UNIVERSITY OF YORK

STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Student Services Committee held on 24 February 2011.

Present:

Ms L Borisovaite (SU Welfare Officer)
Mr J Calhoun (GSA President)
Mrs K Dodd (Academic Registrar)
Dr D Duncan (Registrar and Secretary)
Mr J Greenwood (Director Commercial Services)
Dr J Grenville Pro-Vice Chancellor (Chair)
Mr J Meacock (Director Estates and Campus Services)
Mr T Ngwena (SU President)
Mr S Page (Director Student Support Services)
Mrs B Scott (Lay member)
Dr E Sheen (Academic staff member)
Mrs L Wild (Lay member)

In Attendance:  Mrs J P Ellis (Committee Secretary)
Ms E Harbord (Head of Services, Information Directorate)
Ms H Layton (Director of Internationalisation)
Dr A Wilcox (Director of Administrative Services, University of Hull)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Dr R Aitken (Academic staff member)
Ms S Ford (Academic Staff member)
Ms S Johnston (Head of Campus Services)
Dr N Lunt (Provost)
Mr D Mariano (GSA Welfare Officer)
CATEGORY I BUSINESS

10-11/19.  Introductions and apologies for absence

Ms E Harbord, Mr J Calhoun and Dr A Wilcox were welcomed and introduced to the Committee. It was explained that Dr Wilcox, Director of Administrative Services at the University of Hull, was undertaking an MBA in at the Institute of Education, London and was using this committee as a case study.

Apologies for absence were noted.

10-11/20.  Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2010 were approved.

10-11/21.  Chair’s Business

a. The Chair presented a verbal report to the Committee regarding the current position on new funding arrangements. It was reported that the Director Student Support Services was currently chairing a group preparing the University’s OFFA agreement. He explained the Government’s position to the Committee in that there was an expectation that the university would set itself targets regarding widening access against which it would be measured in five years’ time.

The Chair reported that tuition fees for 2012 had not yet been agreed. The impact of a number of fee models had been assessed but a decision was not anticipated until information from HEFCE had been received and the Government’s white paper had been published in March.

It was confirmed that the university had adopted seven principles in response to the new funding arrangements. These were circulated to members of the Committee:

1. We expect to charge a fee that is appropriate to our position as a high quality institution which competes with the best in the UK and internationally.
2. We will continue to offer places to any student with sufficient ability to benefit from being at York, independent of their ability to pay.
3. We would prefer to charge the same fee for all subjects, so that applicants can choose their course on academic rather than financial grounds. This will be easier to implement if, as expected, the residual
teaching funding from HEFCE is allocated to those disciplines that are most costly to teach.

4. We will devote any extra fee income to improving teaching quality, widening access, enhancing student experience and ensuring the long term financial sustainability of the university.

5. We will maintain our current disciplinary spread, with restructuring of programmes and enhancement of provision where necessary.

6. Given the continuing lack of clarity about both the details of the new funding arrangements and the way the market will respond to the new environment, we will, for the time being, continue to budget conservatively.

7. We will give careful consideration at all levels to how we can best sustain and enhance the university’s competitive position in the new environment.

b. It was reported that a draft Mental Health policy for students was in progress. Once completed it would be circulated for consultation and then brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

c. (Additional item). It was reported that City of York Council proposed to implement changes to the planning regulations regarding landlords’ applications for change of use to houses of multiple occupation. The proposal was put to the Council’s Executive Committee on 1 February 2011. It was noted that the university had submitted a formal objection.

10-11/22. Student Services Committee Away Day

It was noted that the Away Day was a success. The role of governance in relation to Student Services Committee had arisen and it was agreed that this would be raised as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Secretary

The matter of annual reports from service areas was raised and it was agreed that the nature and format of these reports would be discussed as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action: Secretary

10-11/31. Sub groups of Student Services Committee.

This item was brought forward and agenda items 10-11/22 and 10-11/31 were discussed in conjunction with each other.

1. Student First
It was confirmed that the reporting line for Student First was Student Services Committee. It was confirmed that Student First had been set up as a task and finish group but at the Away Day it was recognised that Student Services Consultative sub Committee also had a role in this area.

2. Student Services Consultative sub Committee
Following discussion it was agreed that the membership of the two bodies was very similar, with the exception being lay membership. It was agreed, therefore, that there was little point in continuing with both bodies.

Following further discussion and clarification around the role of Student First it was agreed that:
- The Student First group became a rolling committee which would take the place of the Student Services Consultative sub Committee
- The membership of Student First would be amended to include lay membership
- The ‘pre meetings’ chaired by Mrs B Scott with the JCR chairs would continue
- One JCR chair would attend each Student First meeting (representation to rotate to include all colleges).
- Student First would report to Student Services Committee

It was confirmed that the Catering Focus Group would report directly to Student Services Committee.

3. Student Support Forum
The proposal to phase out the Student Support Forum was considered. Following discussion it was agreed that this would be an agenda item for the next meeting and that consideration would be given to phasing the Forum out from the end of the academic year. It was agreed that consultation should be undertaken before a decision was made.

**Action:** Director Student Support Services to obtain the views of those involved prior to the next meeting.
**Action:** Secretary to include agenda item for next meeting.

10-11/23 Sports Developments and Funding

The Committee considered the report from the Director of Commercial Services on the development of sports facilities and sports funding. It was noted that developments continued at both Heslington West and East sites.
It was confirmed that discussions regarding support for support post 2010 continued.

10-11/24. **Review of Pastoral Support for postgraduate Masters students**

The Chair reported that Mr Russell Yates, Provost of Wentworth College, had been asked to convene a group to review the pastoral support for postgraduate students. The group would report to the next meeting of the Committee.

10-11/26. **Internationalisation Strategy**

Item brought forward.

The Committee received a report from Ms Hilary Layton, Director of Internationalisation, regarding the university’s Internalisation Strategy.

Discussion followed and the work of the team involved in internationalisation was welcomed. It was felt, however, that there was room to integrate more fully the work of the International Student Support Co-ordinator. It was acknowledged that informal links were in place but that ways of formalising these should be identified and that the role of the International Student Support Co-ordinator should be recognised as contributing to the international strategy. Concern was expressed that there was a risk that the work of the International Student Support Co-ordinator could be overlooked and that the work of Student Support Services insufficiently integrated to the overall strategy; their understanding of international student support thereby diluted.

It was noted that there was no mention of the Orientation programme, which represented significant expenditure. It was noted that an action plan was due to follow the strategy and that this would include the Orientation programme.

Discussion followed regarding the work of the Student Union in relation to internationalisation. It was confirmed that the Student Union was currently running a project on internationalisation which would continue for six months. It was therefore appropriate for them to have a role in discussions. It was agreed that the SSC was the best place to formalise such discussions.

A number of issues were identified for consideration including:

- accommodation and how people were housed,
- Events and the significant difficulties students experienced being able to cater for each other.
Following further discussion it was agreed that a sub group should be set up to consider events in more detail. It was agreed that the group would be chaired by Ms Layton and that other members should include relevant students from the SU/GSA, Mr J Greenwood, Mr P Kember, one representative from Campus Services, representatives of College Chairs, Ms L Saunderson, and one further member of Student Support Services.

Action: Ms H Layton

It was agreed that the group would report back to this committee on the events that worked well and those that did not and identify the reasons why. It would also produce guidance for students so that new student committee members knew where to go for practical help.

It was agreed that the SU President should talk to home students to ascertain their views. It was considered important to include the ‘British experience’.

Action: Student Union President

It was agreed that the group should report to the committee in November 2011.

10-11/25 Implications of changes to Tier 4 of the Points Based Immigration System for non EU students.

The Committee considered the report presented by the Academic Registrar.

It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Mr Julian Sturdy MP regarding issues around the proposals for Tier 4 and that a response had been received from Mr Sturdy in support of the university’s arguments.

10-11/27 Plans for student accommodation

The Committee considered the paper from the PVC Students regarding the university’s future plans for student accommodation.

It was explained that current assumptions regarding the likely demand for accommodation were based on application data for 2011/12 and the partially completed planning round.

It was confirmed that apart from three rooms per college being reserved for returning JCR representatives campus university accommodation would not be available to returning students in October 2011.

It was anticipated that, based on current figures, and taking the quantity of guaranteed rooms into consideration, there was a shortfall of approximately
two hundred undergraduate rooms and six hundred and fifty postgraduate rooms. It was explained, however, that this was normally the situation at this time of year.

Concern was expressed, particularly regarding undergraduate students. As student numbers have grown and the accommodation guarantee to first year students has remained, fewer second and third year students have been accommodated on campus.

It was noted that there was a climate of increasing hostility locally to students living in private sector housing and that this issue was likely to be greater next year with returning students seeking private sector accommodation.

It was confirmed that it was likely that clearing students would not be offered a room from next year. It was agreed that the PVC Students would establish the number of students estimated to enter through clearing.

**Action:** PVC Students

Discussion followed regarding guaranteed accommodation for returning postgraduate students. It was suggested that first year postgraduate students had a stronger call on accommodation that returning students. However, it was agreed that there were a number of returning postgraduate students who were vulnerable and were likely to experience difficulty finding suitable private sector accommodation. It was noted that there were arguments on both sides but neither was felt to be strong enough to change the current guarantee.

Discussion followed regarding the provision of additional on-campus accommodation. It was agreed that it was not possible to commit to a particular position at the moment in view of the many uncertainties regarding the new funding arrangements and their impact. It was agreed that there was a need for a more consultative approach to this issue and that departments should be more involved in the process.

**10-11/28 Communication Strategy for Students**

The report from the Communications Strategy Group was considered. The Committee was reassured that the group was making good progress. It was agreed that Ms A Sherratt would be invited to attend the next meeting to provide a report on progress.

**Action:** Secretary to invite Ms Sherratt.
10-11/29  Student Consultative sub Committee

The Chair SSCSC reported that the Board of Study representatives had attended a meeting for the first time.
It was reported that the Student Union was looking into the provision of CCTV and lighting on the campus.
It was reported that concern had been expressed at the length of time it took to receive a response from porters from the red telephones in colleges. It was confirmed that Ms S Johnston was looking into this matter.

It was confirmed that from next term business from SSCSC would go to Student First.

Mrs B Scott was formally thanked for chairing SSCSC.

10-11/30  Catering Focus Group

The Chair confirmed the new name of this group. She reported that the group had struggled with attendance but that since changing its name more students had attended. Representation was still required from catered college accommodation and attempts were being made to obtain this.
Following discussion it was confirmed that representation from The Courtyard should be included.
It was reported that the group was currently gathering information from the different facilities and special events on campus. An example was given of a Polish event on March 3.
It was agreed that this was important work in light of previous discussion regarding internationalisation.
The Chair was thanked for her work.

It was confirmed that a programme of upgrading catering facilities was in place.

10-11/31  Sub groups of Student Services Committee

Previously discussed.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

10-11/32.  Matters arising from the meeting held on 18 November 2010.
a) Student Services Committee Away Day

It was reported that an Away Day for members of Student Services Committee had taken place on 12 January 2011.

b) Membership and terms of reference (M10-11/2 refers)

It was reported that Senate had approved the request to amend the membership of the Committee to include the Registrar and Secretary.

It was reported that the PVC Students had discussed the Committee’s Terms of Reference in order to reflect the significance of student experience with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Registrar and Secretary.

It was reported that the PVC Students had discussed amending the Terms of Reference of the Rents Group regarding recommendations for university owned accommodation with the Registrar and Secretary.

It was reported that membership of the Rents Group had been amended to reflect that Ms S Johnston was the Chair.

c) Student Services Consultative sub Committee (M10-11/7 refers)

It was reported that an agenda item of major sports development and sports funding was included for this meeting.

d) Annual Priorities for 2011 (M10-11/8 refers)

It was reported that the implications of immigration rules for students were included as an agenda item for this meeting.

e) Faith Group Facilities and Faith Contacts (M10-11/10 refers)

It was reported that a working group had been convened to consider this matter and that its first meeting had taken place.

10-11/33. Employability Strategy

The Employability Strategy approved by Senate on 2 November 2010 was received.

Enclosure SSC.10-11/27
Catering Annual Report

The annual report from the Head of Hospitality and Catering was received.

Enclosure SSC.10-11/28

Date of next meeting.

To note that the date for the next meeting is Thursday 16 June 2011 at 2.15pm in Room H/G 15 Heslington Hall.

Jill P Ellis
JPE/March 2011.