

## **Notes from a Common Room**

### **Feedback from Campus Forum Phoenix Halls Wednesday 13th October 2010 6.00pm**

Meeting Chaired by Ed Bending (EB), SUVP Wellbeing with Martin Clayton (MC), SUVP Campus and Communications. Other S.U Officers / Staff present were Emily Nash SUVP Academic Affairs and Beth Kent Wellbeing Development Assistant and Martyn Barber, Site Admin. Grand Parade (Note taking)

#### **Preamble.**

This was the first meeting of the Student Experience Forums taking place at campuses and halls throughout the year. Approximately 30 students attended the meeting and their places of study were split more or less evenly between Grand (and Pavilion) Parade and the Moulsecumb site. It was an informal meeting, taking place in the common room and its' primary focus was on their experience of the Halls but went beyond this at times. It started with EB encouraging individuals to say what problems they had experienced and later a show of hands was taken on how many people shared these gripes to see how widespread a problem may be and i will show this as a percentage of those present where applicable. Some of the issues raised come under the category of Facilities and these were bundled together for a single show of hands but i will list them individually.

#### **1. Computer / Internet Problems**

Within Phoenix halls themselves there appear to be different Proxy settings even on different floors and access to even basic services like i-tunes and Mac Messenger were blocked, access by other means such as a Playstation weren't available at all. (50% of those present had experienced some or all of these problems). There were also complaints about inconsistent Student Central access and most of those present felt that information on the new Unimail was inadequate. (EB explained to them how to complete the process of activating their accounts). It was mentioned that internet access wasn't available on the first day so they hadn't been able to see the itinerary until after some of the events had taken place.

#### **2. Facilities**

The problems raised within this category included; unclear instructions on the washing machines resulting in money being wasted on the wrong facility, no pay-phone on site, shower curtains being too short resulting in wet floors, fridge capacity insufficient for the number of people using them, over-sensitive fire-alarms going off in the middle of the night and problems with postal deliveries.

A wish list within this category included having a change machine - particularly for the washing machines, an end to the 10pm shutting of the common-room, more table tennis bats and balls and especially a cash point as there isn't one near by. These items received 65% agreement from those present. (The change machine received 100%).

#### **3. On-Site Personnel**

A couple of issues in this category were raised. It was claimed that the cleaners drink the students' tea and use their cutlery rather than cleaning, then react badly when challenged on this. The cleaners also, apparently, don't always turn up. 30% had experiences when other on-site personnel were unhelpful.

#### **4. Flyers**

50% felt that flyering (including that done for this meeting) was often too intrusive citing examples of people walking uninvited into students' bedrooms. It was also felt there was too many anyway and they were a nuisance as well as environmentally

questionable. Many of those present felt that other means, such as Face-book would be as effective and less wasteful. EB asked how people had heard about this meeting and many admitted that it was via a flyer but suggested that having a notice-board, preferably in the foyer, would be useful way of negating the need for flyers (or at least so many).

## **5. Other**

Other issues raised included a need for more bike-parking provision on every site. The bins at Moulsecoomb were often overflowing. One student felt that he was penalised because of the need to travel to other sites in order to use sports facilities. EB told him that he was able to claim travel expenses back - something the student hadn't been aware of suggesting that this needs to be more widely advertised particularly to those not at Cockcroft, Falmer or Eastbourne. In regards to the Freshers Induction courses most felt that the practical side was good and that the people were welcoming but that the meeting involving local residents mainly consisted of a few of those residents just criticising students. Someone wondered whether the moving day should be spread over a number of days as there was insufficient parking at Phoenix for them all arriving at once though EB pointed out the logistical problems in arranging this.

During the course of the meeting EB took the opportunity to raise the issue of the Browne Report. As this had been announced only a couple of days before this meeting took place those present were not yet really aware of the details or of their implications but the discussion around the subject suggested that for many the quality of the course took precedence over cost (within reason) but there was concern that HE could be decided by ability to pay rather than ability to do the course and that the financial bar could just keep being raised. They also felt passion for a subject should be measured along with A-level results, which is sometimes true for Arts related courses but rarely for academic ones. Some thought the idea of a graduation tax sounded better and less discriminatory than course fees. The foreign students present were asked how they felt about paying 3 times as much as native students to which 2 (one from Norway the other from Spain) replied that they would have paid that much to study at home, at least on comparable courses. EB used this opportunity to mention the demonstration on the 10th November.

At the end of the meeting EB thanked them all for coming, mentioned the forthcoming meetings at GP and Cockcroft and encouraged them to consider standing in the Elections next month.

The next scheduled meeting at Phoenix Halls is  
Tuesday 6th February 2011  
@ 6.00pm