Retention & Wellbeing Project

Executive Summary
Term 1 - 2021

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Overview

This report presents a distilled overview of the findings of the Retention and Wellbeing Project for Term 1 2021. This term we called 83.9% of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students at least once and spoke directly to 19.4% of them to complete the check in.

We have completed an analysis of the data collected so far to report key findings and to inform the project in term 2 2022.

It is worth mentioning that the order of priority students which we called is as below. As such students at the top of this list are over represented in the findings:

1 - International students studying online
2 - Disabled Students
3 - BAME Students
4 - Lower IMD Quintiles 1 & 2
5 - International Students
6 - Age 21 and over
7 - Year 1 Students
8 - Remaining full student cohort (including undergraduates and postgraduates)

2,829
Student check-ins completed

14,517
Calls made

91
Referrals made for immediate support

Executive Summary of Feedback

Of the students we spoke to the majority study was blended, delivered online and on campus

-45% Blended
-42% On campus only
-13% Online only

Most students (79%) have been vaccinated at least once. 69% have had both jabs and 10% have had one.

Learning Experience
80% of students would rate their learning experience as good or very good and only 4% of students rated their learning experience as bad or very bad. Over 15% gave a neutral response.

Students in the Faculty of Engineering and Science are most satisfied with their experience at 88%. Our three other faculties average satisfaction are below
-76% Education, Health and Human Sciences
-81% Business
-80% Liberal Arts and Sciences

Students rate their learning experience highest at Medway at 89% followed by 80% at Greenwich and Avery Hill at 76%.

International students reported to be more satisfied with their learning experience at 87% compared to home students at 79%.

Disabled students rate their learning experience lower at 74% compared to 82% for students without a declared disability.

Students studying in person rate their satisfaction highest at 85% compared to 71% satisfaction for online learners and 79% for those with a hybrid experience.

Asian students report being the most satisfied at 83% followed by white students at 81%, black students at 77% and mixed race students at 74%.

Co-Curricular Experience

Over half of student's report having had a positive co-curricular experience at 52% however over 45% rate their experience so far as neither good nor bad.

Students in the Faculty of Engineering and Science are most satisfied with their experience at 57%. Our other faculties rate their co-curricular experience satisfaction as below:
-54% Business
-52% Liberal Arts and Sciences
-47% Education, Health and Human Sciences

Almost all other students rated their co-curricular experience as neither good nor bad rather than rating their experience as negative.

Students studying in person rate their satisfaction highest at 57% compared to 39% satisfaction for online learners and 52% for those with a hybrid experience.

Students rate their co-curricular experience highest at Medway at 57% followed by 53% at Greenwich and Avery Hill at 46%.

Asian students report being the most satisfied at 55% followed by white students 52%, mixed race students 50% and black students, 46%.

Sense of Community and Belonging

80% of students feel part of a community at Greenwich with most respondents attributing this to making friends and their attachment to their programme.

Students in the Faculty of Engineering and Science are most satisfied with their experience at 84%. All other faculties satisfaction rates are below
-81% Business
-79% Education, Health and Human Sciences
-78% Liberal Arts and Sciences

Students report the strongest sense of community on the Medway campus at 83%, followed by Greenwich and Avery Hill who both report 80% satisfaction.

Disabled students rate their sense of community lower at 74% compared to 81% for students without a declared disability.

Asian students were more likely to feel part of a community at 82% followed by white students, 81%, mixed race students, 79% and black students, 76%.

Referrals

90 referrals were made across the term. Most referrals were made with students in Education, Health & Human Sciences at 35, followed by Libera; Arts and Sciences at 26, Business at 20 and Engineering and Sciences at 10.

58% of students referred studied on the Greenwich campus, followed by 31% at Avery Hill and 11% at Medway.

Recommendations

The recommendations below have been formed from conversations with students across the term. We would suggest these are reviewed by faculties, SAS and GSU

-Improving learning experience for students online or undertaking hybrid learning, leaving time for questions after lectures. Ensuring the current policy of delivering lectures contemporaneously is being applied consistently across programmes instead of recordings to increase engagement and teaching quality.

-Due to timetabling issues, students may have missed introduction lectures which included information on services such as academic skills, contact information for tutors and other services such as the wellbeing team. Term 2 could be introduced with a 'Welcome Back' lecture whereby students are reminded of their personal tutors and helpful contacts and reminded of services available to them to help improve overall student experience. This information could be delivered through their personal tutor.

-Some student parents struggle to juggle parenthood and university, and may find it difficult to find someone to look after their child while they're studying. It would be useful to speak to these students 1-1 to find out if accommodations could be made at a local level.

-Reviewing conditions of bursaries taking into consideration students' religious beliefs that may prevent them from taking out higher maintenance loans.

-Broadening Academic Skills session beyond academic writing including software, design, and other skills. This could be provided through an online resource such as providing access to LinkedIn learning.

-Students are reporting difficulty getting timely responses from Student Finance. It could be useful to review how central teams can support answering straightforward enquiries before getting to the SF team. It may also be worthwhile reviewing the capacity of the SF team, giving more support to deal with student queries.

-Continue to promote wearing masks, social distancing and other measures to reduce the risk of covid infection and to help students feel safe.

-Consider the co-curricular offer for mature students, arranging more activity that might appeal to them.

-Students in their 2nd Year joined the university during the pandemic, and therefore might not be aware of events and social groups as much as other year groups which might be why they don't feel part of a community compared to students in other year groups. Advertising student groups and involvement opportunities in student hub areas may benefit this.

Plans for Term 2

Before term 2 begins we intend to review the questions we ask students and how we capture their response. The aim is to give more opportunities to capture comments made during the calls which can be fed back to stakeholders. We hope the feedback will help inform future planning, including the development of the student success sub-strategy.

It is GSU's ambition to continue this project as a mainstream offer. This term we will convene a group of interested university staff to discuss the future of the project and to assist with implementing student feedback.

We are planning to call students between 31st January and 24th March.

Reflecting on queries from students received through our advice service we intend to target calls to students who have been escalated through the attendance engagement process, hopefully flagging issues early and preventing a further escalation or withdrawal.

Following this group, we aim to call third year students who are studying programmes that were flagged for improvement through the NSS taskforce earlier this year. NSS taskforce programmes are listed below.

We will then call students based on their risk of non-continuation. We will, of course, be ready to react should there be further developments relating to covid.

The list below shows the order of calls we intend to make -
1. Students issued with stage 1 escalation emails
2. Third year students studying programmes in bottom quartile of satisfaction (NSS)
3. International students studying online
4. Disabled Students
5. BAME students
6. Lower IMD Quintiles 1 & 2
7. International Students
8. Age 21 and over
9. Year 1 students
10. Remaining full student cohort (including undergraduates and postgraduates)

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*NSS 2021 Taskforce Programmes

- Games Design
- LLB Law
- Criminology
- Film & TV
- Paramedic Science London
- Midwifery
- Business Management
- Construction Management
- Quantity Surveying
- Software Engineering
- Computer Science
- Computing
- International Business
- Business with Finance
- Business with Marketing
- Business Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Civil Engineering
- Speech & Language
- Biological Sciences
- Finance & Investment
- Animation
- Architecture
- Advertising & Digital Marketing
- Advertising & Digital Marketing with Language
- Media Communications
- Sociology & Criminology
- Childhood & Youth Studies