

Governing Body
HE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 7 June 2021 at 3.30pm

Present:	C Higgins, Chair J Gazzard, Vice Chair	E Lawrance, HE Student Governor N Savvas, CEO
In Attendance:	C Meredith, Executive Dean of HE E Lees, Vice Dean of HE S Gales, Board Secretary	
Apologies:	T Elkin, Clerk	
Absent:	None	

No interests relevant to items on the agenda were declared by members.

1	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from T Elkin.	Action
2	<u>Minutes from the meeting on 12 March 2021</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March were agreed as an accurate record.	
3	<u>Matters arising from the meeting on 12 March 2021</u> The matters arising were complete or else an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.	
MA1	The Committee agreed the updated Committee Terms of Reference, noting that further changes may be made as part of the governance review.	
MA2	The Committee approved that the CEO should be included in the Committee membership.	Clerk
4	<u>Numerical KPI Update</u> The Committee received a report summarising the progress against the agreed KPI metrics.	
KPI 1	<i>Applications</i> – though significantly below the final 2020/21 target, applications are higher than the same point last year, despite a reduced course offer. This is encouraging.	
KPI 2	<i>Accepted offers</i> - are higher than the same point last year, with a strong conversion rate compared to last year's whole-year conversion rate (which includes enrolments via Clearing).	
KPI 3	<i>Average Tariff Entry</i> – exceeding 2020/21 target	
KPI 4	<i>Retention</i> – exceeding 2020/21 target	
KPI 5	<i>Good Honours Outcomes</i> – data not yet available	
KPI 6	<i>Employment Outcomes</i> – data not yet available	
KPI 7	<i>NSS</i> – data not yet available	
KPI 8	<i>Student Ratio to Staff</i> – data not yet available	

CMeredith explained that the team are continuing to analyse the historical data available and to ensure consistency of use within the new KPI reporting. Additionally, the team is working to define what future data are captured and the process for reporting to ensure the data are not skewed or misrepresentative (e.g. HNC and HND enrolments are currently at the start of the new year and if not properly counted might benefit enrolments but skew withdrawal data).

The Committee discussed the APP performance and noted that retention remains high, and CMeredith confirmed further work is being undertaken to quantify and track engagement.

The Committee discussed how Covid-19 will affect the NSS results and what institutions to benchmark against and noted that, given Covid-19 has affected all institutions, it should still give some meaningful data to compare with both local and national institutions.

The Committee commended the US team for the scale of progress in less than ideal circumstances.

5 Data Registry and Compliance Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee **reviewed and endorsed** the US Leadership Team's Terms of Reference, noting the membership is to be confirmed following further discussions within the Executive.

6 Student Communications Policy

The Committee considered and **approved** the Student Communications policy.

7 Student Metrics Paper

The Committee received a report summarising the progress against the student KPI metrics (as in Agenda item 4). The report also explained the data sources used for US courses (including those validated by University of Suffolk, University of East Anglia and Pearson, as well as those directly validated) and how the data will be used to enhance the US offer to students.

To further support student retention; in 2021/22 US students will benefit from Personal Academic Tutors who will provide wrap-around support to students throughout their academic study and will signpost students to specialised / additional support (including peer-to-peer counselling delivered by the US counselling students), as well as the use of a central IT system (Pro-monitor) to coordinate the early interventions and monitor the effectiveness of wrap-around support. There will also be new inductions (both for new starters and returning students) to advise them of the support available to them.

The student HE governor had been involved in these developments and endorsed them as a significant improvement in student support.

To further support students' attainment and progression; we are working with students to advise them of the terms for reassessment (which differ between validating partners) and working with them to provide appropriate scaffolding and/or personal support, as well as continuously monitoring assessment data to understand if curriculum adjustments need to be made.

8 Student Governor

The Committee received a report outlining the pros/cons of establishing an US Student Association and using this as a mechanism for appointing the HE Student Governor to the Corporation.

The Committee agreed the ambition to establish a Student Association, however noted that without a strong pre-existing student culture, Student Charter and mechanism for effectively collating Student Voice; it is too early to establish an enriching US Student Association. ELawrance agreed and noted there is need for market research with students to proactively co-design and participate in forming the Student Association.

The Committee discussed whether, as a precursor to a student association, US students should elect a Student President who oversees and chairs a Student Council (comprising of the course representatives) to consider how to run a Student Association and/or student social enrichment events. The Student president would also act as the HE Student Governor joining WSC's Corporation. The Committee agreed that a Student Council should be established and report into the pre-existing US Committees, to support student voice and co-design and to lessen the workload of the Student Council. ELees to draft role description of the Student Council, class representatives and Student President (also to be HE Student Governor and member of HE EEC) and to share this with the Committee for electronic approval.

ELees

CHiggins to undertake induction as student governor.

CHiggins left the meeting at 4.42pm and JGazzard assumed the role of Chair.

9 Strategy and Curriculum Strategy Update

The Committee received and considered an initial draft of US's Strategic Framework for 2022-27.

CHiggins re-joined the meeting at 4.48pm and resumed the role of Chair.

The Committee discussed whether the proposed vision is too narrow and/or prescriptive; however, noted that the vision does fit national as well as local priorities and serves as a clear unique-selling point for US. The Committee supported the proposed structure of the Strategic Framework and agreed to review a future more complete draft version, prior to it being endorsed for Corporation approval.

10 Office for Students Compliance Grid

The Committee received an updated version of the internal evaluative report showing US's compliance with CMA. Progress against condition:

- A1 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- B1 Improved from amber-rating to green-rating
- B2 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- B3 Remains red-rating
- B4 Remains red-rating
- B5 Remains green-rating
- B6 *Not applicable*
- C1 Improved from red-rating to green-rating
- C2 Improved from red-rating to green-rating
- C3 Improved from red-rating to green-rating
- D Remains green-rating
- E1 Remains red-rating
- E2 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- E3 Remains amber-rating
- E4 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- E5 Remains green-rating
- F1 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- F2 Improved from red-rating to green-rating
- F3 Worsened from amber-rating to red rating. This was due the complexities of complying with OfS requirements for multiple validating partners, and accordingly US is developing processes and systems to expedite compliance.
- F4 Remains amber-rating
- G1 Remains green-rating
- G2 Improved from red-rating to amber-rating
- G3 Remains green-rating

It was noted there are still some significant risks. CMeridith said the team were working hard to mitigate these risks, which had mostly arisen as a result of the withdrawal from UoS, and would alert the Committee if it appeared that there were likely to be any problems in advance of any possible OfS audit.

11 DOPs Compliance Sign-off Request

Due to incomplete data this report was not available. Clerk to add this agenda as an item for discussion at next meeting.

Clerk

12 Any other business

• **Additional Membership for the Committee**

The Committee agreed to discuss electronically whether they had any recommendations for new members of the Committee.

All

- **University Studies name**

CMeredith noted that we have received written confirmation from the Secretary of State that US is able to formally use the protected term 'University' in the business name of University Studies at West Suffolk College and University Centre at West Suffolk College.

- **Thanks and farewell to HE Student Governor**

The Committee thanked Emma Lawrance for her immense and valuable contribution to US during her tenure as HE Student Governor, and wished her every success for her future endeavours.

Date of next meeting:

- TBC

The meeting closed at 5.10pm

Clerk