

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2008**

Present: Lady Catto (Convener), Professor GJA Burgess, Mr G Cox, Ms A Fraser, Mr J Hardey, Mr J Leiper, Professor WF Long, Ms C Macaslan, Ms H MacKay and Ms S Sithamparanathan, with Mrs J Chalmers, Mr SV Duggan, Mr L Forsyth, Mr I O'Neal, Mr M Seed and Ms YS Gordon (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Cannon and Ms C Hobson

**8. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2007 were approved.

*(copy filed as SAC/180208/14)*

**9. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Lighting in Don Street (Minute 3.2 refers)

- 9.1 The President of the Students' Association (SA) reported positive progress as it was hoped that lights would be installed during the summer providing a safe route between Don Street and Hillhead.

Student Accommodation (Minute 3.4 refers)

- 9.2 The Director of Campus Services reported that the January 2008 intake had been accommodated easily, and now unfortunately there were 70 vacant rooms.

University Union (Minute 3.6 refers)

- 9.3 The President of the SA reported that the lease on the Union bar had been extended from 31 March 2008 to 31 December 2008.

Alumni Annual Fund (Minute 5 refers)

- 9.4 The Convener reported that £21K had been disbursed to different student groups, £10K of which had been disbursed to 90 societies.

**10. Students' Association**

Childcare Provision on Campus

- 10.1 As the Rocking Horse Nursery was not going to be fit for purpose during the next few years, the SA Vice-President for Advice & Support wished to seek reassurance that provision for childcare on campus would be available for students.
- 10.2 The Director of Campus Services explained that an outline paper had been submitted to the University Management Group recently. UMG had agreed that a commercially viable option should be chosen, possibly a new build operated by another provider and the University was looking to double the number of places currently available (47 places currently available). An options appraisal/risk assessment was to be undertaken and submitted to a future meeting of the UMG. The ideal was that a new facility would be in place before the Rocking Horse Nursery closed.

Unite

- 10.3 The SA President was pleased to report that Unite had appointed a Community Liaison Officer recently. This person would be an important link to improve communication between the SA Information & Advice Centre and the numerous Unite properties around Aberdeen.

- 10.4 The Director of Campus Services reminded the Committee that the University would now be the tenant of the new accommodation at Hillhead and students would be treated the same no matter if they were allocated University of Aberdeen or Unite beds. Accommodation for two new Wardens had now been secured.

## **11. Meningitis Cases**

- 11.1 The Committee considered a paper on the above from the Director of Student Support.  
*(copy filed as SAC/180208/15)*
- 11.2 The Director of Student Support reported that after discussion with NHS Grampian it had been agreed that in future cases of meningitis a message to the whole University community would be put onto the University's computer network, informing the community of a suspected case of meningococcal infection.
- 11.3 He also reported that the Medical Practice in attendance during Advising in the past had not been successful being located in the Elphinstone Hall, and he was looking at the possibility of locating the Practice in Crombie/Johnston or Hillhead Halls instead.
- 11.4 The SA President proposed that an appropriate place to highlight health issues would be in the Student Guide, drawing attention to it during Freshers' Week.

## **12. Support Arrangements at Hillhead**

- 12.1 The Committee considered a paper on the above from the University Secretary.  
*(copy filed as SAC/180208/16)*
- 12.2 It was noted that a small Working Group was to be set up to review support arrangements at Hillhead and other Halls of Residence, with its findings reported back to the next meeting of the Committee in May 2008.

**Action: SC**

## **13. Termly Reports**

- 13.1 The Committee received termly reports as under:
- (a) Students' Association
    - Reports from Sabbatical Officers *(copy filed as SAC/180208/17)*
    - AUSA Annual Report 2006/07 *(copy filed as SAC/180208/18)*
    - Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) *(copy filed as SAC/180208/19)*
  - (b) Campus Services *(copy filed as SAC/180208/20)*
  - (c) Student & Academic Services *(copy filed as SAC/180208/21)*

### Plagiarism

- 13.2 The SA Vice-President for Advice & Support reported that the number of cases of plagiarism recently could have been reduced if the information provided to the students by the Schools had been enhanced, such as informing students how to reference properly. The Vice-Principal for Learning & Teaching and the SA Vice-President for Education & Employability reported that they were working together and working with Schools to draw attention to plagiarism and how to avoid it. Frequently the allegations were against postgraduate and international students so there was a cultural and training issue to address.

### Fairtrade and Healthy Options

- 13.3 The Director of Campus Services reported that as part of the tender process, for the next five years, 20% of all products had to be sourced via Fairtrade.
- 13.4 With regard to providing healthy options in vending machines, the Director of Campus Services would discuss healthy options when the contract was to be renewed. He would also ensure that the vending machines in the Polwarth Building were regularly checked for supplies.

### Writing Skills Course

- 13.5 With regard to the Writing Skills Course for postgraduate students to be piloted in the summer, the Vice-Principal for Learning & Teaching confirmed that consideration would also be given to providing this course to undergraduates in the future.

### **14. Dates of future meetings**

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

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

Monday 15 September 2008 at 2 p.m. – Committee Room 3