College of Science and Engineering

College Learning & Teaching Committee

Minutes of meeting held on 16 February 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

Present
Dr N Hulton Convenor
Dr T Bailey School of Mathematics
Dr T Bruce School of Engineering
Dr W Hossack School of Physics & Astronomy
Dr J Martin Deputy Head of College
Prof C Pulham School of Chemistry
Professor Graeme Reid School of Biological Sciences
Prof M Summerfield School of GeoSciences
Dr D Williams Head of Academic Affairs

Action

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr S Anderson (School of Informatics), Mrs L Archibald (Minutes Secretary), Mr J Garforth (Student Representative), Ms L M Henderson (Academic Affairs Officer)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:
The Minutes of the meeting of 19 January should be approved (with a correction to the date). Paper A

2.1 Matters arising

UG and PGT Programme Approval
Resolved:
The revised approval procedures should be approved. Paper B

Retrospective Interruption of Studies
Noted:
The final draft of the procedures would be circulated next week.

3. TEACHING AWARDS

Noted:
The results of the Teaching Awards 2008/09 were noted.

4. CONVENORS REPORT

Tutorial attendance
Noted:
(i) The Convenor had been approached by CHSS who were experiencing problems in some areas with student attendance at tutorials and had asked if CSE were also experiencing such problems.
In discussion it was felt that attendance in some non-honours years in CSE was variable, but not a serious issue. There is an incentivisation issue in some areas, which should be addressed at School rather than College level, and the discussion had highlighted some areas of good practice.

Resolved:
The Convenor should respond to CHSS with these views.

National Student Survey (NSS)
Noted:
The overall level of response to the survey from students in the College at this time is good, though EUSA does not appear to be soliciting responses as heavily as in previous years, so Schools will need to work hard to maintain a good response rate.

Erasmus Mundus
Noted:
There are a few proposals under development for the next round.

Non-specialist mathematics review
Noted:
There had been one meeting of the Task Group and a further meeting has been arranged for 1 March.

Forthcoming events
Noted: the following forthcoming events:
(a) An E-communication meeting in Appleton Tower LT2 on 23 February
(b) An E-learning Forum on e-marking to be held probably in May
(c) The Quality Enhancement Framework annual event to be held on 2 and 3 March at Heriot Watt

First destination statistics
Noted:
The College had been asked to identify benchmark institutions for comparison of first destination statistics.
Resolved:
(a) The Convenor should circulate the request to schools;
(b) Schools then to identify 5 comparator UK HEI departments / groups

ELIR and Enhancement Strategy
Considered:
A discussion paper on school enhancement planning. Paper C
Noted:
(i) Enhancement is a difficult topic to address as it covers many, interlinked issues.
(ii) Schools felt that they should be judged on the effective delivery of their school plans / targets for teaching.
(iii) Schools felt that the document is useful as a summary of important issues, but that a requirement for schools to produce a further document specifically addressing these issues is unnecessary.
(iv) The issues identified in the paper could be considered as separate agenda items by the committee.
(v) There is a need to link school activity with institutional strategy on enhancement.

Resolved:
(i) Schools would not be required to produce a separate document.
(ii) Schools should send their school plans / targets for teaching when available to the secretariat who will then circulate them to members.

6. **YEAR ABROAD STUDENTS**

   **Received:**
   Oral reports from Directors of Teaching on:
   (i) the guidance are given for their 4th year
   (ii) mechanisms for ensuring that the academic performance of students are monitored whilst abroad.

   **Noted:**
   (i) All schools have an individual (or small number of individuals if organised by discipline or honours programme) identified as a point of contact for students whilst abroad. The remit of the individual is to ensure a suitable curriculum for and to maintain contact whilst the student is abroad.
   (ii) The School of Chemistry organises periods abroad that are formally assessed and have robust, defensible assessment procedures which include a visit by UoE staff to the host organisation – a note of the procedures is filed with the Minutes.
   (iii) Schools have difficulty in knowing which of their students has been selected for a voluntary year abroad (e.g. Erasmus or IEP).
   (iv) Secretariat to arrange with the International Office / Visiting Student Office for lists to be sent to Schools.

7. **POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PTES)**

   **Received:**
   Oral reports from Directors of Teaching regarding any significant issues highlighted by the PTES.

   **Noted:**
   (i) The survey is too long, with too many questions added by the University. This is likely to have contributed to the poor response rate.
   (ii) In many areas there are several programmes, so having a combined response makes it difficult to identify specific issues.
   (iii) In areas where there are few programmes, face-to-face discussions with students is more effective at identifying specific
issues.
(iv) It would be useful to have the percentage response as well as the number of respondents.
(v) The release of the data needs to be more timely if Schools are to respond with changes for the following year.

Resolved:
The current format of the survey is inappropriate and needs to be sharpened up to be of value to schools in enhancing provision. The Convenor should convey these views to Senate.

8. FEEDBACK STANDARDS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Received:
A paper from (Senate) Learning and Teaching Committee on enhancing feedback. Paper D

Noted:
In statement 6 of the Standards section, it was felt that not all teachers and assessors would necessarily have the opportunity to contribute to course design, and that a more general statement that course design should incorporate feedback and that teachers and assessors should give feedback should be substituted.

9. EUCLID

Received:
An oral report from Dr Williams.

Noted:
(i) A couple of demonstrations of the Student Administration functionality are being arranged for next month and relevant academic and administrative staff are encouraged to attend.
(ii) Load testing and monitoring of system performance is continuing and the outcome, including whether the Student Administration functionality can go live in July, will be reported next month.
(iii) The School of Chemistry has developed its contingency plan for dealing with problems with EUCLID during the Freshers’ Week / course enrolment period. It is happy to share the plan with other schools, for information.

10. SENATE COMMITTEES

Student Support Task Group

Noted:
Professor Reid reported that the preliminary discussions of the Group had indicated that there were similarities in the roles of the Student Support Officers and Teaching Organisations and that many of the problems with the current DoS system stemmed from management issues.

Resolved:
Professor Reid should brief the Committee when the report of the
Task Group was available.

**Curriculum and Student Progression Committee**

Noted

Dr Williams reported:

(i) The Board of Examiners Task Group had reported and that the College Office was making arrangements to brief schools on the new procedures.

(ii) The Transcripts Task Group had reported and had identified Higher Education Achievement Records (HEAR) as a major policy and resource issue for the University.

(iii) Discussion of the mark analysis from the Extended Common Marking Scheme (ECMS) and the possible uses of the additional teaching week had been deferred.

Resolved:

Professor Yellowlees (Chemistry, member of the Transcripts Task Group) should be invited to brief the Committee in May on the implications of HEAR.

11. **NEW PROGRAMMES**

**School of Biological Sciences**

Considered:

(i) Proposals for two new Honours programmes: **Paper E**

(a) Molecular Genetics

(b) Cell Biology

Noted:

(i) The new programmes comprised a combination of existing courses and no new courses were required;

(ii) The two new programmes and the related existing programmes in Genetics and Molecular Biology would be administered together;

(iii) It was proposed that the new programmes would be offered from 2010/11, enabling current 3rd year students to transfer onto the programme if they had the required prerequisites;

(iv) The programmes were compliant with the Curriculum Framework.

Resolved:

The programmes should be approved.

(ii) Proposal for a new taught Masters programme and associated courses: **Paper F**

- MSc in Systems and Synthetic Biology

Noted:

(i) The new programme builds on links with the Schools of Informatics and Engineering, and few new courses are required;

(ii) There are some new courses associated with the programme:

- Social Dimensions of Systems and Synthetic Biology
- Practical Applications of Systems and Synthetic Biology
- Laboratory Module: Systems and Synthetic Biology
(iii) The programme is compliant with the Curriculum Framework.

Resolved:
The programme and associated courses should be approved.

School of Mathematics

Considered:
Proposal for a new taught Masters programme and associated courses: Paper F
- MSc in Statistics and Operational Research

Noted:
(i) The new programme builds on an existing suite of taught Masters programmes: “MSc in Operational Research with...”;
(ii) The proposed fees for the new programme re the same as the existing suite of programmes (which are non-standard);
(iii) There are some new courses associated with the programme:
  - Computing for Statistics
  - Statistical Regression Models
  - Statistical Theory
(iv) The programme is not compliant with the Curriculum Framework in that there are courses of 5 credits, but there is an existing opt-out for the existing suite of programmes which will be extended to this variant;

Resolved:
The programme and associated courses should be approved.

School of Informatics

Consideration of a proposal for a new Honours programme and new courses was deferred until a representative from the School could attend a meeting of the Committee.

12. AOB

Managed Migration

Secretariat to ask Registry to provide schools with a list of Tier 4 students.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16 March 2010