

Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE)

Meeting 2 Minutes

1/12/16, 1.30pm, NH209 (Students' Association Building)

<u>Apologies</u>	Scott Buchanan (LEAR Officer), Gil McComb (C+S Officer), Bolutife Oyemomi (SEBE RSL), Linda Cupples (NCH Officer), Amir Shafiq (BM Officer), Caroline Fleeting (SSMJ Officer),
<u>Present</u>	Kevin Campbell (VP SHLS & Chair), Lesley McAleavy (Policy and Development Officer), Jen Broadhurst (GSBS RSL), Tamar Everson (CCIS Officer), Kanayo Iken (SHLS PGT Officer), Charlie Beaumont (GSBS PGT Officer), Abhishek Mandal (SHLS RSL), Godswill Azubuike (SEBE PGT Officer)
<u>Absent</u>	Romina Arefin (E Officer), Robyn Moffat-Wall (PSWAHS Officer)
<u>In Attendance</u>	Aimee Cuthbert (SVC & Clerk)

1) Introduction to SAGE (for new members)

The Chair made introduction to SAGE for the benefit of new members to SAGE and gave a brief overview of SAGE's purpose – to discuss issues around the three academic schools for education)

Introductions were then made around the table.

2) Approval of previous meeting minutes

The Clerk had received clarifications from the Policy and Development Officer on points 3 and 4 of the previous meeting but the Policy and Development Officer was happy to pass the minutes on the condition these points were clarified. It was then explained to SAGE that the points of clarification did not change the minutes significantly as they were already very detailed. SAGE was then asked by the Chair to approve the minutes from the previous meetings.

For – 8, Against – 0, Abstain – 0.

The minutes for the previous meeting were unanimously approved and will be presented to Student Voice.

3) Terms of Reference Update

The Chair informed that after SAGE had approved the Terms of Reference for the committee at the previous meeting, Student Voice had passed the Terms of Reference for SAGE and these would now be in place, available on the GCUstudents website for new members to look at and would be reviewed annually.

4) Student Experience Summit and Student Partnership Agreement Update

The Chair informed SAGE that the Student Summit was well attended and went better than anticipated with a lot of good feedback from staff and students.

With the main focus of the Student Summit being on creating a Student Partnership Agreement staff and students gave a lot of feedback on what this should look like, how it should be a living and breathing document and what the community of GCU looks like that should be included in the partnership agreement.

The next steps are to write up the different stages of the partnership agreement with support from the university and sparqs (Student Partnership in Quality Scotland) and that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

5) Student Engagement in Quality Management

At this point the Chair invited the Policy and Development Officer to speak on this point. The Policy and Development Officer said they had clarified acronyms used in the hand out at the request of the Clerk but would be happy to clear up any jargon used for members of SAGE.

a. Verbal overview of background

The Policy and Development Officer then went onto explain that the Engage initiative that she was first involved in had now evolved with student engagement now being embedded in the university – as shown in Section 2 of the paper presented to SAGE. The Policy and Development Officer's role now involved engaging students in the Common Good Curriculum and quality enhancement. This will include having students as full panel members in academic review programme boards within the university

b. Proposed approach to student engagement and next steps - feedback

The proposal presented to SAGE looks at student engagement in a wider sense and how the university can involve students in all levels of engagement. A "ladder" of student engagement has been created to look at 4 areas in which students can get involved. The concern around using the ladder model as it suggests some modes of engagement are better than others but it was stressed that all levels are important as it shows the student voice can be heard at various levels – being a Class Representative, attending Student Summit and being a part of SAGE to name a few – as well as showing the difference in time dedicated to the levels of engagement (being a panel member is mentioned in the 4th section). It was admitted that other aspects of engagement were still to be included on the ladder model but the aim was to bring all aspects of student engagement in the one place. The Policy and Development Officer then asked SAGE if the ladder model was the right approach to take and if working with the Student's Association to develop training students was also a good way to move forward.

GSBS Research Student Lead remarked they liked the idea behind it but felt that it shouldn't be a ladder but more a matrix to show all aspects of student engagement were connected. She also remarked that there are busy periods in the university career of students and this

would allow them to see more clearly how they can contribute and the commitment involved. It was also suggested that they could be different routes for different programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and that different support would be needed for this, as well as some levels may not be appropriate for all students.

CCIS School Officer felt it was a good idea and that similar levels of student engagement were happening in SEBE at present but this was not happening across the board and that there were other levels of engagement to include, especially Module Evaluation Questionnaires.

GSBS PGT Officer also liked the idea but mentioned that those in the middle stage of student engagement as identified in this model may not go onto the final stage and that those who don't would need to be trained in order to contribute effectively.

The Policy and Development Officer thanked SAGE for their feedback, agreeing with the idea of the model being more of a matrix than a ladder and also mentioned that this model was about university level engagement and not necessarily school based. The Policy and Development Officer then went to update SAGE about training for School Officers and Class Reps for programme review boards. Training would be developed with the Students' Association and sparqs but SAGE members were asked what kind of training students would need to successfully participate.

CCIS Officer raised concerns that if staff were present students may not give honest feedback and training around this would be useful as we all can give feedback and contribute when we want to but that students must feel confident enough to do so.

The Policy and Development Officer felt this was a good point and that working with the group to figure out how students can meaningfully contribute to the panels would be important. At the moment Academic Quality and Development were thinking of introducing training around the whole process, facilitating conversations and how to work with the chair to ask questions. The next stage would be to look at dates and call out to students to get involved.

The Chair suggested that running a mock panel would be a good idea for students to see how the group runs and know what questions to ask. The Policy and Development Officer said that her department needed to look at the process and would also provide training for staff members and the chair of these boards. Another idea would be to have joint sessions with staff and students at first but to give more direct support to students.

SAGE responded well to this saying that bringing the group together would be good for initial bonding and would give legitimacy to the student's place on the panel. GSBS PGT Officer suggested that the panel should look at the student in terms of representing others and that students gather feedback and have access to networks to get the student voice. SAGE also felt that these panels would be appealing to Class Reps and School Officers.

The Chair then called for SAGE to directly endorse involving students in quality enhancement of which all members agreed. The Policy and Development Officer then said that this piece of work would be developed further and brought back to SAGE at a later date.

6) Teaching Awards 2017

The Chair then invited the Student Voice Co-ordinator/Clerk to update SAGE on the Teaching Awards.

a. Shortlisting Panels (18th-21st April 2017)

The Student Voice Co-ordinator informed SAGE that the majority of shortlisting panels had been scheduled for the study break in Trimester 2 and SAGE members would be invited nearer the time to be a part of these panels.

b. Promotion ideas

The Student Voice Co-ordinator then invited suggestions from SAGE members on ways in which to promote to students that nominations for the Teaching Awards were open. SAGE members gave a lot of useful ideas which were; mentioning Teaching Awards at any meetings taking place such as SSCGs, getting pop ups on computers, ensuring campus had posters up, sending out emails to students and staff, more social media than current presence, leaflets, promoting in teaching workshops for PGR students and promotion through clubs and societies.

The Chair had said it had been promoted to all Association Deans Learning Teaching and Quality in the three academic schools and that it would be good to get support from the Campus Trade Unions as well as promoting at any learning and teaching events in the university.

The Policy and Development Officer suggested that for the Professional Services award all service leads should be contacted in order to promote this award.

The Student Voice Co-ordinator thanked SAGE for all the suggestions and would try to action as many as possible. The Chair also encouraged SAGE members to also promote the awards as much as possible.

7) Assessment and Feedback Campaigns

At this point in the meeting the Chair updated SAGE on the various assessment and feedback campaigns planned within the Students' Association.

a. Assessment Methods campaign – VP SHLS (Update from previous meeting)

The Chair updated SAGE on his own campaign that it had been decided within SHLS that a Nursing cohort would be chosen as it had challenging regulations and if barriers could be assessed in this cohort the idea would be easier to replicate across the board. The next challenge along with looking at assessment regulations was to pick assessment choices that

does not have a big impact on students' overall mark but allows them the choice to choose a preferred assessment method.

At this point the SEBE PGT Officer asked about the basis of the project and why the Chair wishes to do this campaign. It was also asked if it would be the whole class or the wider student body that the campaign would reach. The Chair explained that certain students feel they excel in one form of assessment and don't perform as well as others so he wished to address this by giving students some choice in what assessment methods to use. There could be issues on certain criteria the school needs to follow for professional accreditation but that he needs to meet with Programme Leads on how to tailor this. It was also stated that the overall goal would be to have this across the board but that it needed to be checked that the assessment methods identified could be equally weighted in terms of difficulty across the board.

CCIS School Officer said the concept was a good idea but wanted to know what would happen if some students see other options as "easier" to take.

The Chair said that this would be up to the academics whose responsibility would be to ensure this is not perceived as such. The point of the campaign was that students could choose the option that was best for them and that it was a self-development opportunity to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. He also mentioned that the campaign would probably look at formative assessment choices as this would probably have the least impact on final marks and that the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic had said there is an appetite across the sector to move towards this but no one had taken the jump just yet. Dublin City has implemented this and has been successful to date. The Chair said he would update SAGE on developments in this campaign.

b. Expectation vs Reality campaign – Student President (for SAGE's information)

As the Student President was unable to attend SAGE and update this agenda point will be pushed to next SAGE to update members.

c. Gaps between exams – discussions at Student Voice

The Chair informed SAGE that Student Voice had passed a motion to look at the gaps between exams and if any regulation had been set. After speaking to Exams, the Chair had found out there was no official policy but there was guidance that differed between departments. The Chair was keen to push the university to have a policy across the board. The Chair invited SAGE members to discuss any issues they had with gaps between exams and ideas on how to improve the situation.

CCIS Officer mentioned that this was not an issue in his course as there were minimal examinations and wondering if this was an issue more related to SHLS. The Chair responded by saying as part of a project with the Dean and ADLTQ of SHLS that he had received feedback from students that there was consistent exam bunching in SHLS so it could be a school based issue, however he stated that the group needs to look across the university and get people to see if exam bunching is suitable and what the right way forward is. The CCIS Officer remarked that gaps between exams should be written into the Exam Policy.

SEBE PGT Officer remarked exam bunching was an issue for postgraduate students with a compressed timetable and exams. Postgraduate students normally go along with this but that the PGT Officers needed to get them to speak out and raise any concerns and that it might be a good idea to get Class Reps to get feedback on this issue. In terms of his own course, the SEBE PGT Officer said it was really spread out and some students don't like this as they'd rather get exams finished sooner rather than later.

The Chair thanked SAGE for its feedback and remarked that the tone from the Exams office when he spoke to them was that students should study for multiple exams but this does not suit all students, with many having external responsibilities out with their studies. The Chair will go back to the Exams Officer and discuss this issue with the DVC Academic. The Chair also remarked that getting a campaign with Class Reps is a good idea and any feedback collected could be collated into a report.

8) AOCB

CCIS Officer informed SAGE he will soon be attending a QAA institutional meeting in Edinburgh around student engagement and he would update SAGE at the next meeting. The Policy and Development Officer asked the Chair if they had been invited. The Chair remarked he was having issues with his diary and that it should be sorted but he would chase this up to check the meeting was in his diary.

9) Date of Next Meeting - tbc

The Clerk told SAGE members that Trimester 2 meeting dates were yet to be set but that SAGE members would receive an invite as and when this happened.

Meeting adjourned at 2.25pm