

Strategy Committee Minutes

23rd August 2017 at 2pm, Turing Room



Attendees: Johanna Moore (chair), Jim Ashe, Murray Cole, Kousha Etessami, Jacques Fleuriot, Vashti Galpin, Nigel Goddard (Skype), Jane Hillston, Jon Oberlander, Barbara Webb, Anda Nicolson (secretary)

Apologies: Nigel Topham, Stuart Anderson

	Summary	ACTION
1.	<p>Approval of previous minutes Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Edinburgh Teaching Award and HEA Fellowships: Following previous discussions about increasing the number of Informatics staff who hold a teaching qualification, it was agreed that action should be taken to raise awareness among staff of these qualifications. This was not included on the General Meeting Agenda, and action is still to be carried out to raise awareness. Carried forward. b) Internationalisation: Don Sannella to set up short-lived working group to look at what activities of the Director of Internationalisation is currently doing and what objectives we have for this area and where the priorities should be. DS will lead this, with input from others. He plans to have the first meeting of this group next week, and will update MJW with progress. MJW to update this committee with progress at the next meeting. c) PhD Fellowship scheme: JH provided feedback to Boris Grot, who will present to this committee in September. He should liaise with BW/NG prior to the meeting. 	MJW
3.	<p>Head of School business</p> <p>Academic hiring 2016/17 update MJW talked through our hiring progress for the current cycle. Our three University Teacher roles have been filled and will be managed by SA. MJW will meet with SA to make sure that their duties are appropriately loaded. They will have teaching duties, tutorials, and project supervision, and will have personal tutees. JH expressed concern about the low number of female academics that we have recruited in this round, noting that this would impact negatively on our next Athena SWAN submission. The committee agreed that we need to be more proactive in searching out potential candidates and encouraging them to apply.</p> <p>Reprioritisation of academic hires 2017/18 Paper 3.1 was presented to review the current hiring plan and to identify if there are any changes to be made. Based on agreements from College, we have between two and four vacancies which we can advertise directly, with a possible increase of up to eight posts available in the next year. This will depend on the level of student recruitment, as this will affect the funding that we have available.</p> <p>KE raised concerns about the possibility of further recruitment, given the physical limits of this building, as there are already issues with space. MJW noted that there will be 5 academic offices in Bayes for Robotics staff, along with 4 additional academic offices. We also have the option to do two simple office conversions in the Forum. JO noted that we could also look to make joint appointments with other Schools, where those Schools provide the accommodation for the staff. This has been done successfully in the past.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that we also need to consider issues like project supervision when we are recruiting, as some areas are demonstrably more popular with students and that this should be weighed up when hiring decisions are being made.</p> <p>There is a lot of opportunity with respect to AI and Robotics, especially in the realms of human-robot interaction and explainable AI. We are seeing growth in the numbers of students who are looking to study AI, so we should look to resource there.</p> <p>Broad support was expressed for making our advertisements for academic positions more general, to enable us to recruit from the broadest pool of applicants. If we are looking to recruit to an area which needs to be more specific, then this can be looked at.</p> <p>Dols should prepare a paragraph for the next meeting for each post that they would like to be prioritised for future hiring. MJW will circulate the full list ahead of the next meeting.</p>	Dol MJW
4.	<p>Report from Director of Research College Research Committee has been in recess over the summer, there is therefore no report from there.</p> <p>JH is to be the Digital Services for Research Steering Group representative for CSE. If anyone has issues to raise for this steering group to look at, they can contact JH. Suggestions can be sent to JH or to Victoria Dishon and DOIs are encouraged to think about this.</p> <p>Over the summer we have had a number of large grant bids, which have been sent for support with short notice. It would be preferable if these bids are sent with plenty of notice, to allow the School Executive to be aware of the bigger picture of overall applications.</p> <p>We have seen a lot of grant success over the summer, including seven EU grants. We haven't seen a lot of EPSRC activity, and should look to increase the activity in this area. We have a number of junior staff applying for fellowships at the moment, with deadlines for these coming up soon.</p> <p>JH will be running some pitching workshops in the School to prepare people for short-notice ISCF bids.</p>	
5.	<p>Teaching business Student recruitment update We are expecting a substantial undergraduate intake. We are taking 30 more S-EU students than last year. We are close to our target of 37 rUK students. We have 80 unconditional firm offers to international students, with a target of 70. We will be looking at a first year intake of over 200 students, which is a large student population.</p> <p>We are expecting around 300 masters students, compared to 330 last year. This is against our target for this year of 350. We are expecting lower numbers this year, mainly from EU students. Overseas applicants are holding compared to last year.</p> <p>New developments in online learning The University does an amount of distance learning already, there are also a small amount of distance learning bespoke Masters courses. The new initiative is to look at a different kind of activity – very large scale paying Masters courses. They are a hybrid between MOOCs, which are generally free, and online business Masters courses, where people pay full fees.</p>	

	<p>Having online scalable Masters courses could help to make up any shortfall caused by immigration policies which discourage overseas students from coming to Edinburgh for on-campus courses. JO is on the steering group representing CSE for this project. They are looking at creating a course for each College. For CSE, the candidates are Data Science, AI and Machine Learning. There is no commitment at this point, but we would need to ensure that if we decide to take part in this scheme we can adequately resource our involvement.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Graduate School business</u> Student recruitment update We have a good number of applicants, and are expecting around 80. The gender breakdown is looking better compared to last year.</p> <p>JA queried that lack of uptake of Microsoft PhD scholarships. Action: JA to speak with NT to understand this.</p> <p>The Enlightenment scholarships will be going ahead. A further update will be provided in due course. There will be 30 in total across the university, with 2 for Informatics.</p>	JA
7.	<p><u>Equality and Diversity</u> We are still looking to fill this post. It was suggested that we could put a call out across the School to evaluate interest in this post. It is a significant role in terms of workload and one which we may not look to give to a junior member of staff. We will be giving admin support to this role and created a role of Outreach Coordinator who will take ownership of outreach work.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Commercialisation business</u> JM welcomed JA to the meeting, the first he has attended as Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement.</p> <p>Report from Director of Commercialisation We have received confirmation of a £2,756,000 award from Scottish Enterprise for Project A, which takes us to quarter 4 of 2020. JA circulated a presentation outlining what we are going to be doing with this funding., including job creation and attracting corporate partners. He also outlined the work packages which will be delivered as part of this project, and the governance structure for the Bayes Innovation Project.</p> <p>Planning is underway for EIE 2018. We are looking at two possible locations for this – EICC and McEwan Hall.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Strategy and planning</u> Planning round 2018-21 We are not anticipating any change in direction from College, but we may be expected to have a greater degree of standardisation across Schools within the College. For the time being, we are working on updating the current plan. The School Plan will be on the agenda for the General Meeting on the 19th of September, to allow input from all areas of the School.</p>	
10.	<p>Date of next meeting: 2pm, Wednesday 27th September 2017.</p>	