

Strategy Committee Minutes

27th September 2017 at 2pm, Turing Room

Location

Attendees: Johanna D. Moore (Chair), Stuart Anderson, James Ashe, Murray Cole, Kousha Eteessami, Jacques Fleuriot, Michael Fourman, Nigel Goddard, Jane Hillston (part), Jon Oberlander, Nigel Topham, Barbara Webb, Martin Wright, Magdalena Mazurczak (secretary), Catherine McDonald (secretary)

Apologies: None

	Summary	ACTION
1	PREVIOUS MEETING	
1.1	<p>Approval of previous minutes Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a true representation of the meeting.</p>	
1.2	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>Edinburgh Teaching Award and HEA Fellowships: Details had been included in the recent School newsletter.</p> <p>Internationalisation: The Director of Internationalisation, Don Sannella, will provide a paper on Internationalisation Strategy for the October meeting of this committee.</p> <p>Graduate School business: JA is still to speak to NT about the lack of take up of Microsoft PhD scholarships.</p>	<p>DS</p> <p>JA</p>
2	HEAD OF SCHOOL'S BUSINESS	
	<p>A general discussion took place regarding the need for additional support posts and whether these should take precedence over further academic hires. MJW provided details of the nine new support posts that had been recruited since June 2016, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative Assistant (HR) - UE04 2. Administrative Secretary (ATI) - UE05 3. Facilities Secretary - UE05 4. Teaching Support Administrator - UE05 5. Portfolio Manager - UE06 6. Communications and Outreach Manager - UE06 7. Teaching Organisation Secretary (PGT)- UE04 8. Computing Support Officer - UE05 9. Trainee Workshop Technician (Mechanical) - UE03 <p>MJW reported that, whilst it was a busy time of year, there was not a significant backlog of work in the Teaching Organisation (which was the case last year at the same time). Others pointed to delays in specific cases, however it was identified that these were often caused by University procedures and systems (such as central timetabling) which are not in the control of the School.</p>	

	<p>MJW made the committee aware of the University’s Service Excellence programme, which is seeking to make efficiencies and effectiveness gains in a number of areas including student administration, human resources and finance.</p> <p>It was recognised that a significant proportion of the additional load on academic staff had come about because of the relatively rapid increase in student cohorts, especially in PGT students.</p> <p>SA provided information on his priorities to address these issues in his recently appointed role of DoT, which he would expand further in his report (item 4).</p> <p>It was recognised that the School should seek ways within its own power to reduce the administrative burden on academic staff. Following further discussion, it was accepted that whilst additional support staff may part of the solution, significant gains could only be achieved through changes in practices and procedures, which was an ongoing process. Action: DoT and DoPS to consult with others to identify further opportunities to improve efficiency of business processes and reduce administrative burden on academic staff.</p>	SA/MJW
2.1	<p>Reprioritisation of academic hires 2017/2018 (Paper 3.1) Dols presented their cases for future academic hires. The following positions were identified, in each case (not necessarily in priority order):</p> <p>ANC Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Machine Learning</p> <p>CISA Lecturer/Reader in Correct and Explainable Artificial Intelligence</p> <p>ICSA Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Reader in Systems for the Internet of Things Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Reader in Novel Computer Architectures and Systems (aka ‘Post-Moore Computing’) Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Reader in Hardware and Systems for Security and Privacy</p> <p>ILCC Artificial Intelligence and Education Laboratory Leader for Cognitive Science</p> <p>IPAB Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Reader in Human-Robot Interaction (previously advertised but not filled) Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Reader in the Application of Robotics or Computer Vision to Medicine</p> <p>LFCS Chair in Computer Science (Algorithms and Complexity) - previously advertised but not filled Lecturer/Reader in Security and Privacy Lecturer/Reader in Software Engineering Lecturer/Reader in Database Systems Lecturer/Reader in Programming Languages</p>	

	<p>It was agreed that the post in Software Engineering should be retained as a priority as it comprised part of the 'dowry' for the Chair in Software Engineering, currently being recruited, however this would not be advertised immediately.</p> <p>It was further agreed that the School still wished to recruit to a Chair in Computer Science in the area of Algorithms and Complexity, however this should not be re-advertised until there was a level of confidence that the post could be filled.</p> <p>JO spoke to the need for a post to take responsibility for the School's language science laboratories and related equipment. It was agreed that this should be taken forward.</p> <p>MJW advised the committee that there were currently three 'open' academic posts to which the School could recruit with minimal further process. It was up to the School to designate which posts these should be. Further posts may be released by College in November or December, when both the School and the College financial position will be clearer, and this could result in additional posts being advertised or/and multiple recruitment in the areas to be advertised in the short term.</p> <p>Following further discussion it was agreed that composite adverts should be placed as soon as practicable for posts in the following areas, with a view to potentially making multiple appointments, should budgets permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics • Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning • Security / Internet of Things <p>It was further agreed that approval should be sought from College to place a fourth advertisement, in anticipation of release of funding for at least one further post in the relatively near future.</p> <p>Action: Dols to consult and provide details of posts to be included in adverts.</p> <p>This committee will return to further prioritisation of academic posts, should additional funding be available once the financial position is clearer in November/December.</p>	Dols
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Reprioritisation of support hires 2017/2018</p> <p>The Committee returned to the issue of support staff hires and, after discussion of various needs, arrived at the following prioritisation, in the short term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director of Teaching/Director of Research admin support (currently covered on a temp basis). 2. An additional Business Development Executive linked to an ICSA grant and part-funded by that grant. 3. An additional Business Development Executive linked to the Robotics Offshore Energy Hub (led by Heriot Watt) and part-funded by that grant. 4. Student Support Officer (to relieve Personal Tutors of some of the pastoral care of students and deal with related administrative processes). This to be for PGT students in the first instance but may be extended (through additional posts) to UGT students, if successful. 5. Admin/secretarial support for the School's Commercialisation team 6. Additional Portfolio Manager (to address increase in grant awards, especially in IPAB). 	

	<p>MF suggested that the highest priority should be given to recruitment of a support post to assist in preparation for the next REF. MJW pointed out that this was the responsibility of the existing Research Data Management team, however additional resource may be recruited, if required.</p> <p>The committee will return to prioritisation of support posts as part of the School's 2018-21 planning submission.</p>	
3.	RESEARCH BUSINESS	
3.1	<p>Report from Director of Research Due to lack of time, DoR will circulate her report by email.</p>	JH
4	TEACHING BUSINESS	
4.1	<p>Report from Director of Teaching SA stated that the newly refurbished Appleton Tower facilities were being well received by students and thanked those involved in the project and the move of Informatics Student Services back into Appleton Tower.</p> <p>SA highlighted the following challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difficulty in allocating masters tutors-demonstrators in September. • The need to allow a longer period to deal with students' class allocation for courses that continuing students had decided to take on in April – July. Two weeks does not allow sufficient time to deal with the matter efficiently in September. • Dealing with unpredictably large class intakes. • A better approach to the allocation of duties. • The need for more support staff resources to release academic administrative input. • Improvements to the administrative computer systems. • The need to continue to provide good quality of education. • The need to address the complexity of the curriculum. <p>SA reported a number of initiatives already under way, aimed at supporting students. These include development of a Programming Club and increased resourcing of InfBase and InfPals.</p> <p>SA had talked to the Head of Student Systems about issues with speed and usability of core University systems.</p> <p>SA will suggest a business procedure reform that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier duties allocation across teaching and support roles. • The School will consider constraints on student numbers. • Improvements to the recruitment processes. • Consider a curriculum structure change (see below). • Initiatives to improve gender balance in recruitment. • Development of online learning tools for both distance and on-site students. • Teaching Committee meeting every two months and introduction of more informal gatherings, in a similar style to the research lunches. 	

	<p>It was noted that Teaching Committee should be a forum for identifying and discussing potential initiatives and for disseminating information on current projects. It was agreed that a new emphasis needs to be placed on Teaching Committee to ensure that it properly fulfils its role.</p> <p>It was suggested that the student course selection tool, Path, should be integrated with the student record system, EUCLID, to remove double keying and improve efficiency.</p> <p>It was noted that this committee had previously agreed that a priority was to seek simplification of the School's curriculum and that Sharon Goldwater was currently undertaking a review with this objective. Action: SG to be invited to provide this committee with an update on progress with the curriculum review at the next meeting.</p>	Secretary
5	GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS	
5.1	<p>Report from Director of Graduate School</p> <p>NT presented this year's student recruitment update. PhD applications increased by 20% compared to the previous year. Due to increased funding, the School was able to offer 20% more places. Acceptances increased by 15%.</p> <p>This year the Graduate School was able to offer 10 additional places funded by previous underspends but this will not be the case for the coming recruitment cycle, however it is hoped to maintain the increased level of core funding for PGR studentships.</p>	
5.2	<p>Enlightenment Scholarships</p> <p>It is planned to trial these for entry in 2018. There will be 30 across the University. The School has indicated that it interested in taking two studentships. These will be for overseas students and include an industrial placement. These will be fully funded studentships with a stipend. Fees will be waived and a £1000 administration charge will be applied to cover central administrative costs.</p>	
6	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	
6.1	No report.	
7	COMMERCIALISATION AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT	
7.1.	<p>Report from Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement</p> <p>JA reported that the School has been offered funding to create a display space that would demonstrate the activities taking place within the building to visitors. He will work with the Exec Group to identify a space and develop proposals.</p> <p>The Bayes Innovation Programme, incorporating continuation funding for substantive part of the current Informatics Ventures activities has been approved by Scottish Enterprise, subject to submission of a detailed project plan.</p> <p>Other highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDT Industry days in mid-October. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2018 EIE (Engage, Invest, Exploit investor showcase event) will be held in the McEwan Hall in April 2018. 	
8	STRATEGY AND PLANNING	
8.1	<p>Strategy and planning</p> <p>DoR and DoT will be asked to review the relevant sections of the current plan in consultation with Research and Teaching committees, respectively. Those with other functional responsibilities will be asked to review sections of the plan relevant to their responsibilities. A School-wide online consultation will also be undertaken. We are currently awaiting planning guidance, however no major change is anticipated, except that a greater emphasis on online learning might be expected.</p>	
9.	OTHER BUSINESS	
9.1	None.	
10	NEXT MEETING	
10.1.	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 25 October 2017, 2pm Turing Room, Informatics Forum.</p>	