

## Student Experience Committees Update

### Summary

This paper highlights the activities of professional services and updates in relation to School based Student Experience Committees.

The Student Experience Committees are held termly for each School and are attended by senior figures from within the School, Student Representatives, the Students' Union and members of staff from each department within Professional Services. This paper encompasses updates delivered across the Student Experience Committees taking place throughout the 2016/17 academic year.

At each committee Student Representatives are encouraged to provide updates on the student experience of their peers.

Student Representatives are the main audience of this paper, whom will then disseminate it amongst their peers. The aim of the paper is to close the feedback loop in line with Student Representation and the Your Voice Our Action campaign.

One action required.

### Recommended action

Senate is asked to **note** the update to Student Experience Committees.

**Publication: Open**



## Student Experience Committees

### Update Report to Student Experience Committees

The University's Senate and Executive Committee each take an overview of the quality of the student experience and discuss what you say works well and where we could do better. As part of this process, each of these groups receives a report from the School Student Experience Committees to have a regular update about the things you want to tell us about. It is obviously very important to us that we can give you an answer to the issues you raise and wherever possible take steps to improve the student experience.

#### 1. Information Services

##### IT

The University has continued to significantly invest in IT with a focus on student satisfaction. In recent years, IT has developed an ethos and approach centred on "customer satisfaction". The introduction and development of the IT Business Relationship Management (IT BRM) role, has helped to deliver a collaborative working approach between the schools, other Professional Services and IT. The IT BRMs regularly attend Student Experience Committees giving insight into the main areas of concern raised by students, and allowing a quick response. The IT BRMs also regularly meet with colleagues in the business to support and guide the purchase of tools and resources that provide cost effective student services.

In general, issues relating to IT resourcing do not form a significant part of Student Experience Committee agendas. This is a testament to the investment that has been made in a stable and reliable infrastructure and a responsive service. Within the last year, Lecture Capture has been an area of particular interest and significant growth. Requests for expanding and improving lecture capture feature frequently in Student Experience Committees. Since the introduction of the service there has been a sharp growth in uptake. As an example, in the month of March, lecture captures have risen from approx. 50 in March 2014, to over 1,100 in the same month in 2017. Whilst the service has grown, issues reported have not increased significantly over this period. Delivery of the service involves a number of specialist IT areas, including AV support, regular room/technology checks, and a responsive booking system through the Service Desk. There is still work to be done to improve the quality and reliability of lecture capture. This will be managed through improved support, and further investment in technology, such as the work currently being delivered through the DALI Project.

IT has also worked closely with PaF and LEaD in the last year within the DALI Project. Through this project, 133 centrally timetabled learning spaces are being upgraded, providing enhancements to learning technology in support of an improved learning experience.

The City, University of London Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), based on Moodle, has become highly embedded within learning, teaching and assessment. As such the platform is under heavy demand. IT work in collaboration with LEaD to provide a quality service. Occasionally issues do arise, however these are quickly identified and resolved in order to minimise disruption. In the last year IT has also invested time and expertise in developing a new user design for the VLE, working with LEaD and Cass, in order to provide a suitable platform for professional online delivery of learning. This work is helping Cass move towards further digitalisation and modularisation of the curriculum.

Students continue to benefit from free Microsoft packages, along with a range of other specialist technologies, tools and resources managed across the University. A number of programme specific software packages are provided to students for use on their personal devices. There is a great demand for student access to PCs, and a particular demand for open access to PC's out of hours.

We welcome feedback from students and colleagues in Senate in order to further improve our service offering. All comments can be directed to [itcommunications@city.ac.uk](mailto:itcommunications@city.ac.uk).

## Library Services

24/7 library opening has been provided for 13 weeks during the January and May exam periods at Northampton Square and Cass libraries in 2016/17.

Following last year's pilot of the service, we now run bookable study places as 'business as usual' on Level 5 of Northampton Square Library during the busy exam season, and are piloting a similar offering at Cass Library for 2016/17, enabling us to help meet demand for study spaces. We update our Twitter feed regularly to indicate space availability in the library. We are also piloting (in May 2017) a new SMS text and response service for users to report noise problems and disturbances on levels 4, 5 & 6 of the Northampton Square Library.

Self-service reservation collections have been introduced at Northampton Square and Cass libraries, to enable students to collect their reserved items during unstaffed hours.

New study desks were installed on Level 6 at Northampton Square Library in September 2016 and more than 85% of individual study desks across levels 4-6 are now kitted with dual sockets.

Our Library Academic Services team continue to work closely with colleagues in the Schools and Departments, as well as our students, to ensure we have the resources that are essential to your learning. Our More Books and Read for Research initiatives enable students and researchers to recommend further additions to our collections: <https://www.city.ac.uk/library/resources/new-purchase-request>. Over the past year this has also involved the addition of new collection items and online resources to support the new BA English within the Centre for English.

Following the success of our Library Essentials programme introduced last year, this year we have looked at developing the model to ensure we are offering the correct level of support at the most appropriate time of year. We now offer regular 30 minute refresher sessions throughout the first term, and are now piloting regular Library Essentials 'pop-ups' which would potentially run through the rest of the academic year. We have improved the accessibility of our [online training calendar](#), as well as increasing and improving on sessions offered, as a direct response to student feedback. Student 1-2-1s are now bookable via an online form, streamlining the process greatly.

We are currently reviewing student feedback from our 2017 'Library Loves...Feedback' promotion in order to establish where else we might be able to make further improvements to the service.

## 2. Property and Facilities

Property and Facilities (PAF) have now delivered the 2012 -16 Estate Investment Plan which resulted in some significant improvements evidenced by metrics relating to the quality of our estate. Our overall facilities spend per FTE increased by 8%, the number of education spaces at Northampton Square increased by 20%, the percentage of seminar and lecture spaces across our estate rated as good quality has increased by 55%, our frequency of use on space is up to 79% and carbon emissions have reduced by over 29%.

The last twelve months have seen the completion of further major projects by PAF. The stunning main entrance and pavilion complex has had an immediate impact in connecting the basement lecture theatres to the rest of the campus. And the new 240-seat lecture theatre has added significant capacity at the heart of Northampton Square. The project as a whole has allowed us to introduce a significant number of new flexible social/study spaces, provision consistently requested via student feedback.

Also related to student feedback, we have recently opened the first phase of the Tait Level 1 Student Amenity project. This project was shaped from inception by feedback via Student Experience Committees, advice from the Students' Union, and via comments invited directly from students during two separate consultation exercises. The new cafeteria, landscaped courtyard, Students' Union shop and access route through to Goswell Road will be joined in summer by offices for the Students' Union, a multi-faith area and further social/study spaces.

Over this summer we will also create new flexible study spaces in Drysdale as part of the ground floor improvement works. This project has been designed largely with student feedback in mind in relation to the

requirement for flexible space with power and data, expanded out of hours access to PC labs and improved access to our buildings. The project also sees better use of external areas to allow an increase in the number of cycle storage spaces.

Meanwhile, we have continued to respond to ad-hoc suggestions made via Student Experience Committees. Most notably, we have introduced (or will introduce) more lockers where space permits (such as in the Tait Level 1 project area); we will make significant improvements this summer to the 'microwave rooms' on level 6 of Cass and level 1 of University Building; all buildings now have at least one water fountain and this is a standard feature we now routinely include in newly created spaces; we have introduced a dedicated cleaner for toilets in the Library whilst drawing up improvement plans for these facilities.

### **3. Catering**

Sodexo are very keen to receive feedback from students, and have a dedicated Student Experience Manager who is responsible for collating feedback and organising activities and special events for students. Beginning with a very successful Welcome Week (with suppliers such as Divine, Quorn and Innocent Smoothies coming in and fun, food-based games across various locations) Sodexo have run over 20 engagement campaigns to date around food sustainability, nutrition, healthy eating, portion size, feedback and Fairtrade. Notably this year, Sodexo once again made a concentrated effort throughout Fairtrade Fortnight to engage with students as much as possible. Among 10 other planned activities, Sodexo arranged for Fairtrade Coffee producer, Leonard Kachebonaho to visit from Tanzania and talk to staff and students about the importance of Fair Trade for local communities.

Sodexo were delighted to open two new outlets this term. On January 17<sup>th</sup> City Café in the Northampton Square Main Entrance opened as a 'Proud to Serve Costa Coffee' outlet. This offers hot & cold drinks, Soho Sandwiches, YuYu products and a range of freshly made cakes and muffins – suitable for everyone.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> Sodexo were thrilled to open The Courtyard, a fresh, deli style outlet, offering breakfast, hot and cold sandwiches, salads, Supp (a soup offering) homemade cakes, City Shakes (milkshake offering), homemade lemonade, pretzels and a range of nutritionally balanced snacks. The bright and inviting space offers staff and students the chance to work, socialise and dine in a welcoming environment.

Based on helpful feedback provided at the Student Experience Committees, Sodexo have introduced a number of improvements to their service. In order to cater for students who wanted to purchase items before early morning lectures, Social Kitchen in Rhind building opened at 8:30am. Similarly, for students who had lectures late into the afternoon, City Pizza/Pasta remains open until 5pm and City Café remains open until 7pm to ensure students can grab a hot drink and a snack. Similarly, Sodexo were asked to provide a breakfast service, and with the opening of The Courtyard a hot breakfast is available from 8:30am. With the two new outlets, Sodexo have been able to offer a wider range of lunch options to students, which in turn has alleviated lengthy queuing time and increased student satisfaction with the choices they now have.

Prices in EATC1TY and across the University continue to be extensively benchmarked against local competition and high street competitors, and Sodexo are committed to providing students with the best value for money. Benchmarking is shared with students via the committee moodle pages, as well as verbally in the meetings. As part of this ongoing commitment to offering food for all budgets, Sodexo will continue to implement a varied price banding system in September 2017, as well a new offering in Fixter Coffee (previously Costa Coffee Proud to Serve) which will be in keeping with the current; 'low cost, high value' catering selection now present.

In response to comments about vegan, vegetarian and gluten free offerings, Sodexo now offer a dairy free and vegan breakfast. For lunch, a full vegan and gluten free salad bar is available in The Courtyard, along with a vegetarian Supp offering which changes daily. In EATC1TY, City Pizza, City Pasta and Originals have a daily vegetarian option with regular gluten free, wheat free and dairy free options. Guest Bar on its 13 week rotation, offers a notable proportion of vegan, vegetarian, dairy free, gluten free and wheat free options, all of which are specified on the menu

Responding to the student demand around City Bar, Sodexo have re-introduced a hot food offering and maintained a competitive price against other student focussed bars.

If you have any comments or feedback regarding the catering service please contact Kathryn Bradley and she will be more than happy to help you. You can reach Kathryn on any of their social media accounts:

Twitter : @EATC1TY    Facebook: [www.facebook.com/eatc1ty](http://www.facebook.com/eatc1ty)

You can also email her directly: [kathryn.bradley@sodexo.com](mailto:kathryn.bradley@sodexo.com)

#### **4. Careers, Student Development and Outreach**

Being able to offer sufficient 1:1 appointments to meet demand in the autumn term continues to be an area of focus for the Careers Service. We are constrained by staff resource and the number of 1:1 consultation rooms available. This year we implemented a new system of Application Advisers who are temporary PhD students, trained to give CV and job application advice. Having greater staff resource for 1:1 appointments has enabled us to offer more appointment slots and better utilise the skills of Careers Consultants for more in-depth careers guidance. We have proactively sought feedback from students on this new system and were pleased by the results; 97% of students would recommend the Application Adviser service. We plan to continue with this new staffing arrangement in 2017/18.

This year has seen a significant amount of development in regards to embedding employability in the curriculum, developments which have incorporated feedback from students. For example based on the feedback from LLB students (via their student rep and module evaluation forms) we are now in the process of putting together a revised Module for 2017-18. The new Module is a result of student feedback indicating that they wanted the pedagogy to be more interactive and that content should have a strengthened relevancy to securing live opportunities. This improved module has been reviewed and approved by the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC). The new Maths employability module has also been approved on the back of positive feedback given at the SSLC.

The Careers Team worked collaboratively with Student Development on setting up a new Employability Award initiative. The employability award will enable City to recognise the value of students' participation in co-curricular activities for employers and for their own personal development. The pilot ran through 2016 / 17 in Journalism and Civil Engineering programmes. The scheme could be refined further and we hope to trial it across the University in 2017 / 18, targeting it towards students engaged in a range of co-curricular activities.

Student Development led on the implementation of a collaborative Pre-induction course available to students from under-represented backgrounds across the University. 106 students attended on the day in September 2016 and feedback showed that it helped inspire and motivate them to start their course.

We have been looking at the progression rates for students involved in CityBuddies. It appears that having a CityBuddy Mentor has a positive impact on progression – our data for 2015 - 16 show that 12.5% more mentees (86.8% progressed) progressed from year 1 to year 2 than students who did not participate (74.3% progressed).

Community Volunteering have spent time in developing the XVS volunteer brokerage website to streamline the process of finding relevant opportunities for their course. We have also developed a relationship with the local council to enable us to keep Northampton Square Gardens maintained throughout the year.

Professional Mentoring have been recognised for the service they provide for students. This year we have been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award for Alumni Engagement. Roughly 70% of our Professional Mentors are alumni of City. A conservative estimate suggests that this equates to a sum in excess of £150,000 per annum of pro bono support to our students.

We have made enhancements to the Experience City website to automatically update events on the front page and so that students can add details to their personal calendars with ease.

## **5. CitySport**

This document is to be used as a brief summary of TeamCity and CitySport activities, up to the end of September, 2016 to the 28th of April, 2017. This period includes the bulk of our student sports teams' league and Conference Cup activity, Varsity series, along with gym activity.

Our Student Sport teams finished the season with an average win/loss percentage of 50% with 4 teams have secured promotion within their league (W V-ball, M Squash, M Futsal, M Football 2nds). We have also seen 3 gold medals from our Tae Kwon Do athletes, within the University sports championships, along with Women's Volleyball competing in the England Volleyball Invitational Tournament, placing 8th out of 32 teams. Volleyball has also secured additional funding from England Volleyball for an upcoming tournament, and our Cheerleading Squad (Central City Allstarz) have placed as Grand Champions for the British Cheerleading Associations University Championships.

2017 marked the first of our Varsity series against Kingston University. A 2 day multisport competition, with 28 teams, and only 1 trophy, happily City won! Positive spectator support, along with some very inspired teamwork created an amazing experience, which will continue for the next 3 years.

Activities highlighted over the period include 3 on 3 basketball tournament, futsal sessions, and Back to Netball and No Strings Badminton.

Overall membership to CitySport still consists of over 3,000 members, with 64% of this total, being City students.

All in all, a very strong Sports Season, and continued growth within the programme of activity. Highlights would be the launch of the new mascot, @CityUniWolf at the CityBar on the 25th of January, along with hosting the Denver Nuggets and Indiana Pacers at CitySport in early January for the NBA Global Games.

**Shereen Sally and Jason Haines**  
**Student and Academic Services**  
**April 2017**