

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Minute of the meeting held on 6 September 2010**

Present: Lady Catto (Convenor), Mr S Cannon, Ms K Christie (Clerk), Mr L Forsyth, Dr L Foley, Mr G Hunter, Mr D Leitch, Mr B Lockhart (Observer), Professor WF Long, Dr G Mackintosh, Professor P McGeorge, Ms M McHaney, Mr R Parker, Mr S Robertson Mr A Ryan, Ms C Ryan, Mr B Snelling, Mrs S Vigers (Minutes), Mr A Wight.

Apologies: Ms J Batty, Ms J Chalmers.

## **1. Welcome**

1.1 The Convenor welcomed Mr B Lockhart who was attending the meeting as an observer.

## **2. Matters arising from the minutes**

2.1 The minutes were approved with a note that Mr Keating was mistakenly mentioned twice.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/01)*

### QML Opening Hours (Minute 23 refers)

2.2 The Committee noted the QML opening hours pilot was completed successfully, and that the Library is currently analysing data to examine usage of the Library and its services during the pilot period. The President of the Students' Association (SA) advised student feedback had been very positive. He stated that students are used to having less facilities out-of-hours and that access to the space to study, books on the shelves, and the availability of computers was very beneficial. The SA is working with the Library to investigate options for future opening hours

### Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) (Minute 30.3 refers)

2.3 The Committee congratulated the SA on having achieved the Bronze award, noting AUSA were the first Students' Association in Scotland to receive this award. A presentation will be made at Holyrood and the President of the SA hoped a representative from the University might attend. The SA has also been invited to Westminster for a SUEI presentation. The Committee noted that the SA is now working on SUEI 2 and is hoping to achieve the Silver award over the next few years.

### Controlled Parking Zones at Library Development (Minute 22.5 refers)

2.4 The Assistant Estates Director informed the Committee that the current student car park at QML will become a regulated car park and that the car park at Butchart will be solely within the control of the SA. The number of SA car permits available has yet to be confirmed; Estates and the SA will meet to agree on this.

**Action: President SA and Assistant Estates Director**

### Appeals and Complaints (Minute 22.4 refers)

2.5 The Director of Academic Affairs informed the Committee that a successful Kaizen review had been undertaken involving representatives from the SA and senior staff. The review had resulted in the design of a more streamlined approach to the Appeals and Complaints procedures. The finer details and proposed changes to policy are currently being worked on and will be put before Senate in November 2010 and Court in December 2010. It is intended that the new procedures will be in place for January.

### **3. Student Centre**

3.1 The Committee was updated on the development of the Student Centre, its staff, services and facilities. The Committee noted that work is on schedule for opening the Infohub during the week beginning 13 September 2010, subject to final equipment being installed. The Committee noted the Infohub would be supported by a new Infohub website, and in time, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool which is currently in development.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/02)*

3.2 The Committee further noted that the Student Reception would remain open until the end of late registration (15<sup>th</sup> October 2010) whilst the Infohub established its services. It was also noted that students and staff will have clear information about what services are available at each venue during the period of transition.

### **4. Living Together, Working Together**

4.1 The Director of Student Affairs introduced a Joint publication by NUS, Universities UK (UUK) and Guild HE, illustrating initiatives to address issues relating to students in the community. The Committee noted that whilst the SA and the University were working together to engage local community, there are already many positive examples of community engagement including the SA's charity campaigns and local volunteering. The Director of Student Affairs and the President of the SA would be drawing up a strategy to encourage further engagement between the University and wider local community.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/03)*

4.2 It was noted that the new library will be open to the community and could provide a means to support wider engagement outwith the institution. It was further noted that although the University's cafés and restaurants on campus were open to the general public they don't attract much custom from the local community.

4.3 The Secretary to the University informed the Committee that the draft of the new Strategic Plan recognises the importance of community engagement.

### **5. Students' Association**

#### Butchart Centre Update

5.1 The Committee noted that work to develop the Butchart building was progressing well. The ceiling in the hall has been lowered with sails, furniture had been delivered and a coffee pod was imminent. The new café area will be called 'Alfie's' after Alfie Alexander. The area should be fully operational by Freshers' Week and the SA was pleased how many societies are already seeking to use / book the space available. It was further noted that SA was hoping to have an 'official' opening in October to which all SAC members would be invited.

#### Class Rep Update

5.2 The Committee noted that the SA's recently appointed Education Development Coordinator had been working to enhance the class rep system. Enhancements for the 2010/11 academic year include development of a class rep handbook, College-specific class rep training sessions, a short promotional video to encourage students to become class reps, and plans for class rep-specific workshops, newsletters and social events throughout the year. The SA had met with the Vice Principal (L&T) and the College Directors of Teaching & Learning to keep staff abreast of developments. The President of the SA

expressed his appreciation to the University for funding the Education Development Coordinator role.

#### AUSA Plan of Work

5.3 The President of the SA drew attention to paper SAC/060910/04 which outlines the SA's draft Plan of work for 2010/11. The Committee noted that the document reflected the benefit of the continuity of the President of the SA remaining in post for a second term, and that the General Manger will provide this continuity on a longer-term basis. The Committee noted that priorities in the plan had been identified at a national level, a city-wide level and a university/internal level. It further noted that this document would be made available to all students online via the SA website.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/04)*

5.4 The Committee noted that there was emphasis in the Plan to encourage more students to participate in sports and societies. In particular it was noted that some clubs do not operate well and a 'ClubCap' accreditation would be rolled out to selected clubs as a pilot scheme.

5.5 The Committee also noted the plans under the remit of the President for Charities. It was further noted that that the University donates 300 computers annually to Africa, and it is the intention to send a team of students to Sierra Leone next summer in connection with this project. It was also noted that over £1600 had been raised for the DEC Pakistan flood appeal via the SA 'just giving' website (staff and students) and a stall run by the SA at the City's Country Fayre on Belmont Street.

5.6 The Committee noted that there will be two campaigns under the Welfare and Equal Opportunities remit: Student Mental Health and Women's Liberation. The latter has two strands, a night safety campaign and a campaign to encourage women in leadership.

5.7 The Committee's attention was drawn to the issue of affordable accommodation in the city; in particular the fact that the Council had raised the licence fee for landlords accommodating 3 or more persons in a house and were, in turn, passing this increase in cost to students. As yet there was no evidence to suggest that the housing situation might discourage students from coming to Aberdeen and discourage graduates from staying in the city, but it was noted that it would be worth exploring the issue. The Director of Student Affairs noted that accommodation for students with families was dwindling and that it is important to ensure ongoing provision. The Committee noted that for the coming year there are currently spare rooms in University accommodation and that accommodating new students will not be an issue.

5.8 The SA was congratulated on the comprehensive nature of the draft Plan of Work which displayed accountability and good governance. The Committee did acknowledge the ambitious nature of some of the aims, and in reminding the SA that sometimes things outside SA control will prevent achievement of some objectives, advised the SA to take note of this in preparing the final document. It was noted that the Plan of Work was still to be completed, and the finished document would be taken to the AUSA General Council in October 2010 for ratification. The Committee wished the SA every success with their plans.

## **6. Remit, Composition and Membership**

6.1 The Committee noted the Remit, Composition and Membership for 2010/11. In particular it was noted that Mr Lockhart, pending ratification by Court, will convene future meetings of the Committee.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/05)*

6.2 The Committee was informed that the University Court approves. on the recommendation of its Governance Committee. who represents it on committees of Court and joint committees of Court and Senate. The Senate is responsible for approving who represents it on committees.

## **7. AOCB**

7.1 The Committee noted rehearsal space for music students was at a premium and that space within Johnston had been offered following discussion between the President of the SA and Professor Gane in light of possible performance space being made available within Butchart. The Committee further noted that the working group led by Professors Gane and Stollery, and to which the Rector would be invited, had not yet met.

7.2 Thanks were expressed to the Convenor for her dedicated service on the Committee.

## **8. Staff-Student Partnership**

8.1 The Committee noted the final version of document produced to meet Recommendation 29 of the Final report of the Curriculum Commission: *“there should be a Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, covering students and staff, which would set out rights and responsibilities in learning and teaching, including student support”*.

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/06)*

## **8. Reports**

The Committee noted the following reports:

- (a) Directorate of Student Affairs
- (b) Directorate of Academic Affairs

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/07)*

*(copy filed as SAC/060910/08)*

**9. Dates of meetings in 2010/2011:** The next meeting of the Student Affairs Committee will be held on **Monday 8 November 2010 at 2 pm in Committee Room 2.**