Engaging with the student experience through institutional research

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Background

Desirable features of institutional self study

• “...Should be a habitual part of institutional management with ownership through both the academic and the executive functions of the institution”

• “...needs to have as its primary goal understanding and enhancing student learning and the quality of the student experience”

(Watson, D. and Madison, E. 2005)
Kingston University: A Diverse Student Population

• Over 20,000 students
• Multi Site Campus
• Range of collaborative courses
• Diverse Student Population
• Growing International students numbers
“Information is a key resource which underpins all the University’s activities.” (KU Information Strategy Oct 08)

But current approach to MI production has:

- Numerous authors of MI reports
- Lack of agreed ‘base definitions’
- Inconsistent calculation / presentation
- No clear routes for reporting / action
- Inadequate lines of communication
Understanding students and their needs (work in progress):

- Comprehensive, holistic approach, linked to student lifecycle
- Feedback from students
- Consistent route for the flow and consideration of information
- Establish a ‘body of knowledge’
- Agree and follow through with actions
- Feedback to students
Understanding students and their needs (work in progress):

- NSS: Coordinated, Institutional approach
- Kingston Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Kingston Observers
- Establishment of Student Experience Group
- Improved SMI portfolio
Collecting evidence: Survey Design

- Outcome of SEG discussions: Three surveys
  - First year experience survey (Transition to HE)
  - Second year experience (Prepare for NSS)
  - PG survey (data on student priorities)

- First year survey designed and piloted with KUSU Freshers’ angels and distributed using Survey Monkey
  - Profile and course information
  - Application and admission to University
  - Transition to University/University life
  - Course expectations
  - Personal support
  - Accommodation and travel
  - Organisation and management
  - Overall experience
Selected First Year Survey Preliminary findings

- Response rate: 1240 (20%) completed survey

- Overall
  - Most satisfied with the application and admission process, and least with accommodation and activities at halls
  - The Students Union was thought to be helpful by well under half of the respondents

- Campus
  - “I feel that everything seems to happen at the Penrhyn Road Campus. .... the student atmosphere is greater at Penrhyn Road especially if you are not in halls of residence”

- Ethnic group
  - Black group was consistently less satisfied
  - Less than half of Black respondents found university life to be as expected
Selected First Year Survey Preliminary findings 2

• Gender and Age
  • The 22-25 group -best experience and most realistic expectations of university life

• Accommodation
  • “As I am not in halls it makes it more difficult to meet people and make friends”
  • “Can I have a place at the halls please? I really REALLY want one!”
  • Comment revealed that students valued the friendship and networking opportunities afforded by halls but that they would appreciate more laid on activities.

• Clearing
  • Little difference between clearing and other students in terms of expectations being met.

• Domicile
  • EU students to be more satisfied than either British or other overseas students
Moving towards institutional changes

SMI ANALYSIS GROUP

- STAR
- Retention and Completion Committee
- Graduate Outcome Committee
- Student Experience Group (SEG)

- Quality Enhancement Committee
- Academic Directorate
  - SMG
  - Executive

- Student Narrative (e.g., Kingston Observers)
- Data Group and Academic Quality Input
- Survey Statistic (e.g., NSS/KSS/DLHE etc.)
- Student Management Information

Kingston University London
Next steps

Kingston Observers
Continues restructure of top level committees.
Second year and post grad surveys

Discussion – Engaging the student experience through IR?...

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