

Strategy Committee Minutes

25th November 2015 at 2pm, Turing Room

Attendees: Johanna Moore (Chair), Martin Wright, Bjoern Franke, Colin Adams, Michael Fourman, Murray Cole, Nigel Goddard, Nigel Topham, Jon Oberlander, Philip Wadler, Markus Guhe, Anda Nicolson(secretary)

Apologies: Dave Hamilton, Perdita Stevens, Don Sannella, Michael Rovatsos, Stuart Anderson

	Summary	ACTION
1.	<p>Approval of previous minutes</p> <p>Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a true representation of the meeting with one correction. Updated minutes have been circulated.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting:</p> <p>a) MF to return figures on the growth rates of the top 5 performances in REF including the number of post-graduates and RAs per a member of academic staff. Completed. Oxford and UCL have grown by 30% over the last REF and Middlesex have doubled their Category A staff in the same period. We need to return around 125 in the next REF to maintain our lead.</p> <p>b) The Alan Turing Institute (TATI). Action: JM to continue working on the proposed secondment model and circulate to this committee. Ongoing. Other universities have advertised their secondments, but we are not ready to do this at present.</p> <p>c) Business Informatics. DS had met with the Business School. There was discussion about the potential size of the market for such a programme. Was the market those with business qualifications wishing to learn about data or those with computer science (or similar) qualifications wishing to learn about business? It was felt that the latter may be more attractive to Informatics as students would have the pre-requisite knowledge for our existing level 11 courses. DS to continue discussions with Business School to clarify proposals. Carry forward</p> <p>d) ESRC will put out a call for a CDT in New Forms of Data (UoE along with UCL and Warwick University). Action: SA to circulate the information. Carry forward.</p> <p>e) Coding project. Edinburgh City Council and Virtual Edinburgh are involved in a coding project offered for PhD students. SA will get in contact with David Richardson and contact Heather Walker with regards to publicity.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>DS</p> <p>SA</p> <p>SA</p>
	RESEARCH BUSINESS	
3.	<p>Report from Director of Research</p> <p>We need to be proactive about identifying potential REF impact cases. There is currently work being done to build a repository of potential cases so that people can access this information and we can monitor and review.</p>	
4.	<p>Report of meeting with Vice-Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy</p> <p>The meeting with Jonathan Seckl was held on 23rd November and was very positive. We should be focussing on mentoring early career staff to provide them with the best chance of success in grant applications. We also need to ensure that as many people as possible are named on potential four star papers so that we can include as many as possible in our ref submission. A joint REF submission with TATI partners was suggested. No conclusion has been reached on this and it will require careful future consideration.</p>	

5.	Research Day New date to be selected in the New Year as previous date clashed with NIPS conference.	MF
6.	Research Services MJW and JY met with the Portfolio Managers. There is currently limited scope for change and more resource is really what is needed. The current staff are mainly part time but still work outwith their core hours to support academics. Some changes have been agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic records will be shared among all Portfolio Managers to increase cover • Emphasise to academic staff that JY is available to assist when there is not cover from Portfolio Managers 	
<u>TEACHING BUSINESS</u>		
7.	Report from Director of Teaching There is currently a shortage of staff for tutoring and marking duties. A recruitment event will be held next week for the coming semester. Marking duties will be prioritised for academic staff, with tutoring roles prioritised for students (who are not permitted to mark) in order to optimise available resources.	
8.	Allocation of teaching duties 2016/17 This is underway and a list of essential courses is being made and will be prioritised. Criteria are strategic priorities, popularity of courses and value for money (an analysis of courses by teaching costs per student credit has been undertaken). Information is being sought on planned sabbaticals. Also compiling a register of alternative lecturers for each course. We have looked at RAs taking on some teaching related duties (project supervision, tutoring, marking, etc) as the norm but this is not explicitly stated in their job description although do undertake such duties. This could be added to future job descriptions, around 5% FTE, as is done in other schools. A formal School policy would be helpful. Action: MJW to update standard RA job description and circulate.	MJW
9.	Sabbaticals Policy: Consideration of Teaching and Education Proposal: to strengthen the case for teaching sabbaticals to allow for the preparation of innovative teaching. JM asked Charlie Jeffery for clarification of university policy on teaching sabbaticals when they met this morning. The university wants to support teaching on an equal basis with research, and we could therefore consider any requests for teaching sabbaticals. Points raised by the committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbaticals generally require that all admin/teaching duties are cleared. This may not be required for a sabbatical taken to prep a course – there could be more effective ways of doing this. • Not allowing teaching sabbaticals would remove personal choice from academics about how they use their sabbatical time. They need to make the case for their sabbatical, be it for research or teaching. The committee agreed to remove the restrictions on using sabbaticals for teaching and agreed that it should be clarified that they can be used for teaching, research or knowledge exchange activity with each case being considered on merit. Action: PW to update guidance on School intranet.	PW
<u>GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS</u>		
10.	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results The results for this survey are from PhD survey responses. We have a similar return rate to other schools in CSE but are below average in some key areas, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who to approach apart from my supervisor with concerns about my degree 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident I'll complete within the expected timescales <p>There are clear indicators showing lack of confidence, lack of engagement with other students and being unsure who they can talk to.</p> <p>Suggested that student focus groups be held for each institute and that a short action plan for each institute is created. Action: as above. All Heads of Institute.</p>	Hols
11.	<p>PGR Completion Rates</p> <p>We are measured on the percentage of PhDs submitted by the end of their fourth year of uninterrupted studies. We need to make sure that we are recording interruptions where there are good reasons for this, such as internships, where possible.</p> <p>Our current completion rates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2008/09 entrants – 59% 2009/10 entrants – 62% 2010/11 entrants – 69% <p>We need to aim to get this closer to 75-80%. Action: Hols to raise at Institute meetings</p>	Hols
	COMMERCIALISATION BUSINESS	
12.	<p>John McAleese has started as a Senior BDE.</p> <p>ICA stated that it was intended to bring together industry engagement events within a single week to optimise attendance, increase impact and make better use of collective resources. This was broadly supported.</p> <p>CA presented a slideshow proposal on a new industry partner engagement programme. Action: This is to be sent to AN to circulate. Completed.</p>	CA/AN
	HEAD OF SCHOOL'S BUSINESS	
13.	<p>Open Education Resources</p> <p>JM spoke about creative commons licences as detailed in Paper C. This only relates to teaching materials. No objections from the committee.</p> <p>Other items</p> <p>CSMC was yesterday. There is a new round of Chancellor's Fellowships, more details to follow.</p> <p>Now is the time to submit for PAG for new hires. There should be a business plan for each academic post showing how the post will pay for itself within three years. We will lead our recruitment strategy with academic posts and support posts will follow. We want a Vision post filled as soon as possible as this is replacement of staff and not growth.</p> <p>RCUK has asked that we have an Ethics and Integrity policy and processes in place and that this is sent to College by 3rd December. Action: MJW to establish who is dealing with this.</p>	MJW
	PLANNING AND BUDGETS	
14.	<p>Planning round 2016/19</p> <p>The planning submission is due by Christmas. There will be some additional headroom in next year's budget due NPRAS income from this year's higher than expected student intake. This could feed through into future years if student numbers are ahead of previous forecasts.</p> <p>Action: Meeting to be arranged before end of semester for this committee to review the School plan.</p>	AN

	<u>OTHER BUSINESS</u>	
15.	<p>Appleton Tower reconfiguration proposals Any reconfiguration work would have to begin in June 2016 after the cladding work is completed. We would plan to return to Appleton Tower in summer 2017, although non-teaching functions may return earlier if the opportunity allows. This timeline allows for a fuller consultation process.</p>	
16.	<p>Revised P&DR documentation for Academic Staff This has been circulated to this committee and will be implemented as soon as possible.</p>	
17.	<p>Expenses guidelines Some queries were raised about the circulated paper. Action: MJW to convene a separate meeting about this to discuss.</p>	AN/MJW
18.	<p>PGR Scholarships There are fewer scholarships available than at this time last year. The number of DTP scholarships we will receive from EPSRC is unclear.</p> <p>China Scholarship Council – fees for these students used to be centrally funded but the university is now asking that Schools pay these while CSC pays their maintenance. It was reported that the Selectors Meeting felt that the School should not commit to funding these students. Following discussion it was agreed that one scholarship may be offered providing we can make it clear that it would only be offered to an exceptional student and would not be offered if there was not an applicant who met this criterion. Action: NT to provide this feedback to College and clarify whether we can proceed on this basis</p>	NT
19.	<p>Date of next meeting: TBC – single-issue meeting in December re: School Plan. Action: AN to arrange.</p>	AN