College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 21 May 2013 at 1.00 p.m..

Present  
Prof G Reid  Convener  
Dr P Bailey  School of Chemistry  
Dr T Bailey  School of Mathematics  
Dr M Gallagher  School of Biological Sciences  
Dr W Hossack  School of Physics & Astronomy  
Prof C Pulham  School of Chemistry  
Dr M Rovatsos  School of Informatics  
Dr D Williams  Head of Academic Affairs  
Prof W Williams  School of GeoSciences  

In attendance:  
Mrs L Archibald  Minutes Secretary

1.00 Open Meeting

Received: presentation from Barry Neilson and Nichola Kett regarding the Programme and Course Information Management (PCIM) project and Student Systems Roadmap. Full documents are available on the web.

Noted:
- Interaction between projects and business processes was necessary to ensure that systems integrate well.
- The usability and layout of systems was vital as was the need for Schools to be able to see a step-by-step process to avoid stressful conditions for staff.
- Limited time allowances for IT Support has made the establishment of new processes extremely difficult in the past. Resources such as additional hardware and IT Support must be planned in advance.
- Improvements in the co-ordination of University information distributed to students is necessary to avoid duplications.
- It was important for Academic Registry to develop an understanding of School processes within the College of Science and Engineering and co-ordinate any new project with the correct people. Contact would be made in the first instance with Teaching Organisation Administrators to take this matter forward.

2.00 College Learning and Teaching Committee

1.1 APOLOGIES/WELCOME  

Apologies were received from Dr Gordon McDougall (Dean of QA), Prof A Murray, (Dean of Students), Ian Stark (School of Informatics) and Lynda Henderson (Academic Affairs Officer).

Phil Bailey from the School of Chemistry and Michael Rovatsos from the School of Informatics were welcomed to their first meeting of the
College Learning and Teaching Committee.

The College also wished to express their gratitude to Colin Pulham and Ian Stark for their hard work and contribution to the Committee over the years which had been very much appreciated.

2. MINUTES

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, subject to minor amendments.

2.1 Matters arising

Mapping of student cycle.

David Williams had written to the Recruitment and Admissions Section asking for list of routine communications with applicants and was currently awaiting a reply.

Widening participation

- The Deans of Science and Engineering in Scotland Education Group had proposed a unified project to take this issue forward to all Scottish Institutions. The first meeting will take place on 31st May and the Dean of Quality Assurance would attend on behalf of the College
- The engagement of the College with Summer Schools run by the Sutton Trust was broadly supported. The College of Humanities and Social Science was beginning involving in summer 2013 and had invited CSE engagement from the following year. It was thought that Science and Engineering may be able to gather knowledge from experiences gained during this coming summer.
- A Working Group was being established to manage this initiative and the Convener would keep Committee members informed of any developments.

3. PROGRAMME APPROVALS

There were no new programmes.

4. CONVENERS REPORT

Practical Strategies For….. Workshops

The Convener had forwarded an e-mail from Velda McClune seeking suggestions for ‘Practical Strategies For…’ Workshops.

- Last year’s Workshops consisted of several 2-hour courses on various learning and teaching themes, including Interviews with Students, Helping Students think about Effective Learning and Writing
Bids for Small Educational Projects.
- Committee members were asked to give thought to workshops geared towards science issues which may be valuable to their staff. Suggestions should be sent to Linda Archibald at linda.archibald@ed.ac.uk as soon as possible.

5. **SCIENCE & ETHICS**

A presentation was given by Steven Sturdy, Science Technology and Innovation Studies, regarding the Science and Ethics course. It was noted:

- This had been developed by David Castle in consultation with Lesley Yellowlees with the possibility of offering this new course to Science and Engineering students.
- The course will look at challenges and dilemmas that working scientists face as a result of the changing world of science. It was felt that there was value in such a high level course for students who were moving on to careers in science and also industry.
- Currently the course was Level 10 and aimed at undergraduate students in years 3 or 4 and composed 20 credits. The start date was proposed for the next academic year.
- This was felt to be an extremely valuable course, although uncertainty was expressed regarding the targeted students. It was thought that possible timetabling issues and the value of credits involved may make this course less attractive to 3rd and 4th year students.
- Consideration could be given to using elements of this course for a 10 credit alternative and/or directing this towards 2nd year students.
- Additional investigation was suggested to ensure that the course was directed towards the correct target audience.
- Members were asked to discuss within their school how a course such as this would fit in with their current programmes or could be incorporated into standard courses. Feedback on this should be given to David Castle within the next three weeks.

6. **MARKING GUIDELINES**

Members received a paper on Marking Guidelines (Paper B). It was noted:

- This paper followed on from a report earlier in the year on the removal of stickers from coursework.
- It was important that the College ensures that appropriate marking guidelines are in place, so that context is understood. It is possible that these guidelines may vary from course to course but expectations should be made clear to students.
- Consideration should be given to the advice issued to individual markers. Schools must also be specific regarding academic standards required from written work.
- It was likely that this document would require modifications and the Convener would keep Committee up to date with developments.
7. **SINGLE SEMESTER ABROAD**

The Committee discussed the proposed undergraduate opportunities for single-semester study abroad. It was noted:

- This proposal originated from the International Office in response to key performance indicators in the Strategic Plan to increase the number of opportunities to study abroad.
- Phil Bailey from the School of Chemistry was representing the College on the Taskgroup for this issue.
- A possible way forward would be to have one semester abroad which may appeal to some students but also raises various issues.
- The structure of some courses may cause difficulties in identifying periods when students may leave Edinburgh and academic year structures may be incompatible with those of certain International institutions.
- Accommodation for very short periods of time may prove impractical.
- Other alternatives may be considered including the possibility of summer schools, internships and placements.
- There was a diversity of practice in visits abroad throughout the University with not all managed through the International Office.
- It was important that any proposal should be attractive and welcomed by students. Further research into student opinion should be undertaken.
- Baseline data had been collected which suggested that numbers necessitated the increase of student studies abroad by 800.
- It was thought that clarification should be sought regarding what would be interpreted as an ‘international experience’
- Accurate data on the current numbers of students studying abroad must also be obtained.
- The College broadly supported this proposal as providing valuable experience for students. It was, however, important that these opportunities must be carried out as resource-efficiently as possible.
- Members were asked to give thought to a list of options for opportunities and any issues that may be associated with these. This should be fed back to Tom Ward, Head of Recruitment and Admissions, as soon as possible.

8. **REPORTS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES**

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) – meeting on 25 April 2013

- The Committee received a presentation from Dave Laurenson on the Shared Academic Timetabling Board.
- New templates for School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies were available.
- The College proposal to change the weighting of the BSc Chemistry honours years was approved. CSPC will establish a Working Group to look at the criteria for other models of weighting of honours years So
that variations on this weighting may be mainstreamed, rather than considered as opt-outs.
- Maternity and Family Leave was also discussed and the need for clarification on the procedures for approval highlighted.
- The draft Degree Regulations were approved. Academic Services will provide Schools with a one page summary of changes made.
- CSPC Concessions meeting will take place on 17th June. Any concessions which require University approval will be considered at this meeting.
- College Concession meetings will be scheduled for the next three weeks. A poll/rota will be sent to members as soon as possible seeking volunteers for these.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Shared Academic Timetabling

Concerns were expressed about the operational aspects of the new timetabling functionality which is due to go live in September 2013. Schools are still very nervous about the introduction of a major software change at the start of next session. They emphasised the need for adequate load testing so ensure the system is robust, and for adequate time for training of staff. Otherwise the implementation should not go ahead. School staff also consider that there is a serious issue with the timing of data feeds from EUCLID to the Allocator to downstream systems such as Learn, SMART. They are very concerned about the delay of getting information to synchronise in different IT systems and the effect this will have in slowing down the enrolment process at the very busy time at the start of the academic session.

It was noted that the Academic Lead for the project is to brief CSMC on Thursday 23 May on these concerns and will also address the College Computing and IT Committee on Thursday 30 May, in advance of a Project Board meeting on Friday 31 May where a decision will be made on whether to go ahead with the implementation this year.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

24th September at 2.00 p.m. – venue to be confirmed

A Schedule for 2013/14 College Learning and Teaching Committee meetings was tabled and could be found on the Committee website.