Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) held at 2pm on Wednesday 16 March 2016 in the Raeburn Room, Old College

1. Attendance

Present:

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley	Assistant Principal (Research-Led Learning)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
Ms Shelagh Green	Director, Careers Service (co-opted member)
Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart	Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Health in Social Science (co-opted member)
Professor Peter Higgins	Representative of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Ms Melissa Highton	Convener of Learning Technologies Advisory Group (ex officio)
Ms Erin Jackson	Distance Learning Manager, School of Law, CHSS (co-opted member)
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Mr John Lowrey	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, CHSS
Ms Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka	EUSA Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (ex officio)
Dr Margaret MacDougall	Medical Statistician and Researcher in Education (co-opted member)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Senior Lecturer, School of Mathematics, CSE (co-opted member)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching, CSE
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, CMVM
Mrs Philippa Ward (Secretary)	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (ex officio)
Ms Imogen Wilson	EUSA Vice President (Academic Affairs) (ex officio)

Apologies:

Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Dr Gale Macleod	Dean of Postgraduate (Taught), CHSS
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee, ex officio)
Professor Anna Meredith	Director for Postgraduate Taught, CMVM
Professor Wyn Williams	Director of Teaching, School of GeoSciences, CSE

In Attendance

Dr Hazel Christie	Institute for Academic Development
Mr Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary – Student Experience
Ms Jennifer McGregor	Governance and Strategic Planning
Ms Jenni Murray	Student Induction Coordinator
Professor Susan Rhind	Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Lecture Capture (Item 5.8)

The Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division updated members on the current situation with CapturED. It was noted that the system was still widely used, but had a failure rate of around 20%, primarily due to equipment failure. Attention for the remainder of the academic year would be focussed on maintaining the system in the largest lecture theatres.

Media Hopper was also being used to upload and publish media, and Panopto was being introduced in a number of Schools. However, the limitations of Panopto - it does allow advance scheduling, and the licence currently held by the University is pilot-scale only - were recognised.

Benchmarking within the sector was being undertaken, and clear, data-informed proposals would be brought to the May 2016 meeting of LTC. Lecture capture would continue to be considered in Planning Round discussions.

> **Actions:** Director of the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division to bring proposals for the University's future approach to lecture capture to the May 2016 meeting of LTC.

4. Convener's Communications

4.1 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

Members noted that the technical consultation on the TEF would likely be announced in May. Scottish institutions and the Scottish Government were considering the implications of the introduction of a TEF for Scotland, and were looking closely at how the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review process might map onto the TEF. The University of Edinburgh would continue to be involved in all consultation.

4.2 Widening Access

The Committee was advised that the final report of the Scottish Government's Commission on Widening Access had been published. It included the following recommendations:

- The Scottish Government should appoint a Commissioner for Fair Access by the end of 2016.
- By 2018, the Commissioner for Fair Access should publish a Scottish Framework for Fair Access.
- By 2019, all Universities should set access thresholds for all degree programmes against which learners from the most deprived backgrounds should be assessed.
- By 2030, students from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 20 (the 20% most deprived backgrounds) should represent 20% of entrants to higher education.
- To drive progress towards the above goal, by 2021, students from SIMD 20 should represent at least 16% of full-time, first degree entrants to Scottish universities as a whole, and 10% of entrants to each individual Scottish university.

The report also placed emphasis on articulation, encouraging universities to accept students with HNCs and HNDs onto programmes at higher levels.

Members discussed the significant challenges that the report posed for the University. Edinburgh would be required to almost double its intake of SIMD 20 student by 2021. Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) would initiate discussions on how this target might be met. The Director of SRA and the newly appointed Head of Widening Participation would bring a report to the May meeting of LTC.

> **Actions:**
> 1. SRA to initiate discussions on how to respond to the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access.
> 2. Director of SRA and Head of Widening Participation to bring report to May meeting of LTC.

5.	**For Discussion**

5.1 2015 New Student Survey Results

Ms Jenni Murray, Student Induction Coordinator, attended the meeting to discuss the findings of the Survey with the Committee. It was noted that the Survey had been issued to all on-campus students. Its key findings included the following:

- Overall satisfaction with both Welcome Week and the first few weeks of University was high.
- There was scope to enhance pre-arrival information. Students were keen to receive more information about courses (for example reading lists, sample lectures) and course choice, specifics of the meeting with their Personal Tutor, and access to other useful resources.
- The quality of the events held during Welcome Week was considered to be high, but many students would have welcomed more activities at School and programme level to help build a stronger sense of community.
- There would be benefit in Schools helping students to understand more fully what was expected of them academically.
- There would be benefit in Schools doing more to promote attendance at Information Services / Library induction events.

Members discussed the following:

- In the context of the University's Athena Swan goals, there may be benefit in doing more gender analysis of the Survey's findings. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed with the Vice-Principal People and Culture.
- The low response rate was discussed. It was noted that the Survey was long and that only 52% of the undergraduate and 58% of the postgraduate students who started the survey completed it. Further consideration would be given to the Survey's length.
- Concerns were raised about the fact that the Survey was only being issued to on-campus students and that distance students were being excluded. It was noted that steps were being taken to address this.
- The need to improve the information produced by Schools about courses was discussed. However, the Committee also recognised that there were already issues regarding multiple sources of (sometimes inconsistent) information for prospective students, and that, in the context of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Guidance, it was important to avoid a proliferation of further information. The Director of Academic Services would liaise with relevant staff in the Colleges and the University's CMA group.

LTC endorsed the recommendations outlined in the paper, and agreed that they would be taken to College learning and teaching committees for further consideration and implementation.

Actions:
1. Jenni Murray to discuss the Survey's findings with the Vice-Principal People and Culture.
2. Jenni Murray to give further consideration to the length of the Survey.
3. Director of Academic Services to liaise with Colleges and CMA group about the need to improve course information produced by Schools.

> 4. Paper to be taken to College learning and teaching committees for further consideration and implementation of recommendations.

5.2   Learning and Teaching Communications – Teaching Matters Website

Members were advised that usage data for the Teaching Matters website was being considered, but it was too early to draw conclusions. It was hoped that usage would increase month on month, and members were asked to promote and consider producing articles for the site. The impact of the site would evaluated after six months, and a decision made about its future beyond summer 2016 at this point.

5.3   Student Systems Roadmap

The Committee was advised that the paper was a high-level overview of Student Systems' priorities for 2016-19, and was asked to comment on the priorities. The following was highlighted:

- A short-term piece of work had been commissioned to help visualise the current and possible student digital experience. This would report in April 2016 and feed into the development of the 'student digital experience' strand of the Roadmap.
- The importance to Student Systems' ability to enhance services of the partnership with Information Services' Applications Division was noted. It was recognised that closer partnership working with other 'student facing' services in the University Secretary's Group and Schools, the Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division, and the wider data community internally would be necessary to take forward a number of strands of the Roadmap.
- Priorities may shift in response to the outcomes of the Service Excellence Programme and Learning Analytics Pilot.

Members were supportive of the plans laid out in the paper, and particularly of work being undertaken on the visualisation of the digital experience, learning analytics, and on developing flipped perspective systems. The importance of having an effective system in place to support the Personal Tutor role was recognised. Concerns were raised about the current application, enrolment and payment systems for online distance learning (ODL) students. The Committee was advised that work on the development of a clear checklist for ODL applicants was progressing, and further work was planned once this had been achieved.

5.4 Interim Report of Task Group to Review the Academic Year Structure

The Task Group was considering ways in which symmetry might be brought to the academic year structure in order to offer a better student and staff experience. The timescale was tight, with a detailed set of recommendations being required in advance of the summer, and there were only a small number of options available:

1. Starting Semester 1 earlier
2. Examining Semester 1 courses after Christmas
3. Returning to a 3 term model
4. Introducing an 'accelerated' model with three terms running over the full year allowing students to complete a full honours degree in three years.

The Task Group had concluded that options 1, 3 and 4 were not viable, and therefore only option 2 was still being considered. A move from 11 weeks of teaching to a 5+1+5 structure followed by revision and exams was proposed. It was noted that the middle week would not be a reading week, but would be a structured teaching week for revision and consolidation.

Members recognised that the proposed model raised many questions. Extensive consultation with staff and students would therefore be undertaken, and LTC supported the Task Group's consultation plan. It would be important to consider the suitability of the model for postgraduate taught students, and to allow for some flexibility, regardless of the model implemented. The potential overlap between the work of this Task Group and that of the Innovation in Teaching and Learning Working Group was noted. It was agreed that the University's decision to accept students through clearing would be added to the reasons given for rejection of option 1 in the paper.

Actions: Director of Academic Services to highlight the University's decision to accept students through clearing as a reason for rejecting option 1.

5.5 Grade Point Averages (GPA) – Update on Sector Developments

Members were reminded that, at the November meeting of LTC, it had been agreed that the University would adopt GPA on a minimalist, 'on demand' basis. LTC approved the proposal that this development be paused until the outcome of the technical consultation for the Teaching Excellence Framework was known.

5.6 Feedback on Assessment – Turnaround Times

The Committee noted that the data on turnaround times submitted for Semester 1 2015/16 was not dissimilar to that for Semester 2 2014/15, although the number of Schools experiencing difficulties in providing the data had reduced. Many Schools were reporting high levels of return of feedback within prescribed timescales, but some were still struggling. The Assistant Principal Assessment and Feedback would continue to work with those Schools that were performing less well.

It remained difficult to compare data across Schools on account of the variation in the way in which the data was produced. Work to develop more systematic approaches to collecting the data was ongoing.

Whilst the 15 day turnaround time rule was considered to have resulted in significant improvement in practice, it also risked unintended consequences, for example a reduction in the quality of feedback in some areas, and use of exams in some cases where other forms of assessment might have be more beneficial, but the School did not feel confident that it could return feedback on this assessment within the prescribed timescale. LTC agreed that there would be value in retaining the 15 day benchmark, but suggested that the Committee have a broader discussion regarding the scope for permitting greater flexibility where this was appropriate for the assessment in question.

Members discussed the importance of arranging assessments so that they were useful to students, and noted that visualisation tools were available to assist with this. The need to provide students with timetables of when feedback and exam results would be returned was also discussed, and Schools would be reminded of their responsibilities in this area. It was noted that feedback was not always linked to assessment.

LTC considered whether data on feedback turnaround times should become part of the University's Quality Assurance processes. The issue would discussed with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.

Actions: Director of Academic Services to:
1. remind Schools of the requirement to publish dates for return of feedback and exam results;

2. discuss with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance the possibility of including data on feedback turnaround times in the University's QA processes.

5.7 Senate Committee Planning for 2016/17 Onwards

The paper provided an update on progress against 2015/16 plans, and invited LTC to suggest and prioritise high priority projects for 2016/17. Plans for 2016/17 would be finalised at the Senate Committees' Symposium on 27 April 2016.

Members noted that the current Senate Committees' planning process did not fit with the timing of the University Planning Round. As such, the paper also proposed a revised approach to planning in future which would allow projects with resource implications to be considered earlier in the year.

LTC confirmed that it was content with the proposed approach to future planning cycles, and agreed that the Service Excellence Project would be added to the list of high priority projects for 2016/17. Members were asked to advise the Director of Academic Services of other items to be added to the list.

Actions: Members to advise Director of Academic Services of other items to be added to the list of high priority projects for 2016/17.

6. For Approval

6.1 Innovation in Teaching and Learning Working Group – Remit and Membership

LTC approved the remit and membership for this Working Group. It was agreed that mechanisms for including work on careers and employability would be considered.

Actions: Convener of Innovation in Teaching and Learning Working Group to consider mechanisms for including work on careers and employability within the Group's remit.

6.2 Student Surveys Review

The Committee was advised that the paper presented a high-level, draft plan to review and propose changes to the University's current suite of student surveys. It detailed both the surveys that were in and out of scope.

LTC approved the proposed review. It also discussed:

- the need to reconsider the length of the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES) given that large numbers of students starting the survey failed to complete it;
- the importance of giving further consideration to the International Student Barometer (ISB);
- the possibility of including the Decliners' Survey in the Review;
- the potential benefit of developing some survey good practice and guidance, particularly in the context of EvaSys roll-out.

7. For Noting / Information

7.1 Report from Learning and Teaching Policy Group (LTPG)

Members welcomed the report. It was noted that the Senior Vice-Principal would take responsibility for drafting a University strategy to replace the current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

7.2 Enhancement Led Institutional Review – Final Report

LTC noted that the final report had now been published. Recommendations would be taken forward be theme leads who had been asked to produce an action plan for the next 3 years, reporting to Senate Quality Assurance Committee in April.

7.3 Enhancement Themes – Update

It was reported that a successful 'Gearing Up for Transitions' event had taken place, and the University's 'Gearing Up' webpage had been updated to include resources coming out of the day. An article would be written for the 'Teaching Matters' website.

> **Actions:** Nichola Kett to produce article on 'Gearing Up' for 'Teaching Matters' website.

7.4 Student Survey Response Rates

An update was provided on response rates for the student surveys that were currently open. Members noted that there was little change from 2015 response rates, and further work was needed in this area.

7.5 Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) Report

LTC noted the report. The need to schedule Senate Committee discussions to allow them to shape the KSC agenda was discussed.

7.6 Digital Education

Members welcomed the report which had been produced by the Vice Principal Digital Education and summarised the key areas of work he had taken forward. It was noted that the University was in the process of appointing a new Assistant Principal Digital Education.

7.7 Draft Strategic Plan

Members noted that the draft Strategic Plan was currently available for consultation. Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) was keen for the consultation to be as wide as possible, and several student sessions had taken place. A key feature of the Plan was 'What makes us Edinburgh': the University of Edinburgh's distinctive place within the sector. The Plan also outlined the University's strategic objectives, learning and teaching and research being the University's fundamental, mutually reinforcing activities, with equal priority. It was noted that Key Performance Indicators were not included in the Plan at this stage. The Strategic Plan would be signed off by Court in June, and published in September 2016.

LTC welcomed the draft Strategic Plan and particularly the shift towards 'learning'. It was proposed that the first bullet be amended to reflect the fact that we are a community of learners, not just deliverers of education. There was also a desire for the Plan to reflect more of the University's aspirations in relation to diversity and widening opportunity. Some concerns were raised about the use of text and diagrams within the Plan, and it was agreed that this would be given further thought. It was noted that the final aim was to produce a slim, printed version of the Strategic Plan which would be supported by online case studies. Members were keen to see examples of how this would work in the near future.

Actions: GaSP to take forward LTC's suggestions in relation to the draft Strategic Plan.

8.   Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 25 May 2016 at 2.00pm in the Joseph Black Building, Kings Buildings.

Philippa Ward
Academic Services