



MINUTES

Students' Union Education Zone

4:30pm Thursday 7th November 2019

FT002

1. Welcome and Introduction

Jenny convened the meeting and welcomed the attendees to the second Education Zone for the 19/20 academic year. The vast majority of attendees were academic reps as anticipated as this zone tends to be targeted towards them. There were 52 attendees. The zone was the culmination of the Hidden Course Costs campaign day that was run.

2. To receive any items for Any other Business

No other items were noted.

Questions were posed by Jenny regarding the transparency of the university with regards to its costs.

This zone was held to discuss the issues of hidden course costs for students. Whilst this is generally regarded as a sector wide problem, it was valuable to gain input from YSJ students to demonstrate how deeply students feel about the difficulties hidden course costs cause.

- Out of 52 students, 42 felt that the university was not open about the issue of hidden course costs before they applied. Music students had to pay up to £100 for special books. There were no online copies and the books always seemed to be out on loan. Graduation costs were mentioned and one student called them “insane”.
- When asked about having to pay for items they were not told about, 27 students said they did, and 21 students said they did not. When students were asked about items, they had to pay for they listed the following: art supplies, software, books, uniform, printing costs and paper. There is an inconsistency in some schools where lecturers upload material electronically though some do not; and this means that the pressure to buy the text due to limited copies in the library increases.
- When asked if costs have an effect on wellbeing, 18 said yes and 32 said no.



- Students discussed the issue of part time work and how oftentimes it was discouraged by their tutors. There seems to be a stigma around this with academics who do not seem to fully understand the financial pressures student face today.
- Students remarked that they felt they would be at an overwhelming advantage if they had money to spend on additional resources. One example was for a sport qualification which they felt pressure to sign up for though it cost around £300 and was supplementary knowledge to what was being taught on a module. Another was music equipment.
- Students were asked if they expected that their full course costs would be covered by the £9250 fee and 31 said yes whilst 12 said no.
- The school of geography seemed to be remarkably transparent about course costs and would fund students for essential trips. This garnered a positive response from students.
- When asked what students would like the university to do to improve the situation the following were listed: honesty about costs, transparency on where student fees go, more copies of texts in the library, aspire card to be improved, more regard for estranged students and VC expenses to be scrutinised.
- When asked if any of the costs were made aware to them, most replies stated that they were simply told about study abroad.
- The Aspire Card was mentioned as a mixed bag though the books on it are apparently inflated in price.