College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning and Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 20 October 2015

Present
Prof G Reid  Convener, Dean of Learning and Teaching  
Dr P Bailey  School of Chemistry  
Dr T Bailey  School of Mathematics  
Mrs J Candlish  Head of Academic Affairs  
Dr M Gallagher  School of Biological Sciences  
Prof J Hardy  School of Physics & Astronomy  
Ms L Henderson  Academic Affairs Officer  
Dr B Franke  School of Informatics  
Dr A Maciocia  Dean of Students  
Dr B Ngwenya  School of GeoSciences (for W Williams)  
Mr S Warrington  School of Engineering  

Attending:
Mrs L Archibald  Secretary

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: G MacDougall (Dean of QA) and W Williams (School of GeoSciences)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2016 were approved, subject to a minor amendment

2.1 MATTERS ARISING

a) CLTC Terms of Reference

The College Learning and Teaching Committee and Concessions Sub-Committee’s Terms of Reference had been updated as agreed at the previous meeting and would appear on the College wiki as soon as possible.

b) Arrivals Policy

Feedback given by the Committee had been incorporated into this document. This had now been passed to Recruitment and Admissions for comment and the document would be made available as soon as possible.

c) Programme Change Guidelines

Following the meeting on 19th January, Toby Bailey had sent a document to Committee members which clarified the issue.
As the proposed restructured programme would not differ greatly in content, this was considered a minor change. There is flexibility as long as this is advertised and informed to students, with a phase in period.

While the University regulations state that it has the right to change a programme, clarification was needed as to when this statement becomes ‘binding’ (offer made, matriculated or in programme). Lynda Henderson would check this with Academic Services. Checks would also be made with PCIM to clarify the definition of what is considered a major or minor change.

d) Academic and Exam Misconduct

The spike in misconduct cases is continuing at present with a higher than average number of cases being heard at College level.

The cases are not confined to any one School, although it does appear that a large percentage are related to collaboration, despite clear instructions from the Course Organiser.

It was thought that the College Academic Misconduct Officer should be invited to a future meeting, perhaps April, to give an overview of the situation.

3. CONVENERS REPORT

a) Teaching Spaces and Room Allocation

Following the difficulties experienced last September, a wide-ranging review was conducted, led by Gavin McLachlan. A draft report has now been passed to Central Management Group for comment.

The draft recommendations include:

- Clear governance and ownership of spaces, where a person is identified who has a defined leadership role for management of teaching spaces.

- A detailed teaching spaces strategy and plan. This would look forward in terms of how spaces are developed and maintained.

- A more simplified, centralised way of allocating teaching activities.

- More enhanced and formal modelling of timetabling and teaching spaces, which will also allow us to predict the type and capacity of space needed in 5 years’ time.

It was noted:

- While the centralised allocation of spaces may present some difficulties to staff, this will allow the College to make better use of the teaching spaces currently available.

- Significantly better data would be needed to implement the allocation of teaching spaces, including staff availability and teaching slots which is currently
held on localised spreadsheets. A process for collecting this data will also have to be organised.

- It was thought that the allocation of wet labs through a centralised system may not be appropriate for several reasons.

b) Lecture Capture.

It was noted:

- While the current lecture capture system has reached the end of its useful life, it is clear that a large number of staff and students feel this is a priority.

- Melissa Highton from Information Services has undertaken to research some options for a replacement.

- The Panopto system does exist but is limited in terms of the number of licences required for its wide-spread operation.

- Audio recordings were very popular and while this is a less expensive option, its functions were limited.

- The School of Engineering had set up a classroom equipped with Panopto. Committee members could contact Victoria Dishon for information on this.

c) Assessment Paper

Members were asked to provide the Convener with a short update on how Schools have been progressing in terms of the Assessment Paper, including any changes to timing of exams and exam boards for S1 courses or reducing the numbers of exams.

This should be provided by the end of this week (26th February).

d) Global Select

Difficulties have been experienced with the Global Select programme this year with clashes between English Language tutorials and timetabled specific labs.

It was thought that these students should ideally be brought in through admissions procedure for entry on regular programmes. A paper was expected from Recruitment and Admissions which will give an overview of the current status.

The Dean of Students would highlight this issue at the CIG meeting on 25th February.

4. **SENATE COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

A) Special Circumstances
Members received several papers regarding the Special Circumstances Task Group (Papers B, C, D and E). A number of changes were proposed to University policies and Committee was asked to consider any issues that may be fed back to the Group.

It was noted:

- While the College exemplars of things that will or will not be counted as special circumstances was commended, Central University are keen that Colleges do not produce their own guidance. These exemplars will now exist in a modified form in the draft policy.

- Some changes have been proposed in the way Special Circumstances Committees direct Exam Boards. Decisions are still binding on Exam Boards but relate only to whether or not there were special circumstances and whether this had an impact on pieces of assessment.

- It was important that it is made clear what impact the special circumstances had on the student (i.e. meant that they could not attend the exam), rather than simply major or minor special circumstances.

- Schools currently have different standards for the paperwork required for these Committees and the guidance given was helpful.

- Deadlines for submitting special circumstances can be problematic with clarification needed regarding what constitutes submission. Does this mean submission of the form or does this include submission of any evidence? A set rule and deadline for the whole institution could be considered.

- Clarification was still needed regarding self certification for illness and what a student can self-certify for. In the case of a short, minor illness, it would be inappropriate to require a doctor’s letter.

- A common sense approach to coursework extensions is necessary and there should not be any inconsistency between course organisers. Extensions should be processed through one standard place (such as Student Support staff).

- Board of Examiners should be directed that Boards will normally accept the recommendations of the Special Circumstances Committee.

b) Review of Academic Year

A Group has been set up to manage this review. The College is represented on this group by Graeme Reid, Joy Candlish and Lesley Yellowlees.

The timescale is very short with the Interim Report expected mid-March and a final report by 25th May. Some interim meetings may need to be held with the College Learning and Teaching Committee to align with this.

Options being considered include:
- Holding Semester 1 examinations after the Winter break. It had been noted that other institutions had considered this possibility but had not taken this route or had changed from this model. Academic Services were currently trying to identify the reasoning for this, which may assist the University in making any decision.

- Starting Semester 1 a week earlier is another option. Concerns have been expressed by Admissions and Accommodation services over clashes with external bodies. This may lead to late applications due to timing of release of grades etc.

- The ‘Trimester’ model with 3 terms within a year is also being considered.

- Another proposal is that the University should have a break within the semester for revision and catch-up before the start of examinations.
- It should be noted that if examinations were held in January, there should be a week ‘break’ before Semester 2 begins.

The Committee would be kept up to date with developments.

c) Assessment & Progression Steering Group

The College was represented by Graeme Reid, Joy Candlish and Stephen Warrington. Stephen Warrington gave a brief update:

- It is the intention that EUCLID will now store all assessment components, rather than just final marks. A test had been run which had gone very well.

- It is proposed that a University policy be implemented which gives deadlines for all Boards and Special Circumstances which relate to these. It is vital that all marks are available for classification boards.

- It should be noted that where all final marks are available, Schools need not wait until the set deadline.

- The Group are looking into the possibility of recording special circumstances to allow the tracking of these.

- An over-ride on EUCLID will be necessary in order to discount a special circumstance or unreliable mark.

d) Learning Analytics Working Group

Toby Bailey was representing the College on this Group. It was noted

- This Group was set up in conjunction with Civitas.

- Jeff Haywood has established a pilot project which will apply learning analytics to online masters courses.

- This project involves taking past data available on these courses regarding performance, assessment and background to arrive at some model of student success
- A Governance meeting will be held shortly and students and programme directors this may affect will receive communication from Jeff Haywood.

- No opt-out option is available, although students may have the opt-out for their data appearing in reports.

5. **USE OF CALCULATORS AND DICTIONARIES IN EXAMS**

Members received a paper (Paper F) regarding the proposed amendment to Exam Regulations. It was noted:

- It was proposed that a Board of Studies would now determine whether dictionaries or calculators were allowed in an examination for any course.

- This will alleviate the workload for Schools to produce individual letters for any student.

- It would have to be made clear to Course Organisers, the risks and requirements involved in allowing dictionaries or calculators.

- Exact details of what type of dictionary was allowed was imperative (technical/scientific/translation etc).

- Thought could be given to whether it may be more appropriate to give students access to a thesaurus.

- It should be noted that there will be a heavy increase in workload for invigilators who will have to check each dictionary to ensure they contain no prohibited material.

- It must be made clear to students that examinations should be written in pen.

*Action: JC to provide this feedback to Student Administration, for incorporation into Reg review.*

6. **COLLEGE CONCESSIONS**

Members had received a paper regarding College Concessions. The following issues were discussed:

- Should the requirement for external evidence continue or is a statement from the School sufficient.

- It was thought that external evidence was necessary for all such decisions.

- More clarity and detail was necessary regarding the evidence needed for College to process a concession.

- Meetings had been held with the Schools of Chemistry and GeoSciences regarding the information needed for concessions which had been extremely helpful.
- It was thought that meetings should be set up with relevant staff from the remaining Schools to clarify the procedures.

**Study Abroad**

Members were asked to consider what action should be taken in the event of an optional study abroad student resigning from their placement without appropriate evidence.

While the College does not wish to discourage students from taking optional study abroad, resigning from a placement also denies another student this opportunity.

It was felt that this question does need further discussion and perhaps should be considered at University level. Joy Candlish would investigate what action was taken at other Colleges.

7. **INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK**

Schools had experienced no new issues with this Week with outcomes which had been in line with previous years.

8. **TUTORS & DEMONSTRATORS**

Members had received a report regarding Schools’ current practice.

While it was thought that a uniform practice would be useful within the College, some transition and flexibility would be necessary, dependent on the market and structural content.

The Dean of Students would highlight this subject at a future RTC meeting.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Programme and Course Issues**

A request had been received from the School of Informatics to allow a cap on the number of students taking an honours course.

This request was due to a lack of space within labs which the School are also unable to repeat because the lab is fully timetabled. The cap would be set at 100 as a safeguard and it was not anticipated that these numbers would be exceeded in any case.

While caps should be avoided wherever possible, in this case where labs cannot be substituted or increased, the request was APPROVED by committee.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The meeting scheduled for 22nd March had been postponed to
5th April, starting with a Programme Approval meeting at 1.00 p.m. and College Learning and Teaching Committee at 2.00 p.m.