# Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes
## Wednesday 26 September 2018

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

**Apologies:** None

| | Summary | ACTION |
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| **1.**<br>**1.1** | **PREVIOUS MEETING**<br>**Approval of previous meeting minutes**<br>Minutes from the previous meeting were approved with no changes. | |
| **1.2** | **Matters arising from previous meeting**<br>*Allocation of Teaching Duties* – SOA will circulate the model this week.<br>*Vacancy for Distance Education Co-ordinator* – This is still vacant.  Post still vacant and SOA is still to speak to a member of staff to gauge their interest in this role.<br>*Industry Academic Advisory Board* – Invite to go out when Angela returns from annual leave next week.<br>*Institute Demos* – Thanks for those who have sent stuff through.  Successfully used some of these yesterday for the ministerial visit.<br>*Chancellor's Fellows* – Advert is now live. Please encourage candidates to apply.<br>*Research slides* – DoIs have sent updates and LA will forward the updated slide deck back to JH.<br>*SWOT Analysis* – DoIs reminded that they will be required to present their analysis at the October meeting. | SOA<br><br>SOA<br><br>LA/AS<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>LA<br><br>DoIs |
| **2.**<br>**2.1** | **HEAD OF SCHOOL's BUSINESS**<br>**Report from Head of School**<br>JH advised that one of the key themes for the Senate meeting next week, will be "Teaching and Academic Careers".  We have been asked to have someone come to speak to our academic staff at a suitable forum to discuss the project in more detail.  We have invited Alan Murray to come along to the School General Meeting on 4th October to speak to academic staff on this.  **Action:** DoIs to encourage their colleagues to attend.<br><br>JH also reported on the successful visit by Kate Forbes MSP, to the Forum and Bayes Centre on Tuesday 25th September.  During her visit she saw a demonstration of ANYmal and Husky, as well as presentations on the SUMMA Project and e-Voting.  We have more of these visits coming up, so need (**Action:**) DoIs to produce more demos, or even a poster, which will be engaging and can be tailored to various visits. | <br><br><br><br><br><br>DoIs<br><br><br><br><br><br>DoIs |
| **2.2** | **Academic Recruitment Update**<br>MJW provided a brief update to the Committee, however, there has not been any new recruitment activity since our last meeting.<br><br>It was noted that the Lecturer in Machine Learning & AI post was still outstanding, but the candidate is due to be visiting SoI next week and has been given until the middle of October to make a final decision. [*Post meeting note :*  Candidate has withdrawn.] | |

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| 2.3 | **Academic Recruitment 2018/19 (Papers 2.3a-e)**<br>As discussed at the previous meeting, the DoIs for ANC, ICSA and ILCC presented their respective cases for several academic posts.<br><br>- ANC – L/R in Machine Learning - JH stated that she would like to see a more diverse pool of potential candidates. **Post approved.**<br>- ANC - L/SL/R in Computational Neuroscience and Artificial Intelligence – This post could contribute to more cognitive focussed collaborations, as well as to ML teaching. JH was in favour, if it contributed to ML teaching, however, this needs to be explicit in the advert. **Post approved**, on the proviso that the job description is made suitable.<br>- ICSA – L/SL/R in Data-Centric Systems – MM advised that he felt this post would present a useful way to forge links and sees it as a complimentary role to the new Lecturer in Database Systems. **Post approved**, with the job description to be amended to reflect that they would contribute to first year systems teaching.<br>- ICSA – L/SL/R in Systems and Hardware Security – It is the intention of this post to complement our current strengths in security. **Post approved**.<br>- ICSA – L/SL/R in Operating Systems – MM advised that he felt that this was an area that we are lacking in critical mass and we need to do more to compete with the likes of Cambridge. JH agreed that we should have someone in this area, but it could be hard to recruit to this area, when we don't have an established group in Edinburgh for them to join. However, MM was confident that this could be seen as an opportunity by potential candidates. **Post approved.**<br>- ILCC – L/SL/R in Computational Cognitive Science – **Post approved** in principle, further to JH, FK and JF having further discussion.<br><br>JH would like to see (**Action:**) a list of potential candidates for all of the proposed cases discussed above and at the previous Strategy Committee.<br><br>For all posts, DoIs are asked to discuss with their respective Institutes to ascertain their preferred time for interviews and how they would like to group their posts. **Action:** DoIs are to email JH and MJW with this information asap. | | NG<br><br><br><br><br>NG<br><br><br><br>MM<br><br><br>MM<br><br><br><br><br><br>MM<br><br>JH/FK/JF<br><br><br>DoIs<br><br><br><br><br>NG/MM/FK |
| **3.**<br>**3.1** | **RESEARCH BUSINESS**<br>**Report from Director of Research**<br>CKW provided the following update :<br>- Fellowship applications – There have been two applications to RAEng, two for ERC Advanced Grants, as well as two for URFs. No applications were put forward from SoI to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship for Round 2. Upcoming planned applications include two for the EPSRC Early Career Fellowship and one for ERC Starting Grant.<br>- There is an EPSRC Capital Award of £200k available to purchase equipment for data and data visualisation. Benjamin Bach (SoI) is the PI.<br>- CKW and Ian Simpson are arranging meetings with Institutes, to help get a better understanding of how they could help to support them. It was also noted that Michael Rovatsos will be going around the Institutes to give a talk on the newly opened Bayes Centre. | | |
| **4.**<br>**4.1** | **TEACHING BUSINESS**<br>**Report from Direct of Teaching**<br>SOA provided an update as follows :<br>- EUCLID – Problems with data entry and speed are still big issues, and would benefit from pressure being applied, as well as being raised at CSMC. | | |

- LEARN – SOA also advised that a review will be undertaken this year to identify and resolve current issues.
- Distance Learning at Scale – This is being led by Gavin McLachlan. There is pressure from the University to launch micro-masters programmes and in particular for Informatics to create one jointly with Maths in AI. It is intended that these will be up and running by next summer.

SOA advised that he is on the DLAS Board, which is chaired by Charlie Jeffery. The only Schools on this board are Informatics, Maths and the Business School.

**Action:** SOA to draft a paper on SoI's proposed strategy to DLAS and will bring back to this Committee for input and discussion. | SOA

SOA spoke in more detail in relation to the current Admissions numbers for the PGT and UG programmes. Projected enrolments for 2018/19 on the PGT programmes are now up at 415 (including Design Informatics and EPCC programmes), compared to 343 for 2017/18. With the number for the UG programmes at 281 (although expect this to be around 300), compared to 271 for 2017/18. We are now in a situation whereby we have more new students, than established students, and this has had an impact on ITO.

SOA suggested reasons for why we got it wrong:
- Increase in quality of applications
- Improved conversion from conditional offers to unconditional
- Better conversion from unconditional offers to enrolled students

He proposed the following strategy for next year:
- **Undergraduate**:
  - Discourage potential applicants by emphasizing a very high typical offer.
  - Set the target to 250, cap first year courses at 304
  - Use gathered field aggressively for overseas applicants

- **Postgraduate**:
  - **Deadlines:** Applications will close on the 31st January and we will operate a gathered field. The deadline can be extended if necessary
  - **Deposit**: All applicants are expected to pay the £1500 deposit.
  - **Academic levels:** Only the top tier of the pool to be made an offer. All others will be rejected. Tier one specifics are to be clarified with College.
  - **SEU/Overseas**: The College will endeavour to maintain a maximum split of 70% international.
  - **Targets:** Overall target for PGT to be 300 (exc DI and EPCC), with individual targets set for each programme.
  - **Potential Applicants:** will see warnings before application that our courses are in extremely high demand

We want to try to control students from swapping programmes. Specifications will therefore be tightened up to make it harder for students to move around. Would also like to see higher walls between programmes, so that students are more channelled in what they can do.

MJW added that these figures are based on conversion factors, which vary from year to year, and there is always a degree of uncertainty until we get to enrolments. Moving to gathered field for overseas UG and for PGT and closing in January provides more control

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| | but not certainty.  If we do not have enough acceptances on particular programmes, we would still be able to re-open them and then close again once we get to target offers.<br><br>It was also noted by BW that the Student Support officers have been a great introduction and it would be good to look to make further appointments. | |
| **5.**<br>**5.1** | **GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS**<br>**Report from Director of Graduate School**<br>NT provided a brief update as follows :<br>- Applications are up 15% on 2017-18, with 114 offers have being made, with 78 accepted and three pending.<br>- Unofficial survey – NT spoke to Alastair Scobie, who was already aware of it.  Now planning to conduct a further survey on behalf of computing support.  It was suggested that there was a need for more clusters for PGR students, which AS was open to, however, there could be constraints around resources.  The committee noted that this could be an issue that the Computing Strategy Group should deal with. | |
| **6.**<br>**6.1** | **COMMERCIALISATION BUSINESS**<br>**Report from Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement**<br>JA provided the following summary update :<br>- BIP Board was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September – this represented the first full year of the project.<br>- The key Smart Objectives of the project (KPIs) were discussed.  In all cases the annual targets were exceeded.<br>- 140+ organisations applied for the 10 places on the AI and Blockchain Accelerator. The "finals" were held on 26<sup>th</sup> September to determine the cohort.  The quality of the applications is high.<br>- If all leases that have gone out from Estates are signed – they Bayes Centre will be full.<br>- There is a waitlist – some initial discussions with respect to a membership model discussed – this will be reviewed.<br>- EIE 2019 timetable was presented including the Informatics ventures Speaker series. Discussions with SE and SDI continue with respect to support and in particular mapping of the ECO system and the opportunity to bring investors from the USA / Asia to Scotland during the week of EIE.  Informatics Ventures are in discussions with Entrepreneurial Scotland – to enable dovetailing with their conference and dinner.<br>- The School and Bayes pipelines are strong with over 80 opportunities (at differing levels of engagement)<br>- A list of events will be shared with this Committee. **Action:** JA. | JA |
| **7.**<br>**7.1** | **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**<br>RBF advised that he and Dorota Glowacka will take on the leadership of the Equality & Diversity Committee, with DG taking the lead with Athena SWAN.<br><br>It was also noted that we aim to run a variety of training sessions over the upcoming academic year and will provide more detail on these in due course.<br><br>As the Jamboree was quite successful earlier this year, we would be keen to run it again next year. | |

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| **8.**<br>**8.1** | **STRATEGY AND PLANNING**<br>**School Strategy and Plan for 2019-23 (Paper 8.1)**<br>MJW brought this paper to the meeting as a guide for each Institute, in order to help develop their own SWOT analysis for the next Strategy Committee Meeting on 31st October. | |
| **8.2** | **Investment Opportunities**<br>MJW referred to the email from College that he circulated to Strategy Committee. Proposals are sought for new areas of activity that could be brought forward, should funding be available.  This would also feed into School Plan.  **Action:** DoIs to discuss in Institutes but also to consider multi-Institute initiatives. | DoIs |
| **9.**<br>**9.1** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**<br>MJW advised that we are close to agreeing access to Informatics staff and PhD students to all common areas within Bayes. | |
| 10. | **Date of next meeting:**  Wednesday 31st October 2018, 2pm, Turing Room | |