

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2007

Present: Lady Catto (Convener), Professor GJA Burgess, Mr S Cannon, Mr G Cox, Ms A Fraser, Mr J Hardey, Ms C Hobson, Ms H MacKay, Ms S Sithamparanathan and Mr J Wilson, with Mrs J Chalmers, Ms K Christie, Mr SV Duggan, Mr L Forsyth, Professor CHW Gane, Mr A Kerr, Mr RW Murray, Mr M Seed and Ms YS Gordon (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Leiper, Professor WF Long and Ms C Macaslan

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2007 were approved.

(copy filed as SAC/051107/08)

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

2.1 Support Arrangements at Hillhead (Minute 30.3 refers)

The University Secretary reported that preliminary findings of a review of support arrangements at Hillhead would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: L Forsyth/S Cannon

3. Students' Association

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

(copy filed as SAC/051107/09)

Lights in Seaton Park

3.2 The SA President reported that due to recent attacks on students in Seaton Park a number of meetings had been arranged with Estates, the police, and the Council to discuss lighting for the Park. The SA would be encouraging the Council to provide different types of lighting to prevent a light tunnel situation, but given that students might walk through the Park anyway after dark, the solution might be to propose that the Park was locked at dusk.

Student Accommodation

3.3 The SA President requested an update on the current accommodation situation and University policy for the future.

3.4 The Director of Campus Services reported that all those accommodated in hotels had now secured permanent residence; the temporary dormitory accommodation at Hillhead was closing this week and thereafter five vacant rooms would remain. A discussion was still to be had to decide if current policy extended to the second half-session intake of postgraduate and ERASMUS students.

3.5 The Director of Campus Services reported that by September 2008 520 beds would be available in new Halls of Residence and a further 200 beds in another Unite premises had been secured. A Project Board would be meeting later in November to discuss the new rooms and the SA President was a member of this Project Board. The accommodation crisis in the summer had highlighted the need for a range of accommodation including en-suite, budget and family rooms. There were no plans to re-introduce the 25-mile radius for students to be eligible to apply for a place in Halls as local students also wished to apply for this facility. It was also reported that the University would hold the lease on the new development and would sub-let to students.

University Union

- 3.6 As the Union bar was due to close at the end of March 2008 the SA President requested that, for the future, students would prefer a proper Union, with space for societies to meet, and not just a bar.
- 3.7 The University Secretary acknowledged that there was nowhere on campus at the moment which would fulfil such a request and would obviously require a significant amount of space, but it would be borne in mind to look for a venue in the interim. The SA was also reminded that the University had invested £8M in the Hub; that social and recreational facilities were available at Hillhead; and that the SA Sabbatical Officers themselves (at the time) had requested that the University Union site in the Gallowgate close due to its significant financial loss.

Meningitis Cases

- 3.8 The SA Vice-President for Advice & Support sought clarification of the policy/protocol between the University and NHS Health Protection Team with particular respect to dissemination of information to students and timeframes for this. The students felt that leaflets on meningitis should have been issued at the same time as letters were issued to students informing them that someone was suspected of having contracted meningitis. The leaflets were not issued until a week later.
- 3.9 The Director of Student Support reported that the University followed the lead of NHS Grampian with regard to protocol and confidentiality prevented information being issued sooner. He would reflect on the recent case and report back to the Committee.

Action: SVD

Floodlighting on and usage of pitches/playing fields

- 3.10 The SA Vice-President for Sport reported that whilst they welcomed the new sports centre plans this was mainly an indoor facility. The University's external pitches were an issue due to lack of adequate floodlighting and also that only 50 matches per year were permitted on one of the playing fields. As a result the Sports Union have to spend almost £4,000 renting council football pitches.
- 3.11 It was reported that the Director of Sports & Recreation was to prepare a detailed report on outdoor facilities at the Balgownie, King's playing fields, the tennis course at Hillhead and the new sports facility, with a view to bringing forward the outcome of the report in 2008.

4. Recognising Non-Academic Accreditation

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report on the above from the Vice-Principal for Learning & Teaching.
(copy filed as SAC/051107/10)
- 4.2 The Assistant Registrar (Academic Services) reported that the paper essentially highlighted the principles important for the pilot scheme to operate and how to differentiate between the different roles. A meeting later in the afternoon would iron out the majority of issues raised by respective parties.

5. Alumni Annual Fund

- 5.1 The Committee received information on the Alumni Annual Fund.
(copy filed as SAC/051107/11)
- 5.2 The Convener explained that the Fund was for the benefit of the students but it was not a hardship fund. Normally there was only one meeting to disburse the monies for the year but the Convener had requested a second closing date so that she could raise awareness of the Fund to the students at this meeting.
- 5.3 It was agreed that as the money belonged to the Development Trust trustees the SA President would contact the Alumni Office to request a presentation from the Development Trust in order to gather the detail of what exactly was available.

Action: AF

6. Termly Reports

To note: Reports as under:

- (a) Students' Association *(copy filed as SAC/051107/12)*
 - Reports from Sabbatical Officers
 - Strategic Plan – Review of 2006/07
- (b) Campus Services *(Oral report)*
- (c) Student & Academic Services *(copy filed as SAC/051107/13)*

7. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted that future meetings would be held as follows:

Monday 18 February 2008 at 2 p.m. – Committee Room 2

Monday 26 May 2008 at 2 p.m. – Committee Room 2

Monday 8 September 2008 at 2 p.m. – venue to be confirmed