

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2010

Present: Professor G Burgess, Dr B Connolly, Professor M Cotter, Dr J Geddes, Dr M Hole, Mrs L Johnson, Professor J King, Mr B Lockhart, Professor W Long, Dr G Mc Ewan, Mr Parker, Professor T Salmon, Mr J Simpson, Professor G Walkden, Dr M Young, Ms A Hogg, Dr G Mackintosh, Ms K Ross, Mr P Fantom, Ms P Spence, Dr K Shennan, and Professor D Coyle with Dr R Bernard (Clerk) in attendance.

Apologies: Professor P Edwards, Mr D Hay, Professor W Naphy, Ms K Christie and Mr D Paterson.

MINUTES

305. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2010; subject to two minor typographical amendments (minute 286.3 and minute 292.4 refers).
(copy filed as UCTL/170310/45)

INSTITUTIONAL eLEARNING STRATEGY

- 306.1 The Committee received a paper from the Institutional eLearning Strategy Group which is a sub group of the University Committee for Teaching and Learning.
- 306.2 The Committee noted this paper was a result of Curriculum Reform Recommendation 35 which states that '*All students should have an enhanced learning experience through the use of eLearning*'.
- 306.3 The Committee noted the proposed eLearning Vision and principles of the Institutional eLearning Strategy, which included: future directions for eLearning across the University with a focus on staff development (including dissemination of good practice); ePedagogy; the eLearning environment; student diversity; quality and research and development. The Committee further noted the proposed elements of the Strategy, which include:
- Empower and enable staff
 - ePedagogy
 - eLearning environment
 - Student diversity
 - Quality
 - Research & innovation
- 306.4 Following general discussion, comments were received from members of the Committee in regards to one particular element of the Strategy. It was suggested that the first element, 'Empower and enable staff', be amended to emphasise that staff '*should*' be skilled and confident in the appropriate deployment of eLearning as opposed to 'encouraged'. Several members felt strongly that staff *should* be skilled and confident in eLearning particularly given that this was an Institutional eLearning Strategy, which would ultimately have an effect on practices across the University. Some members of the Committee would have preferred the Strategy to make it compulsory for all staff members to be 'skilled and confident' in the deployment of eLearning.

- 306.5 Further comments received from the Committee also suggested that the emphasis of the paper should perhaps be more directed to the student's perspective. Some members of the Committee did not feel that there was enough emphasis from the student's perspective and suggested that specific detail be added to Strategy to emphasise that students will have sufficient eLearning opportunities and enhanced learning experience made available to them.
- 306.6 Further discussion centred round the vision of the eLearning Group Strategy Group, and in particular the reference to graduates being 'equipped with the relevant attributes and skills to adapt, thrive, achieve and continue their development in the global workplace'. Concern was raised by members regarding the reference to 'the global workplace' and wondered whether it should be replaced to 'a life space/place' instead.
- 306.7 Finally, the Committee noted that the Strategy Group were concerned that people would interpret the Strategy as simply WebCT and not eLearning. The Committee acknowledged that this proposal was more than just WebCT and agreed it was important to educate both staff and students of this and ensure both parties understand the importance of the Strategy in order to move forward.
- 306.8 In reviewing the paper, the Committee noted that it was being used to help raise awareness of the eLearning Vision and Strategy across the University. The Committee further noted that in addition to this, the Chair of the Group, Professor Do, would be visiting Colleges shortly to discuss the Institutional eLearning Strategy in more detail.

(copy filed as UCTL/170310/46)

UPDATED LEARNING & TEACHING OPERATIONAL PLAN 2009/2010

- 307.1 The Committee were invited to consider the Updated Learning & Teaching Operational Plan 2009/2010, following its last appearance at UCTL in November 2009.
- 307.2 The Convener informed the Committee that the paper was an updated version of the Learning & Teaching Operational Plan and was in effect a mid-year catch up.
- 307.3 In reviewing the updated document, the Committee noted that there had been progress with some areas and less with others. The Committee further noted that a final update / complete plan would be available later in the year.
- 307.4 Following general discussion, in noting the updates to the Learning & Teaching Operational Plan, concerns were expressed regarding Curriculum Reform. The Committee noted that the planning, preparation and implementation of Curriculum Reform had not been instigated as 'smoothly' and with as 'minimal disruption' as suggested in the Plan.
- 307.5 In addition, members of the Committee expressed particular concern in regards to engaging staff in Curriculum Reform. It was noted that some Colleges were feeling stretched, particularly in regards to producing Level 2, Sixth Century Courses.
- 307.6 The Students' Association expressed concerns that the needs of postgraduate students were not being addressed. A query was raised regarding whether examples of good practice were being shared amongst Colleges. The Committee agreed that examples of good practice *should* be shared amongst Colleges and noted that the Heads of the Graduate School were already keen to share initiatives and take forward any that were applicable/suitable for their own Colleges and students.

(copy filed as UCTL/170310/47)

ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

- 308.1 The Committee received an oral update from the Convener regarding ELIR.
- 308.2 The Committee noted that the final draft of the Reflective Analysis had now been finalised and submitted to the Panel for consideration prior to their visit on 24 and 25 March 2010.
- 308.3 The Convener updated the Committee with a list of the various 'emerging themes', which included:
- Strategic objectives
 - CREF project
 - Graduate attributes / PDP
 - Academic and pastoral support
 - Staff appraisals
 - Annual monitoring of teaching quality
 - Feedback on assessment
 - Arrangements for sharing of good practice in teaching and learning
- 308.4 The Committee also noted that both staff members and students involved in ELIR would be briefed on the possible topics/issues to be discussed prior to the visit.

EVALUATION OF THE ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- 309.1 The Committee were invited to consider a lengthy discussion paper detailing the Evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).
- 309.2 The Committee noted that the Academic Infrastructure consisted of a set of nationally-agreed reference points which give all higher education providers a shared framework for setting, describing and assuring the quality of the learning experience and standards of higher education awards and programmes. These reference points include the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements, the Code of Practice and Programme Specifications.
- 309.3 The Committee noted that a response was to be prepared on behalf of the University in regards to how successful the Academic Infrastructure has been in meeting its original intentions and how it might be developed in the future to ensure its continued relevance.
- 309.4 The Committee noted that an institutional response would be developed over the coming weeks and noted the Convener's request to forward any comments/thoughts to the Clerk for UCTL.

(copy filed as UCTL/170310/48)

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING & LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT TO SENATE

- 310.1 The Committee noted the Annual Report to Senate for 2008/2009.
- 310.2 The Convener briefed the Committee on the various areas outlined in the Annual Report including Student Progression, Academic Appeals, Academic Discipline, Academic Complaints and Equal Opportunities Monitoring.

310.3 The Convener informed the Committee that he would like the information contained in the Report to be presented in a different way for future meetings of UCTL and Senate. The Committee agreed that the information was not presented in a user friendly way and would like to see the information presented differently for future meetings.

310.4 The Committee were concerned with some information contained within Appendix 4 – Disciplinary Cases. The Committee noted it appeared as if there were no cases where the allegation had **not** been upheld for both academic years 2008-2009 and 2006-2007. The Convener agreed that this seemed rather odd and confirmed that Registry would be asked to check that the information provided was indeed correct and a true reflection of the situation to date.

Clerk: Registry
(copy filed as UCTL/170310/49)

GRADUATION DATES

311. The Committee noted the schedule of ceremonies for the July 2010 graduation ceremonies as approved by the Convener in February 2010.

(copy filed as UCTL/170310/50)

REVISIONS TO THE QAA CODE OF PRACTICE

312. The Committee noted that the QAA has published revisions to two sections of the Code of Practice, Section 3: Disabled students and Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance. The revised sections are available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>. Changes required as a result of the revisions will be considered initially by the Heads of Student Support and the Careers Service in the first instance, with any recommendations for change being brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

313. The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held as follows: