**Executive Committee Minutes**

**Thursday 8th December 2016**

**1. Attendance and Apologies –** Apologies were noted

Attended: Habiba Amjad (HA); Nicole Berroa (NB); Stewart Boyd (SB); Sohaib Farooqui (SFa); Rachael Healey (RH); Joshua Largent (JL); Issic Romel (IR); Liam Slough (LS).

Apologies: Rebecca Baker (RB); Joshua Richardson (JR); Afsheen Saleem (AS).

Staff Present: Robin Eves, Chair’s Aide (SV&DC); Ann Gough, CEO (CEO); Thomas Swainson, secretary (C&DA)

**2. Minutes from the last meeting** – None received

HA explained the issues around exec and said this meeting will be very actioned based straying away from the agenda.

**3. Student Feedback Presentation –** A presentation on the Officers on Tour scheme

SV&DC delivered a presentation on main trending issues on campus received through officer on tour reports and feedback through the faculty reps. This report will be attached with the minutes for reference.

In relation to a point within the presentation, SB asked what justification has been given for an open access and electronic monitoring. HA said that it has been raised in another meeting looking at swipe card monitoring and a survey is being conducted around attendance monitoring. The SU is being consulted around the attendance policy and officers have a stance for it being focused on safeguarding. SB said he agrees and it should provide an element of pastoral care. SV&DC briefed officers on what the attendance policy is being created for and claimed that the policy could have a negative effect if implemented wrongly. CEO stated that the University had open areas before and the open campus policy was driven through the University’s desire to be a figurehead in the community. CEO also stated that the SU was cautious against the decision from a safeguarding perspective and are currently monitoring incidents related to the public on campus. Around the attendance policy, CEO said there has been a history of BME students not attending their lectures and the University were trying to promote attendance to this demographic.

**4. Student Issues –** Officers were asked to raise any issues from students

HA asked officers to raise any issues. SB claimed timetabling has been an issue again for his cohort due to the late release which causes an issue with childcare and work commitments. SB has also been trying to engage students in collective action to raise a case for the University to provide ad hoc child care. SB wants to ask students to help create a case using real money terms. RH said at a recent faculty meeting timetabling was raised with the university claiming they are addressing the issue. Some of the issues were due to the movement of FEHW students to MC. HA explained that the University’s efforts to increase contact time have led to poor timetabling. SB also raised skills for learning especially in regards to computer literacy for adult learning.

JL stated that students are not attending early morning lectures. JL also raised the issue that there have been a lot of cases of sexual assault on female students with students been harassed on nights out and around campus. SV&DC talked about Safety in the City campaigns ran nationally that educate people on what is unacceptable whilst also enabling victims to speak. SFa said we do this during the opening week but more can be done to help support victims and educate students on what isn’t acceptable. SFa said there should be another effort in refreshers but then there to be constant education. IR asked if it is around campus or just on nights out. JL mentioned it’s primarily on nights out but does happen on campus too. IR said there is a committee being organised around violence against women which should cover this. JL said that he feels students don’t feel confident to speak out and we need to enable and support victims to speak out. CEO said this is a major issue that we need to provide support for female students as they sometimes may feel they are not a victim of sexual harassment. We need to be a key promoter of safety for women. SV&DC said with evening events it’s easy for SU’s to say were very 9-5 but outside of this time students are still students. RH suggested the idea of Walking buses and SV&DC stated that Christian Unions’ in other SUs provide free tea and coffee to people heading home. CEO said that the Epic Café in the city centre is a safe space and we should promote that. LS said some students won’t attend some of the seminars in welcome week and they’re more focussed on social events, if there was more promotion of the events, more students may attend. SFa said a lot of 1st years attend this programmes but 2nd years don’t feel it will be useful. SF said we need to recapture students. NB should the events be repetitively hosted. SFa said it’s more about making the courses relevant and engaging. SV&DC said that there needs to be a spark to create interest in the seminar and selling them rather than just saying people need to go.

NB mentioned the issue of International Student isolation raised by JR in a previous meeting and the work she has being doing to try and help international students integrate into the University community. She has been asking these students during officer on tour dates to find out what the barriers are. She also claimed they find it hard to integrate into the local community and find themselves with other international students. NB has also asked what they feel is lacking from their experience. The main focus of these students is to improve their academic skills. In Welcome Week they want to find more about the local area to know more about the city/town they live in so more events should provide this. HA said that the University do provide tours of the town for students, NB said she would work with the University on the plans for next year. IR said that there are other events as well that can provide more interesting ways to engage with the local area. SFa said that international students really enjoy the trips organised by the University and would like to see more international students events. The international brunch was a big success and SFa would like to provide more. International students also enjoy the city break trips. SV&DC asked if they were charged, HA said they are subsidised. NB said the trips have a lot of international students that enjoy these types of breaks.

LS raised the issue of Telford bus timetables. The timetabling of the buses has a gap in the timetable that leaves students stranded in Telford for an hour which doesn’t help students who have evening commitments. The timetable is also poorly timed for students leaving lectures at the campus and for the train times for students arriving at the station, if the timetable aligned better with lectures students would be happier. HA suggested a meeting with IR, LS and the University around this issue. LS also raised the unfair nature of the Walsall timetables in relation to Telford’s. IR has also raised some concerns around this issue. NB asked why do they have different timetables, HA claimed it’s quieter at those times and Telford has lower student numbers. LS said the unreliability of the buses causes a loss of trust. SV&DC raised the issue around disabled students using the replacement coaches. IR said that in one instance a student wasn’t able to use the coach and instead had to hire a cab at a personal cost, after this initial case the student was able to get the taxi on the university’s account. SV&DC said that there should be provisions in place with taxi accounts but it’s not 100% clear. SF asked if the officers have any news on the double decker bus provision. HA said the University is in the procurement process now for next year. Officers raised the issue with overcrowded buses, HA said the university were monitoring numbers.

IR stated that some of the students that start later in the year have been allowing late enrolment but there are no measures to support students who have enrolled late. This is due to many reasons that can be out of control of the student. SFa asked if the SU should engage with those students and to try and help support them by suggesting a peer support group that could be similar to one he was involved with and asked if we could help provide it on a wider scale. IR said SFa’s points were good but it could lead to a negative result if those providing the support aren’t delivering it correctly or if collusion is a bye product of this support. HA said that this could be approached on a case to case basis as with assessments its high risk but with practical skills it’s a lot lower. SFa said there are other ways to support students and some tutors were very supportive of the work he was doing. IR said SFa’s work was admirable but we may not get students with the same level of understanding to academic misconduct. NB asked about teaching assistants and if students could get involved. SFa said his tutor said students are fine to provide support but not to make those seeking that help completely reliant on it. SV&DC said study groups are an integral part of the American education system. NB said tutors do host revision weeks. IR said that not everything can be delivered in the time frame. LS said a student joined late in Telford with no support from the University or induction sessions, fortunately the student cohort all helped support students. RV&DC said he agrees with IR to a degree but training can be put in place to help with that aspect.

RH raised issues students have with Queen Street and herself and the faculty rep for FEHW have been asked to take photos of the facilities as evidence.

RH said FEHW students are struggling with late books especially whilst on placement but after talks with the library, students can now ring them and explain their situation if they are unable to physically return the book. Also, students are generally interested in the workshops and the library is trying to expand their offer; they are open for suggestions. IR stated that the sessions and guides around referencing are relatively good but the sessions are too late into the semester. HA said the referencing sessions were moved to stop an info overload and are targeted for better engagement before assessments. IR said there are apparently inconsistencies in the sessions from welcome week and the sessions offered by the learning centre. HA mentioned that different courses use different referencing styles. IR said that there should be more work to make sure students know the difference. SV&DC asked if enough is done around referencing. SFa said some students have modules around academic skills including referencing, other officers said that this isn’t done in all courses. NB said that students arriving in January may not have the relevant session. IR said Erasmus students don’t always have the session either and to his understanding January students have the session. LS said that the modules on his level 4 course doesn’t include the session. SV&DC asked if students understand the importance and relevance of the academic writing modules. LS claimed it’s down to communication and promotion; he has had to direct students to University materials as students don’t know. SFa said that sometimes the sessions don’t fix the problem; you can’t always successful teach students how to reference.

HA explained the content of a paper taken to the University around the future of the Student Voice partnership. There will be focus groups and engagement with students around changes to the project. HA also talked about the SU survey and asked officers to try promote it. HA also raised the issues around King Street.

**Actions for officers**

HA and SB, meeting around Skills for Learning and the other issues raised by SB.

There should be an Awareness campaign for Sexual Assault with JL involved in the planning.

An international student event programme review should be conducted by the SU.

Peer mentoring should be explored with input from SFa.

Referencing sessions should be a topic for officers to engage with students about.

**5. AOB –** Any other business

HA raised the issues around noise in the library and explained that there will be a revamp to try and minimise the disruptions and bad behaviour. LS stated the problem with the lifts and asked what will be done around them. IR explained that the library will try and minimise disruption and are being more responsive.

NB discussed an item raised in a QSS meeting around academic and social experience representation with the University looking at experience champions. They’re also looking at how we record course rep effectiveness to improve the system.

DV&DC gave a quick demonstration of BaseCamp and asked officers to input into the Communication Groups. Officers were generally willing to trial it.

**HA thanked officers for their time and closed the meeting at 18:37**