Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 22nd August 2018

Attendees: Jane Hillston (Chair), Stuart Anderson, Kousha Etessami, Jacques Fleuriot, Vashti Galpin, Jim Ashe, Nigel Topham, Nigel Goddard, Frank Keller, Mahesh Marina, Dorota Glowacka (for Bob Fisher), Ian Simpson (for Bob Fisher), Martin Wright, Lorna Adams (secretary).

Apologies: Chris Williams, Bob Fisher, Barbara Webb

	Summary	ACTION
1. **1.1**	**PREVIOUS MEETING** **Approval of previous meeting minutes** Minutes from the previous meeting were approved with no changes.	
1.2	**Matters arising from previous meeting** *Allocation of Teaching Duties* – SOA advised that details of the new model will be circulated w/c 27th August. *Vacancy for Distance Education Co-ordinator* – This vacancy is still open, however, as we do not want to leave it vacant any longer, we are now thinking of convening a working group instead. **Action:** If anyone is interested in being in this group, please discuss with JH. *International student recruitment priorities* – JH has now spoken to Don Sannella. *GDPR online training* – A friendly reminder to those who have yet to complete the training! *Industry Academic Advisory Board* – SOA has circulated the paper to the DoIs. It is intended to have the Board meeting in November and coincide with graduation/prize giving. The meeting should be confirmed by end of September. **Action:** SOA and JA to meet to discuss plans. Angela Sturniolo in the School Office will help organise the Advisory Board meeting. *Office365 Migration* – The planned migration to O365 has been postponed. This has to happen outside teaching time so as to minimise any potential disruption. It is likely that we will end up with a phased migration, beginning with the support services teams. We will advise the new date once known.	SOA All SOA/JA
2. **2.1**	**HEAD OF SCHOOL's BUSINESS** **Report from Head of School** JH welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new academic year, as well as her first as our new HoS. On behalf of the committee, JH extended thanks to our previous HoS, Johanna Moore, for her hard work during her term of office. JH provided a few short updates as follows : • Student numbers for the MSc programmes are quite stable, with projected enrolments similar to last year at c320. • Projected enrolments for the UG programmes are somewhat up compared to previous years and are currently forecast at around 300. It was noted that although there is a significant increase in projected international entrants, we have also seen a drop in EU students. This decrease is as a result of the stricter entry criteria implemented by College to the latter. • The first Graduate Apprenticeship programme will be commencing this year with places taken up by students from within the existing pool of entrants.	

informatics

The School has seen a large growth in student and staff numbers, and we are all aware of the resultant restrictions of space. JH suggested that if academics are going to be away for a period of time they could advise InfHR who could re-allocate their office on a short-term basis, rather than it lie empty.

MJW advised that we currently have a tender out for a programme of works that will include a final round of office conversions (eg 3for2s) and additional meeting spaces.

JH stated her intention to identify PGR offices where there is capacity for additional desks and students, perhaps by reducing desk sizes. Linked to this, we will be looking at improving ventilation in the building, especially in internal offices, but this will be a bigger undertaking and is not included in the current programme of works.

In JH's role as DoR, all Institutes were asked to create a "party piece" for use during high level visits to SoI. JH stressed that these visits will become more frequent, particularly with the opening of Bayes. In fact we are already the focus of increased attention, with visits planned by an MSP, Edinburgh Airport and Edinburgh City Council over the coming weeks. It is important that we have demo's prepared that we can call upon for these visits, which provide a high level snapshot of what we do and, ideally, do not rely on the same people to represent each Institute on every occasion.

Action: DoIs are reminded to create suitable 20 minute demos (similar to those provided for the Principal's visit) that HoS can call upon; at short notice if necessary.

DoIs

It was noted that there is a proposal to create an Informatics Showcase in IF-G.03. It is not likely, however, that this would be done until next spring.

JH reported that, recently, a number of staff have secured positions in industry. There are also a number of staff working in industry on leave of absence or on a split-time basis. JH stated her intention, where possible, to try and retain links, on a part-time basis, with staff who move into industry positions. JH has recently had discussions with College HR and with Jonathan Seckl regarding contractual arrangements for such staff and the related Intellectual Property issues. College HR are looking into suitable contracts for these situations and Jonathan Seckl has requested the university legal team to look at flexible options for the latter.

2.2 **Academic Recruitment Update**
MJW briefly updated the Committee on current academic recruitment, with particular mention of the following:

- L/SL/R in Computational Biology – This is a joint appointment with Biological Sciences and the successful candidate has chosen to be based in Informatics.
- L in Machine Learning & AI – JH advised that she is still in discussion with the candidate.

2.3 **Academic Recruitment 2018/19 (paper 2.3)**
MJW introduced the paper which sets out the current academic vacancies and recruitment planned for 2018/19 – a total of 20 potential posts for this year.

In view of the number of vacancies, MJW suggested that we perhaps hold over some of these posts to next year. It was noted that recruiting 20 posts in one year does not seem achievable, given all the other HoS commitments.

There was some concern about holding posts back to next year, in particular, uncertainty surrounding Brexit was already making candidates hesitant in moving to the UK, so it could be even more problematic post-Brexit. It was also felt that if we continue to lose staff to industry, we could be losing key people in key areas and we could not afford to wait two years to replace them.

JH also advised that, in addition to these posts, there will also be a further round of Chancellor's Fellows. These are not allocated to specific Schools but will be based around priority areas. Even though SoI are not leading on these this time, we could still have one or more CFs appointed to our School.

Action: Once the CF advert is finalised, JH will forward to all DoIs for information. `JH/LA/DoIs`

Given the number of posts already identified for recruiting this year, which could increase if we were to lose any other colleagues, JH is keen for us to identify areas of strategic importance around teaching or research, in order to help prioritise the School's recruitment plans.

It was noted that there are currently three vacant Chair posts. We have not been successful with Chair recruitment processes recently. JH is keen for us to have a more targeted approach to these and suggested that we have an active search committee, before we advertise the post. We would set-up a special seminar series and invite specific people to come along to present, in advance of advertising a related post. It was agreed to proceed on this basis for the Chair in Software Engineering; also for the proposed new Chair in Industrial Robotics, once established.

JH would like to see a replacement for JO's Chair, to provide senior leadership for Design Informatics within the School. SOA stated his support for this, as JO had a linking role between ILCC and Design Informatics, and it is important to still have this. There was discussion regarding the scope of the post, which would require the establishment of a new Chair, via University Court. It was agreed to follow the process above to identify potential candidates, once a Chair has been established.

ILCC, ICSA and LFCS briefly summarised their cases for several academic posts within their respective Institutes; comments/actions as follows:

- ILCC – L/SL/R Computational Social Science - Committee approved.
- ILCC – L/SL/R Automatic Speech Recognition – Committee approved.
- ILCC/ANC – L/SL/R Computational Neuroscience. **Action:** FK and NG to discuss separately. FK to bring full proposal back to next meeting. `FK/NG`
- ILCC – L/SL/R Cognitive Science. **Action:** FK to discuss with JF and present a full case at next meeting. `FK/JF`
- ICSA – Case for multiple academic posts (L/SL/R) in Computer Systems – MM presented case for these posts. JH suggested that priorities should be to replace posts in database systems and operating systems. **Action:** Need detailed cases for these, as well as prioritising of the remaining areas. MM to bring these back to the next Committee meeting. `MM`
- LFCS – KE summarised the key LFCS recruitment priorities. It was agreed to postpone the L/SL/R in Programming Languages with a view to linking it to the recruitment to the vacant Chair in Software Engineering. **Action:** SOA will speak to KE in relation to Programming Languages post. **Action:** KE and MM to co-ordinate a case for Systems & Hardware for Security & Privacy, and to bring this back to the next Committee meeting. `SOA/KE` `KE/MM`

	In addition, NG advised that he will submit a case for the vacant Machine Learning post.	NG
3. **3.1**	**RESEARCH BUSINESS** **Report from Director of Research** IS provided the following update in the absence of DoR: • Fellowships - Currently RAEng, UKRI Future Leader (FLF) and EPSRC Early Career Fellowship applications are in progress. Due to the FLF requiring a commitment from the SoI to offer a faculty post (and the tapering nature of the funding) we are running an internal selection process that will involve a confidential interview and research presentation from candidates. This has meant an earlier internal deadline of 29th August, for expressions of interest from candidates, so that we can meet the College deadlines for application. This has been communicated throughout the school by DoR. We have had several approaches for each of these Fellowships and are in the process of assigning mentors, and securing the required documents to make sure we satisfy the time constraints involved. • In anticipation of the arrival of the new Director of Research Services we are reviewing the way in which grant funding information is collected and disseminated throughout the School. This will involve discussion with the College RSO, SoI Research Services, including Portfolio Managers and the RDM team, as we need to increase the breadth of opportunities identified in a timely way and direct that to specific individuals in the School to maximise the likelihood of engagement. • CW and IS will be touring the Institutes with a view to getting an initial overview of current headline research areas from the perspective of funding. These will be followed up with more targeted group meetings where needed. DoIs will be contacted over the coming weeks to begin making arrangements for these. Anticipate that Institutes may need to do a presentation to DoR and DDoR, and sessions should only take 30 minutes. **Action:** JH will make slides available to DoIs. These may require updating, so please provide any updates to LA by Friday 7th September. • In an activity related to the previous two points, CW and IS are investigating with the School Comms and Research Services teams, how to implement an effective internal system, for capturing the research activity areas, for all active members of research staff, so that the correct people can be identified, in order that we can identify strategic strengths and gaps in our research programme. • IS and MJW highlighted the excellent research award income secured by the School in the last financial year, amounting to £22.7m - an increase of over 30% on the previous year.	JH/LA/DoIs
4. **4.1**	**TEACHING BUSINESS** **Report from Direct of Teaching** SOA provided a verbal update as follows : • NSS – SoI headline score went up compared to the rest of the University which went down. • PTES – Unfortunately feedback has been negative, but feel this was due to the survey being carried out during the strike action earlier in the year. The Teaching Committee have come up with some suggested actions to improve the student experience. • Projected entrants for PG programmes are at just over 300; similar to last year but still with some uncertainty as to the final figure. SOA advised that the intention is to try and cap numbers by programme for 2019 entry.	

	• Breakdown of current unconditional offers for UG programmes is: 72 Scottish; 38 Rest of UK; 48 EU and 163 International. Anticipated intake is c310 against a target intake of 270.		
	Action: SOA to circulate breakdown of distribution of international applicants.		SOA
	• Visiting UG students – we have no control over these numbers.		
	• In part as a result of City Deal, there is an increasing focus on distance learning.		
	Action: SOA will produce a report on this to bring to the next meeting.		SOA
	It was also noted that the Teaching Organisation has not grown proportionate to the increase in student cohorts which have almost doubled. SOA advised that they are looking at ways to reorganise the team to make it more efficient. MJW stated that the School is open to the case for additional staff within the ITO, if necessary, and that he was confident that this would be supported by College.		
5. **5.1**	**GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS** **Report from Director of Graduate School** NT reported that we are in a good position with regards to offers and acceptances. So far PGR applications are at 746, with the gender split being 78% male and 22% female. He also advised that EU applications are up 52% on last year's numbers, with a 20% increase in overseas applicants. In general, applications are all looking healthy. NT also advised that an unofficial survey was undertaken, which highlighted issues relating to the environment (air quality; noise; cleanliness; smells etc) and computing equipment (out of date systems; computing support; procurement issues). **Action:** NT to make Alastair Scobie aware of the concerns regarding computing facilities.		NT
6. **6.1**	**COMMERCIALISATION BUSINESS** **Report from Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement** JA provided an update as follows : • There are 165 external occupants for Bayes and there is now a waiting list, as there is no more space available. JA is meeting with Dave Robertson on 23rd August to discuss possible solutions, one of which would be to create an additional facility, possibly at South College Street, which is within a few minutes' walk to Bayes. • The timetable has been confirmed for EIE 2019, which will take place on 24th April 2019 at McEwan Hall. Applications open on 1st October 2018. • It was also noted a total £60.5M of industry support over five CDT bids has been secured with the support of the School business development team. • As part of the IV Speaker Series, "Grill the billionaire" – Eric McAfee, will be taking place on 26th September 2018 at 2:30pm, in the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre. **Action:** DoIs to encourage students to come along to this session. JH advised that she will be attending a lunch with Eric McAfee. **Action:** SC members to advise JH of anyone else who would be interested in joining her for lunch with Eric McAfee.		DoIs All
7. **7.1**	**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY** Dorota Glowacka attended the meeting in Bob Fisher's absence, but did not have anything to report yet, particularly as the E&D Committee are still to meet in the coming weeks.		
8. **8.1**	**STRATEGY AND PLANNING** **School Strategy and Plan for 2019-23 (paper 8.1)**		

	MJW requested that all DoIs undertake their own SWOT analysis for each of their Institutes and to bring this to the Strategy Committee meeting on 31st October 2018. **Action:** DoIs to present an Institute SWOT analysis at the October meeting of Strategy Committee. In addition, all members of this Committee are asked to note the process as detailed in Paper 8.1.	DoIs
9. **9.1**	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** **Restructuring – Research Services, Finance and Administration (paper 9.1)** MJW highlighted the split of previous role, into Head of Finance and Administration, and Head of Research Services. Interviews for the HoF&A take place on Wednesday 29th August. MJW also advised that Janet Ball will be joining us in October as HoRS.	
9.2	**Jon Oberlander Memorial** Robin Hill joined the meeting to provide an update on plans for commemorating Jon Oberlander. RH distributed a document to the Committee which summarised various proposals to honour JO. RH advised that it has been decided not to have a memorial lecture to coincide with the Bayes opening. The family do not want to rush anything, and would prefer to have a more dedicated and personal event later. SICSA are keen to be involved in a memorial lecture and have offered support. JH added that as SICSA have only committed to supporting one lecture, we would need to consider the longer term sustainability if it were to become an annual event. It was suggested that as the School already holds a series of Distinguished Lectures, perhaps we would consider making one of these an annual Jon Oberlander Memorial Lecture. The Committee were agreed that we could consider commissioning a piece of Scottish artwork, with funding through subscription, as this is something that we can do in the short term. We are very considerate of the family's wish not to rush things, but also that JO's PhD students will be finishing up soon and we need to strike a balance between the two. JH passed thanks to RH for taking this forward and advised that she would be very happy to come along to the working group for further discussion.	
9.3	**Strategy Committee – updated remit and membership (paper 9.3)** We are currently reviewing all Committee remits and memberships. The Committee were happy to approve the proposed revised remit and membership. As Vashti Galpin's term as Research Staff representative is now at an end, JH took the opportunity to extend her thanks for her service to this Committee. However, as this post is now vacant and until we appoint a new representative, VG will still attend the September meeting.	
10.	**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 26th September 2018, 2pm, Turing Room	