

Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 22nd November 2017



Attendees: Johanna D Moore (Chair), Stuart Anderson, Jane Hillston, Kousha Eteessami, Jacques Fleuriot, Nigel Goddard, Jon Oberlander (2-3pm), Nigel Topham, Martin Wright, Vashti Galpin, Mahesh Marina (for Murray Cole), Keith Edwards (for Jim Ashe), Lorna Adams (secretary),

Apologies: Jim Ashe, Murray Cole,

	Summary	ACTION
1.	PREVIOUS MEETING	
1.1	Approval of previous meeting Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a true representation of the meeting.	
1.2	Matters arising from previous meeting Internationalisation: Assumed that Don Sannella has updated his International Strategy based on the feedback provided at the previous meeting. Microsoft Scholarships: Out of three proposals that were submitted by UoE, only one was from Informatics. It was suggested that the timeline for submitting proposals should be extended past September, to allow time to get over a very busy period. It was also noted that once these scholarships are awarded, a long time often passed before students were recruited to the programmes. JA and NT to have a further discussion and report back in due course.	JA/NT
2.	HEAD OF SCHOOL'S BUSINESS	
2.1	Report from Head of School JM advised that Mark van Rossum has submitted his resignation. His leaving date is yet to be agreed. JM was advised Dragan Gasevic will be leaving. We need to consider if and how Dragan might be replaced, given his special area of expertise. JO suggested that one possibility would be to link artificial intelligence and education. JH raised a proposal from Biological Sciences for a joint post in Computational Biology. Action: It was agreed that MJW should ask Guido Sanguinetti to work on the proposal with colleagues in Biological Sciences.	MJW/GS
2.2	Academic Recruitment update JM asked MJW to provide an update on progress on the academic recruitment priorities agreed at the September meeting of the committee. This is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics – post closes 30 November • Security and Internet of Things – post closes 3 January • Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning – awaiting information • Security – going to advert • Senior Data Scientist – re-advert closes 19 December <p>Consideration of further priorities for academic recruitment, for the current and subsequent years, will take place at the December meeting of this committee, in the context of the School Plan 2018-21.</p>	

2.3	<p>City Deal Update</p> <p>JO provided the group with a brief background to the City Deal. Six local authorities that make up Edinburgh and South East Scotland City region, have been in negotiations with the UK and Scottish Governments, with a deal being reached in July. A large part of the City Deal is related to data driven innovation which, amongst other things, will build on Informatics successes; i.e. applying data science to practical problems. A sum of £600million has been committed to this, of which the government will fund around £260-£300 million, with the rest being funded by University of Edinburgh / Heriot Watt University.</p> <p>The three UoE institutes, Bayes, Usher and Edinburgh Futures Institute will benefit from this government funding. However, as the Bayes Institute was already under construction before the City Deal was confirmed, it could mean that the government money allocated to pay for Bayes, could be redirected and help populate the institute with activity. As a result, it is likely that there will be some new appointments in due course.</p> <p>The intention of City Deal is to develop world class data infrastructure. Also to increase skills. City Deal may also provide funding for distance learning activities.</p> <p>JO advised that the current target for the deal to be signed is mid-February. Governance arrangements are still being developed. It is envisaged that JO, as Director of the Bayes Institute, will be a member of the operational/delivery board.</p>	
3.	RESEARCH BUSINESS	
3.1	<p>Report from Director of Research</p> <p>In general the EPSRC visit went well, thanks to everyone who contributed.</p> <p>JH provided a brief update on the forthcoming REF submission as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not going to be a selection of staff. • Census date will be 31 July 2020. • The number of papers- 2.5 x the number of eligible FTE. • Minimum of one paper, with maximum of five. • Impact Case studies – one for every 15FTE or part thereof. • If people move during the return period, return by both institutions. • All submitted staff are to have an Orcid Number – Action : MJW will circulate info. <p>There was some discussion regarding the selection of papers to be submitted and the sensitivities around this. It was agreed that a clear and transparent process would be required. It was emphasised that that it should be seen as a School submission, rather than a judgement on individual staff.</p>	MJW
3.2	<p>Centre for Doctoral Training Proposals</p> <p>Following on from the EPSRC visit, JH provided some key headlines :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indication from EPSRC – limited to 12-15 outline proposals from UoE. • EPSRC expect 130 in total to be funded, unless there is a boost in funding. The anticipated success rate is 3.5 for every one that is funded. • Looking for c400 outline proposals. • Look at recent Innovation Fellowships as an indication of success rate. • Won't know much more until January when the call comes out. • Plan to award 60 Innovation Fellowships. For Informatics 6-8. 	

	<p>JH is pushing Andy Mount for a definitive timetable. Strong feeling that initial process within CSE should be streamlined and light touch to save potentially wasted effort.</p> <p>Action: JM to raise this at CSMC. We want an early deadline; clear timetable; shorter proposal. JH to raise directly with AM and seek support from DoRs in other CSE Schools.</p>	<p>JM JH</p>
4.	TEACHING BUSINESS	
4.1	<p>Report from Director of Teaching</p> <p>SA advised that he had convened a preliminary meeting around distance learning, which provided enough detail to put into the School Plan. This will be followed up with a wider consultation within the School, probably in February.</p> <p>A report within CSE revealed that Informatics makes most extensive use of concessions. This is probably a consequence of our curriculum structure. We need to look at how it might be simplified</p> <p>There are delays with contracts for student tutors and demonstrators. Some still do not have contracts and we are now in week 10. Action: MJW to investigate reasons for the delay and seek to find ways to streamline the process.</p>	<p>MJW</p>
4.2	<p>Allocation of Teaching Duties – Revised Methodology (Paper 4.2)</p> <p>SA introduced discussion on this item.</p> <p>The following comments were noted :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JH was concerned that this would incentivise big courses and would require a lot of teaching support. What about smaller, specialised courses? What about the impact on diversity of curriculum, which is one of the School’s strengths? This could potentially take away the opportunity for people to teach in their specialist area. • Small courses are important for student experience and staff recruitment. • We need more resource to help improve student experience scores. The current way of allocating duties is not working very well. • Including projects within the model is positive with potential trade-offs between projects and teaching. • Institutes may not have sufficient resources to populate all courses within their area. • KE likes a points based system, however it would be difficult to balance on an annual basis. Credit points could be built up over a longer period of time, with the institutes taking responsibility of managing this. • VG was concerned that there is potential that smaller courses could suffer once larger courses are accommodated. • NT stated that a sensible workload model, with proper credit given, would enable us as a school to work out how we best resource activities. • There is still an issue as to whether the total resource within the School is adequate to meet the needs of the increased size of the taught student cohort. • Recent recruitment of additional academic posts and University Teachers is, in part, intended to address this. More University Teachers may be required. • Institutes’ focus is on research. They do not necessarily map on to teaching and courses. SA stated that he expected some negotiation between institutes in overlapping areas. • Institutes taking responsibility for teaching duty allocation would fundamentally change their purpose and the nature of the School. DoIs are not line managers. 	

	<p>SA stated that his expectation was that the proposal may result in fewer courses being available, overall, with some courses not being offered in every year. What was offered in relation to specialist courses would be for the Institutes to decide. The impact on this on the MSc would need to be considered.</p> <p>Overall, there was general agreement that the present duty allocation model is not fit for purpose and that change is necessary. More work needs to be done on the alternative, however. It was noted that the implementation of change could be quite challenging, especially within a timescale for introduction for 2018/19 duties.</p> <p>Action: SA to reflect on feedback and amend the proposal accordingly. This will be circulated, along with the matrix/spreadsheet, to the Committee.</p> <p>Action: Institute Directors to sound out their institute members for views/feedback on this and provide to SA.</p>	SA DoIs
5.	GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS	
5.1	<p>Report from Director of Graduate School</p> <p>The University has now launched the Enlightenment Postgraduate Research Scholarships. The School is likely to focus on the option which provides for a student internship. These will be open to overseas students as well as SEU students.</p> <p>Also, the School has launched its Informatics Global Research Studentships. This is part of a streamlining of the promotional and application process, discussed at previous meetings.</p> <p>There has been a significant drop in applications from potential PGR students, compared to previous years. The fall is in all sectors, but largest in overseas and EU applications. This needs to be monitored closely as it could be a cause for concern, if the trend is to continue.</p> <p>Action: Institutes to increase efforts to promote research studentships in their areas.</p>	DoIs
6.	COMMERCIALISATION & INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT BUSINESS	
6.1	<p>Report from Director of Commercialisation and Industry Engagement</p> <p>KE provided an update on behalf of JA regarding current activity.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with a senior academic at another institution who is connected to a very significant online retail company in China. There is interest in setting up an industry sponsored lab in the UK and Edinburgh is being considered as a location.</p> <p>Action: JA and JM to undertake due diligence on the proposal.</p>	JM/JA
7.	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	
7.1	<p>Activity Update</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Committee Chair – MJW advised that the position was still vacant.</p> <p>Athena Swan Implementation Plan – MJW and LA will be taking this forward, and are meeting with Kami Vaniea for a handover. Training on dealing with students with Asperger’s Syndrome will be rearranged for the new year. Action: LA to arrange.</p>	LA
8.	STRATEGY AND PLANNING	
8.1	Planning Headlines (Paper 8.1)	

	<p>MJW spoke briefly to this item and requested that if there was any additional or amended information that should be included in the paper, then please pass this onto him. The paper will form the basis of a wider consultation on the School plan 2018-21.</p> <p>Action: Advise MJW of any additions or amendments to the draft planning headlines</p>	All
8.2	<p>Student Intake Targets 2018-21 MJW presented proposed student intake targets for inclusion in the School Plan 2018-21.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of the UGT SEU intake to previous levels (2017 was inflated by higher than historic conversion rates – this will need to be addressed, if it were to continue). • A similar RUK intake to the current year (which shows a decline on the previous year). • Continued gradual increase in year 1 UGT overseas intake. Over time, this may compensate for any decline in EU UGT and PGT students. • Similar PGT intakes to the current year. These will be managed through the deposit scheme, which will apply to all PGT students for 2018 entry, and a move to ‘gathered field’ admissions. The objective is to increase the quality of the intake. <p>There is a discrepancy in the data for PGR students in the University’s ‘diagonal tables’ which are used for planning purposes and the data in EUCLID. The reasons for this are being investigated. PGR intake will, however, largely be determined by available funding (assuming applications levels are maintained).</p> <p>There was discussion about maintaining the current level of PGT intake and whether this is in the best interests of the School.</p> <p>SA advised of some of the measures that are being taken to alleviate some of the issues arising from increased taught student cohorts. These include appointment of Student Support Officers (support staff roles) to assist Personal Tutors with their responsibilities, recruitment of a Learning Technologist to support staff in making better use of the tools available to support teaching, and proposals to change the way in which student projects are undertaken and supervised.</p> <p>There was also increased support for students through the Programming Club, InfBase and Writing Clinics. It is planned to increase resources dedicated to these and similar initiatives.</p> <p>It was further noted that there had been a 25% increase in academic staff in recent years and also the recruitment of University Teachers.</p>	
9.	OTHER BUSINESS	
9.1	<p>MJW advised that a new University expenses policy will become effective on 1 December. School guidance will be updated to reflect the new policy. Action: MJW to update School guidance.</p>	MJW
10.	NEXT MEETING	
10.1	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13 th December, 2pm, Turing Room.	