

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON

SENATE/COUNCIL

STUDENT SENATE

Summary Report on the meeting of Student Senate, 26 February 2014

This brief report summarises the business of the eleventh meeting of Student Senate.

1. Report from the last meeting

The Report from the last meeting of Student Senate was approved, and the Secretary highlighted the section on TAPS (the Transforming Assessment Pilot Scheme, sponsored by the Higher Education Academy), presented by Learning Enhancement staff. The staff passed their thanks on to student senators, who had responded themselves and also encouraged other students to do so, with the result that some 100 responses had been received. Together with input from the academic programme representatives' conference and other sources, staff had amassed a wide range of material to inform their research and proposals.

2. Report back on 'Top of your agenda' item

The Secretary reported on the University's responses to the six major items raised by student senators under this item at the last meeting. The aspects covered related to extended opening hours and silent area 'zoning' in the Library; security operations at Whitelands College; provision of information on the rights of off-campus landlords; earlier provision of academic timetable information, and the use of Wednesday afternoons for compulsory teaching sessions.

Progress had been made in most of these areas, and student senators' concerns had been addressed. Further investigation continued however, by staff and the students' union, into where compulsory teaching was timetabled on Wednesday afternoons, which was preventing some students from taking part in sporting fixtures and activities.

3. Student Life development

David Dickinson, Director of Student Experience, opened a discussion about the University's Student Life Development project, concentrating on the central themes which guide and focus activities:

- Strengthening community and a sense of belonging
- Raising awareness and enhancing engagement
- Facilitating student development

Student senators and RSU members considered that these tenets, and the related remit of the Student Life Development Group, was appropriate. Annexes to the paper comprised 'Some key elements of the student Life programme' and 'Model of the Roehampton Student Experience'.

In the context of this item, discussion continued about student societies at the University, which had increased in number and membership.

4. Developing Sport at Roehampton

The Director of Student Experience introduced a new Sports Strategy and information regarding a bid to the Sport England University Activation Fund, both of which were welcomed by the meeting.

The appeal of activities not labelled specifically as 'sport', and non-competitive in nature, was discussed, as a range of activities of this sort already existed at Roehampton and could be developed further to encourage more participants. Attracting students who are resident off-campus to events needs to be encouraged, as do the social activities after sports events that are common and popular at other universities.

5. Capital Development Projects/'Ideal Student Hub'

Paul DaBell (RSU), student representative on the capital development project boards, updated the meeting on progress on all three major projects.

Under this heading, Rachel Blaney (RSU) and colleagues reported back on visits to Universities in the west and Wales to investigate student facilities (RSU's WISH project). It was considered that each institution visited had strengths that Roehampton could learn from, and visits to another group of universities in March would provide further useful comparisons.

6. National Student Survey (NSS)

Senior staff members welcomed all the efforts of RSU and staff to encourage final year students' participation in the NSS, which had yielded very high numbers of responses in all academic departments. The deadline for submission is 30 April.

7. Student-led Budget

This meeting included initial discussion with students regarding their recommendations for spending the £50k student-led budget allocation for next academic year, 2014-15. The President of RSU reminded about previous years' allocations, and the continuing success of some initiatives which had commenced as a result of the student-led budget, such as extended (24 hour) library opening hours.

Jon Carter (RSU) presented initial ideas that had already been put forward by students for next year's budget, and these would be considered further, with a view to deciding on areas of spend at the next meeting of Student Senate.

8. 'Top of your agenda'

In this standing item on the Student Senate agenda, student members present raised a range of matters currently affecting their student experience, both positive or negative. Where there were concerns indicated, these would be looked into by staff and RSU members with a view to providing solutions and/or reporting back to the next meeting.

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 7 May 2014

*Andrew Skinner
Deputy University Secretary
Secretary to Student Senate
February 2014*