1.1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Prof A Murray, Dean of Students.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2.1 Matters arising

*NSS Results*

This item would be covered elsewhere on the agenda

*Innovative Learning Week*

A brief discussion on this issue had taken place at the previous meeting.

It would be useful to have a more reflective look at this year’s Innovative Learning Week in order to plan for the next year.

It was noted:

- There had been mixed success with activities carried out over the previous years and the College should be in a better position to predict the appeal of future events.
- Schools may not wish to commit outgoing resources and large
amounts of staff time to activities where very small audiences are likely.
- Canvassing student opinion on activities they might find useful and allowing these to be student-led may be of benefit.
- Useful events could be extracted from Innovative Learning Week and incorporated into mainstream activities if necessary.
- It is possible that attendances may build-up for events over time as students become more aware of the potential benefits.
- Overall student feedback for those who attended events was extremely positive.

This issue will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

3. CONVENERS REPORT

The Convener had attended the Edinburgh Awards on 22nd April.

A Pro-Science activity run by Katie Hudson (Physics graduate) was very impressive. This activity involves students visiting schools to learn about teaching which provides both an outreach and skills-developing opportunity for the student.

The College would be very happy to support Katie in any attempt to expand these activities where possible.

4. MAPPING OF STUDENT LIFECYCLE

Registry is taking forward this project as part of business process reviews. It was noted:

- This initiative will map a student data and business processes from application to graduation and alumni.
- A message had been sent to Schools regarding the display of a draft map which was held in JCMB.
- Once this initial phase has been completed, maps will be disseminated around the University and also presented to this Committee.
- This map will provide a resource to help enhance the student experience.
- It is expected that this project will assist the University information-flow and identify areas where there is a lack, or duplication of, material.
- It was thought that communications to students from Admissions should be shared with Schools as a matter of routine in order to harmonise material.
- It would also be useful for Schools to have sight of the Student MyEd page set-up.

David Williams would discuss these issues with Admissions and Registry.
5. **ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

Committee had received a discussion paper from the Convener (Paper B) regarding assessment strategies. It was noted:

- The paper outlines issues relating to assessment processes within the College. Thought should be given to appropriate ways to improve and simplify the management of assessment to reduce assessment-related workload and focus on enhancement of teaching and learning experiences.
- The subject of assessment is not just an issue in the University of Edinburgh but around the UK and many of the concerns raised in the Convener’s paper were present in the External Report also distributed to Committee.
- A strategic view was needed across the College to decide the appropriate amount and type of assessment required at programme level, rather than simply at course level.
- Large amounts of assessment may have a knock-on effect in terms of feedback required.
- Students often wish to achieve credit for courses as an indicator of hard work applied.
- It is often difficult to distinguish between assessment for learning and assessment for progression.
- Assessment may be carried out through the completion of tasks, rather than examination.
- Training students to learn new techniques and complete initial draft summary reports would give the opportunity to also practice report-writing skills.
- It is important to strike a balance between training, feedback and assessed components.
- Detailed feedback may be targeted to pertinent areas of a programme to provide maximum benefit.
- Self-assessed and Peer-assessed assignments in early years while building up a portfolio of work may be motivating to students.
- A portfolio of reports could be used for assessment where a student can select a report for marking and another chosen by the examiner at random.
- The UK system of assessment is not currently a flexible system. In other countries the expectation is that all areas of student conduct are assessed, including behaviour and attendance.
- The structure of programme course points should be considered and whether these are optimal. While 40 point courses allow for one examination, 10 point courses allow for more flexibility, particularly for cross-discipline programmes.

Further discussion on this item would be necessary and Committee were asked to discuss the issue of curriculum and associated assessment within their School. In particular, what is needed to assess the suitability of a student to pass from one stage to the next and for degree classification.
A related Remediation Paper on this issue has been passed through Principal’s Strategy Group and Central Management Group and will be passed to Finance & General Purposes Committee. The modified version will come to the College Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting in September.

6. **WIDENING PARTICIPATION**

Committee had received a paper from the Convener regarding possible activities to widen participation.

Since writing this paper, another paper has been received through the Deans of Science and Engineering in Scotland Education Group which has proposed that there should be a unified project to take this issue forward to all Scottish Institutions. This Paper has now been agreed by the Scottish Government.

While this is viewed as a very positive move, concern was expressed that the diversity of Institutions across Scotland may make this unified approach unfeasible for some.

A meeting to discuss this issue will be held at the end of May. The Convener will represent the College at this meeting and advise of any developments.

A number of actions have been suggested which may strengthen College activity in the area of widening access and across a broader area. It was noted.

- The organisation of ‘Summer School’ type events and online activities may be considered. Access to online resources and potential employment responsibilities would have to be taken into account.
- Time available between accepting an offer and arriving at University can be short which may limit pre-arrival activities.
- Additional post arrival activities for any student who requires support should be considered, such as study skills classes.
- The College has been asked to report to the Deans Group on existing access routes for students.
- While the College has some articulation-type measures with Further Education Institutions, this would require further investigation and more formal arrangements.
- It was important for the College to become more involved in outreach activities generally to raise the profile of Science & Engineering and improve its talent pool.
- There is the potential for Schools to collaborate in these activities, particularly as potential student interest may be cross discipline.
- It was not thought appropriate to lower entry qualifications for targeted students and consideration may be given to various testing means.
- Advice should be taken from support mechanisms currently within the University and further research undertaken. The assistance of groups
such as SciFun may be enlisted to help focus target audiences.

It was thought that a Working Group should be established to take this issue forward. Members were asked to identify people within their Schools who would be willing to serve on this Group.

7. **COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

Members had been circulated the College Quality Assurance Report for information.

Schools had been asked to provide standard statistical reports which had been compiled into a summary with a College overview. This Report had been passed to Senatus with no major recommendations.

The summary included information on withdrawals from Schools. It was unclear whether these withdrawals referred to students who had changed degree programmes or left the University entirely. The Dean of QA would check how these statistics match with the data from Central University.

It was thought that a 5 year trend which included gender balance would be extremely helpful to Schools.

Thanks were extended to Kate Nicol, Lynda Henderson and David Williams for their assistance with this report.

8. **WORKING GROUPS**

Quality Assurance Committee

A pilot was run using EVASYS software for coursework evaluation. This pilot worked well and was felt to be an improvement from an administrative viewpoint.

The use of mostly standard questions in this questionnaire means that the comparison of courses was possible. This software can also be used for staff evaluation/staff appraisal purposes.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Ecological Sciences TPR

This report was noted
- MA in Primary Education with Earth Sciences

This programme was being administered by the School of Education and was circulated for information.

- Teaching Awards

Congratulations were extended to winners of the Teaching Awards
Sue Sierra, Mathematics
Alan Clark, Informatics
Andrew Curtis, Geosciences
and to runners-up, Tina Duren and Martin Reekie, Engineering

- Appeals Committee

Volunteers were sought for the Student Appeals Committee, which considers individual student appeals within the University.

Details of the Committee remit and individuals required would be send to Members. Schools were asked to respond to David Williams as soon as possible.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21st May 2013
1.00 – Programme Approval Meeting
2.00 – College Learning & Teaching Committee