College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 27th February 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

Present
Prof G Reid  Convener
Dr T Bailey  School of Mathematics
Ms A Haley  School of Biological Sciences (for M Gallagher)
Ms L Henderson  Academic Affairs Officer
Dr W Hossack  School of Physics & Astronomy
Dr G McDougall  Dean of Quality Assurance
Prof C Pulham  School of Chemistry
Dr I Stark  School of Informatics
Dr S Warrington  School of Engineering
Dr D Williams  Head of Academic Affairs
Prof W Williams  School of GeoSciences

In attendance:
Mrs L Archibald  Minutes Secretary

1. **APOLOGIES**

   Prof A Murray (Dean of Students), Dr M Gallagher (School of Biological Sciences)

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

   Committee were tabled a proposed revision to the minutes on item 6. LH

   Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2013 were approved.

2.1 **Matters Arising**

   **Concessions**

   The new procedure and forms had now been sent to Schools. A pro-forma to nominate School contacts for concession documentation had also been forwarded. Schools should send completed documents to the College Office as soon as possible.

   **Communication response times**
- At a meeting of the Student Support Implementation Group it was agreed that the Personal Tutor communication response time rules will now apply to all staff and students in the University.

- It was thought that it may be difficult to apply this policy to students, particularly as there were no sanctions involved. It should, however, be made clear that all staff and students are expected to comply with this policy.

- The incorporation of a new policy statement into Course Booklets and on official e-mails may be appropriate.

- It was also extremely important that students were reminded that all e-mails must come through their University (SMS) account. Mail sent from personal accounts may be filtered out of email security systems and not reach their intended recipient

3. **Conveners Report**

*Resits*

- A paper has been passed through CSPC and LTC regarding proposed Revisions to resit arrangements. Wyn Williams was currently representing the College on the associated Task Group.

- Although this issue is at a preliminary stage, some concern had been expressed at the rapid pace the proposal was being led.

- Various solutions had been discussed including
  - the ability to reassess during the following semester
  - assessing learning outcomes in alternative ways
  - possibility of resits in July.

- Although some suggested solutions have associated problems, it was important not to allow anxieties regarding changes to obstruct the College from finding a resolution to the current difficulties.

- It was not appropriate to circulate the paper to Members at the current time due to its rapid changes. Wyn Williams was representing the College on the Working Group and would keep members informed of any developments.

*Moderation*

The paper had been discussed at the CSPC. Following comments from members of College it was felt important to delay finalising this document until Schools had the opportunity to consider possible effects.

- Members were asked to consider the principles of this paper and any particular problems these might raise at School level. Any comments should be sent to David Williams as soon as possible.
4. **Shared Academic Timetabling**

Received: Presentation from Liz Bondi and James Thin regarding the Shared Academic Timetabling Project.

Noted:

- Throughout 2011/12 the University implemented software to produce a new timetabling system.

- One of the key targets for this system is to offer personalised timetables for students and to deliver to the University community planning tools to manage space and time differently.

- A new room booking system was delivered and a web timetabling template for capturing timetables.

- A benefit of the updated system will be the ability to manage whole classes, tutorials, workshops and seminars. Ultimately incorporating staff calendars, teams and scenario planning. This would clearly need some work on the interface between systems but could be implemented in the longer term.

- Possible weaknesses of the new system were that it involved a fairly complicated process. Staff using this system would require training and the system itself would rely on data being of good quality. Historically student records and timetable information has been of mixed quality and measures would have to be taken to ensure data input was of a consistent high standard.

- The aim of the process is not to make the system more centralised, rather to have a unified overview of services in order to make systems more available.

- It is vital that the University have a delay mechanism on the Allocator System which will allow for local scenario planning.

- The Business User and Technical User Group will meet on 13th March to gather information from allocators. It was hoped that this opportunity would give confidence to users that the system will function efficiently.

- The introduction of the system will also focus on the best use of the Estate. It should be noted, however, that a co-ordinated approach to the placing of lectures and the common location of students must be taken into account.

- At this stage, the Timetabling project is forming a basic platform for processes. It was proposed that more sophisticated tools would be added to the system later.

- Software will be available for students to automatically be allocated to groups without having to manually allocate each student and customised e-mails will be possible via an xml feed.
- It is likely that there may be short term losses with the new system, although it is hoped that the new benefits will outweigh these.

- Personal Tutors must be able to easily use systems and produce timetables for students as soon as possible. It would be helpful to have a list of problems that were faced by Personal Tutors in the previous year to make sure back-up systems are put in place before September.

- A copy of the hand-out circulated to members is attached to these minutes for further information.

5. **EXAMINATION TIMETABLE**

Student adjustments and the examination diet (Paper B) was discussed. It was noted:

- Issues had been raised in the previous academic year where Schools had been asked to provide papers for disabled students at a time different from the main cohort. Short notice had made it impractical to comply with this request.

- The Convener had met with Sheila Williams, Director of the Student Disability Service, Craig Shearer from registry and Vice Principal Sue Rigby to discuss the issues and potential solutions.

- In discussions of timing of release of draft and published exam timetables, Registry were of the view that this could not be pushed any further forward. It was not feasible to complete timetables until after the first two weeks as students often change course registrations.

- Registry have agreed to highlight students with relevant adjustments when sending draft timetables to Schools. Schools were asked to pay particular attention to these both for courses and programmes to ensure these are sensible.

- It may be beneficial to e-mail affected students asking them to check their arrangements for examinations. The Disability Service should be able to contact all students with a learning profile.

- It was noted that particular problems could be experienced with chaperoning. Schools should contact David Williams for advice on the use of chaperoning and communication to students on not contacting other students.

- Members were asked to advise the Convener of any issues that were outstanding.

6. **INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK**

This year’s Innovative Learning Week was briefly discussed. It was noted:

**Informatics**
The Week was considered to have gone well, although there had been mixed responses with certain events.

Students who became involved in organised events had found these very useful.

**Chemistry**

Poor engagement had been experienced from years 1 and 2 but some excellent activities with other years. The experiences of those students who did become involved were extremely positive.

Among the events Chemistry had organised a Student Conference, a compulsory second year meeting with programme organisers and second years and a Careers Fair.

Events which were non-compulsory had a poor attendance, although students who did attend felt they were very constructive.

Some concern had been expressed at the perceived lack of staff engagement with many choosing to take sabbaticals at this time.

**Engineering**

The School had run mainly small events which had been moderately successful.

Careers events organised with Development and Alumni and presentations from recent graduates had received a muted response.

It was thought that some more student-led events may be popular.

Engineering had also experienced a certain lack of staff commitment to this Week.

**GeoSciences**

It was felt that this was a valuable week which provided the opportunity for staff and students to reflect and catch up.

A large range of different events had been organised including Conferences, careers workshops and specific training events.

With a typical 30% attendance turnout, the effort required to host specific events was thought to outweigh the benefits in terms of student numbers.

**Mathematics**

The School found a relatively small percentage of students involved in events, although those who had participated had enjoyed the experience.

Events had included bite size seminars with students presenting maths
topics which they found interesting, Alumni event, and companies giving mock interviews to students.

It was thought to be beneficial to have a clear focussed week when these types of events can be organised, rather than spread throughout the year.

**Physics & Astronomy**

Events organised by the School had not been well attended.

Group and Team Project Presentations had been reasonably well received by 3rd year students, but unfortunately all other events had been cancelled due to lack of numbers.

The Convener thanked members for their responses. Schools would be required to write a brief report on the outcome of this year's Innovative Learning Week to share experiences and good practice.

7. **SRUC STAFF AND STUDENT FEEDBACK**

- Scottish Rural Universities College (SRUC) Has recently been created from the amalgamation of the Scottish Agricultural College with 3 other colleges in the agriculture sector.. The University of Edinburgh accredits three BSc programmes delivered by SRUC.

- As part of discussions at an Accreditation Committee meeting, the issue of ELIR outcomes and feedback was raised. SRUC have prepared a document for students and staff to explain what feedback was which was forwarded to members for information or to use and incorporate into any guidance.

8. **REPORTS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

*Senate Learning & Teaching Committee*

Velda McCune is hoping to establish a system for the University to be Higher Education Authority accredited to enable Edinburgh to develop Continuing Professional Development for academic staff.

HEA has 4 levels of Fellowship and the University is keen to establish a representation at the higher stages and involve them in training at the lower levels. This paper is in draft form at the moment but has been enthusiastically received.

*CSPC*

It was noted that MOOCs would begin to come through normal Board of Studies and College approval processes and under the remit of CLTC in the next semester.

It was thought that as these courses can often be high profile, these should be managed through a regulatory procedure.
For the current period these continue to be processed through a separate channel led by Vice-Principal Jeff Haywood.

QAC

A short-term license to pilot EVASYS questionnaire management system has been purchased and will be used for course level questionnaires.

A 150 courses pilot between GeoSciences and Economics will look at potential problems and issues associated with system. It is hoped that this system may be rolled out as a survey tool in the next academic year.

A SQAC summary of appeals for last academic year was discussed at this meeting. It may be useful for Directors of Teaching to study the information contained in this document to identify any possible trends.

A copy of this document would be forwarded to members as soon as possible.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

   The issue of the noting of examination absences was raised. It was important that there was some consistency in the recording of these.

   David Williams would contact Craig Shearer in Registry to ask for advice on this issue.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
    26th March @ 2.00