

## **1835 Supporting the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme**

Proposer: Hussam Hussein (Ethnic Minorities Officer)

Secunder: Connor Rand (UG Education Officer)

Union Council notes:

1. That the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is a structured mentoring system in which first year undergraduate students are mentored by students in higher years. The aim of PAL is to mentor first years through the transition into higher education.

2. Mentors provide academic support – and some pastoral support - by sharing the experience and skills they have gained.

3. PAL is being introduced into UEA to benefit both the recipients and deliverers of PAL. Interacting with mentors helps first years understand university processes and requirements as well as develop good study habits. Mentors and officers develop key skills that should aid in their future employability and career development.

4. PAL mentors provide mentoring to small groups of first year students. Working in pairs or trios PAL mentors prepare and attend regular sessions to facilitate discussion around academic subject material. PAL mentors plan each session, taking into account students' learning needs. Advice and guidance is based on the mentors' own experience and university guidelines.

5. Mentors are supported and guided by PAL officers (usually Postgraduate UEA students). PAL does not replace existing teaching or academic and pastoral support. Instead, it ensures that there are additional opportunities for students to learn from each other. PAL is run by students for students.

6. PAL has been in place as a pilot project at UEA since January 2013, it is now in its 4th phase , and has been confirmed only until the end of this academic year. No decision has been made so far on renewing it.

7. In its 3rd phase (2014-2015), about 650 mentees and 145 between mentors and officers have benefited from the PAL scheme.

8. Currently, the PAL scheme is operational in 8 schools: AMA, CHE, CMP, DEV, ENV, HSC, MED; and NBS.

9. Research has shown that students of marginalised backgrounds have strongly benefited from the PAL scheme as it provides them a supportive tool to adapt and familiarise with a new academic and/ or cultural environment.

Union Council believes:

1. That PAL has been having a valuable positive impact on both mentees, mentors and officers since January 2013.

2. It is important to provide students with opportunities to learn new skills from other peers in a structured programme like PAL.

3. PAL is an important tool for providing mentors and officers with skills and work experience on mentoring and teaching, which is valuable for improving students' CVs, employability and future work opportunities.

Union Council resolves:

1. To mandate the Undergraduate Education Officer and the Postgraduate Education Officer to lobby the university to maintain and further support the PAL project.

2. To mandate Council representatives and Officers on the relevant committees, including Learning and Teaching Committee, to put the issue of PAL's long-term existence on the agenda and to strongly support and voice the students support for the PAL scheme.

3. To mandate the Undergraduate Education Officer to write an email to the Vice Chancellor and all others concerned in expressing the position of the SU in support of the PAL scheme and demanding its continuation and support for the next year, within a week of the approval of this motion.

4. To mandate the Undergraduate Education Officer to write an email to the PAL administrators thanking them for their work and expressing SU support for the continuation of the scheme for the next year, within a week of the approval of this motion.

5. To advertise and raise awareness about this unique opportunity of peer support learning during Welcome Week.