

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 May 2007

Present: Lady Catto (Convener), Professor GJA Burgess, Mr D Elliott, Mr J Fairwood, Professor CHW Gane, Mr JR Hardey, Professor WF Long, Ms CA Macaslan, Ms LM Macdonald, Mr C MacKenzie and Mr R Miller, with Mr L Forsyth, Mr RW Murray, Mr M Seed and Ms YS Gordon (Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Cannon.

The Committee welcomed the incoming Sabbatical Officers for 2007/08:

President:	Angela Fraser
VP Advice & Support:	Sakthi Sithamparanathan
VP Charities:	Clare Hobson
VP Education & Employability:	John Hardey (re-elected)
VP Societies & Student Activities:	Helen Mackay
VP Sport:	Gordon Cox (not in attendance)

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2007 were approved subject to amendment of Minute 12.7 to:

It was noted that the University had identified costs of £10,000 for lockable noticeboards across campus and that the Association was to liaise with Estates in taking this forward.

(copy filed as SAC/280507/12)

20. Matters Arising from the Minutes

20.1 Remit and Composition (Minute 11 refers)

It was noted that the proposed changes to the remit and composition had been approved by the University Management Group and would next be forwarded to Senate and Court for approval.

21. Students' Association

21.1 The Committee received a report from the President of the Students' Association (SA), including issues raised by the Sabbatical Officers.

(copy filed as SAC/280507/13)

Radio Station

21.2 It was noted that the Radio Station Committee would receive training on the radio station equipment at the beginning of June, with the aim to launch the radio station during Freshers' Week.

21.3 It was agreed that the SA President should set up a meeting with the Director of Campus Services to discuss possible venues for a permanent location for the radio station. Unfortunately there was not enough space in The Hub to meet the demands of the station and there were accessibility issues with the temporary locations. It should also be noted that the Niteline service location was also reported to be inaccessible and if any space in the University became available Niteline should be considered.

Action: R Miller/LF

21.4 It was agreed that the SA President and the Director of Campus Services should meet to discuss the detail of radio station being played through The Hub sound system.

Action: R Miller/LF

NUS Extra

- 21.5 It was agreed that the SA President and the Director of Campus Services should meet to discuss the advertising of the NUS Extra new discount card available to students.

Action: R Miller/LF

On-line Voting

- 21.6 It was noted that the on-line voting system used for the first time in the student elections had proved successful and the SA encouraged the University to use on-line voting technology at any future elections.

Student Life Survey

- 21.7 It was noted that a survey on student life undertaken by the SA, had been sent to all students with the aim to survey student opinion on different areas of student life, focussing on experiences at Halls of Residences and the nightlife in Aberdeen. It was also noted that the SA would be canvassing student opinion more frequently in future and the SA recommended that if the University was thinking of introducing new policies that affected students, such as changing the length of leases at Halls, this technology could be used to canvas opinion on the needs of the students.

- 21.8 It was agreed that the SA President and the Director of Campus Services should meet to discuss the outcome of the survey results.

Action: R Miller/LF

SA President attendance at the UMG

- 21.9 It was noted that the role of the SA President was as a member of the governing body of the University and, as such, had membership on the Court, JPFECC, Student Affairs and other committees. The University Management Group, however, was concerned with the executive management of the University and the SA President was not a member of the executive management team. To be a member of the UMG would create a conflict in roles for the SA President post.
- 21.10 It was agreed that if the SA President wished to raise issues of governance it should be done through the Review Group of the University Court. The Convener also suggested to the SA President that he ask the University Secretary to provide a copy of the slides used in the recent presentation to the General Council of the Business Committee regarding the governance and management of the University.

Action: R Miller

Class Representatives/Area of Study Conveners (AOSC)

- 21.11 It was noted that the SA Vice-President (Education & Employability) was liaising closely with the Registry and the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) on a number of initiatives such as the role and responsibilities of the Area of Study Conveners, a presentation for staff on the role of the Class Representative system within the wider QAA structures, the role of student feedback in the University and the accreditation scheme for volunteers. It was also noted that through the University Management Group initial discussions were underway regarding a review of the Advising system and whether the Advising role included the pastoral care of students.

Appeals, Complaints, Discipline, Referencing

- 21.12 The SA Vice-President (Advice & Support) reported that the advice given on how to reference properly varied widely across the University. The Vice-Principal (Library & Information Services) reported that whilst it had been compulsory in the Law School for many years that students were taught how to reference properly, it was difficult to introduce a University-wide system as many different practices existed within disciplines. It was noted that the Centre for Learning & Teaching was considering how to improve the current system and how to raise awareness of the generic information which would apply to all Schools. Workshops on how to reference properly were already available at the start of term. The Vice-President (Education & Employability) was to meet with the Head of the Centre for Learning & Teaching to discuss the improvements that were to be made.

Turnitin

- 21.13 It was noted that some disciplines asked their students to put their written work through the Turnitin software before submission, but it would be much better for the University to advocate good working practices so that students were confident when submitting their own work.

Photocopy Costs

- 21.14 It was noted that the cost of photocopying was set by the Directorate of Information Technology and it was non-profit making. The Vice-Principal (Library & Information Services) could not comment on practices at RGU where photocopying costs were apparently 2.5 pence per sheet as opposed to 5 pence per sheet here.

Christian Union – Pure Course

- 21.15 The SA Vice-President (Societies & Student Activities) reported that the Pure Course, run by the Christian Unions affiliated to the Universities & Colleges Christian Fellowship, had been a major issue for many Student Unions across the UK whilst also receiving national media attention. At this University the issue was handled well, did not blow out of proportion and received no media attention.

Fairtrade Status

- 21.16 The Committee was pleased to note that the University had achieved Fairtrade status.

22. University's Gender Equality Scheme

- 22.1 The Committee considered the University's Gender Equality Scheme and was asked to feedback comments to the Director of Equality Plus.

(copy filed as SAC/280507/14)

- 22.2 It was noted that the overall objective of the Gender Equality Scheme was to set out the approach that the University would take to meeting the general duty required by the Equality Act and to mainstream gender equality into all its functions. The Scheme must be published by the end of June 2007 to comply with legislation. The Appendix sets out the Action Plan for the coming three-year period. It was noted that the outcome of the analysis of statistics would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

- 22.3 The SA President requested that the Union bar be included as a non-academic activity for males and females socialising (Section 2.6 of the Action Plan refers).

Action: Clerk

- 22.4 The Vice-Principal (Library & Information Services) advised members to submit any further comments on the draft Scheme to the Clerk as soon as possible.

23. Termly Reports

- 23.1 The Committee noted termly reports from the Students' Association, Heads of Student & Academic Services and the Director of Campus Services.

(copies filed as SAC/280507/15-17)

24. Equality and Diversity Committee

- 24.1 The Committee noted the remit and composition of the former Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities, which was now to be known as the Equality and Diversity Committee. The remit and composition were to be submitted to the Senate and University Court for final approval.

(copy filed as SAC/280507/18)

25. Dental Practice – Old Aberdeen

- 25.1 The Committee noted a letter from the NHS Grampian Primary Care Dental Services, dated 2 March 2007, regarding the new dental practice.

(copy filed as SAC/280507/19)

26. Disbursement Figures

- 26.1 The disbursement figures to the Students' Association and the Debater in 2007/08 would not be available until the beginning of June so figures would be reported directly to the SA and would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

27. Dates of future meetings in 2007/08

- 27.1 The Committee noted the dates of future meetings below (venues to be confirmed). The Committee agreed that the meeting on 10 September 2007 should move from 2.00 p.m. to 11.00 a.m. to accommodate the Convener who had to be in Edinburgh later in the afternoon.

Monday 10 September 2007 at 11 a.m.

Monday 5 November 2007 at 2 p.m.

Monday 18 February 2008 at 2 p.m.

Monday 26 May 2008 at 2 p.m.