staff and therefore has an impact on students and their learning. Further work will be done to address these challenges.

SC provided an update on ASQUACK, specifically the discussion forums. Quantifying Assessments and the frequency.

TA updated the re-naming committee, investigating the names of buildings on campus. Proposal that the SU should lead on the consultation with students, whilst the capacity of the SU right now is low.

AO attended committees that specifically focused on the internal and external auditing within the B&L School.

AOO has no further updates.

7. Sabbatical Officer Updates:

JW:

Mental health awareness – mindfulness sessions with great attendance. The sessions will be recorded as well to improve support through the Rafiki programme.

Further conversations with placement teams – great results all round. Concerns regarding fatigue of staff in the H&S School.

TA:

Recorded lectures were not taken to SELTEC as it was too soon.

Further work will go in to prepare for the next committee meeting.

TA updated the committee in regard to the PPR project; focusing on the quality of the degree students are receiving and also, whether the PPR is fit for purpose.

TA informed the committee that there is still no further clarity on the BAME Awards Gap. Following future communication, discussions seem to finally taking place to progress the project.

Sport and Society update may have hit a dead end. Possibility to pause the objective and focus on other priorities.

AOO asked for clarity on the objective.

TA expressed that the concern currently is that the University has to prioritise the response to COVID. The project may draw resource away from COVID response into other work, when not needed.

RR agreed that the operational amendments as a result of COVID can be seen in the Union as well.

AOO:

Update on the Union's Communication Strategy, with support from BA.

AOO informed the committee that BA will provide an update of what that looks like.

AOO has stressed the importance of Sabbatical engagement in the organisation of the calendar of activities for Welcome in post semesters, rather than brought in at the end.

Excellent teaching – recording lecture policy and further engagement to online teaching.

AOO is meeting with academic staff in SEE to provide feedback from the course and school rep consultation to share what online teaching should look like. Pursuing to develop the provision for online teaching.

AOO will be working with the relevant partners to continue the Black Student Network in the next semester.

SC:

Assessment Feedback and Dissertation Framework has had conversations with LB to put forward a plan of action, involving gathering student feedback.

SC and AOO have had conversations with the library regarding improving resource dedicated to BAME literature and research.

Further conversations regarding decolonising the curriculum within the school of A&M.

TA identified the staff leads for the BAME Awards Gap and outlined that greater communication needed to take place between both working groups. Poor communication across the University is causing further issues.

AO:

Combination of two projects regarding placements.

A programme will take place in the second semester which will provide students with the opportunity to gain additional qualifications that can enhance their employability.

Workshops will involve graduate interviews and preparing students for life after graduation, going into employment.

Great development of student opportunities within the academic school.

AO outlined the further work that will be done to improve the experiences of international students when accessing accommodation.

AO informed the committee that they will be attending a collaborative meeting with ADA of B&L to focus on best practice in the sector towards the BAME Awards Gap.

8. VO Spotlight:

No VO updates for this meeting.

9. Partnership Steering Group

TA informed the committee that the agenda setting will be taking place next week.

TA will request the draft agenda to discuss at length.

TA put forward any requests.

TA also put forward the question to the rest of the committee as to whether the structure of the Partnership Steering Group was sufficient.

AOO stated that further conversations will take place after the draft agenda has been circulated.

Action: TA to circulate the draft agenda to be discussed at a later meeting.

10. COVID Update

RR provided an update regarding the University and Students' Union updated response to COVID:

The University has developed a plan for students to have tests carried out before the leave for the Christmas period, in line with the government's response for student 'migration'.

All students will be tested by the 6th of December.

The test is specifically for students who will be travelling home for Christmas.

If students test positive, there is still sufficient time for students to travel home after isolating before the Christmas period.

All teaching will move online from the 9th of December.

Further communications that will go out to students will be circulated soon – details must be confirmed before circulating.

11. Oasis Community Hub

TA outlined the email that is attached the agenda.

SC and AOO put forward their agreement to the project.

AOO queried what the SU engagement.

AO and JW also agreed.

TA put forward the suggestion of reaching out to the library and the accommodation providers to put collection boxes/sites.

TA then suggested further communication must be put forward with Oasis Academy regarding how the collection of this should be done.

RR suggested working directly with the Environmental and Sustainability team.

Action: TA to forward information of Oasis project to the E&S team.

12. Good Lad Initiative:

AOO outlined the information.

AOO has highlighted that OS is in support of this project and will be engaging with the wider sport and society community to see if there is further engagement.

JW and SC put forward their support.

RR stated that any costing should be put forward to AH.

RR outlined that consent training will take place in early semester two, ran by a separate organisation. The two projects are separate, yet it's important to highlight what is being done, nonetheless.

AOO queried who would sign off the costing.

RR confirmed that the costing would be put into the Student Opportunities budget.

All were in agreement.

Action: AOO to speak with RR and AH regarding this training for Sports and Societies.

13. Prevent Strategy

SC informed the committee regarding communication from a student towards how the SU carries out Prevent.

SC has raised that there should be some form of strategy linked to Prevent but SC has identified that there are a number of concerns regarding Prevent which has led to controversy.

RR provided context – Prevent is a legal duty for the University. Certain wording is a legal necessity that must be used. The University there has no choice over the wording as it is a legal obligation. There is a certain amount of leeway regarding the implementation.

RR outlined that the policy towards Prevent at Salford ensures that students that are vulnerable or at risk of exploitation are directed to the wellbeing team, who are trained in such manors.

RR stated that any amendments must be towards lobbying the government for change rather than the University.

AOO outlined that Prevent will be included in the papers for University Council this Friday. As per the papers, it can be seen that the University handles Prevent and supports students better than other institutions.

SC asked what the response should be back to the student who raised the query.

AOO is happy to go forward with a conversation with the student to speak with the student.

RR stated that the student who is querying the Union's stance on Prevent is carrying out research, and therefore an 'interview' will be fine.

AO will be happy to carry out the interview.

Action: AO and AOO to speak with the student regarding Prevent interview.

14. AOB

GMSA Campaign:

GC provided an update on the campaign proposal.

TA expressed their concerns regarding Salford student engagement with the objectives.

SC agreed; stated that the campaign plan was too 'vague'.

All Sabbatical Officers were in agreement.

Action: TA to communicate with Manchester SU.