SENATUS ACADEMICUS

30 September 2015 at 2.00pm, Informatics Forum, Crichton St.

AGENDA

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION THEME: Strategy for Learning and Teaching

1.	**Learning and Teaching: an Unambiguous Priority** Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal	**S 15 - 16 1 A**
2.	**Strengthening our Culture of High Performance in Teaching** Professor Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture	
3.	**Student Experience, Learning and Teaching in the Next Strategic Plan** Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy	**S 15 - 16 1 B**

INTERLUDE AND TEA/COFFEE BREAK

FORMAL BUSINESS

1.	Report of E-Business conducted 8 – 16 September 2015 **For Noting**	**S 15 - 16 1 C**
2.	Special Minute **For Approval**	**S 15 - 16 1 D**

COMMUNICATION

3.	Higher Education Governance Bill **For Information**	**S 15 - 16 1 E**
4.	Senate Membership: Professor Ruth King, Thomas Bayes Chair of Statistics **For Information**	
5.	Teaching Excellence Framework **For Information**	**S 15 - 16 1 F**
6.	EUSA's priorities for 2015/16 **For Information**	**S 15 - 16 1 G**

If you require this agenda or any of the papers in an alternative format e.g. large print please contact Anne Marie O'Mullane on 0131 651 4979 or email Annemarie.O'Mullane@ed.ac.uk

H/02/02/02
S: 30.9.15

S 15/16 1 A

The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

Student Experience, Teaching and Learning at the University of Edinburgh

Executive Summary

This is a discussion paper designed to prompt reflection on how we can strengthen our culture and expectations of high performance in learning and teaching at the University of Edinburgh. The paper includes initial findings from the 2015 NSS, as discussed at Principal's Strategy Group in August. The paper presents an analysis of wider challenges around student experience, teaching and learning at the University.

How does this align with the University/College School/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

This aligns with the University's strategic goal of 'Excellence in Education' and strategic theme of 'Outstanding Student Experience'.

Action requested
For Information. The contents of this paper will be presented to Senate and discussed in the Presentation and Discussion Section of the meeting.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated? Key points will be communicated via the Senate Committees Newsletter. The Senior Vice Principal plans to discuss the themes raised in this paper in meetings with Schools.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. Resource implications: There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper

2. Risk assessment: The paper refers to risk in the wider challenges section of the paper.

3. Equality and Diversity: No. This paper does not propose a new policy or practice or seek to change an existing policy or practice.

4. Freedom of Information

This is an open paper

Any other relevant information, including keywords

Learning, Teaching, Student Experience, NSS

Originator of the paper

Professor Charlie Jeffery
Senior Vice Principal
September 2015

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Senate 30 September 2015

Student Experience, Teaching and Learning at the University of Edinburgh

This discussion paper is designed to prompt reflection on how we can strengthen our culture and expectations of high performance in learning and teaching at the University of Edinburgh. The first part of the paper sets out initial findings from this year's NSS, as initially discussed at Principal's Strategy Group in August. The second part presents an analysis of wider challenges around student experience, teaching and learning at the University drawn from consultation over the last weeks with Heads of College, College Deans of Learning and Teaching, Heads of School, senior professional services staff and EUSA sabbaticals.

NSS Findings

Detailed University, School, Subject and Course-level data on NSS is now available. The Appendix to this paper sets out a number of key findings.

First (Table One in the Appendix), there is the very **good news of overall improvement** compared to 2014 on the key metrics of Overall Satisfaction (up 2% to 84%, though our performance is flat across the four year period 2012-15) and Assessment and Feedback (up 4% to 59%, showing steady improvement from 2012-15, but still at an unacceptably low level). The response rate also increased by a further 3% to 76% (again with steady improvement). None of the primary theme metrics saw a fall this year and all but one an improvement. These are important achievements and it is important that we communicate this to academic and professional staff.

Second, our **relative performance remains concerning** (Table Two). We lag significantly behind the upper quartile standards for both UUK and Russell Group institutions and are at best closing only slowly on those benchmarks and in some cases falling further back. We rank 84/123 on Overall Satisfaction and equal 123rd with Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance on Assessment and Feedback. Clearly this is not good enough and we need to keep pressing to continue the improvements seen this year.

Third, our overall scores conceal **significant variation by School**, comparing 2015 with 2014 scores, relative to university-wide averages, as shown in Tables Three to Nine. There is a fairly consistent pattern of Schools that perform relatively well year-on-year (SBS, Divinity, BMS, Chemistry, Vets, Law). Maths (in particular), Health in Social Science and Geosciences have improved significantly across the board from 2014-15. A second group - the largest - consists of those Schools who have been making progress since 2012 but still have work to do to achieve and sustain consistently high levels of performance (HCA, Informatics, LLC, Economics, Education, Engineering, SPS and ECA, the latter bouncing down after a significant

improvement last year). A third group consists of Schools which have seen significant falls or continuing low performance on some (Business, PPLS) or several (MVM and Physics) measures. These variations will need to be explored in depth in School-level meetings with view to addressing problems and identifying (and sharing) reasons for improvements.

Fourth, Table Ten explores the statistical relationships of scores on primary themes to one another and to Overall Satisfaction. Perhaps the most useful inferences can be drawn from correlations with Overall Satisfaction, not least because this is the most widely used metric for comparison in the sector. Our highest performing measure, Learning Resources has the weakest correlation with Overall Satisfaction. Our **two weakest performing measures** – Assessment and Feedback and Academic Support – **number among the strongest correlations with Overall Satisfaction** (alongside a better performing measure, Teaching on my Course). A number of questions follow. While we have made progress on timeliness of feedback (but still score too low on that measure) in many cases the School-level data suggests student concerns over quality of feedback, which should be a focus of attention. And we need to review how well we provide academic support as the Personal Tutor system becomes more fully embedded. Further improvement on both measures needs to remain a top priority, and Assistant Principals with specific responsibilities in these fields have now been appointed.

Wider Challenges

The NSS is a key part of an external context around student experience, teaching and learning which is increasingly challenging for the University. As noted above, NSS provides an indicator on which we score poorly in comparison not just to our standard peer group, but the sector as a whole. An obvious effect has been to limit our performance in UK league tables. There has been no apparent effect on undergraduate recruitment, though a Teaching Excellence Framework which drew on NSS scores as a metric (as would very likely be the case) could ratchet up the level of risk to our healthy pattern of undergraduate recruitment. As discussion on TEF takes shape, we need all the more urgently to improve NSS performance substantially and address wider challenges to which NSS calls attention (we should note also that these shortcomings are also reflected in other external surveys like PTES for postgraduate taught students and our own internal surveys fielded at earlier stages of undergraduate study).

Addressing these shortcomings has been a major priority for the University in the last years. NSS improvement this year is a welcome reflection of this work. However improvement has been slow. Recent consultations suggest four limitations on progress.

First, we have **fragmented our responses** to NSS into discrete and largely uncoordinated School-level action and our wider response to the need to improve student experience into a large number of discrete initiatives radiating out from the Senate Committees and the Student Enhancement Programme. While each plan and initiative has had a considered rationale, it is not clear they have cohered into an integrated strategy. In addition some see a dislocation between between College and School structures through which formal line management responsibilities flow, and L&T structures linking Senate Committees with College and School L&T Deans/Directors, with L&T structures often felt to lack traction on line management structures.

Second, and relatedly, it is not yet clear that individual academics perceive that there is the same status attached to teaching as they feel is attached to research, nor is it clear that line managers feel they have all the tools necessary to enhance performance in L&T. This does not reflect any purposeful decision to give L&T lower priority than research. Much appears to flow from the existence of meaningful macro-level research metrics like REF that have clear significance for reputation and funding, along with well-understood subject-level metrics around levels of research funding and types of publication outlet which can inform individuals' line management and career development. It is simply easier for individuals and for the University to know what excellence is in research than it is in L&T and we may have drifted to where the metrics have led us, **inadvertently downgrading the institutional priority attached to L&T** as a result.

Third, there appears to be a strong sense that our approach to assessment, our regulations and QA processes, and in some cases curriculum structure are **over-complicated and cumbersome**. On regulations and QA this may be more perception than reality, and based in misunderstandings of School/College roles on the one hand and Senate Committee roles on the other. On assessment and curriculum this appears to be custom and practice which is hard to shift. But the effect is to produce a widely held feeling of 'wading through treacle' in L&T matters.

Fourth, amid these complexities, and given the absence of robust performance metrics, it can be **difficult to give due recognition to the many examples of high quality teaching** and learning practice, pedagogical innovation and excellent student experience we have in particular schools or around particular individuals. It can be difficult too to give due recognition to the focus we have given in the last few years to L&T in promotion processes and in other initiatives designed to recognise and celebrate outstanding teaching.

Restoring L&T as an unambiguous priority

In these circumstances it has been very difficult to set out a 'big picture' and develop from it clearly stated university-wide priorities around which all the relevant structures in the University are mobilised in a focused way. So we need to restore L&T as an unambiguous priority of the University, equivalent to that we attach to research. Though doing so will be a challenge of considerable complexity in detail, we need to convey a clear and straightforward big picture which gives meaning to that priority. I propose the following components:

1. A very clear message conveyed by the University's **leadership at all levels** that L&T and the student experience is an unambiguous priority for the University of Edinburgh
2. Well-understood policies that **recognise and reward outstanding teaching** and student experience, but also **hold poor standards to account** in appropriate ways
3. Linked to this, identification, diffusion and **celebration of the best L&T practice** and of wider measures to enhance students' experience
4. **Simplification** of how we regulate and organise teaching and assess learning.

Each of these components will require a range of implementing measures, many building on what is already in place, some new, including the following (which is not intended to be definitive):

- Our unambiguous priority can be conveyed by giving clear focus to L&T leadership and ensuring an integrated approach across the different levels and structures of the University. A regular meeting of Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Heads of College and University Secretary dedicated to L&T will give overall direction. A Learning and Teaching Policy Group, building on the Senate Committee Convenors' Forum and equivalent to Research Policy Group, will be established to give clear strategic leadership across the university on L&T issues. Convened by the Senior Vice Principal it will include the Senate Committee Convenors, an enhanced team of Vice and Assistant Principals, College Deans of L&T and senior professional staff. The pivotal leadership role of Heads of School will be recognised in a periodic programme of School-level discussions led by the Senior Vice Principal and including Head of College, College Deans of L&T, Head of School and School Directors of L&T, linked with clearly articulated plans for enhancement and addressing School-level NSS issues. Heads of School will also contribute to the development of University-wide strategy through additional Academic Strategy Group meetings dedicated to L&T.

- We need to ensure we recognise teaching performance as routinely and with as strong a sense of priority as we do research performance. We need to do this in recruitment processes, in annual recognition and reward processes; in focused Annual Review/PDR discussions; in offering effective CPD opportunities; and, where necessary in performance improvement and disciplinary processes that hold poor teaching to account. To do this

systematically we will need to project strong expectations of high performance in L&T and to have a better capacity to assess performance in credible ways, including means of evaluating individual-level performance around teaching quality, assessment (both timeliness and quality) and personal tutoring. Vice Principal People and Culture, Professor Jane Norman, will join the Learning and Teaching Policy Group in recognition of the concern to strengthen our culture and expectations of high performance in L&T.

- At University level and in some School settings we have highlighted problems, especially around NSS. There has been good reason for this, but also a danger that if we do not provide counterbalance we produce a self-fulfilling prophecy. So we need to learn better and more quickly from those Schools and/or curriculum innovations which deliver L&T and an associated student experience of especially high quality. We need to find ways of surfacing our stories of success in L&T –as we do very effectively around research – to raise awareness of them, and to celebrate good practice through more creative and effective internal communications. We can aim in this way to raise the sense of esteem around teaching excellence which can underpin a high performance culture. We should mount 'roadshow' meetings in the different locations of the University to communicate priorities more directly to academic and support staff and also look for opportunities to work with EUSA in highlighting our many positives (just as we have worked with EUSA in addressing problem areas).

- Giving teaching unambiguous priority and taking measures to enhance esteem and reward strong performance should not be seen as a trade-off with the priority we give to research. But giving it that priority may require many academics to give more time to teaching than they do now, and line managers to ensure such time is available and used. If we do not want that to reduce time available for research, something else must give. Simplifying what we do can help square that circle: by clarifying regulations, standardising where decentralised practices add unnecessary requirements, stripping out unnecessary scrutiny and approval processes, tackling over-assessment, and simplifying curriculum structure.

I am keen to involve EUSA sabbaticals in discussion around these themes and to have regular engagement with them and other EUSA forums. EUSA will be an important partner in conveying our 'unambiguous priority' to student audiences.

I am keen also to provide some breathing space for a wider reflection on learning and teaching to take place as progress is made on the themes set out above. The different forums outlined above – the Learning and Teaching Policy Group, Academic Strategy Group sessions focused on L&T, roadshow meetings around the University and engagement with EUSA – can become venues for a university-wide conversation about our values around teaching. This conversation could be shaped with view to producing a formal statement/declaration in the new year. The aim would be to give unmissable profile and visibility to our unambiguous commitment to L&T by spring 2016. A University-wide meeting of Heads of College and Heads of

School at the end of August generated a number of themes that could figure in such a declaration, including our capacity to offer teaching informed in all parts of the University by cutting edge research, ideas on the co-production of learning and knowledge by staff and students, and a strengthened commitment to personalised academic support for students. There are no doubt many other ideas to add in the coming months. All contributions are welcome.

Charlie Jeffery
Senior Vice Principal
September 2015

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The National Student Survey (NSS) 2015

Principal's Strategy Group Meeting

Student Surveys Unit
19th August 2015

The National Student Survey

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

University of Edinburgh - 2012 – 2015

Primary Theme (% Agree)	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change (%) 2012 - 2015
Overall Satisfaction	83%	82%	82%	84%	+1%
The teaching on my course	87%	85%	86%	87%	0
Assessment and feedback	52%	54%	55%	59%	+7%
Academic support	73%	72%	76%	77%	+4%
Organisation and management	80%	78%	77%	78%	-2%
Learning resources	83%	87%	89%	89%	+6%
Personal development	77%	76%	78%	79%	+2%
Response Rate	*68%*	*69%*	*73%*	*76%*	*+8%*

Table 1

- The table to the left of this page show the **University level Agree % for each Primary Theme from 2012 to 2015**, as well as each years corresponding response rate.

- The table below shows the University of Edinburgh's Primary Theme Agree % and response rate in relation to the UUK and RG upper quartiles in 2012 and 2015, as well as the change in these relationships over time.
- The table also shows the University of Edinburgh's ranking position compared to the Russell Group and UUK.

University of Edinburgh vs Russell Group and UUK Upper Quartiles - 2012 – 2015

Primary Theme (% Agree)	2012			2015			Change (%) 2012 - 2015			Russell Group Rank			UUK Rank		
	UoE	vs UUK Upper Quartile	vs RG Upper Quartile	UoE	vs UUK Upper Quartile	vs RG Upper Quartile	UoE	vs UUK Upper Quartile	vs RG Upper Quartile	2012 Russell Group (out of 24)	2015 Russell Group (out of 24)	change in position	2012 UUK (out of 121)	2015 UUK (out of 123)	change in position
Overall Satisfaction	83%	-5%	-6%	84%	-5%	-6%	+1%	0%	0%	23	20	↑	87	84	↑
The teaching on my course	87%	-2%	-3%	87%	-3%	-3%	0%	-1%	0%	16	20	↓	53	68	↓
Assessment and feedback	52%	-20%	-18%	59%	-17%	-13%	+7%	+3%	+5%	24	24	-	121	122	↓
Academic support	73%	-9%	-9%	77%	-7%	-7%	+4%	+2%	+2%	24	21	↑	111	109	↑
Organisation and management	80%	-1%	-4%	78%	-5%	-6%	-2%	-4%	-2%	23	23	-	47	63	↓
Learning resources	83%	-3%	-5%	89%	0%	-2%	+6%	+3%	+3%	21	15	↑	56	25	↑
Personal development	77%	-6%	-6%	79%	-7%	-6%	+2%	-1%	0%	23	20	↑	111	117	↓
Response Rate	*68%*	*-3%*	*-5%*	*76%*	*0%*	*0%*	*+8%*	*+3%*	*+5%*	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2

Overall Satisfaction Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

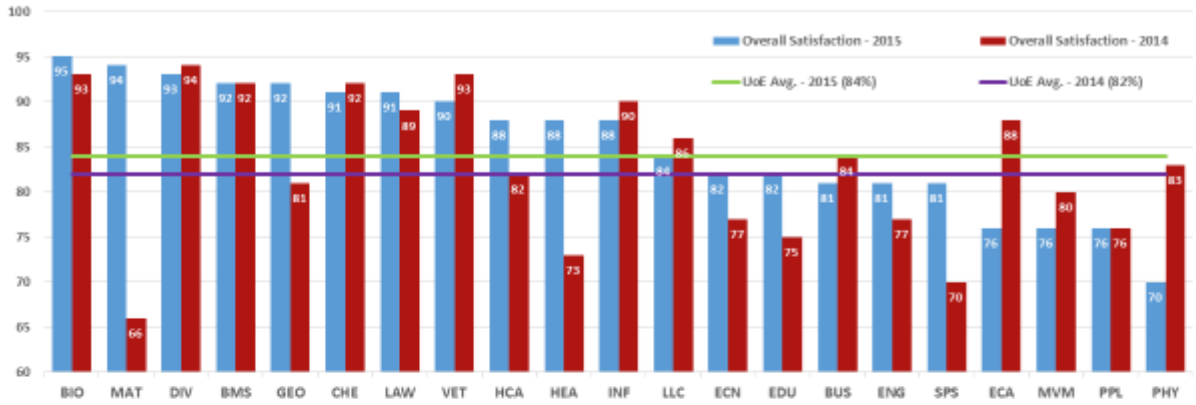

Table 3

Assessment and Feedback Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

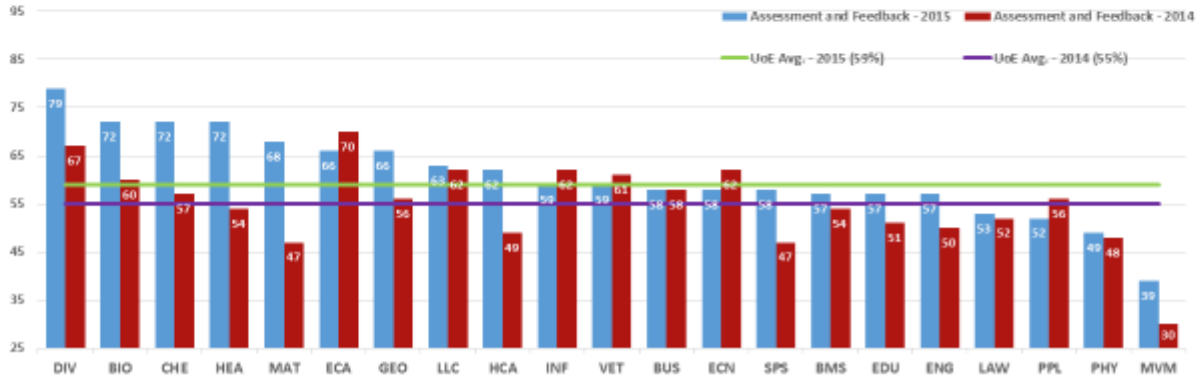

Table 4

- The bar charts to the left of this page show the Agree % by School as well at the University level average for **Overall Satisfaction** and **Assessment and Feedback** in **2014 and 2015**.

Teaching on my Course Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

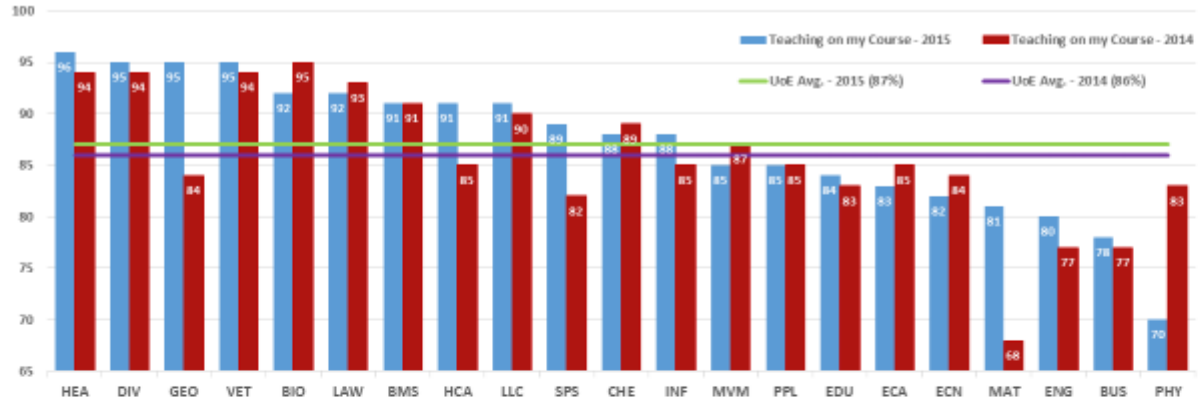

Table 5

Academic Support Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

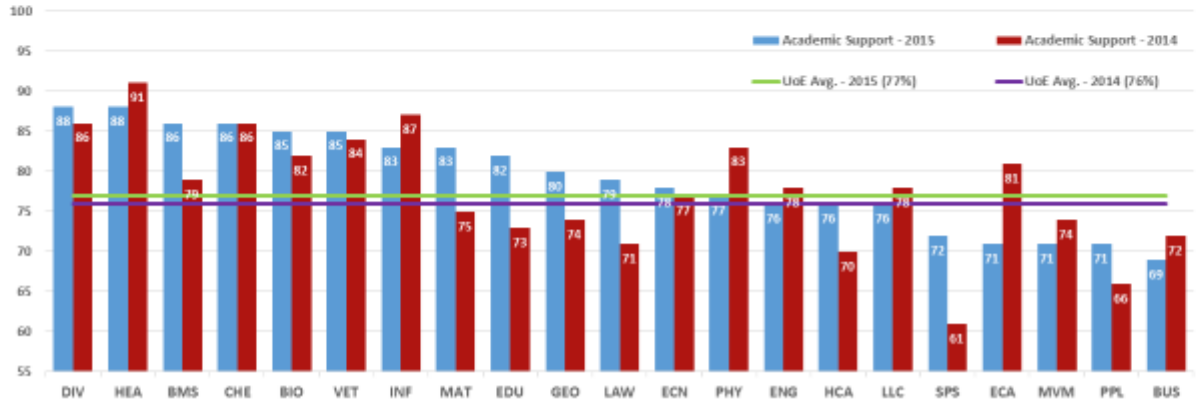

Table 6

- The bar charts to the left of this page show the Agree % by School as well at the University level average for **Teaching on my Course** and **Academic Support** in **2014 and 2015**.

Organisation and Management Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

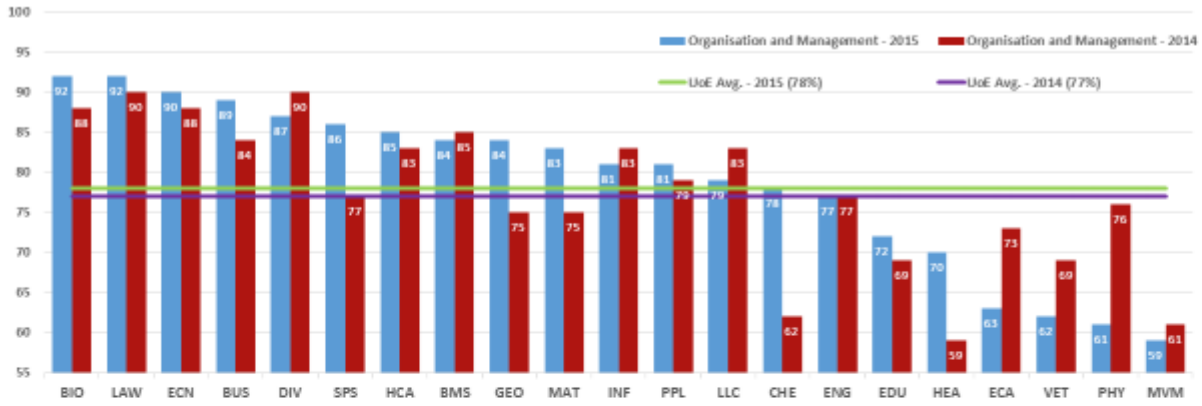

Table 7

Learning Resources Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

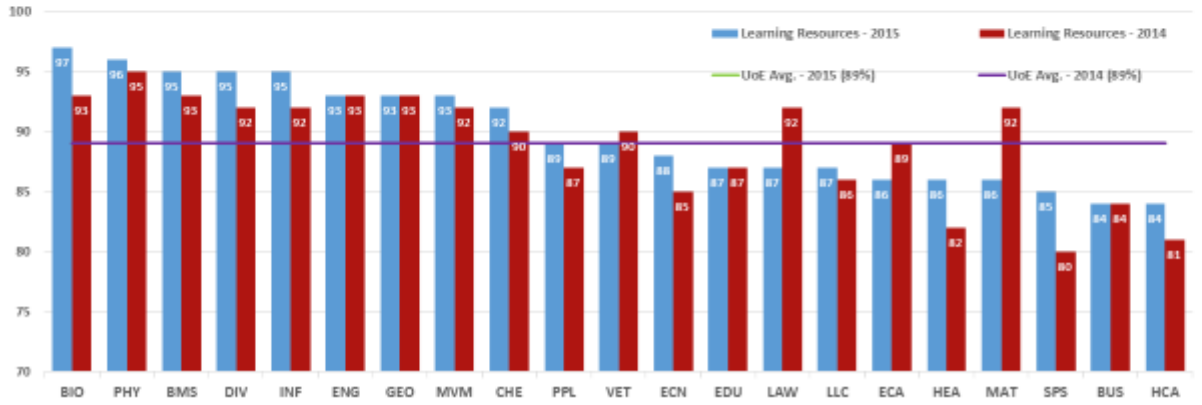

Table 8

- The bar charts to the left of this page show the Agree % by School as well at the University level average for **Organisation and Management** and **Learning Resources** in **2014 and 2015**.

Personal Development Agree % - 2015 vs 2014

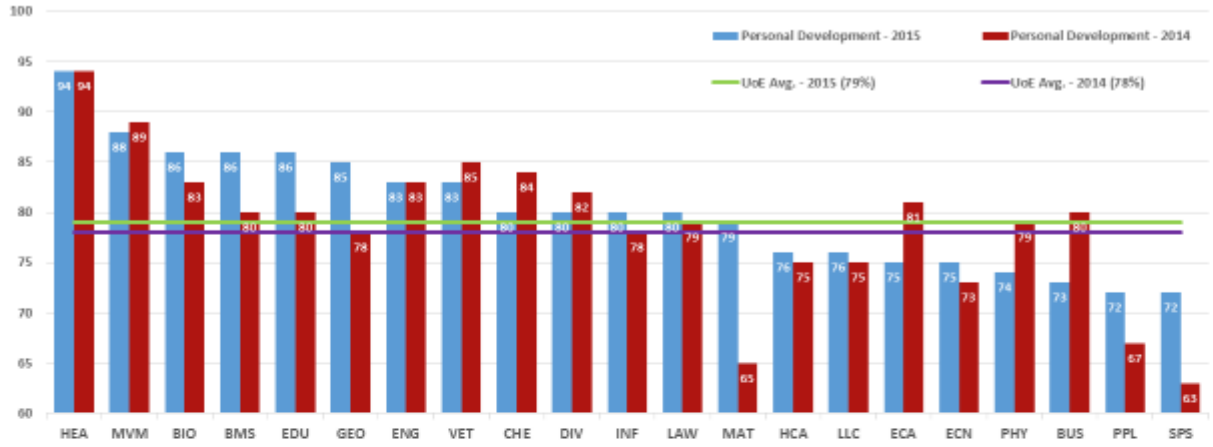

Table 9

- The bar charts to the left of this page show the Agree % by School as well at the University level average for **Personal Development** in **2014 and 2015**.

Question and Primary Theme – Correlation and relationship analysis

Primary Theme	The teaching on my Course	Assessment and Feedback	Academic Support	Organisation and Management	Learning Resources	Personal Development	Overall Satisfaction
The teaching on my course	**1.00**	**0.47**	**0.52**	**0.25**	**0.01**	**0.47**	**0.70**
1. Staff are good at explaining things.	0.94	0.50	0.63	0.38	0.07	0.44	0.80
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.	0.94	0.38	0.31	0.11	-0.10	0.41	0.51
3. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.	0.94	0.52	0.50	0.26	-0.10	0.45	0.71
4. The course is intellectually stimulating.	0.87	0.38	0.56	0.18	0.31	0.46	0.63
Assessment and feedback	**0.47**	**1.00**	**0.60**	**0.34**	**0.01**	**0.15**	**0.65**
5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.	0.35	0.74	0.57	0.40	0.13	0.26	0.63
6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.	0.24	0.63	0.50	0.53	0.16	-0.03	0.71
7. Feedback on my work has been prompt.	0.31	0.91	0.57	0.23	0.07	0.12	0.57
8. I have received detailed comments on my work.	0.48	0.88	0.36	0.24	-0.19	0.05	0.42
9. Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.	0.51	0.92	0.56	0.18	-0.01	0.26	0.52
Academic support	**0.52**	**0.60**	**1.00**	**0.11**	**0.40**	**0.60**	**0.75**
10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.	0.57	0.70	0.94	0.05	0.33	0.65	0.74
11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	0.35	0.30	0.79	0.17	0.45	0.28	0.61
12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.	0.46	0.54	0.96	0.08	0.37	0.60	0.67
Organisation and management	**0.25**	**0.34**	**0.11**	**1.00**	**-0.08**	**-0.23**	**0.53**
13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.	0.24	0.37	0.07	0.93	-0.22	-0.26	0.40
14. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.	0.14	0.27	-0.01	0.97	-0.09	-0.29	0.40
15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly.	0.33	0.35	0.28	0.91	0.09	-0.10	0.70
Learning resources	**0.01**	**0.01**	**0.40**	**-0.08**	**1.00**	**0.33**	**0.14**
16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.	-0.07	-0.15	0.18	-0.17	0.85	0.17	0.03
17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.	-0.18	0.00	0.34	-0.05	0.85	0.18	0.10
18. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.	0.14	0.09	0.49	-0.04	0.93	0.45	0.18
Personal development	**0.47**	**0.15**	**0.60**	**-0.23**	**0.33**	**1.00**	**0.42**
19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.	0.47	0.29	0.61	-0.19	0.17	0.97	0.46
20. My communication skills have improved.	0.47	-0.02	0.40	-0.37	0.23	0.87	0.17
21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.	0.37	0.19	0.65	-0.01	0.46	0.85	0.59
Overall Satisfaction	**0.70**	**0.65**	**0.75**	**0.53**	**0.14**	**0.42**	**1.00**

- This table shows the relationship between the questions and primary themes for the NSS 2015 results.
- The numbers displayed are conventional correlation figures.
  1 = Perfect positive correlation
  0 = No correlation
  -1 = Perfect negative correlation
- Based on this data, the Primary Theme that has the strongest correlation with **Overall Satisfaction** is **Academic Support (0.75),** closely followed by **Teaching on my Course (0.7)** and **Assessment and Feedback (0.65)**.
- The Primary Theme with the weakest correlation to **Overall satisfaction** is **Learning Resources (0.14)**
- **Please note:** correlation does not necessarily allow for causation to be inferred and all correlation analysis should be performed with the utmost care.

Table 10

H/02/02/02
30.09.15

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

Student Experience, Learning and Teaching in the Next Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

The current University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan runs to the end of academic year 2016. Governance and Strategic Planning are developing the next strategic plan. This paper invites discussion on the plan's content and structure, especially as it relates to learning, teaching and the student experience.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?
This paper discusses the new plans and priorities. The development of the plan seeks to align with other university plans and this discussion will help us to arrive at this point.

Action requested
For discussion.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
Feedback from the discussion will be incorporated into the draft plan which will be discussed at the 7 December 2015 meeting of Court. The draft plan will then be available for consultation from January to March and final sign off will take place in June 2016 before publication in September 2015.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   Core business for Governance and Strategic Planning; no additional implications.
2. **Risk assessment**
   Changes to the strategic plan may result in changes to the Risk Register. Elements of risk are currently partially managed through the monitoring of the strategic plan.
3. **Equality and Diversity**
   The current strategic plan was developed with Equality and Diversity issues in mind, and specific elements of the current plan (including Strategic Theme 12, Equality and Widening Participation, and Enabler 4, People) explicitly link the University's measures of success to KPIs and targets relating to Equality and Diversity. We will continue to be mindful of these and seek to embed these further. We will also ensure that staff and students from different backgrounds and communities can contribute to the planning process.
4. **Freedom of information**
   This paper is open.

Key words
Strategic plan, planning

Originator of the paper
Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy, 16 September 2015

Senate
30 September 2015
Student Experience, Learning and Teaching in the Next Strategic Plan

Background and context

1. The current University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan has been successful as a unifying document for the University and as an articulation of our ambitions with political stakeholders. We are, however, approaching the end of the current strategic plan period and this paper aims to outline our initial thoughts developing the new strategic plan.

2. The context for the new strategic plan is both challenging, with evolving UK and Scottish funding and policy environments, and likely to be characterised by a polarisation between those universities willing to respond strategically to increased demand, technological innovation and collaborative opportunities and those constrained by stretched resources. We hope to use the development process, as well as the strategic plan itself, as a way to engage the university and wider stakeholder community around our shared objectives. The Strategic Vision for 2025 provides a horizon point for the new strategic plan and should allow explicit debate on the pace with which we pursue our different priorities and aspiration. The Vision can be found at:

   http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-vision-2025

3. We want to take this opportunity to think carefully about the structure and content of the plan – it has been quite stable for about ten years, and this has served us well, but as our external and internal environments evolve, we should look at whether the content and framing of the plan should develop with this. The current plan can be found online at

   http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2012-16

Timescale, structure and content of the plan

4. University of Edinburgh Strategic Plans have typically covered a four year time period. However, we believe that there is merit in developing a plan that covers at least a five year period (2016-2021) during this cycle. This is largely driven by the anticipation of several major internal and external events over the upcoming five years, as well as recognising the longer planning horizon that this gives us.

5. The 2012-16 plan demonstrates significant continuity with previous plans. This has provided a strong sense of coherence and stability in shared aspirations which have enabled significant change to be embraced. The themes agreed to in the Strategic Vision 2025 sustain that continuity with the University's mission but also emphasise the transformational outcomes to be delivered. We would expect this "transformational" emphasis to be a key characteristic of the new strategic plan.

Goals

6. There are currently three strategic goals in the 2012-16 plan:

   - Excellence in Education
   - Excellence in Research
   - Excellence in Innovation

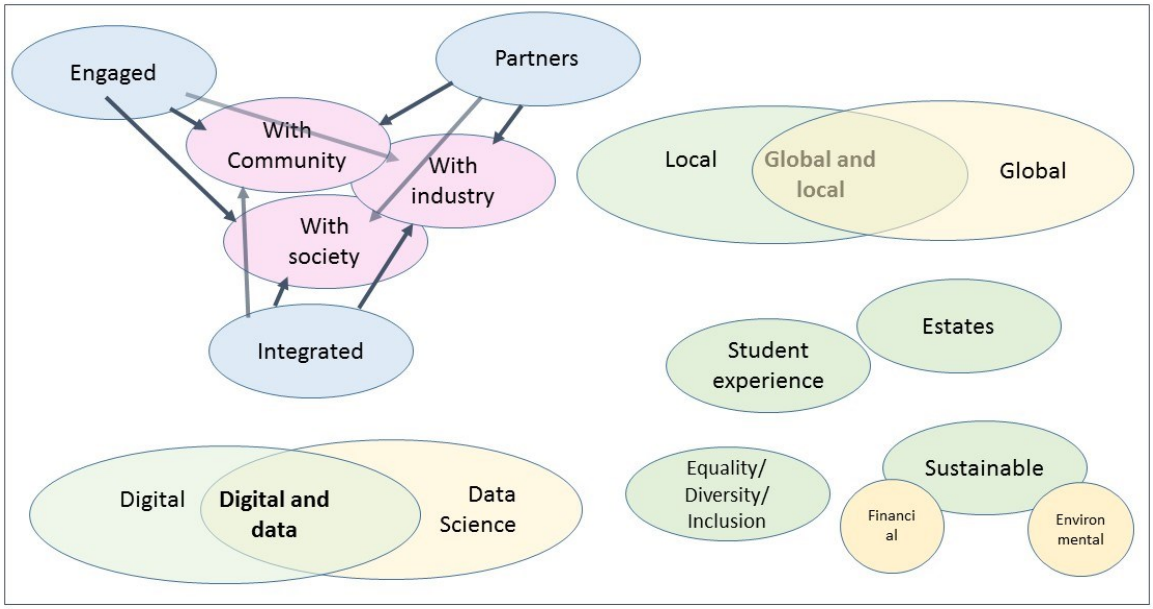
7. Discussions to date indicate broad support for the retention of these three goals – it is difficult to imagine a world in which excellence in education, research and innovation are not crucial to the University's success. However, there has been feedback that the 'innovation' goal needs to be reshaped.

Enablers

8. The current plan includes three enablers – elements that underpin our ability deliver against our goals.
    - People
    - Infrastructure
    - Finance
9. Discussions on this element have been varied. Among areas raised for consideration to date are the inclusion of students within the people element (which currently only includes staff) and the role of estates and place.
10. One suggestion for the enablers to date has been 'People and Place'.

Themes

11. The themes as currently articulated are intended to shape how we approach the achievement of our goals:
    - Outstanding student experience
    - Global impact
    - Lifelong Community
    - Social Responsibility
    - Partnerships
    - Equality and Widening Participation
12. Conversations to date suggest a degree of overlap between these themes (for example between global impact and partnerships), and a need for a re-imagining of the themes to take into account areas of activity with increasing prominence.
13. Some 'headlines' for the themes which have been discussed to date are outlined below.



Measuring success

14. As part of the development of the new plan, we will review the measures of success. The current Strategic Plan is monitored through an annual evaluation against the KPIs and targets summarised at the end of the plan, presented successively to Central Management Group, Policy and Resources Committee and Court. Current performance against a number of the KPIs and targets are also cascaded to Colleges as part of the annual planning round. Reports on AY2012-13 and 2013-14 can be found on the Governance and Strategic Planning website at

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/monitoring-and-reporting

15. Continuity of measurement, allowing a longer timescale over which trends can be monitored and improvements, has benefits and we would not wish to revise all the measures currently used. However, with advances in support for dashboards, and developing understanding of Business Intelligence and Management Information across the University, this seems an excellent opportunity to review the approach to how our monitoring of progress, success and business as usual is carried out. We will work closely with groups developing dashboards – including Student Systems – to ensure that we make use of the information that is already available and that where targets are set these are against appropriate measures.

16. We also consider that the contribution of each of the University's component parts could be better addressed through consideration at the outset of how each School, College and Support Group contributes to the overall plan for the University – in terms of their activities and drivers for actions. This would allow ensure that we have tested the achievability of our University aspirations but also have a much more transparent set of measures for judging whether progress being achieved in each part of the University.

Discussion

17. We would particularly welcome your views on those areas of the plan relating to learning, teaching and the student experience. A sense of what is useful – and what is less so – in the current articulation of the plan would be helpful.

18. It will be important to recognise that these areas will continue to develop and that the strategic plan will not be the only articulation of the student experience or of the University's commitment to learning and teaching. We would also like your feedback on how we can best integrate different plans and strategies into the institutional Strategic Plan.

19. In discussing the new plan with senior managers, some potential themes have come up again and again. These have the potential to cut across the strategic goals already articulated, and to shape our approach to learning, teaching and the student experience. In particular, these include:

    - Global
    - Local and the city
    - Industry engagement
    - Data science
    - Digital technology

    We are interested in Senate's views on how these different themes would shape our attitudes and actions in relation to students.

20. Some specific prompts for discussion are given below but we welcome views on other areas of relevance to the student experience, learning and teaching.

    - What would we need to do to genuinely deliver excellence in education?
    - What are the priorities for learning and teaching?
    - What is the 'unique Edinburgh offer' for our students?
    - How should we recognise the importance of the student experience in the plan? Is it really right to think about education as separate from the overall student experience? This may be a separate question from whether 'learning and teaching' are distinct from the student experience.
    - Should students be an integral part of the 'People' enabler?
    - How should we integrate the learning and teaching vision into the plan?

21. Mindful of the developments in relation to the learning and teaching vision, we will continue this dialogue as the core elements of this vision are agreed.

22. We also welcome views on the Strategic Vision 2025, and how the plan can support the university's ambitions to deliver against this vision.

23. We intend to devote time to the issue of measuring progress against the strategic plan in the early part of 2016, but early views from the Committee on key success measures are welcomed.

Next steps

24. We have a broad range of engagements planned to enable as many people as possible to feed into the plan's development. This includes:

    - Discussions with senior managers (throughout September/October)
    - Presentation and discussion at Senate, 30 September

- Focus groups on student experience, learning and teaching, and other topics (October)
- Discussion at Academic Strategy Group (11 November)

25. Following the draft plan's discussion at Court we will be making the plan available for consultation across the university in January. We will also be discussing the measures of success much more broadly in Spring 2016. The final plan will be signed off at Court in June 2016 and published in September 2016.

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

Meeting Date

Report of E-Business conducted 8 – 16 September 2015

Executive Summary

This paper provides the draft report of the electronic business of Senate from 8 -16 September 2015.

How does this align with the University/College School/Committee's strategic plans and priorities? Not applicable

Action requested

For noting.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Key decisions will be communicated in the Senate Committees Newsletter.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications**

   Does the paper have resource implications? No

2. **Risk assessment**

   Does the paper include a risk analysis? No

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   Does the paper have equality and diversity implications? Not relevant

4. **Freedom of Information**

   This is an open paper.

Any other relevant information, including keywords
Minutes, Emeritus, Quality Arrangements, Scottish Funding Council, Resolutions

Originator of the paper

Senate Secretariat
23 September 2015

The University of Edinburgh

Electronic Senate

Report of Electronic Business of Senate conducted from Tuesday 8 September to Wednesday 16 September 2015

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Minutes from the Senate Meeting 3 June 2015

Senate approved the minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 3 June 2015.

a. Special Meeting and Graduation Ceremonials on 26, 27, 29 and 30 June and 1, 2, 3 and 4 July 2015

The minutes of the Special Meetings and Graduation Ceremonials in June and July 2015 were taken as read and approved. It was noted that copies are available from Student Administration, Old College.

2. Membership of Senate

Senate noted the new professorial and student members.

3. Conferment of the title Emeritus Professor

Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus on Professor J M Rotter, requesting that the Head of College prepare the Special Minute.

4. The University of Edinburgh Baseline Statement on Quality Arrangements

Senate approved the University of Edinburgh Baseline Statement on Quality Arrangements. Senate noted that the Statement had been transmitted in parallel to University Court.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

5. Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2014/15

Senate noted the Report and offered no observations for transmission to University Court.

6. Communications from the University Court

Senate noted the content of the report from the University Court on its meeting of 22 June 2015 and offered no observations on the draft resolution.

7. Resolutions – Chairs

Court presented to Senatus draft Resolutions in accordance with the procedures for the creation of new chairs, renaming of existing chairs and the process for personal chairs. Senatus, having considered the draft Resolutions below, offered no observations.

Draft Resolution No. 66/2015: Foundation of a Chair of Future Infrastructure
Draft Resolution No. 67/2015: Foundation of a Chair of Structural Engineering
Draft Resolution No.64/2015: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Biocatalysis
Draft Resolution No.65/2015: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Public Health

8. Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee

Senate noted the report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee informing it of the award of two further out of cycle Personal Chairs.

9. Report of the Senate Exception Committee

Senate noted the business conducted by the Senate Exception Committee.

10. Quality Assurance Committee Terms of Reference

Senate approved a minor change to the current remit and terms of reference for the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.

11. Senate Membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee

Senate approved Senate representation on Knowledge Strategy Committee.

12. Membership of the University Library Committee

Senate approved the membership of the University Library Committee for session 2105/16.

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

Special Minute

Executive Summary

The paper provides the posthumous Special Minute for Professor Volker Mahnke.

How does this align with the University/College School/Committee's strategic plans and priorities? Not applicable

Action requested

The Senatus is invited to adopt the Special Minute for Professor Volker Mahnke

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Emeritus Professor procedures for communication will be followed.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. **Resource implications**
   Does the paper have resource implications? No.

2. **Risk assessment**
   Does the paper include a risk analysis? No.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Has due consideration been given to the equality impact of this paper? Not relevant.

4. **Freedom of Information**
   This is an open paper.

Any other relevant information, including keywords
Special Minute

Originator of the paper

Arlene Newlands,
Senate Secretariat
September 2105

Volker Mahnke, BA, MSc, PhD, PhD
Emeritus Professor of International Business

Oxygen for the brain. That is what Volker would call his frequent walks around the Meadows just next to the University of Edinburgh Business School. Never one to find meetings productive, he always felf that the best ideas came from a brisk stroll. To his colleagues and students lucky enough to be invited on one of these walks, they were always stimulating. For Volker loved ideas and he always seemed to have an endless supply of them.

Volker was born on March 14, 1967, in Weiden, Germany. He earned a BSc in Industrial Production from the Berufsacademy of Heidenheim, Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from the University of Applied Sciences in Heidenheim, before gaining an MSc in International Accounting and Finance from the University of Gothenburg , and a PhD in Economics from Copenhagen Business School. Volker became an Assistant Professor in Copenhagen in 1999, Associate Professor in 2002, and Professor in 2007. He joined the University of Edinburgh Business School in 2012 as Professor of International Business.

Volker was most at home challenging orthodoxy and was an academic entrepreneur in spirit who was very engaging in his approach and excellent with colleagues, students and business. He made significant academic contributions to knowledge-based theories of the firm, strategy process, and the impact of knowledge structures on corporate performance. While at Edinburgh, his refreshing honesty, total dislike of meetings, and willingness to suggest and try new things was a terrific antidote to a traditional University that sometimes finds it difficult to change. He did much to cajole us into new ways of thinking and behaving, which was characteristic of the legacy he left wherever he went. In his short time as Director of Research in the Business School, he did much to foster an exciting intellectual environment.

Volker earned the affection and respect of those who knew him everywhere. He was a gifted teacher and much respected scholar across the world. The big bear, as he was called when at Copenhagen Business School, was one of those people who made the world better by lifting everyone up through his infectious love of it. But Volkers's enthusiasm for academia came a distant second to the most important people in his life, his wife Yen, and his daughters Nina and Maia, who the sun clearly rose and set on. We miss him greatly for these qualities and for his wry smile, sharp mind and towering physical stature. And we wish to extend our condolences and fond memories of Volker to Yen, Nina and Maia.

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill update

Executive Summary

The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill, the Scottish Government's draft legislation proposing changes to the way Universities are governed, is currently being considered by Parliament.

The University has put in a written submission to the Parliamentary Committee which is reviewing the Bill. This submission was approved by the University Court, which has overall responsibility for the governance of the University. In this evidence the University expresses a number of concerns - in particular in relation to the new powers that would be granted to Scottish Ministers and the potential adverse knock-on effects on our institutional and academic autonomy. This is included as Appendix 1.

The draft legislation will also have a direct impact on Senate and its functioning. The University Secretary and Senatus Assessors on University Court wrote to all Senate Members on 16 September 2015 to give some further information on these issues. This is included as Appendix 2.

How does this align with the University/College School/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

An aim of the University's Strategic Plan is to maintain and enhance our overall financial strength in order to deliver our strategic goals and enhance the University's competitive position. We do this by ensuring good governance and having a framework to enhance decision-making and accountability. Our response to the Bill takes this aim into consideration.

Action requested

The Education and Culture Committee will be taking oral evidence on the Bill on 6 October and Parliament is expected to conclude its scrutiny early in the New Year.

Senate is asked to *note* this timetable and *discuss* the potential issues and implications of the Bill.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

All staff will be kept informed of progress with the Bill as it progresses through Parliament.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. Resource implications

There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper

2. Risk assessment

The University's submission (Appendix 1) addressed potential risks.

3. Equality and Diversity

The consultation sought views on equality and diversity to which the University responded positively.

4. Freedom of Information

This is an open paper

Any other relevant information, including keywords

Higher Education Governance, membership, Bill

Originator of the paper

Sarah Smith
University Secretary
18 September 2015

Appendix 1 – Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill: Evidence from the University of Edinburgh to the Education and Culture Committee

Summary
The University of Edinburgh has deep concerns about the scope and provisions of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill.

We support the aim of the Scottish Government to create an inclusive, strong and sustainable economy and we are committed to ensuring that there is transparent and inclusive participation in the governance of the University.

We are very concerned, however, that the proposed legislation opens up the real potential for a reduction in the ability of Universities to ensure academic freedom and act as a source of independent thinking.

We are dismayed that the proposed legislation could weaken the inclusiveness and effectiveness of our existing governance arrangements which ensure both a strong voice for staff and students and external, independent expertise in governing what is a large and complex organisation.

We do not think that there has been any compelling explanation of what the problem is that needs to be fixed here.

Overall there appears to have been no obvious recognition of the very different size and shape of Universities within Scotland. The proposed uniform (apparently arbitrary) upper limit on Senate membership is just one example of an apparent lack of recognition of the very different sizes of higher education institutions in Scotland.

Question 1 – *What do you consider to be the existing problems (if any) with higher education governance, particularly around modernity, inclusion and accountability?*

The new Scottish Code of Good HE Governance has only recently been introduced (in July 2013) and we have reviewed and refined our approach to ensure full compliance.

Our system of governance is working well, providing appropriate oversight and assurance for a University which is currently 17th in the world; returns over £9 to the Scottish economy for every £1 of public funding invested; has a strong track record of widening participation (with over half of our Scottish students coming from widening participation backgrounds and offering a wide range of open, free online courses); and is a committed fair employer (we are the first University in Scotland to sign up to the Scottish Government's Business Pledge). We pay scrupulous attention to continuing to ensure robust, open and transparent governance of our institution. We recognise our accountabilities to our wide range of stakeholders, within and beyond the University community.

We do not think that there has been any evidenced argument of the benefit to Scotland of the further changes proposed in this draft legislation. The new Scottish Code of Good HE Governance takes an appropriate principles-based approach and all higher education institutions have an obligation to either comply or explain. This seems much more appropriate than the prescriptive 'one-size fits all' approach proposed in the Bill, given the wide diversity in size and shape of higher education institutions in Scotland.

Question 2 – *The extent to which the Bill (a) will improve higher education governance, particularly in the areas above; (b) may alter the higher education sector's current level of autonomy; (c) may affect lines of accountability between the Scottish Government, relevant public bodies and the higher education sector.*

We think that the Bill would weaken higher education governance. We are particularly concerned that it would reduce Universities' autonomy and ability to ensure academic freedom and act as a source of independent thinking.

There has been a clear and well established understanding over many years in Scotland - and more broadly in the UK - on how best to balance the need for Universities to be accountable for the public resources that they receive while ensuring that they should be able to offer analysis and comment without fear or favour regardless of the political make-up of the Government of the day. The proposed new legislation breaks that convention, giving future Governments significant potential influence and control, without the safeguard of the same level of parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation. This is not only of deep concern in itself, but also poses a threat to Universities' classification by the Office for National Statistics which would have severe adverse consequences on our ability to contribute to Scotland's economy and society and on our wider global mission.

The extent of the proposed powers to be exercised through secondary legislation are, in our opinion, constitutionally inappropriate and deeply concerning in this regard. Sections 1, 8, 13 and 20 give wide powers to Ministers to enable future changes through secondary legislation which could significantly shift the balance, reducing the autonomy and ability of higher education institutions to ensure academic freedom. Section 14 provides Scottish Ministers with the broad power when making regulations 'to make different provision for different purposes'. The Bill gives Ministers potentially very open ended powers that should properly be exercised by Parliament through primary legislation.

The Robbins report (Cmnd 2154), made a thorough examination of the importance of ensuring appropriate institutional autonomy to guarantee academic autonomy and noted that: 'a system that aims at the maximum of independence compatible with the necessary degree of public control is a good in itself, as reflecting the ultimate values of a free society...we do not regard such freedom as a privilege but rather as a necessary condition for the proper discharge of the higher academic functions'.
The UK Higher Education sector is seen as a role model in this regard by its European counterparts.

The draft Bill is already being seen by Higher Education commentators as leading to reduced autonomy for Scottish Universities. This threatens our ability to attract and retain world class talent. The individual's academic freedom depends not only upon specific recognition of his or her intellectual liberty, but also upon the collective and institutional independence of the institution within which that individual freedom is protected and nourished. This Bill threatens the ability of higher education institutions to provide that environment in Scotland. We are competing in an increasingly competitive environment internationally, where the gap is increasing between the truly world-leading Universities and the rest. Our ability to build on our strong track record, through international partnerships and collaborations, will be hampered by the uncertainty generated by this draft legislation around academic freedom, reduction in institutional autonomy and limited parliamentary scrutiny over enhanced Ministerial powers.

Question 3 – *Has the correct balance been struck between legislative and non-legislative measures? Are any further measures needed?*

We do not think that the case has been made for the proposed legislative measures in the Bill (or any further legislative measures) at a time when important non-legislative measures – the new Scottish Code of Good HE Governance – have only recently been developed and implemented; and our existing governance is providing good, robust and open assurance and accountability.

Examples of the way in which we account for our stewardship of resources and set out our strategic direction are included in our substantial annual report and accounts (which includes a full corporate governance statement, risk assessment and social responsibility and sustainability report); in our annual review (which highlights key impacts and achievements); and in our Court webpages which include Court papers and minutes open to all.

Question 4 – *Please provide your views on the merits of each of the specific proposals on appointment of chair; inclusion of various persons within the membership of governing bodies; and requirements that academic boards should be comprised of no more than 120 people and include various persons.*

We do not agree with these proposals which do not appear to reflect an understanding of the extent of transparency and inclusivity that exists within our current governance arrangements or the diversity of size and shape of higher education institutions within Scotland.

Our Court already has representatives from our staff, students, alumni and the city as well as external independent members who bring a breadth and balance of skills and are appointed through an open and transparent process.

The proposal for a single elected Chair and to strip the Rector from long established rights to preside over Court does not recognise the fact that the University of Edinburgh has a different model which ensures an effective voice for staff and students in the governance of our institution.

Our dual model of leadership combines a Rector, directly elected by the students and staff of the University, who presides over meetings of Court; and a Vice-Convener, whose role is similar to that of chair of institution, appointed by Court through an open and transparent recruitment process. This dual model works well for us, ensuring both a strong voice for staff and students and external, independent expertise in governing a large and complex organisation. The proposals would require institutions such as ours to run two parallel electoral processes for these roles – reducing our ability to be able to access (through a full, transparent appointment process) the depth of skills and experience that we need for the governance of a global university of our size and breadth.

The proposals appear to significantly underestimate the onerous nature of these roles. The University of Edinburgh's dual leadership model requires some 8 hours/week, including weekend and evening work, for the Vice-Convener in addition to the time spent by the Rector in presiding at full Court meetings, chairing General Council and holding surgeries and public meetings for individual students. Neither the Rector nor the Vice-Convener claim remuneration for the time spent fulfilling these roles. We cannot understand the basis for the time estimate in the Financial Memorandum of 6 days/year which appears to us to display a real lack of understanding of the depth and breadth of the commitments associated with this role to ensure good and robust governance.

Our large and inclusive Senate is managed effectively through a tried and tested approach which includes committee structures focusing on key aspects of Senate's work. This ensures our Senate can both provide a forum for wide engagement with our professorial and student body while ensuring effective decision-making. We are therefore concerned to see the proposed (apparently arbitrary) upper limit of 120 on the numbers of our colleagues who would be able to participate in future meetings of our Senate. This would strip hundreds of our professors of their existing rights as members of our Senate to no obvious benefit to our institution.

In each of the above provisions, the case has not been made that one size fits all. Our institution is a large one (with 13,000 staff and 35,000 students and includes individual Schools which are larger than some whole higher education institutions in Scotland). We have developed tried and tested mechanisms for ensuring appropriate voice and engagement for an institution of our size and history and accounting for its activities and stewardship of resources.

These proposed legislative provisions break with the understanding established in the Universities (Scotland) Acts to date that has respected the diversity of Universities in Scotland. The Bill represents an unwarranted move towards standardisation which does not properly take account of the appropriate diversity of size, shape and focus that exists within the sector.

Question 5-7: *Academic Freedom – please provide your views on the likely practical effect of these provisions; any significant constraints; and whether the situations in which relevant persons can exercise their academic freedom are clear.*

We find it perplexing that, while the Bill purports to strengthen academic freedom through making explicit the freedom to develop and advance new ideas and innovative proposals, it poses a serious potential threat to higher education institutions' very ability to protect such freedoms. As discussed in the answer to question 2, the scope of the proposed secondary legislation is particularly troubling in this regard. The specific proposal to extend the definition of academic freedom is, in our view, unnecessary and unlikely to strengthen further what is already a core value for the University of Edinburgh.

Conclusion

We are committed to making a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health, economic growth and cultural wellbeing. We are very concerned that the proposed provisions in the Bill would weaken rather than strengthen our ability to deliver on this in an increasingly competitive international environment.

Appendix 2 – Email sent to all Senate Members (16/9/15)

You may already have seen the staff news item informing all staff about the Scottish Government's draft legislation on Higher Education Governance and attaching the link to the University's written submission to the Parliament on this at http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Higher%20Education%20Governance%20(Scotland)/HEGBillUoE.pdf. We are writing separately to all Senate Members to give some more information on the issues that will have a direct impact on Senate and its functioning.

The current draft legislation proposes a uniform cap of 120 people for membership of Senates in each higher education institution in Scotland. At Senate's meeting on 6 June 2012 to discuss the review of Higher Education Governance, there was unanimous support that Senate membership should not be altered to reduce membership to 120 members. There was also a strong consensus that a large and very inclusive Senate serves a valuable function. Following the e-Senate meeting in January 2015, Senate endorsed the University's proposed position on the aspects of the consultation that related to academic governance which included the University's objection to the proposal that the size of academic boards be limited to 120 people.

In the University's draft evidence to the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament, we repeat our concern that limiting the size of Senate in this way would strip hundreds of our professors of their existing rights as members of our Senate to no obvious benefit to our institution. We further note that the proposed uniform (apparently arbitrary) upper limit does not appear to recognise the very different sizes of higher education institutions in Scotland.

The draft legislation also proposes significant new powers for Scottish Ministers to vary the size and composition of Senate - and the composition of the University Court and the way in which its Chair is selected – in the future. In the University's written submission we note that the draft legislation breaks the clear and well established understanding over many years in Scotland – and more broadly in the UK – on how best to balance the need for Universities to be accountable for the public resources that they receive while ensuring that they should be able to offer analysis and comment without fear or favour regardless of the political make-up of the Government of the day. In our evidence we note the proposed new secondary legislative powers would give future Governments significant potential influence and control, without the safeguard of the same level of parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation. We believe this opens up the real potential to weaken the ability of Universities to ensure academic freedom and act as a source of independent thinking.

Our evidence also sets out why we think our current system of governance is working well and suggests that there has not been any evidenced argument of the benefit to Scotland of the further changes proposed in this draft legislation.

Each Senate member will rightly draw their own conclusions about the proposed legislation. If you are concerned, you may wish to consider ways of making your views known – for example to your MSP – and to be aware that the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament will start taking oral evidence on 6 October.

Sarah Smith, University Secretary
Dr Marialuisa Aliotta, Senatus Assessor on University Court
Professor Jake Ansell, Senatus Assessor on University Court
Professor Sarah Cooper, Senatus Assessor on University Court
Dr Claire Phillips, Senatus Assessor on University Court

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

Teaching Excellence Framework

Executive Summary

This paper informs Senate of the UK Universities Minister Jo Johnson's plans to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in England, and sets out some potential implications of the plans.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

It is relevant to the University's strategic goal of Excellence in Education.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Since this paper is for information, there is no requirement to communicate its content to relevant stakeholders.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**

   There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper

2. **Risk assessment**

   Since Senate is not being invited to make a decision there is no need for a risk assessment.

3. **Equality and Diversity**

   In the absence of specific proposals, it is not possible to assess any equality implications for the University of a TEF.

4. **Freedom of information**
   This paper is open**.**

Keywords

Teaching Excellence Framework, TEF

Originator of the paper

Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services

Teaching Excellence Framework

This paper informs Senate of the UK Universities Minister Jo Johnson's plans to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in England, and sets out some potential implications for the University.

Announcements regarding the TEF

On 1 July 2015 Mr Johnson announced his intention to introduce a TEF in England. He indicated that the aims of the TEF would be:

- To ensure all students receive an excellent teaching experience that encourages original thinking, drives up engagement and prepares them for the world of work;
- To build a culture where teaching has equal status with research, with great teachers enjoying the same professional recognition and opportunities for career and pay progression as great researchers;
- To stimulate a diverse HE market and provide students with the information they need to judge teaching quality – in the same way they can already compare a faculty's research rating;
- To recognise those institutions that do the most to welcome students from a range of backgrounds and support their retention and progression to further study or a graduate job.

He emphasised that:

- The TEF would create incentives to make 'good' teaching even better;
- Those institutions that can demonstrate that they excel in teaching and in supporting all students – including those from disadvantaged backgrounds – through university into graduate jobs will reap rewards;
- The TEF would include a clear set of outcome-focused criteria and metrics, underpinned by an external assessment process undertaken by an independent quality body from within the existing landscape;
- Any external review associated with the TEF would be proportionate and light-touch.

The Minister indicated that he plans to work with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to design the proposal, and that the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills plans to publish a green paper on the topic in the autumn.

See: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/teaching-at-the-heart-of-the-system

On 8 July 2015, as part of his Summer Budget announcement, the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that the government would "link the student fee cap to inflation for those institutions that can show they offer high-quality teaching".

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-george-osbornes-summer-budget-2015-speech

Key implications of the proposed TEF

While public announcements provide relatively little information regarding the proposed TEF, the potential implications appear to be:

- A basket of indicators of teaching excellence would be developed;

- For English HEIs, there would be a direct relationship between tuition fee income and performance against these indicators of teaching quality;
- Those indicators could have an increasing influence on institutional reputation (and, potentially, on student recruitment), including for HEIs in Scotland;
- The proposed TEF may therefore increase the importance of the University performing well in relation to those indicators.

Indicators of teaching excellence

It is likely that there will be a lively discussion regarding the choice of indicators to inform the assessment of teaching excellence. Key issues are likely to include:

- Whether appropriate data currently exists or whether there will need to be any new data collection;
- Whether the indicators provide a meaningful measure of teaching excellence;
- Whether institutions could have any flexibility in the indicators that apply to them;
- Scope (eg whether the TEF, and the associated quality assessment arrangements apply to Postgraduate as well as Undergraduate study);
- The level of aggregation and granularity of the TEF work, for example whether it will it seek to assess teaching quality separately for different types of teaching (eg full-time and part-time) or for different programmes / subject areas, or whether it will operate at institutional level;
- The number of years' data that would inform the TEF;
- Whether institutions would be able to accompany the data with a supporting statement or narrative that sets out the wider context for a university's teaching and relevant qualitative information.

Possible types of outcome indicators could include:

- Student satisfaction (eg National Student Survey);
- Student academic outcomes (eg data on student retention or on non-completion);
- Employability (e.g. graduate earnings or destinations; longitudinal data on salary and/or employment; professional employment outcomes).

Some commentators have also suggested that the indicators could include other types of measures such as:

- Student demand (eg demand for places from well-qualified applicants; entry tariff score);
- Recognition by employers and professional bodies (eg accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies);
- Data on teaching staff (eg spend per student on teaching staff; staff to student ratios; academic qualifications held by staff, including those with PhDs; proportion of staff engaged as external examiners);
- Teaching environment and facilities (eg proximity to world class research; spending on facilities; quality of teaching environment).

Further Commentary on the proposed TEF

The Times Higher Education published the following article regarding potential approaches to the TEF:

https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/teaching-excellence-framework-tef-how-might-it-be-built?page=0%2C1

Related quality assessment developments

In June 2015, the funding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland initiated a joint review of quality assessment. The consultation document is available at:

www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2015/201511/2015_11_.pdf

While there is some uncertainty regarding how these proposals for quality assessment would interact with the proposals for the TEF in England, both sets of proposals have in common a strong focus on the use of student output data by funding bodies or other sector bodies to assess the quality of an institution's learning and teaching. The quality assessment consultation document indicates that the proposed TEF may draw on similar data to that used for the quality assessment processes.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is also currently reviewing the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF).

Tom Ward
Director of Academic Services

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The University of Edinburgh

Senate

30 September 2015

EUSA Priorities 2015/16

Executive Summary

This paper seeks to provide an introduction to EUSA's new sabbatical officers and their priorities for 2015/16.

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

This item is for information. An implementation or communication plan is not necessary.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. **Resource implications (including staffing)**
   None.

2. **Risk assessment**
   The paper does not include a risk assessment.

3. **Equality and Diversity**
   Due consideration has been given to the equality impact of this paper.

4. **Freedom of information**
   The paper is open.

Key words

EUSA, priorities, assessment, learning

Originator of the paper

Imogen Wilson, EUSA Vice President Academic Affairs

The sabbatical officers elected for 2015-16 are:

Jonny Ross-Tatam, EUSA President

Imogen Wilson, EUSA Vice President Academic Affairs (VPAA)

Andy Peel, EUSA Vice President Societies & Activities (VPSA)

Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice President Services (VPS)

VPAA Objectives for 2015-16:

1. **Addressing Assessment issues**

The aim is to ensure assessment is varied and challenging while meeting modern expectation of a world-class institution, and to put students' interests ahead of traditional practice. Every student learns in a different way, and our assessment options should reflect this. We should always aim to promote a culture of community where students feel that they can approach academic staff with questions.

- End the physical hand-in – students should not have to hand in work on paper if they are handing in assessment online already. If staff want to read and mark the work on paper, they should be responsible for printing it. Turning in work on paper adds stress and additional financial costs for students, and is not environmentally friendly.
- Examine courses taught in semester 1 in the December exam diet, and have exam boards meet shortly thereafter and not months later to confirm marks.
- Diversify assessment away from exams – this could mean: more take-home/open book exams, more informal in-class assessment, tests during the semester rather than at the end, a greater reliance on coursework, etc. We encourage staff to include Reps or all students in a cohort in discussions about different forms of assessment for learning.
- Have a semester structure to aid assessment and re-sit issues – we need to somehow address the problem of our asymmetric semesters and stop using it as an excuse.

2. **Progressive and flexible learning**

The aim is to promote innovative ways of learning and teaching by putting an emphasis on student/staff collaboration, on open access learning, making the most of vast online opportunities, and making those opportunities available for students outside of Edinburgh too.

- Continue and hopefully expand SLICCs after the pilot.
- Promote the new 'introduction to Gender Studies' course which will be formally co-created by students and staff as part of the 'SPS in Practice' course in semester 2 this year.
- Promote innovative ways of giving students feedback, including audio-recorded feedback, Feedback Days or Meet the Marker events that encourage all students (no matter if they have done well or struggled with the assessment) to meet with staff and discuss how they can improve
- Challenge tradition by prioritising liberation issues in the curriculum and across the university

- Design an introductory section of the Holyrood Elections MOOC which can be used as an educational resource for first time voters at Edinburgh University, other universities and colleges, and secondary schools in the wider community

3. To protect the rights of students and staff.

The aim is to prevent the negative impacts of government cuts, and always have the highest-possible quality of education as our number 1 priority.

- Campaign against any proposed fee rises.
- Bring back the post-study work visa, or failing this, reverse the cruel new financial demands around extending a tier 4 visa.
- Expose and then cover extra course costs
- Ensure tutors are on contracts that they want, that they are adequately trained (and paid for their training), that they have clear marking criteria provided when marking students' work, and that their pay adequately takes into account the time needed to mark work and provide high-quality feedback.