UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on
Thursday 12 January 2017

Present:
Professor J Scott (Chair)
Dr A Cameron  Dr L Cunningham
Dr F Deepwell  Ms T Dodman
Professor S Gabbott  Mr G Green*
Mr C Harrison  Ms G McIntyre*
Mr A Mitchell  Dr R Norman
Mr R Patel  Mr G Reay

* present only for the business recorded in 17/M4

In attendance: Dr J Kaduk (for the business recorded in 17/M5) and Ms K Galloway (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr C Hewitt and Dr G Wynn

17/M1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
The Group noted that there were no declarations of interest

17/M2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The Group considered the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016.
The Group approved the minutes as a correct record
a. National Mentoring Consortium
   Arising from 16/M59b, the Group noted that 15 student mentees had been found
   for the ethnic minority undergraduate scheme.

b. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2016
   Arising from 16/M60a, the Group welcomed news that two of the University’s
   nominees had been successful in applying for a National Teaching Fellowship: namely
   Dr Sarah Scott (Archaeology and Ancient History) and Prof Chris Wilkins (Education).
   The Group was pleased to note that these latest National Teaching Fellows brought
   the University’s total number of awards since the Scheme began to 16.

c. Lecture Capture
   Arising from 16/M60d, the Group noted the button access problem had been
   resolved by ITS.
   The Chair reported that, as at 31 December 2016, approximately 11k sessions had
   been recorded, nearly 44k hours had been viewed and there had been 204k
   viewings altogether. This equated to 20.4 views and 4.4 hours per undergraduate
   student.
d. **Themes of work: Belonging and resilience**

Arising from 16/M61, the Chair reported that there had been no specific pattern to mature student course withdrawals by course.

The Associate Director of the Student Experience and, in absentia, the Head of Student Support Services reported that there were no existing University activities specifically targeted at mature student retention but activities were planned to be introduced.

The Chair reported that he was involved in discussions to identify how the University can support mature students more effectively, building on the activities currently being led by Charlotte Barratt.

e. **Fabulous First Year**

Arising from 16/M62, the Chair reported that he was discussing opportunities for induction week with the Education Officer of the Students’ Union. The forthcoming change to the academic year would free up time for Year 2 and 3 students to support freshers’ week activities and also attend any departmental sessions specifically targeted at returning students. The Group noted that events for these year groups must be sufficient in number for students to recognise the importance of attending University for ‘induction’ week and that renaming the week may facilitate this process.

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**17/M3 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Group considered its terms of reference with revisions as requested by the Academic Policy Committee to reflect the new reporting line to the Group from the Learning Technologies Advisory Group.

The Group approved its revised terms of reference subject to ratification by the Academic Policy Committee at its January meeting.

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**17/M4 LEARNING ANALYTICS PRESENTATION**

The Group received a presentation from a representative from Nottingham Trent University about its learning analytics student dashboard.

The Group noted the key points of the presentation:

**Background**

- The Dashboard is an enabler tool for staff and students introduced to:
  - improve the early identification of students deemed to be at risk of withdrawal or academic failure because of their level of engagement
  - support interventions that lead to sustained changes in students’ approach to their studies and promote virtuous behaviour
  - empower students in their own learning by giving the means to track their own progress, facilitate feedback processes and reduce barriers within the student and tutor relationship
  - give the institution insight into groups at risk, which may be used in turn to inform course design and delivery.
Features

• A variety of measures are used to assess each student’s engagement (e.g. door swipes, library book log outs, VLE usage, and assignment submission). The specifics of the measures are not revealed to students to discourage attempts to cheat the system.

• Student engagement is compared through the cohort by the Dashboard and it calculates an engagement rating - high, good, partial, low, not fully enrolled.

• Information that is confidential or requires interpretation is hidden from the student view. The tutor view has additional functionality.

• Tutors receive an alert if a tutee fails an assignment or if 14 days elapse with no engagement with measurable factors during term time to prompt them to meet with the student.

Pilot and phased introduction

• The pilot phase involved four courses, 40 staff and 500 Year 1 students. Willing participants were selected.

• Phase 1 comprised an extended roll out, the ethical policy was written and the formal governance structure was developed; Phase 2 was an all school launch and additional measures were introduced for Phase 3.

Outcomes

• Most students reported an increase in the amount of time spent studying and some that they spoke with their tutor or someone providing specialist support as a result of the Dashboard.

• The majority of staff reported finding the system to be a useful tool. Higher frequency log-in related to higher reported usefulness.

• Some low level teething problems persist.

The Group welcomed the presentation and noted that the University would be exploring learning analytics through a number of different routes and would conduct some discrete testing.

17/M5

STUDENT PERFORMANCE REPORT PRESENTATION

The Group received a paper and presentation from Dr J Kaduk about a reporting tool created for personal tutors within the Department of Geography to inform discussion with tutees about their academic performance. The Group also viewed an example report.

The Group noted key points of the presentation:

Background

• The report was introduced with the main aims to provide personal tutors with easy access to up-to-date information on the module marks and feedback of their personal tutees, support students better in achieving their desired course outcome and improve degree classifications.

Features

• Html file reports produced using a software statistics package are automatically emailed to personal tutors. The primary data source is the Student Records System.
• Reports include live hyperlinks to feedback assignments held by the Department of Geography allowing a course overview to be gained of the areas at which the tutee typically excels and those at which they should target improvements.

• Graphs plotting individual academic performance relative to the cohort are available to staff to inform discussion with personal tutees about their progress but are purposely hidden from the student view.

• Supportive comments within the report about progress such as “keep your performance up” are populated automatically according to the particular student’s academic performance.

• The report includes a lengthy disclaimer developed in consultation with the PVC (Student Experience) and other colleagues to educate students about the accuracy of the report and convey that it features extra contextual data provided solely for the purpose of comparison and benchmarking.

Development opportunities
• The capability to link to assignment feedback is currently specific to the Department of Geography because it marks electronically but elements of the report are transferable.

The Group thanked Dr Kaduk for his presentation and welcomed the development of this student performance report. It considered the feedback archive feature of the report to be particularly helpful for supporting students and noted the data presented in graph form were especially useful for module directors.

The Group noted and welcomed the work that was underway to extend availability of the report’s features to other departments.

17/M6  CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair reported that:

a. PTES and UKES 2017
   the University would again be participating in the PTES and UKES surveys; targeting taught postgraduate and Year 1 and 2 students respectively. He would be writing to directors of learning and teaching requesting for the surveys to be promoted to relevant student groups in an effort to increase low response rates

b. TEF 2 submission
   The TEF response submission would be submitted by the University on 26 January 2017.

17/M7  LEARNING SPACES

The Group received a verbal update from the Director of the Leicester Learning Institute about work underway to improve learning spaces on campus:

a. Learning Spaces Strategy
   Work was underway in consultation with key individuals/teams to develop a Learning Spaces Strategy for the University. This would include guidance to ensure decoration would be suitable for students with visual impairments and mental health difficulties, for example. Unfortunately recently refurbished spaces typically used a predominately bright white palate, which was not ideal for these groups of students.
b. **Social Learning Spaces**
The new reading room positioned opposite the Library café at the site of the former Bookshop was already proving to be very popular with students.

c. **New learning block**
The Director of LLI was meeting architects about this planned development.

17/M8  **LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES ADVISORY GROUP**

The Group considered minor revisions to the terms of reference and membership of the Learning Technologies Advisory Group (LTAG; 16/M66 refers).

The Group approved the changes subject to ratification by the Academic Policy Committee at its January meeting.

The Group noted that learning technologies would now be a standing item on College Academic Committee agendas. The Group asked the Chair of LTAG to ensure that minutes would be made available to these committees [ACTION: F DEEPWELL]

Duration of meeting: 2 hours and 30 minutes