



**The
University
Of
Sheffield.**

**Office UEB/2017/0310/01
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.**

Minutes

University Executive Board

Date: 26 September 2017

Present: Professor G Valentine (GV) (in the Chair),
Professor Sir Keith Burnett (KB), Mrs H J Dingle (HJD),
Mr A Dodman (AD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF),
Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Professor W Morgan (WM),
Professor D Petley (DP), Professor Dame Pamela J Shaw (PJS),

In attendance: Mr R Sykes (RS) (items 2-4); Ms S Bridgeford (SB) (item 4);
Mrs V E Jackson (VEJ) (item 5)

Apologies: Professor N Clarke (NC), Dr T Strike (TS), Professor C Watkins (CW)

Secretary: Mr D T Swinn (DTS)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2017

(UEB/2017/2609/001)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Update on the Student Services Review

(Rob Sykes in attendance for this item)

- 2.1 UEB received an update on the review of student services, which featured several parallel and complementary processes that aimed to reshape these structures in a way that would provide maximum support for delivery of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Members were pleased to note the level of positive input and engagement from colleagues and it was reported that implementation of any structural and related procedural changes was planned to take place by the end of 2017/18. Corporate Communications were supporting the development of a communications plan to ensure that all staff were kept informed. This would be shared with UEB in due course. It was important that this review was recognised as being undertaken under the auspices of UEB and the President & Vice-Chancellor, as with any other institutional initiative.

3. NSS

(UEB/2017/2609/02)

(Rob Sykes in attendance for this item)

- 3.1 UEB received and noted the 2017 NSS data and considered a related report with a series of recommended actions from institutional to Faculty and Departmental levels, in academic and professional services departments. Although the University as a whole had not reached the 50% of replies threshold for the institution to be ranked due to the boycott by around 800 students in protest against the survey's links to the TEF, and

despite the survey's flaws, there were a range of data that required a response in order to ensure that the University continued to deliver and enhanced an excellent student experience.

- 3.2 As in previous years the results demonstrated areas of excellence- and a related need to ensure that good practice was shared and built upon - but in others performance had dipped. It was concerning to note that some areas were failing to address issues highlighted in past NSS surveys, in many cases despite the formulation of an action plan. It was agreed that the continuing trend for generally lower scores for assessment and feedback required specific focus and should act as a driver for the Programme Level View. This would provide an overarching framework within which the issue could be addressed constructively and consistently across departments.
- 3.3 UEB agreed to recommend the series of proposed actions in the related paper, subject to the following additional comments:
- It was vital to ensure that students understood the importance that the University placed on the feedback provided by students. Proactive communication with students about how the University was responding alongside engagement about how to do so. This would be discussed with Corporate Communications, informed by the previous 'You Said, We Did' campaign in the Faculty of Engineering.
 - External input and benchmarking practice in programme level assessments was welcomed, but the costs associated with the TESTA model should be considered before proceeding.
 - WM and FVPs should ensure that information was cascaded, and action taken, via FDLTs and FEBs to departments in a consistent manner.
 - FVPs should work with their FDLTs to reflect on the effectiveness of student representation at faculty and departmental level, building on existing work by the SU; and all UEB members should use their interactions with SU Officers to communicate about the institutional response to the NSS, including further thought about how the University and SU could work together to establish a platform to contribute to the wider policy debate about tuition fees and student funding.

UEB would receive updates on progress made as part of periodic updates on the overall Learning and Teaching Strategy.

4. Student Mental Health Strategy (UEB/2017/2609/03)

(Rob Sykes and Susan Bridgeford in attendance for this item)

- 4.1 UEB received and welcomed an update on the new approach to supporting student mental health and wider engagement with the mental health and well-being. The successful launch of the new Student Access to Mental Health Service on 18 September provided a first point of contact for students to investigate a broad range of mental health support needs in a single triage appointment that enabled experienced mental health professionals to assess student mental health needs and direct them to the most appropriate form of support. The service included a clinical liaison role to help and support staff in supporting students.
- 4.2 UEB also endorsed a draft Student Mental Health Strategy, noting that this was intended to connect with and complement a broader range of student support and academic priorities. UEB made the following additional recommendations:
- The explicit inclusion of PGR student needs, including links to the Doctoral Academy and Faculty Graduate Schools. It was reported that the University had offered to join a HEFCE pilot study into PGR student mental health;

- The need to cross-reference related policies for staff in the strategy and delivery plans to ensure these were fully aligned and connected;
- It was essential that staff understood their legal responsibilities with respect to student confidentiality, particularly when disclosures may be made, for example to family members, due to individuals being deemed at risk or concerns raised.

A related Strategy Group would provide oversight and provide updates to the P&VC, drawing across relevant internal and external services and groups.

- 4.3 More broadly, there was a need to consider how mental health issues were taken into account at academic level, for example reviewing University Regulations relating to extenuating circumstances and case reviews. It was vital that these processes were clear to understand and simple and practical to implement in order to minimise any potential adverse impact on students suffering a mental health condition.

5. Closed Minute and Paper

6. Report of the UEB IT Sub-Group (Meeting held on 12 September)

(UEB/2017/2609/05)

- 6.1 UEB received and approved the report, noting that it was intended to facilitate greater understanding and oversight of IT matters, in particular the need to develop an overarching IT strategy aligned with institutional priorities, notably the objectives of the Learning and Teaching & Research Strategies. This would enable the prioritisation of individual projects, including consideration of their respective costs. HJD reported that she had taken steps to ensure that IT capital was also dealt with via ECSG.

7. Round table

- (a) Research Awards: PJS reported that the School of Clinical Dentistry had been awarded £9.8m for a Sheffield-led project into dental anxiety in children.
- (b) Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Appointments: PJS updated on expected forthcoming appointments and recruitment.
- (c) HEFCE Connecting Capability Scheme: DP reported that the deadline for submission of bids to round two of the scheme was 6 November. As institutions were only permitted to be part of one project, the University would be evaluating three shortlisted projects, all aligned to institutional strategic priorities.
- (d) MindSphere Lounge: MJH reported on the successful launch of the collaboration with Siemens and the hard work of colleagues in ensuring that the project proceeded, in particular John Dale (Regional Engagement and Partnerships).
- (e) Maker Space: MJH reported the successful opening of the student-led Maker Space in the Diamond to promote student innovation.
- (f) Industrial Relations: UEB noted that UCU planned to hold a consultative members' ballot related to USS pensions rights.
- (g) UEB Members' objectives: GV would be contacting members in due course.