

Hertfordshire Students' Union

Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting held on Thursday 01st March 2018 in C214

Members present: See attached list

In Attendance: Phil Mackay – Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Hobbs – Director of Engagement and Communications
Scott Grace – Student Engagement Manager [Clerk]

Apologies: See attendance list

<p>AMM.1</p>	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Adil opened the meeting at 17:05 and welcomed everyone for attending. Adil set out how the meeting was going to run.</p> <p>Adil also welcomed Prof Quintin McKellar, Vice Chancellor of the University of Hertfordshire who would be taking questions from the floor.</p> <p>Apologies were recorded on the attendance sheet.</p>	
<p>AMM.2</p>	<p>Questions to the Vice Chancellor</p> <p><i>Before becoming VC, what Jobs did you have?</i></p> <p>I've had an unusual journey. I started as Vet and am one of only two Vets who are VCs. I Studied at Glasgow Vet School and worked up the ranks before becoming Director of Research Institute. I then became principle at Royal Vet College and applied to UH when the role came up.</p> <p><i>Of the 96.2% of employability rate the university has – how many are international?</i></p> <p>The figure is worked out by calling up our graduates within 6 months of graduation. I believe some are now included.</p> <p><i>Is that something that could be improved on?</i></p> <p>Yes. The University are already looking at this as we are interested in and we continue to build our alumni relations. I visit Malaysia once a year as this is one our biggest overseas cohorts of students, to facilitate graduation.</p> <p><i>Is it possible to improve the security of the academic buildings?</i></p> <p>This is something that requires a lot of thought. There are some buildings that we allow public to access and use some facilities such as people can apply to use our library</p>	

	<p>for example students from other university's that live near UH. We have to ensure the security of the equipment and we want to prevent undesirable people in.</p> <p>I don't know if we quite have the balance right but we did have a discussion about this two years ago following external affairs such as terrorism and school shootings in the USA. We considered perimeter fencing and decided not to. We were right at the time – as we haven't had any incidents. But we have to be mindful of the risk we faces.</p> <p><i>What about the security of the students who live off campus?</i></p> <p>This is much more difficult as we do not have any jurisdiction over off campus areas. However, through the Dean of Students office, we try to understand where students live. We have a close relationship with the local police and we have 1 PC and 2 PCSO's linked to the Uni.</p> <p><i>What's happening with the Street Lights around the campus?</i></p> <p>I will take that back to estates and get that fixed. I have lobbied the local MP and council to address the lack of street lights back to the station and will continue to do this.</p> <p><i>What position does the University take on students who have a violent criminal record?</i></p> <p>When a student has any violent episode, the Dean of Students will ask me to suspend them until we find out what has happened. If they have been found to be violent they will be thrown out of the University. In some circumstances, this maybe for a year but the university certainly takes action.</p> <p><i>As Law students study four modules plus one additional module if I want to. If you take this up, you can't take part in extra-curricular activity – can this be changed?</i></p> <p>I will take this back to the Dean of School and discuss this with her. I am not promising to have this over turned.</p> <p><i>A lecturer in the School of Creative Arts has left because a lecturer was made a better financial offer from another university and UH wouldn't match the offer. Guardian articles states that VC salaries are out of kilter with the academic staff. What is your view on this?</i></p> <p>This is quite complicated. The pay for Academic and professional staff is agreed nationally therefore it is not within the gift of the university to raise salaries. Staff can apply for promotion and therefore increase salary through the scales. Shelby and I have just seen some data that</p>	<p>VC to respond to the student.</p>
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analysis the efficiency of the University and this demonstrates that we have less staff but they are paid more. This could be that we have promoted staff or simply they are older and have moved through the scales already.

The conversation around VC is currently a hot topic. Firstly the question surround is VC pay governed enough. What happens is Uni has a remuneration committee which looks at senior staff pay. I have come off the committee that looks at my salary but will remain on the committee that decides pay for other senior staff as I am their line manager. There is also the issue of the absolute amounts that VCs get and there has been a lot of debate this in relation to other jobs. Some people will say that pay is lower than a commercial company. Others will say that this is funded by tuition fees and that it should be lower. There is a study comparing VC pay to other public sector senior salaries and it found that VCs are usually paid less. That's the fact but in terms of if we get paid too much is a personal decision for you and others to decide

What is the view of the University in having a hardship fund for international students?

My understanding is that they are open to all students' not just home students. I would like to think that we would look to help any of our students that find themselves in trouble.

At the moment – it does not extend to all students?

Really! Let me take that back and see what I can do!

Lots of students are facing mental health issues in a range of ways – what is the University doing to lobby at the national level to address this?

There is currently an initiative that is designed to help students suffering with mental health issues and we are a part of that. We have seen a massive spike in the number of students taking this up this year so we now need to think about what we put in place to respond to that. *Are we lobby on reducing the stress?* We are working with the HE finding review on issues such as maintenance grants which is currently a loan therefore adds a burden or they do not take it out and have the additional burden of the a job which puts pressure on their time. We would also like to address the interest rates that students face on their loans.

How do you work with students to improve our rankings and that international rankings reflect our richness?

We have looked at all the various metrics that affect where we stand in the tables and we are responding to this appropriately. The one we need to continue to focus on is

	<p>the NSS feedback which has a massive impact. We are trying to improve the teaching experience which in turn impact on the general experience.</p> <p>In terms of the overseas rankings that factors in collaborative research and the numbers of international students which is an area where UH does well.</p> <p><i>Will the university to look to extend the NSS?</i></p> <p>We already gather feedback from other levels via mid module questionnaire plus other work such as the SU survey.</p> <p><i>From your own point of view, is Business facing the right direction to move forward with?</i></p> <p>What we hoped would emerge would be that say a Humanities students would be ready for employment when they graduate – we do not intend to be seen as giant business school. The strapline emerged a long time ago and reflects that we are situated in a business rich area, we developed from a business – the DH aircraft factory and 80% of our degrees are accredited by a professional body. We felt that this gave it a unique approach. When we go forward, we will certainly look at this as we review the strategy in the future.</p> <p><i>Are the university planning to invest in facilities such as the aerospace simulator?</i></p> <p>I can't answer the direct question however I will explain how we spend the money we get. SL has lobbied me to publish and it will break down how money is distributed across the university. To invest in big capital expenditure, we need to make a surplus so that we can put this into reserves. We then invite schools to bid for some money to invest in the facilities that they need. A committee then decides how to allocate that money in order of priority.</p> <p><i>You expressed importance of placements – international students can struggle with this as they would then require a visa?</i></p> <p>I lobby to have the visa restrictions for international students relaxed – and we have made very little progress on this but that will not deter us from what we are looking to achieve.</p>	
<p>AMM.3</p>	<p>Presentation of the Students' Union Accounts and Report from the Trustee Board</p> <p>SL presented a report from the Trustee Board setting out what the Students' Union had been working on and achieved during the 2016/17 academic year.</p>	

	<p>There were no questions from the floor.</p> <p>This was adopted unanimously.</p> <p>SL Presented the accounts and financial statements for the Students' Union and its subsidiary companies. There were no questions from the floor.</p> <p>These were accepted unanimously.</p>	
AMM.4	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was none.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 18:30 and was followed by refreshments.</p>	

Signed:

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