University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 19 May 2017

Responses to Issues Raised in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries 2015-16

Dr Richard Lowdon, Senate Office

1. Process

As in previous years, the Undergraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries for each College were submitted to the Senate Office two weeks in advance of the November meeting of ASC. The Postgraduate Summaries were submitted to ASC two weeks in advance of the January meeting of ASC. The College Summaries were then reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes. Following consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, ASC confirmed and identified additional themes that they wished to be raised. The Senate Office then contacted relevant services to seek updates and responses to these University-wide matters.

2. Key Themes

The following issues from the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries received responses from the relevant University Services:

- Quality and suitability of teaching spaces
- MyCampus
- Student mental health
- Recruitment and marketing

3. Quality and suitability of teaching spaces

Quality and suitability of teaching spaces was one of the most prominent topics raised in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries. The following specific issues were sent to Estates & Buildings for commentary:

Availability of rooms for teaching and exams

I. "Teaching space availability – especially for large group teaching is very poor such as GUU debating chamber". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

II. "Exam Arrangements: being held outside of core teaching hours". (Celtic and Gaelic)

Quality of teaching spaces

III. "There is an entrenched shortage of suitable teaching rooms of all types and sizes. Lecture rooms are set up in conference style with fixed or panelled boards instead of roller boards. Local teaching staff report that they are not consulted when refurbishment takes place and that refurbishment often worsens the setup of a room in terms of what is needed for teaching rather than improving it". (College of Science and Engineering)

IV. "The quality of teaching accommodation – both in terms of size and accessibility – remains a concern amongst staff. Similarly there is a shortage of student spaces

within the University. Students consistently express a desire for spaces where they can come together and work as a group". (SSPS)

V. "There are issues with some rooms in the Medical School building. There is interference in the PA system with sound from other nearby lectures interfering and causing disruption. This appeared to be a known issue but was not resolved. This is unsatisfactory and needs to be urgently addressed". (Adam Smith Business School)

Consideration of location during allocation of teaching spaces

VI. "Room bookings are problematic, particularly for courses with irregular timetables. Students and staff find it difficult to have different venues each week, especially when there are several last minute changes of venue (Accounting and Finance). This does not help with student satisfaction or attendance". (Adam Smith Business School)

VII. "Timetablers are now unable to request specific buildings through CMIS therefore students who on this programme (BACP) are non---traditional students and attend infrequently and not familiar with the campus are sent to various locations. This has huge implications for staff and students. Staff booking taxis to transport them between locations will be costly and students will communicate their concerns and dissatisfaction in evaluations and in NSS". (Education)

VIII. "Once again, it would appear that in preparing the room allocations, the previous year's allocations are ignored and a fresh start is made. There is no memory in the system. There is no coherence in where students are sent for different lectures – first year classes taught daily are allocated different rooms in different buildings on different days. Students find themselves being expected to travel from the St Andrews Building in Gibson Street to the Boyd Orr Building near Byres Road within the 10 minute lecture changeover window; this is not possible for able-bodied students let alone students with physical impairments (this is a DDA issue)". (College of Science and Engineering)

Communication with Estates and Buildings

IX. "There would appear to be very little communication between E&B and teaching staff. In particular, the on-campus teaching facility "Rock around the University" was disturbed and, in part, destroyed by work associated with the installation of the new University heating system". (College of Science and Engineering)

Wheelchair access

X. The College of Arts noted that many teaching rooms were inaccessible to wheelchair users.

3.1 Response from Estates & Buildings

The following response was received from Estates & Buildings in relation to these issues:

"The University has recognised the current challenges in providing high quality teaching space across all parts of the campus. As a result the first project which has been approved under the campus development plan is the Learning & Teaching Hub. The University Court approved the business case for this project last December. Work starts shortly and the University will invest nearly £90million over the next two years to deliver this brand new facility. The intention is that it will open in 2019.

To enable the new building to be developed the current "Maths and Stats" building will have to be demolished and the staff and students from the School will move to new temporary accommodation in Easter.

The new building will provide new lecture theatres and study spaces as well as spaces for group working and will help address many of the issues raised in the monitoring process.

In the interim the University continues to carry out refurbishments and enhancements to teaching space and have focused in 2016 on trial new ways of teaching. In 2016 new TEAL teaching rooms were opened and these have received positive feedback.

In the last twelve months estates colleagues have also introduced a new process for inspections of teaching spaces so that minor repairs can be picked up more regularly. Estates however remain reliant on users of the rooms to let us know of any faults they may see. Were there at specific maintenance issues raised in the comments then these will be investigated.

Finally the comments regarding "Rock around the Campus" are noted. Estates are committed to making sure that the campus is where possible used as a "living lab " and Indeed many engineering students benefitted from being able to engage with the District Heating contractors through and site visits and a viewing platform for research students provided within the new boiler room. I will arrange for colleagues in Estates to speak with Engineering to understand were any of the Rocks have been disturbed".

4. MyCampus

Another key issue identified in the College Annual Monitoring Summaries was the administrative workload and technical issues associated with MyCampus. The following comments from the Summaries were reported to Student Lifecycle Support and Development:

I.   "Increased flexibility required in MyCampus to accommodate master's teaching, which often involves specialist lecturers by experts and so have to be booked or changed at short notice" (College of MVLS).

II. "MyCampus for reviewing good cause has huge administrative workload implications, especially since the number of good cause applications received has increased tenfold compared to previous years. Clarification from University is needed concerning guidelines and possibly allowing students to review their options (extensions, etc.) before submitting good cause applications". (Education)

III. "MyCampus continues to cause problems; little has changed since its introduction but staff feel that there is little point in continued reporting of problems because there is no institutional willpower to address the situation … Staff report that the micromanagement that MyCampus employs as a result of its coding is the direct cause of the administrative burdens teaching staff have". (College of Science & Engineering)

4.1 Response from Student Lifecycle Support and Development

Student Lifecycle Support and Development provided the following responses:

I.   "More detail may be required to understand this issue, specifically what is required or what is not working for the College. Room requests/ bookings are actually made on CMIS, all updates and changes are requested /recorded there. MyCampus receives this information as part of an overnight interface in order to display the

information. All users (students and staff) are encouraged to use the timetabling app for room information and updates.

II. "SLSD is committed to reviewing the Good Cause functionality in partnership with the Senate Office.

Senate would be best placed to advise on the rules and guidance provided for Good Cause as it falls within their governance.

III. "It is difficult to respond to this comment as no specific examples of issues are provided by the College. Much work has been undertaken to improve usability of MyCampus since its introduction in 2010 and it is regrettable that this College has seen no benefit. As users become more experienced in the use of systems following initial implementation; as the system developers learn about new functionality; and as business process change, there can be opportunities to make enhancements. SLSD actively encourages feedback from staff through SupportWorks, Specialist User Groups (Advising, Timetabling, Student Finance etc.) and the Registration & Enrolment Operations Group, or through Future Functionality requests. SLSD would welcome the opportunity to work with the College to better understand the specific difficulties they believe are caused by MyCampus and the existing coding/configuration.

5. Student mental health

Student mental health support was raised in several College Annual Monitoring Summaries. The Clerk of Senate was provided with the following comments:

I. "Concerns about provision of mental health support in the University. As noted last year, this is a 'basic and urgent issue': first appointments take too long, and further referrals are resulting in long waiting times" (College of Arts).

II. "Adequate resourcing needed for University Services to support student numbers and demand. Currently, support services for students with mental health problems are massively over-stretched" (College of Arts).

III. "Student mental health: it was noted that there is an increase in need among students which requires increased provision of Counselling Services, and that changes to the Advising system mean that students no longer have a single named Adviser of Studies, but have access to a team of highly trained Advisers who can assist with academic matters arising as a result of experiencing mental health issues" (College of Arts).

IV. "Expansion of mental health advice and counselling services within the University are urgently required" (College of MVLS).

V. "Specifically, there should be more pastoral support given the statistics that show how mental health issues are on the rise especially among international students. Staff also need some training in dealing with these mental health issues" (College of Social Sciences).

5.1 Response from the Clerk of Senate

The following response was received from the Clerk of Senate:

"In 2014 CAPS piloted a peer mental health support system in the School of Veterinary Medicine, with student volunteers being trained by CAPS staff in basic counselling skills. The student volunteers act as peer supporters to their student contemporaries. CAPS manages the process overall, setting up a support network with the volunteers

continuing to receive group supervision. Following the success of the pilot, the scheme has now been rolled out to the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Social & Political Sciences and ASBS. CAPS has noted a drop in referrals to the Service by students from participating Schools. In addition, following a discussion at Council of Senate in June 2016, it was agreed that extra resource would be sought for CAPS and would be folded in to the annual budget round discussions in early 2017".

6. Recruitment and marketing

Another issue identified in the Annual Monitoring Summaries related to recruitment and marketing - this was particularly noticeable in the College of Arts Summary. The Marketing, Recruitment & International Office were sent the following comments for response:

I. "Current recruitment levels jeopardised by the increase in PGT fees. Acute need for funds to enable us to establish PGT bursaries to enhance marketing and recruitment. This should be regarded as investment which will secure a greater return, or at least sustain current recruitment levels" (History).

II. "Additional resources for marketing/publicity materials needed – particularly in light of no longer having SFC funded places available for two TS PGT programmes, including this one" (School of Culture & Creative Arts).

III. "Modernities MLitt: would like assistance from the Alumni Office with maximising the potential of its thriving Facebook group to help with marketing. This would also apply to other programmes with social media interfaces" (School of Critical Studies).

6.1 Response from the Marketing, Recruitment and International Office

The following response was received from MaRIO:

I. PGT Fees - The UK/EU Fee increase from 16/17 to 17/18 was minimal - £300. The International fee increase for the same period was £900. All fee increases were recommended to Colleges and SMG and approved following an extensive programme level benchmarking exercise. Colleges and Schools may wish to consider the creation of new Scholarships and Discounts for all fee status' to support recruitment. MaRIO can support the Colleges and Schools in the structure of any new awards, ensuring any investment is in line with our strategic priorities. Along with MaRIO colleagues, all Heads of College Finance sit on the Discount Working Group (chaired by Rachel) and a paper will be submitted to SMG in May recommending the scholarships/discount structure for 2018 admission. Any request for new scholarships and discounts could be brought to that Group by the College of Arts Head of Finance. However, the scholarship/discount offering was restructured for 2017 admission and we will not be able to measure success until after enrolment in September 2017. Therefore, I would be cautious around introducing new scholarships until we can measure the success of the current structure.

II. SFC Funded Places - It has been confirmed the SFC will continue to fund 128 fte on an ongoing basis. The Recruitment Marketing Manager for all 4 Colleges will confirm with College colleagues, the specific programmes and split of places. Once MaRIO receives that confirmation, a marketing campaign will be launched to promote these places.

7. Issues under review

Moodle and University IT provision

Responses have been requested from IT Services with regards to the functional and technical limitations of Moodle and the requirement for specialist training, PC cluster

provision, and the IT service provided at the Dumfries Campus through the University of West of Scotland.

English language support

The issue of English Language Support has been passed on to the Transitions Working Group for further consideration.

EvaSys

Issues relating to EvaSys have been raised at the EvaSys Advisory Board. The Board has also conducted a Policy review where Schools and Research Institutes were invited to provide feedback on EvaSys and the Course Evaluation Policy. This review has resulted in several changes being made to the Policy. Additional and updated Guidance for academic and administrative staff is being prepared.