College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 22nd October 2013

Present  
Prof G Reid  Convener, Dean of Learning and Teaching  
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  
Dr M Rovatsos  School of Informatics  
Dr D Williams  Head of Academic Affairs  
Dr S Warrington  School of Engineering  
Prof W Williams  School of GeoSciences  

In attendance:  
Mrs L Archibald  Minutes Secretary  

1.1 APOLOGIES  
Apologies had been received from Ms Lynda Henderson (Academic Affairs Officer), Dr Gordon McDougall (Dean of Quality Assurance), Prof Alan Murray (Dean of Students) and Mr James Ferguson (Lead Student Representative).

1.2 Student Representatives  
The College Deans had attended a meeting with class representatives from around the College recently and student volunteers had been recruited for the various College Committees.

An online forum was available to student representatives where issues can be raised and significant points brought to the relevant Committee for discussion.

2. Minutes of previous meeting  
The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013 were approved subject to an amendment to Item 5.

2.1 Matters Arising  
i) Single semester abroad  

The Convener had been asked to seek clarity on the responsibilities of task groups examining the issue of the single semester abroad.

The University currently has two separate bodies:

- a specific task group investigating the possibility of awarding credit for periods abroad and whether current schemes within the University could be spread more widely;

- a task group set up by the International Office, on which Phil Bailey
represented the College. This task group is working on increasing overseas experiences by a further 800 students.

Phil Bailey provided a pie chart giving the breakdown of student international experiences. This baseline data, provided by GaSP, appeared to be inaccurate and it was thought that College study-abroad experiences may be considerably higher. It was likely that some short term experiences may not have been included in these numbers.

Stuart Macdonald is in the process of setting up a ‘Centre for Cultural Relations’ through the Global Citizens Programme which encompasses a variety of overseas student experiences, primarily for a single semester. It is envisaged that any School within the University will be able to access these programmes.

Schools may find difficulties in creating a single credit bearing semester and ensuring that students do not miss any core courses. Securing accommodation for one semester may also prove problematic for students.

While students often realise the advantages of a semester abroad, some increased market research would be beneficial.

Schools should give thought to any opportunities or initiatives that may broaden options for experiences abroad.

ii) Curriculum for Excellence

Members were asked at the last meeting to give suggestions of graduates who are now teachers who may be able to assist the University in preparation for the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence.

The curriculum in future years would alter, perhaps in both content and assessment, which would have an effect on student recruitment and selection. It was important that there be a consistent application and interpretation of these changes.

The Committee were again encouraged to identify suitable teachers within their disciplines that the College may invite to a collaborative meeting with relevant staff.

iii) Declaration of Own Work

The Committee had considered the universal use of this form at the previous meeting. This had now been discussed at the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) meeting and a summary of this discussion was tabled.

Noted:

- Some system of acknowledgement of the rules regarding misconduct was necessary. This would also avoid any claims of ignorance
concerning procedures.

- It was important that students are made aware of exactly what is expected from individual pieces of work. Rules should be clear as to whether these have to be completed individually, or as a group project and distinct boundaries drawn between collaboration and collusion.

- It was thought that the use of this form for every piece of assessed work may overwhelm the Teaching Office with additional paperwork.

- A more selective use such as the signing of a form once per course or for each major piece of assessed work may be more appropriate.

- The message should be taken back to course teams that students must acknowledge that they understand the regulations regarding plagiarism and this should be easily traceable through the Teaching Office.

iv) Turnitin Workshops

- Committee were asked to consider organising a workshop for appropriate staff to learn the more advanced features of Turnitin software.

- It was important that staff are able to interpret these reports correctly and where access is given to students, controls put in place to manage number of submissions.

- This Workshop was agreed and the College Office would contact Schools to arrange this.

iv) Courses in Engineering

The new courses discussed at the previous meeting had now been approved online, as no concerns had been raised by the Committee.

3. CONVENERS REPORT

The Convener had recently met with the Head of College and other University staff regarding the possibility of putting in place an Entrepreneurship course directed at pre honours students.

Members were asked to consider:

- whether there would be interest within their School
- how this may be timetabled
- who might lead this course

Noted

- Any course would be aimed at students across the College, rather than students in a specific School.

- A former Engineering course "Innovation and Enterprise for Scientists
and Engineers” in association with Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) had been quite successful. Due to a key member of staff leaving, this course had been cancelled but had the potential to be reintroduced.

- Fiona Godsman, chief executive of SIE, had met with the Convener, Dr Gallagher and the head of School of Biological Sciences to look at possible contributions to teaching activities. Avenues being pursued were an event in Innovative Learning Week and the possible development of a strand of the Edinburgh Award driven by SIE.

- In terms of timetabling, a time slot of 5.10 -6.00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at Kings Building may be achievable, matching the course’s previous time slots.

- It would be necessary to source a suitable course organiser to take this issue forward.

Members were in favour of this proposal and were asked to give any suggestions for a possible Organiser to Graeme Reid or Linda Archibald as soon as possible.

4. OUTREACH COURSES AND ASSESSMENT INNOVATIONS

Hugh Murdoch (EUSA President) and Sue Rigby (Vice Principal Learning and Teaching) led a discussion on outreach courses and assessment innovations. It was noted:

- Learning Conversations had been launched on 22nd October with the intention of bringing together students and academics.

This group will consider what learning will look like in the future, the way the University as a whole teaches and will work together to design courses. It was thought that the input of students from early stages of programme design would be of mutual benefit.

- The first event will take place on November 13th focussing on collaboration to open avenues of dialogue. Ideas for the focus of ‘thematic discussions’ will be considered for future gatherings.

- Support might be given to the adapting of the Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme to cover applications from students as well as from staff.

- There was a desire from students to become involved in the setting out of University strategies and build a culture where they are able to influence future initiatives.

- Learning Conversations hopes to appeal to a large section of students. The involvement of academics, teaching and support staff was also important in this process.

- Consistency was necessary across the University regarding student opinion and student involvement in a cohesive academic/student
community.

- Student input into the current initiative to increase the diversity of assessment would also be key.

- In terms of the assessment of achievements, it was noted that students often feel that there should be a ‘credit bearing outcome’ for taking part in any process.

- In future it is hoped that options of how students wish to be assessed will be something the University could consider.

- It was felt that the University should be flexible in their capacity to change programmes quickly to react to current happenings.

- Ian Pirie through CSPC should be asked to consider increasing agility of what the University can do in terms of building flexibility into courses to include ‘exploratory’ options without risk of detriment to a student’s classification.

- Members were asked to give their support to this scheme and encourage staff to attend the event on November 13th.

5. PROEDURE FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMME REVIEW & POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS

Members received College Procedure for TPR and PPR Reports (Paper B) for information.

This document is a College procedure which builds on the University procedure.

This process is run by the Academic Affairs Office and ensures that all aspects of Quality Assurance and Enhancement are encompassed.

6. VISITING STUDENTS AND RESITS

This item arose from a recent meeting of Teaching Organisation Administrators.

It was noted that a difference in practice existed among Schools regarding visiting students and the entitlement of resits for levels 9, 10 and 11.

The University regulations state that students are entitled to resits unless they are honours level. While visiting students are not classed as honours students, they may be at honours level in their home institutions. As a result of this, two interpretations have been adopted around the College.

It was felt that a common interpretation across the College and University should be adopted, but it was recognised that permitting resits at level 9, 10 and 11 for visiting students would have considerable resource implications for those Schools that did not
already implement this practice. It was noted that where resits were provided, the proportion of visiting students actually attending the resit exam was a tiny proportion of those eligible to take it.

It was also noted that Registry are establishing procedures to allow international students to take examinations outwith Edinburgh. International students can apply to have exams taken in their own country either at their home institution or through British Council. This is likely to increase the number of such students taking resits and increase the resource implications.

Alternatives were discussed, which included:

(i) alternative forms of assessment to an exam, such as an essay or oral examination which can measure attainment of specific learning outcomes, although it was recognised that some courses may not be suitable for these types of alternatives;

(ii) allowing resits at the next available main diet, although this may not fit in with graduation dates from visiting students’ home institutions;

(ii) awarding credit by aggregation for visiting students.

It was agreed that David Williams would draft a paper for consideration at CSPC, outlining the regulatory issue, the concerns expressed by Committee, and possible resolutions. This item would be discussed again at the next meeting of CLTC.

D Williams

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*School Health & Safety Issues*

The issue of the use of safety clothing in fieldwork was raised. Prof. Williams queried whether students incorrectly dressed should be excluded from participation in fieldwork.

It was agreed that minimum specifications should be given on required safety clothing. Students who do not comply with these specifications should be disqualified from participating in these outings.

The provision of compliant clothing should be outlined in the programme under ‘associated costs’.