

**Report from Director of Student and Academic Services**

The Chair of Education and Student Committee and the Director of Student and Academic Services have agreed that it would be appropriate for there to be a standing report on each Committee agenda that updates on broad developments in Student and Academic Services in light of the remit that this Service now has in supporting the educational offer, student journey and experience.

This is the first report.

**Recommended action**

To **note** the report and to consider any matters arising at the meeting.

## Report from Director of Student and Academic Services

### 1. Merger of Student and Academic Services and Careers, Skills Development and Outreach

Following the ExCo decision in early June to merge Student and Academic Services and CSDO, work has progressed on formal consultation and the subsequent start of implementation. The rationale for the merger, proposed by the PVC (Strategy and Planning), was to offer an enhanced Service that brought together further aspects of the student journey, and which could better support implementation of the Education and Student Strategy hubs. The CSDO Service previously reported to the PVC (Strategy and Planning). The core areas covered by the broader Student and Academic Services are now:

- **Student and Academic Administration:** Business leadership of the student record system (SITS), student record management, registration, examinations, graduation, student information.
- **Operations Board:** the matrix management structure for School Heads of Academic Services (and sub-groups such as the Quality Forum) which will report to ExCo.
- **Admissions:** Direct management of UG admissions (other than Cass).
- **Quality and Academic Development:** Frameworks for academic governance, academic policy and regulation; collaborative provision; Graduate School; External Examining; module evaluation; programme development, approval and review.
- **Student Services:** Accommodation, student health, chaplaincy, student advice, financial support
- **Sports and Leisure Services:** including a commercial sports centre
- **Careers Service:** Careers information, advice and guidance, external employer engagement, Unitemps (franchised recruitment agency)
- **Student Experience:** Student Development (institution-wide buddying, community volunteering, mentoring schemes); widening participation and outreach; student retention; student voice (surveys and representation); SU Officer relationship management; student appeals, complaints and discipline; student charter, student contract.
- **Management Information:** internal reporting, HESA and HESES returns, DLHE, KIS.

The overall staff numbers of the broader Service will comprise c.125. This includes sessional staff in CitySport and a number of Honorary Chaplains. A revised organisational chart will be published shortly.

Consultation with staff took place during July. The CSDO Deputy Director took a decision to leave the University in August and we have appointed an Interim Head of Careers (Gemma Kenyon) whilst completing the appointment of a permanent Head. Interviews for the permanent post will take place on 24<sup>th</sup> September with a panel comprising PVC (Strategy and Planning), Director of Student and Academic Services, two Deans (Law and SASS) and an external. Colleagues in CSDO and S&AS will see candidates' presentations.

The organisational development component of the merger is being supported by HR and we have been working on a number of activities following the end of consultation and prior to the merger formally starting on 12<sup>th</sup> October. This collaboration is incredibly valuable in supporting colleagues in both Services through change. It also emphasises the fact that implementation of organisational change takes time, it means changes for many colleagues and is unsettling for many particularly following several other organisational and management changes during the past three years. Implementation of the merger is therefore a key priority of the Director and will continue to be so during the coming months.

## **2. Student and Academic Services Planning 2015-16**

Since June, we have been engaged in a planning process that (i) builds upon commitments made to the University ExCo and Education and Student Committee on strategic priorities and (ii) which has involved colleagues from across the Service in outlining their plans for the coming year. The latter has been a very important activity to support colleagues' sense of belonging as well as to involve them in understanding some of the wider University constraints (e.g. financial). Our plans are driven by 5 themes:

1. Day-to-Day Service Delivery (front-facing and behind the scenes)
2. Education and Student Strategy
3. Transformation Programme (see below)
4. Compliance Frameworks
5. Our Service Development

Key areas of work relevant to Education and Student Committee (i.e. it does not include our Service Development plan) are provided in the Appendix. The plan is not yet complete as it does not include activities that will be led by CSDO, and many activities require timescales. A further iteration of the plan will therefore be brought back to the November meeting, and elements of it will converge into the Education and Student Strategy implementation plan.

Our plan is heavily informed by change, particularly the external compliance requirements that are increasing and our coordinating role in these areas. The underpinning message to Student and Academic Services colleagues in sharing the plan is that there has never been a bigger period of change for HE and that our Service will take a coordinating role in much of this very much led by external demands including student expectations. For example, while CMA and Prevent will require significant cultural change, the impact of the HEFCE QA proposals and the TEF are likely to bring even greater change. Overall, combined with the demands of the Education and Student Strategy and Transformation Programme, this will mean changes to our Service delivery across the short- to medium-term in discussion with ExCo, the SU and Education and Student Committee.

## **3. Transformation Programme**

In mid-August our new fixed-term Transformation Programme Manager, Nicky Riley, started in Student and Academic Services. Nicky's post is funded following a bid to Planning and Resources Committee to lead the modernisation and simplification of the underpinning student and academic administration. A clearer and more attractive title for this work will follow. The Transformation Programme follows the process work we started under PSR but which, despite some achievements (e.g. student portal phase 1, migration of SITS to e-vision), requires a clear programme of change to govern its direction.

Nicky, who reports to Lisa L'homme (Deputy Director of S&AS), is currently in the process of meeting key colleagues from across the University to start shaping the vision of the programme. Once established, a Programme Board will report to the University Strategy and

Planning Board. Updates will be provided to Education and Student Committee. A broader communications strategy will also be in place.

#### **4. Clearing 2015**

Lisa L'homme, Deputy Director, oversaw Clearing operations in August. As a newcomer to City, Lisa has identified that a fundamental review of Clearing operations is required to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness and its competitive edge with other institutions. Lisa will take proposals on this to the UG Admissions and Recruitment Working Group initially. This review will also include reporting activities led from within S&AS.

#### **6. Welcome Week and Registration 2015**

Significant work has gone into leading preparations for welcome week and registration 2015 and this has been particularly challenging this year in light of the estate works (as well as on-going changes to Tier 4 requirements by the Home Office). We are particularly grateful for the support we have received from SASS to use the Rhind Building for student registration in light of the usual main site not being available. All student services (student centre, chaplaincy and sports and leisure) have enhanced their broader welcome week plans for this year, and we have been collaborating with the SU to enable its hosting of Freshers' Fair in CitySport. We have identified the need to review some of the Welcome Week content as this has not been reviewed on an institution-wide basis in many years. The Student Experience Team will progress this work in liaison with Schools, the SU and reviewing what is happening in other institutions, with initial proposals coming back to E&S by Spring 2016.

#### **7. Competition and Market Authority**

A working group of ExCo, chaired jointly by the Directors of Student and Academic Services and Marketing and Communications, has overseen the development of work for the University to be compliant with CMA requirements. The primary focus has been the development of a set of Terms and Conditions for registered students. This work has been led by the Student Experience Team in liaison with the University's solicitors. The group is meeting again in the week of 14<sup>th</sup> September and a more specific update will be provided to Education and Student Committee at its meeting.

#### **8. Religious Observance Working Group**

A working group of the Operations Board has been set up to review logistics for operating the exam period where it coincides with a religious festival such as Ramadan. This has been established due to clashes that will occur in the next two academic years. The group will meet again in October and a fuller report will be shared with Education and Student Committee, including any proposals that have academic policy implications.

#### **9. University of London**

The Director of Student and Academic Services has been invited to be a member of City's Implementation Steering Group. UoL has made direct contact for representation on its Academic Quality Advisory Group (this will be Alison Edridge – Assistant Director of S&AS). There are also a series of informal network groups of the UoL colleges (e.g. Academic Registrars group) with which Student and Academic Services will become involved.

Susannah Marsden  
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14<sup>th</sup> September 2015