1.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gordon McDougall (Dean of Quality Assurance), Maurice Gallagher (School of Biological Sciences) and David Williams (Head of Academic Affairs).

2. MINUTES

Amendments would be made to Item 6. Innovative Learning Week for Engineering and Chemistry.

The minutes were agreed subject to these changes.

2.1 Matters arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3. CONVENERS REPORT

An External Consultant (Critical Thinking) had been engaged through Sue Rigby, Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, to explore the reasons why some NSS results had produced low scores.

An interim report had been received by Deans that had identified issues which were familiar and similar to previous reports.

Dr Rigby had drafted an action plan to be presented to Principal’s Strategy Group in April.
Examples of good practice were reported and efforts should be made where possible to address negative aspects.

Schools should pay attention to eliminating evident poor practice. Thought should also be given to how courses are structured to enable useful and timely feedback to students.

Members should give consideration to what action could be taken in this regard and the issue would be discussed further at the next meeting.

4 FEEDBACK ISSUES

A presentation was given by Dai Hounsell regarding feedback issues. It was noted:

- Dr Hounsell was heading a new project focusing on the long term issue of feedback to students.

- It was important that new lecturers within Science and Engineering are able to determine what counts as effective feedback and procedures such as an archive of good practice may be extremely useful. Members were asked whether assistance in establishing such procedures would be helpful.

- It was noted that the College currently has many procedures in place to ensure staff are able to access information such as moderation, workshops and student working groups. It was thought, however, that variability in quality and quantity of feedback still exists.

- While written feedback is the most common method, consideration should be given to different ways of giving feedback, which may not necessarily be in writing.

- Thought should be given to the purpose of feedback. Students often regard this as a justification of marks given, rather than assistance toward learning goals.

- Timing issues often have an impact on the significance of feedback given. Longer time scales tend to invalidate comments, with students failing to recall their mindset at the time of writing.

- An open archive of information available across Schools with examples of good practice would be extremely useful.

- A Workshop tailored for Science and Engineering which focused on identifying good practice would also be helpful.
Prof Hounsell would work on developing such a workshop in consultation with the Convener.

5. **PATH DEMO**

Greg Tyler and Paul Horrocks, final year undergraduate students in the School of Mathematics, gave a demonstration of ‘PATH for Maths’.

Noted

- Course information on DRPS can be unclear for students making course choices. Although PATH provides an alternative solution, it was noted that Schools may also need to review the utility of the course information they put on DRPS.

- The system has produced a good return rate for student feedback. Students can make yes / no recommendations, as well as detailed written feedback. Comments are moderated before publication, and class reps are involved in the moderation process. Comments can be used to communicate issues to class representatives which can be taken forward to Liaison Committees and Schools.

- While the course selection element of the system is still in development, Personal Tutors in Mathematics have reported the system was useful when talking to students about course choices.

The committee agreed that PATH had great potential for development, although it was too early at this stage to ascertain its feasibility for the College.

Schools who were interested in carrying out a pilot of this system should contact the Convener.

6. **DISTANCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE BIDS**

**MSc Carbon Management.**

Members had been circulated a copy of the Option 2 Funding Proforma for this course (Paper B)

Noted:

- This Online bid is a development of the very successful residential MSc in Carbon Management.

- This is a collaborative course with resources pooled from current material available through the University of Edinburgh and its partners.
institutions University of St Andrews and Heriot Watt University.

- It is the intention that the first few years would be badged through University of Edinburgh with all three Universities having joint ownership. It is possible that the administering University may rotate once the course had become established.

- Three 20 credit level 11 courses are envisaged, where the student can completes three courses of core material with the scope for expansion.

- A competitor survey suggests that while other similar courses are available, these are campus based rather than distance learning.

- A demand survey which has run since start of semester had identified 40 potential students so far. The feedback has been encouraging with many students interested in the first module (Introduction) with two further modules.

- It is intended that this course should go live in January 2014 and it is hoped that a MOOC may also be feasible.

- Course material will be available on the server and lectures released every few days. Partner Institutions will also contribute to these items.

- These courses would appeal to both students and active industry professionals who wish to enhance their skills or retrain.

- Fee levels are unlikely to be standard and clarification on fees and registration would be helpful. Lynda Henderson and Susan Cooper would be able to work with the School to develop this area.

- It should be noted that funds may be available for administrative support and the School should give consideration to applying for these.

The Committee was very supportive of this bid.

**PG Certificate in Computational Chemistry and Modelling**

Noted

- This CPD in collaboration with Heriot Watt University and University of St Andrews is intended as an online version of the current residential programme.

- Although this is an Option 2 bid, the School is currently canvassing demand.

- The bid is to secure resources to develop teaching material and resources. In the event that the certificate route is unsuccessful, the teaching resources developed would be used for MOOCs or individual
It was important to ensure that this bid was in a condition to optimise the success of the bid.

Judy Hardy would continue to liaise with the School regarding this bid.

7. **WEIGHTING OF HONOURS YEARS**

Committee received a paper from the School of Chemistry regarding the weighting of honours years.

It was noted that a standardisation of weighting would not be suitable for all Schools within the College and it was advantageous to have alternative systems at the current time.

The paper was Approved by Committee.

8. **EDINBURGH STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY**

Committee had received Results from the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (Paper F – closed).

This paper was discussed at the Conveners Forum and disappointment was expressed that low scores were noted in areas similar to NSS.

School-level information will be more widely available online after statistical moderation has been completed.

9. **REPORTS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES**

**Curriculum and Student Progression Committee**

The Student Maternity Policy is currently being developed, although still requires some revisions. The Convener would keep Members up to date with progress.

The Convener and Will Hossack were representing the College on the Special Circumstances Task Group and would inform members of any developments.

**Senate Learning & Teaching Committee**

Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies are being developed.

Information would be extracted from School Plans which would come back for assessment.
Curriculum for Excellence is progressing and Scottish students who had come through the new curriculum and assessment regime would be admitted in about three years time.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Facebook and Code of Conduct**

It was noted that many student-originated Facebook pages had been set up for cohorts with discussions taking place on coursework.

This seemed a positive idea in principle, particularly for community and team-building. However, concern was expressed that this medium allows the potential for posting answers, incorrect advice or plagiarism.

It was important that students are made aware in coursework material and tutorials that it is also deemed Academic Misconduct to provide answers or allow someone to copy your work.

**Vacation Scholarships**

It was noted that there appeared to be an uneven distribution between Schools as to numbers of applications to College administered Vacation Scholarships.

Members were asked to ensure that students and relevant staff are aware of these Scholarships, which may require School level review and development support for students to ensure high quality applications.

The College would like to consider expanding interpretation of the Scholarship criteria wherever possible to better reflect modern science and engineering education and training opportunities.

**Timetabling System**

It was felt that this project had created a large amount of work for Teaching Organisation staff.

A great deal of time was needed to enter events, even though much of the information was carried forward.

Tutorials of all kinds are difficult to represent on the system and more than one tutorial in the same room does not fit the model given. It was thought that the logging of lectures and not tutorials would be more appropriate.

The Convener would discuss this issue with Dave Laurenson and would advise members of any developments
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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