## UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2017

**Present:** Mrs J Shirreffs (Convener), Rev M Anderson, Dr R Bernard, Ms D Connolly, Ms D Dyker, Prof H Hutchison, Ms E Lister, Mr L Macleod, Prof J Masthoff, Prof P McGeorge, Mr L Ogubie, Prof E Pavlovskaia, Mrs M Paterson, Ms A Shipley, and Ms K Smith, with Ms C Cameron (Clerk), Ms K Scaife, and Mr A Wight.

**Apologies** were received from Ms D Bruxvoort, Ms M Chapman, Ms J Chalmers, Mrs C Inglis, Prof A Jenkinson, Prof C Kee, and Mr D Stuart.

1. PRELIMINARIES

The Convenor welcomed members to the first meeting of the new academic year and noted several changes in the composition due to the restructure of Professional Services.

The Committee recorded their thanks to Sir Ian Diamond, who had announced his intention to retire.

2. PRESENTATION FROM ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Convenor welcomed Ms K Allan to the meeting in her capacity as Alumni Engagement Manager.

The Committee received a presentation on the Alumni Engagement Strategy, and noted the following key points:

* It was important to recognise alumni engagement as a two-way process, with alumni receiving meaningful connection from the University as well as giving to it in various ways;
* Alumni represent the brand of the University, and can “tell the story” of the University in unique ways;
* The vision of the strategy was to *Engage the Aberdeen family in the future of our University;*
* The strategy was themed around six aims:
  + Student experience and engagement – engaging students before graduation;
  + Communications, including events and reunions;
  + Volunteering and Recognition;
  + Alumni networks;
  + Benefits and Services; and
  + Parent and Family engagement.
* The biggest challenges facing alumni engagement are the sustainability of interventions and the need to remain strategic in approach;
* Online and transnational provision was also recognised as a key challenge with the different student experience and requirements of different groups of alumni.

The Convenor thanked Ms Allan for her informative presentation, and suggested a follow-up presentation in due course.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was noted that work was ongoing to enhance communications around the availability of wellbeing resources, with a summer internship having focused on improving the *Clued Up* webpages. The intern had worked on a timetable of student “pressure points” throughout the year. It was noted that student volunteers would blog about specific issues at specific pressure points throughout the year.

5. REMIT AND COMPOSITION

The Committee received an updated remit and composition for discussion. The Committee noted that all remits and compositions were being reviewed as a result of changes to the composition of Court.

The Committee agreed a slightly revised remit:

Responsible for:

* Contributing to the development and approval of policy and strategy regarding non-academic aspects of the student experience (other than those under the specific remit of other University committees), ensuring that adequate regard is given to the student experience.
* Reviewing progress against plans relevant to the non-academic student experience.
* Receiving reports from the Students’ Association, and reports relevant to the student experience from the Directorates of Academic and Student Affairs, People, and Estates and Facilities, and any other bodies as appropriate.
* To ensure compliance with the Code of Practice laid down by the University in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 Education Act.
* To advise the UCTL, Senate and Court on such matters as may be remitted to it by those bodies.

The Committee also agreed a revised composition:

Convenor: Lay Member of Court

Composition: Rector

Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching

University Secretary

Chair of the Undergraduate Committee (or nominee)

Chair of the Postgraduate Committee (or nominee)

Director of Estates and Facilities (or nominee)

Director of People (or nominee)

Director of Student and Academic Affairs (or nominee)

University Librarian (or nominee)

Head of Student Experience

Head of Student Support

President of the Students’ Association plus two sabbatical officers

In attendance: *Chief Executive Officer, Students’ Association*

*Student Engagement Manager*

*Director of Digital and Information Services (or nominee)*

It was agreed that Deans not on the Committee would receive the papers for information.

**Action: Clerk**

The Committee noted that under the terms of the Code of Practice to Ensure Compliance with Part II of the Education Act 1994, the AUSA Business and Budget Plan, Financial Accounts and list of affiliations should be presented to the Committee annually. It was agreed the Financial Accounts and list of affiliations would be received at the February meeting. **Action: AUSA**

6. STUDENT COMMUNICATION, SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION RECORDING – NEW PROCESS PROPOSAL

The Committee received and considered a paper outlining a proposed new Customer Relationship System for recording student communication, support and intervention. During discussion, the following points were noted:

* Serious debate was required around how internal communication was managed, particularly in relation to sensitive information relating to students;
* Debate was also required around the information held on students and how it was treated and shared, including acceptable limits on use;
* Information was required on data protection legislation implications for data collection, storage and sharing;
* Individual students should have control of the data we hold on them and should be asked for permission to share their data. More education on this was required;
* Staff training on data protection requirements was also required; and
* Private conversations between Personal Tutors and students should not be entered into a system that can be accessed by others without permission from the student.

It was agreed that a small group would be formed to further debate these issues as pertinent to the student experience. **Action: DD**

7. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

The Committee received and considered a report from the Directorate of Student and Academic Services. The Committee noted that registration had gone much more smoothly than in previous years, with 10,000 students registered before the start of Freshers’ Week. In addition, fewer queries were received during Freshers’ Week.

8. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF PEOPLE

The Committee received and considered a report from the Directorate of People. The Committee noted that although the Counselling Service was now focused on students only, staff had other alternative options in place. The Director of People and the Head of Counselling were in discussion about how to enhance counselling provision for students.

9. STUDENT ORIENTATION

*Ms B Farr was in attendance for this item.*

The Committee received a paper on the successful Student Orientation event that had taken place during Freshers’ Week. Over 1,000 people had attended one of 22 workshop sessions on a variety of themes.

10. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF ESTATES AND FACILITIES

The Committee received and noted a report from the Directorate of Estates and Facilities. The Committee recorded their congratulations to Mr C Maclachlan on winning Business Manager of the Year at the College and University Business Officers awards.

11. REPORT FROM AUSA

The Committee received and noted a report from AUSA. The following key points were highlighted:

* Freshers’ Week had been very successful;
* The recent SuperTeams event had gone well;
* Work was ongoing to consult with students about what they wanted to see in the Students’ Union Building;
* Following campaigning led by the Communities Officer, Aberdeen City Council had decided not to impose an HMO overprovision policy;
* The first Student Council meeting had been held;
* A Health and Wellbeing Day had been organised for Thursday 12 October;
* A consultation on 24 hour library opening was ongoing; and
* The Cut the Rent campaign was ongoing.

It was noted that due to the short timescales, it was unlikely that works to the Students’ Union Building would be completed by December 2017. It was also noted that the societies’ space at Hillhead could be booked through AUSA for student events.

12. STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Committee received an update on the Student Partnership Agreement. It was noted that the consultation period was nearing an end, after which the final document would be circulated to the Committee for comment. The launch of the Agreement was planned for Refreshers’ Week. **Action: KS/All**

13. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2017/18

Meetings of the Student Experience Committee in 2017/18 had been scheduled as follows: (all held at **2.00 pm**):

Monday 5 February 2018

Monday 14 May 2018