## UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2016

**Present:** Mrs J Shireffs (Convener), Mrs M Anderson, Dr A Arnason, Ms D Bruxvoort, Mr L Forsyth, Mr L Fuller, Mrs C Inglis, Ms J Killin, Ms A McClellan, Professor P McGeorge, Dr G Mackintosh, Mr L Macleod, Professor J Masthoff, Professor W Naphy, Ms A Shipley and Professor R Wells with Ms C Cameron (Clerk), Ms B Farr, Mr J McManus, Ms M Paterson, Mr N Qamar, Professor M Ross, and Ms F Urquhart.

**Apologies** were received from Ms K Allan, Mr C Anucha, Ms J Chalmers, Ms M Chapman, Professor S Davies and Mr A Wight.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 9 May 2016 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the following matters arising from the previous minutes, which were not reported under other items on the agenda.

2.1 **Prevent (minute 30 refers)**

A communications strategy regarding the Prevent strategy had been approved and was being implemented.

3. PRESENTATION FROM AUSA ON THEIR PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

AUSA gave a presentation on their plans for the year ahead. It was noted that Freshers’ Week had been successful, with excellent wristband sales and increased engagement. The officers outlined their priorities under the common theme of “Protect, Support and Represent Our Students” which included:

* Chubbe Anucha, Student President – increased engagement with students through a visible presence on campus; improving town-gown relationships; work with low-progression schools; increased online teaching;
* Alice McClellan, Sports Officer – introducing referrals for free gym membership to improve mental health; volunteering programme enhancement; healthy eating accreditation; Get Active campaign;
* Jenny Killin, Welfare Officer – *We Get It* sexual harassment campaign; peer-to-peer mental and sexual health support; improvements to housing support;
* Lewis Macleod, Communities Officer – Guarantor scheme for international students; campaign to lower rents; return of *Shared Planet Café*; panel discussion on food waste; community outreach; student workers rights; and
* Liam Fuller, Education Officer – Student Partnership Agreement; enhancing the Student Representative System; improvement of postgraduate representation; a positive campaign around avoiding plagiarism.

It was noted that the committee would help and support AUSA in achieving their aims to improve the student experience. It was suggested that it would be helpful for AUSA to talk to the Public Engagement with Research Unit around their community outreach plans, to the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing about mental health issues, and to staff at the Rowett Institute around healthy eating initiatives. **Action: AUSA/NQ**

4. REMIT AND COMPOSITION

The Committee received a paper outlining amendments to the composition of the Committee to reflect changes in the University structure. It was agreed that the current *One academic member of staff with an interest in the Undergraduate Student Experience nominated from each College* and *One academic member of staff with an interest in the Postgraduate Student Experience nominated from each College* should be replaced by the new Dean positions as follows:

Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)

Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)

Dean of Postgraduate Taught Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)

Dean of Postgraduate Taught Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)

Dean of the Graduate School

It was noted that the representative from Alumni Relations should also be included in the composition. **Action: Clerk**

It was agreed that representation of international and transnational students was required. It was agreed that the committee would consider co-opting the Dean for Transnational Education should one be appointed. **Action: Clerk**

5. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

5.1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy update

The Committee received and considered the updated Health, Wellbeing and Safety policy. It was noted that wellbeing was now included in the policy, and that the Principal was expected to sign off the policy in due course. It was agreed that students and staff would be key to the success of the policy.

5.2 Mental Health Policy update

The Committee received and noted an update to the Mental Health Policy. It was noted that the next stage in the process was publicising the contents of the policy. It was agreed that AUSA was ideally placed to help with this.

*[Note by Clerk: Professor W Naphy left the meeting at this point]*

It was noted that recent publicity had suggested that there was a shortage of counsellors in the City. It was noted that there had been recent recruitment to the University Counselling Service, increasing the resource to 6 fte, the equivalent of around 1 counsellor per 2,000 students. In addition, a job description was being developed for a Mental Health Co-ordinator for Student Support. It was noted that an Employee Assistance Programme was being introduced to provide additional support for staff.

The Committee noted their support for the policy and associated action plan.

5.3 Wellbeing Centre Proposal

The Committee received a paper outlining proposals for the creation of a Wellbeing Centre to bring together a number of functions in one location. It was noted that a small group was being convened to take this forward.

*[Note by Clerk: Professor M Ross and Mr N Qamar left the meeting at this point]*

6. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF STUDENT LIFE

The Committee received and considered a report from the Directorate of Student Life. It was noted that work was ongoing to increase footfall through *Union Brew*.

The Committee discussed reports that there were fewer postgraduate students living in University accommodation. It was noted that increasingly, postgraduate students require accommodation for family but that the majority of rooms available were single study bedrooms. It was agreed that this issue would be considered further. **Action: LF**

It was noted that some fine-tuning of the operation of the Students’ Union Building was required, including clarifying communication and the individual identities of AUSA and University services. It was agreed that the Head of Student Support and the AUSA CEO would discuss this further. **Action: AS/MP**

The Committee noted the success of the recent Interfaith Kirking of the Students Association.

7. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Committee received and considered a report from the Directorate of Academic Affairs.

It was noted that the 13.2% response rate to the MyAberdeen survey was similar to previous years, but could be improved.

8. REPORT FROM AUSA

The Committee received and considered a report from AUSA.

It was noted that meetings were ongoing to resolve any issues around the new ID cards.

9. ASV MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received and noted the ASV Monitoring Report.

10. CLOSING REMARKS

The Convenor thanked members of the Committee standing down for their contributions.

11. FUTURE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the Student Experience Committee in 2016/17 had been scheduled as follows: (all held at **2.00 pm**):

Wednesday 15 February 2017

Monday 8 May 2017