

Bowland College Syndicate Meeting 19th June 2013

Present

Joe Thornberry, Pat Brown Simon Corless, James Roberts, Alison Platt, Jean Bennett, Jenny Brine, Abigail Wells, Ian Saunders, Patrick Somervell, Jaime Bell-Bradford, Felicity Robinson, Dan Flanagan, Molly Sander, Justin Chow, Lee Dudding, Griffith Jones, Rachel Chambers, Jordan Marsh, Aino Lisma, Rachel Davis

1. Apologies

Josh Pearce, Bob Blake, Paul Arthur, Jo Dickinson, Louise Banton, Sherry Currington, Marjorie Wood, Rosemary White, Helen Davies, Jessica Connally, Vicky Milner

2. Minutes of Syndicate Meeting 16th May 2012

Agreed to be a correct record

3. Matters Arising from minutes of 16th May 2012

Joe advised that the matters arising he wanted to discuss would be covered in the Principal's report. No-one else had any matters arising from these minutes.

4. College Officers Reports

4.1 Principals Report

University Strategy - Following debate, the university's strategy has been significantly amended. Currently it is still in draft form, however, Joe reported that it is very ambitious with Lancaster wishing to climb the league tables internationally and secure its position in the top 10 UK universities (recently it has slipped outside of the top 10). Lancaster aims to improve all the time in order to keep up and beat other universities. The College Principals highlighted that in the original redraft there was no mention of the colleges, since when the document has been heavily revised and now includes a strategy for maintaining the colleges.

College SCR representation on Senate - This has also recently been open for debate. Currently each college has 2 representatives drawn from the SCR – the principal and a representative appointed by syndicate. Joe was involved in the group reviewing the number of representatives on Senate. The first paper submitted to Senate by the Vice-Chancellor which called for a dramatic reduction of the number of people on Senate was withdrawn. It has now been decided that there will only be one representative on Senate drawn from each college's SCR and that will be the principal.

College Membership fee - This will be increasing to £36.00 for students on 3 or 4 year courses and £12.00 for those who only come to study for a year or part of a year. The last time it was increased was the mid-1990's. The amount charged will rise each year. Despite requests that the college membership fees be included with the tuition fees in respect of the

increase in fees to £9000 a year, it was decided that they would remain separate as including them would have proved difficult for accounting purposes.

College Budget – Current figures shows a £6000 underspend however much of that amount has already been allocated e.g. £2000 for graduation, money for travel grants. Not much of the equipment purchase and the equipment maintenance has been spent. Monies left will be used to purchase items such as Freshers reps T-shirts.

Jenny Brine mentioned that there is still a substantial amount left in welfare grants. Pat Brown said that, after discussion with Bob Blake, these funds have now been allocated.

Patrick Somervell mentioned the fact that Roses cost LUSU £15000 this year, which is roughly the same amount as was received in membership fees this year. He suggested that we could use this information to convey to new students the value of the membership fee inasmuch as it covers the cost of activities organised by the college throughout the whole of their degree.

Patrick will also be having a discussion with Joe about the purchase of equipment for the JCR from the college's budget.

Joe mentioned that we had exceeded our target for fine income, although we were still nowhere near the £6000 collected by Lonsdale. Pat mentioned that the amount in fines had increased in most colleges this year. Joe explained that the amount of predicted income from fines was set by the university.

Student Experience Survey – 28% of Bowland students said they had not been contacted by the college advisor. This % was similar across the colleges. In light of this Joe, Pat & contacted advisors and asked/reminded them to contact their advisees, most of which had already done so. It was decided that the college needs to promote the advisors and advisory system more at the start of term.

The survey also asked if students wanted their college to be linked to departments. They said no, however, 45% said they would like to graduate with their department. Joe highlighted that the question of graduating by department was wrongly worded as students would actually graduate by Faculty not department if this was the case and, as such, the responses should be considered as skewed.

Cleaning, portering and accommodation also scored poorly in the survey, however, Joe pointed out that this was beyond the college's control.

Bowland International Student Survey – This survey was sent out last week. There have not been many replies so far. Joe asked the JCR to encourage any international students they know to complete the survey.

The 50th Anniversary of the University & Bowland College – 2014 will see the 50th anniversary of the university and Bowland College. Lonsdale College also opened the same year. Lonsdale have suggested that Bowland and Lonsdale work together on any events the

colleges decide to put on to mark the anniversary. After discussion, Syndicate agreed to Lonsdale's proposal.

Bar Management – New management structures were put into place shortly after Jo Hardman took over as Head of Commercial Services. Joe reported that the new management team were approachable and open to ideas/suggestions.

Pool Tables – At the last meeting of Syndicate the issue of the poor maintenance etc of the pool tables was highlighted. Since then, LUSU have employed a new company to manage the pool table, however, the level of service has not improved. Many of the colleges have decided to purchase their own pool tables and put any profits from the tables into the college budget. Joe reported that the money raised by the pool tables is an important source of income for LUSU so Bowland will be keeping one of the current pool tables whilst replacing the second with a bar billiards table sourced by Gareth. All profits made by the billiard table will go into college funds and the table should be in place for the start of next term.

Founders – Although the SCR lost against Lonsdale SCR the JCR beat Lonsdale overall. It was a great weekend with lots of 1st years getting involved in the various sports. Joe thanked the JCR sports reps for all the hard work they put into the weekend.

Griffith Jones (JCR social Sec) brought up the fact that the JCR area is not used much at night and said the JCR had been thinking about how to make it more like a living room space for on campus student by, for example, enabling students to 'hire' out the Sky remote control and the X-box. Simon Corless reminded Syndicate that all the TVs in the JCR do have Freeview. Alison Platt asked who they JCR thought should manage this scheme on a day to day basis, Griffith replied that this was still under consideration. Simon suggested that the remote control and the X-box could be kept in the JCR office and the JCR could take responsibility for issue of these items. Simon also said he would train any of the JCR who partook of this scheme on the use of the kit relating to the TVs behind the bar.

Patrick Somervell brought up the cost of the Sky contract, approx. £1000 a year, which currently comes out of the JCR's budget and suggested we consider cancelling the contract. Pat Brown explained that the contract we had had been a special one-off deal and if we were to cancel it and then later decide to reapply the cost would be significantly more. Simon pointed out that if the JCR started querying the current contract Sky may well start looking more closely at our contract and that could create issues. Simon reminded the JCR that the Sky kit was owned by the college and instead of cancelling the contract maybe we should look utilising Sky more by, for example, issuing students with a timetable of events on Sky. Pat reminded the JCR that quite a few students who seek her permission to watch sports that are on in the middle of the night and that she does give them a copy of the timetable of events when she receives it. Joe said it was up to the JCR how they spend their money, however, the lack of promotion of the availability of Sky in the bar could be why it was not being used and maybe they would like to look at changing how they promote it.

Dan Flanagan (JCR male ed & welfare) suggested the purchase of covered noticeboards so that details of the SCR & JCR members could be published in each building/kitchen. Alison queried the cost of such noticeboards and also pointed out that it was probably unlikely they could be fitted by the start of term. She suggested that the JCR might like to use the existing noticeboards in kitchens and buildings for this purpose and said she would be happy to let the JCR into the accommodation before the Freshers arrived to put this information up.

4.2 Senior Advisor's Report

Molly Sanders reported that some advisors failed to turn up in kitchens when they said they would and other JCR members stated that their advisor had never taken them out for the meal he had promised he would. Pat asked that if this happened again could someone please let her or their Fresher's rep know. Patrick said that he would like to see the advisor system overhauled at which point Alison reminded Syndicate that all advisors are volunteers who carry out their duties in the own time. Jean Bennett also reported the fact that sometimes, despite the advisors best efforts, people do not respond to invitations to meet them/ go out for a meal. Molly went on to ask if the joint JCR/SCR email about drop-in sessions could go out on a Friday instead of a Tuesday as 2 of the welfare officers have their drop-in sessions on a Monday. This was agreed.

Concerns were raised about the removal of telephones from bedrooms. The JCR team would like something of equal value, for example, Skype installed in rooms. Simon informed the meeting that Tom Finnigan had polled a number of students who had said they did not have an issue with phones being removed from rooms. In response, Dan advised that only about 50 students had been asked. Simon said he thought it was a bad idea to remove the phones from residences, however, the current contract for the system runs out in October 2013 and, because of this, the phones will be removed over the summer. Simon suggested that we might want to increase the number of rounds the porters and the assistant deans did at night. Joe suggested that the JCR might like to ask the LUSU president to bring up the matter at UMAG. Jean also expressed her concerns. Cost was, according to Simon, the main factor which had led to the decision to remove phones from rooms. The current phone system needs replacing, however, the only viable option is to move to VOIP phones which cost £65 per handset as opposed to £6 each for the current phones. It was suggested that the only way that the university may change their minds on this matter was if there was a massive student protest.

4.3 Deanery Report

Simon apologised for not being able to reduce the amount of income from fines to zero. Most of the fines relate to incidences of smoking in the residences and the covering up of heat detectors in rooms. Monies raised through fines will be ploughed back into the college and it is hoped some of it can be used to educate residents against smoking and covering detectors in rooms.

James and Jessica will be leaving the deanery team at the end of this academic year. Next year Helen will be joined by Dan Bowen and Lucia.

4.4 College Residence Officer's Report

Allocations for 2013/14 – Everyone who requested a room has been allocated one and there are still a few spaces available should any continuer require accommodation. The majority of other undergraduate colleges are in the same position and, with the expected drop in the number of incoming 1st years, the university fully expects there to be vacant rooms at the start of the next academic year. Vacant rooms will likely be used as show rooms for prospective students.

Bowland South & East and Bowland Tower (SET) – Work commenced on the refurbishment of Bowland Tower and the conversion of the offices on B & C floor Bowland South & East (above the banks and the ice cream shop in Alexandra Square) on 15th April. Residents of Slaidburn House are kept up-to-date with the progress of the works and how any noise generated by the works might impact upon them and, thus far I have received no complaints from them. The provisions made for them to study elsewhere (A026 County Main) ends on Friday of this week, in line with the end of Quiet Period. The project is still, as far as I know, on schedule to be completed and ready for occupation at the start of January 2014.

Ash House – This accommodation will close as soon as the people moving to SET have vacated the building. It will remain closed until September/October 2014, during which time it will be refurbished. The extent of the refurbishment has yet to be decided and I have yet to see any plans/designs.

Room choosing for people moving into SET – Everyone who opts for a room in Ash prior to moving to a room in SET will be given a chance to choose where they live in SET during Michaelmas term, thus giving 1st years the same opportunity to select their rooms as continuers.

Arrangements for moving residents from Ash House to SET – It has been agreed that residents who opt to live in Ash House prior to moving to the Tower or South & East will have all their belongings moved from their room in Ash to their new room during the vacation period. Boxes will be provided to residents prior to the Christmas vacation for them to fill and label and a removals company will move them to the appropriate room as soon as it is ready.

5. JCR Report

6. AOB

Ian Saunders expressed his thanks to all the college and JCR officers for keeping Bowland the best college on campus.