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Learning and Teaching Committee

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 04 February 2015**

Duration of meeting: **14:00 to 16:45**

Location: **G5.05, High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Shan Wareing	Vice Chancellor's Office	Ex-Officio
Marcus Wood	Academic Quality Directorate	Officer
Robert Coldwell	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Officer
Connor Baker	Students' Union	Ex-officio
Barbara Dexter	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Simon Lee-Price	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Steve Hoole	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Kath Dunn	Learning and Teaching Directorate	Ex-officio
Ursula Crow	Library	Ex-officio
Teresa Moore	Applied Management & Law	Ex-officio
Allen Stroud	Media Production & Performance	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Ray Batchelor	Design, Craft & visual Arts	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Richard Jones	Enterprise, Security, Resilience & Computing	Nominated by HoS 2014-2015
Lesley Bridges	Advanced Health Care	Nominated by HoS 2014-2016
Karen Harrison-White	Pre-Qualifying Nursing & Vocational Health Care	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Sue Leddington	Social Sciences & Education	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Liz Bell	Academic Quality Directorate	Co-opted
Annette Gimbert	Human Resources Directorate	Co-opted

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Paula Kavanagh	Aylesbury College	Appointed by Chair 2014-2016

Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
N/A		

Welcome / Apologies for absence

15.01 There was one apology for absence as noted.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

15.02 No conflicts were declared.

Minutes of previous meeting (15-Oct-2014)

15.03 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes not appearing on the agenda

15.04 There were no further matters.

Status of actions from the previous meeting

15.05 Noted, with the following comments:

a) Trial of Shadow Committee (Minute 14.45)

Postponed indefinitely as student interest was not as expected at this point. The SU representative noted that feedback would be generated from SU Council meetings in future.

b) Learning Resources (Minute 14.55)

The ongoing research brought to light the problems involved with partner college staff access, as they are not technically Bucks staff (an issue found across the sector, not unique to Bucks).

c) Learning Resources (Minute 14.55)

Staff surveyed regarding library usage with a paper due for 6 May 2015 L&T Committee meeting.

d) TEL Strategy (Minute 14.63)

Approved by Senate.

e) Assessment Criteria (Minute 14.69)

Early analysis of examples of marking criteria had identified the scale of the exercise; 24 different criteria were being used across DMM, 29 in S&H, with contradictions across faculty, department and course levels. Next steps were to conduct a brief scoping exercise across the sector and to identify differing requirements of industry-led subject criteria versus academic criteria.

15.06 The Chair noted the extensive range of strategically focused work that was underway in relation to the learning and teaching agenda, and thanked the

Committee members for their contributions, and that of the staff they managed who were not in attendance.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

15.07 No Chair's Actions had been taken since the previous meeting.

Chair's Report

15.08 The Chair noted that three National Teaching Fellow applications had been submitted. The University was confident of the quality of the submissions.

15.09 The Chair updated the Committee with the progress made on the three week turnaround of assessment feedback, and that the census date for the next update would be 6th February 2015. It was noted that the current policy was five years old and had developed over that period, most recently to include iPads for completing marking and feedback. Research had been commissioned into the feedback and would be presented to SMT following a consultation exercise. The Chair highlighted that improvements should not be solely centred on NNS Survey responses, but also reflect institutionally agreed professional standards.

Learning and Teaching Directorate Update

15.10 The Director of Learning and Teaching gave a verbal update on the following:

a) CPD Framework

An HEA consultancy day took place 29-Jan-2015 which HEA accreditor Rachael Carkell (of University of Bath) attended. Encouraging progress made. Once implemented in September 2015 Bucks will have accreditation powers for recognition in all categories except Principal Fellows.

Currently the University has: 101 Fellows, 3 Senior Fellows, 2 Principal Fellows, and 4 Associate Fellows of the HEA, which is relevant for published HESA data.

b) Academic Enhancement Team

University Operations Board has approved the title of the team and positions have now been filled.

c) Enhanced Student Experience Package (ESEP) Funding

Further bids were welcomed in three areas: Technology Enhanced Learning, Strategic Curriculum Development, and Conference Event Costs Related to L&T Priorities. Interested parties should contact the Director of Learning and Teaching.

d) Guided Learning Hours

The December 2014 Senate meeting requested a project to explore contact hours outside of timetabled teaching. A project led by the Director of Learning and Teaching has been designed and received ESEP funding, and the relevant forms are to be submitted to the February Ethics Committee for approval for student and staff survey.

e) Activities Week

Noted as Senate's decision to continue with 9/3/2015 week as planned, but with future weeks to be reassessed.

f) Enterprise Month

Report on November 2014 event available upon request.

Students' Union Priorities for Learning and Teaching (Paper LTC15.01)

15.11 The paper was introduced by the Student's Union Vice President (Education and Welfare). It had been produced following a recent Students' Union Council meeting.

a) Staff Student Ratio

The Committee recognised the need for clarification of Guided Learning hours, contact time with academics and technicians, staff contribution to course related events, time spent utilising simulated learning environments, and a clearer understanding the statistics that other universities based their published SSR data on. The Chair noted that staff contact time also fed into the eventual cost of courses, considered during the validation process.

b) Advance Lecture Notes

Students have requested that lecture notes are placed on Blackboard prior to teaching sessions. Discussion considered the impact on student attendance of providing prior access to lecturers' notes, balanced against the enhanced quality of learning if the opportunity is offered. The assistance it gave to those for whom English is a second language or have dyslexia was also noted.

c) Big Deal On Course

Students have raised communication problems stemming from the introduction of the initiative. The Chair explained that the University aims to avoid these problems in 2015-2016 by retaining the existing, established framework, and building on the solutions developed in 2014/5.

d) Delivery of teaching hours

Students queried whether they receive the teaching hours to which they are entitled. The lack of an all-encompassing recording system to track teaching hours was noted, as Timetabling, Validation agreed contact hours, and other recording mechanisms did not necessarily overlap. Room Audits generate room usage data, which suggests that a proportion of scheduled events do not take place. Whatever the reasons for this, institutionally we should have a clearer shared understanding of the timetable and use of the estate. This area was identified by the Chair as a work in progress.

e) Depth of Feedback

It was noted that concern was based on 'small pockets of dissatisfaction' and highlighted the delicate balance between timeliness and quality of feedback. The Committee agreed that the sharing of best practice needed to take place, and that a recent Assessment Summit had also addressed the issue. Members noted that verbal feedback, critical forums, discussions within simulated learning were not always recognised by students as feedback, which should be addressed through more effective communication.

15.12 It was noted that the Students Union are reviewing their Education Campaign initially launched in 2009. Seven improvements had been identified and would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Action: Connor Baker

15.13 Committee members were asked to remind their respective areas of the need to avoid organising meetings involving students that clashed with scheduled lectures.

15.14 The Chair requested that SU matters become a standing agenda item.

Action: Secretary

NSS 2014: Review of Faculty reports against NSS targets (Paper LTC15.02)

- 15.15 The paper was introduced by the Faculty representatives, who noted that improvements based on NSS statistics were ongoing. The Chair highlighted the significance of the student feedback and the need to reflect their opinions in future planning.
- 15.16 The Committee asked the DMM representative to ensure the report was updated to include other actions from the Faculty. The revised paper would be circulated to the Committee for note.

Action: Teresa Moore

Staff Development Day themes 2015-2016 (Paper LTC15.03)

- 15.17 The paper was introduced by the Academic Enhancement Manager. It was noted that external partners would be invited to Staff Development Days (beginning with the 10-Mar-2015 event) as would External Examiners (from 22-May-2015 onwards).
- 15.18 Committee members agreed that:
- External Examiners would be invited by Academic Departments rather than the Learning & Teaching Directorate (but with L&TD reminding academic staff via Digest announcements).
 - 3 staff development days should continue to take place each academic year.
 - Associate Lectures should be paid through attendance being built into the original employment contracts, and expenses should be covered.
 - All staff should be aware of staff development days and other key dates in the official Academic Year Calendar when planning their own events.
- 15.19 The Academic Enhancement Manager would update the Academic Year Planning Group of Staff Development Day dates beyond 2014-15. This would help avoid diary clashes as much as possible.

Action: Julie Irwin

KIS and the Unistats dataset (Paper LTC15.04)

- 15.20 The paper was introduced by the Secretary. Attention was drawn to the usefulness of using the Unistats website as a tool for easy comparison against local and national provisions. It was noted how the information related to teaching time, widening participation, and for use during Validation to provide a better offering.
- 15.21 Further technical information was available through the University Planning and Intelligence Unit.

Excellence Awards (Paper LTC15.05)

- 15.22 The paper was introduced by the Academic Enhancement Manager. Committee members raised the following points:
- The University prefers use of the phrase Professional Service Employees (PSEs) when referring to administrative staff.
 - A university Fellow should be a Fellow rather than an Associate Fellow
 - Criteria should not focus exclusively on 'Scholarly Research' as work based research would allow for PSE contribution.
 - Criteria should link to HEA referencing
 - Scenarios could be included for clarity

- Inviting a member of staff with an active research background onto the panel should be considered.

15.23 The paper was agreed, with amendments as outlined above, and would be revisited after the first year.

Work-based and placement learning definitions: Draft statement (LTC15.06)

15.24 The paper was introduced by the Academic Enhancement Manager. It was noted that the University's current policy had been prepared in 2009 and was now out of date.

15.25 A scoping exercise had been undertaken which had uncovered many inconsistencies in approach across the university:

- Definitions were used almost 'randomly'
- Some areas had a team of staff to support students whereas others had limited provisions
- At times students relied on personal contacts which put others at a disadvantage (especially when viewed alongside the widening participation strategy).

15.26 The different approaches were partly explained by the depth of professional partnerships within each course or module. The Committee agreed that a comprehensive review was needed to ensure a consistent and integrated approach.

15.27 Committee members noted the management of work related learning affected the reputation of the university and greatly influenced the confidence of the students to further engage in their future fields of employment. It was highlighted that on several courses the number of secured professional placements dictated the intake of new students.

15.28 The Committee supported the ongoing work. The Chair noted that although the paper's recommendations included an increase in financial resources, the Committee itself did not have the power to grant this.

15.29 Recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 6 were agreed. Recommendations 1 and 2 were not agreed. The Chair suggested that a consideration of any additional resource requirements could be considered in the future as the area is progressed strategically.

Changes to E-submission, marking and moderation policy and procedures (Paper LTC15.13)

15.30 The paper was introduced by the Open4Learning Representative. The accompanying paper outlined changes to the policy and procedure and tied up some loose ends. The paper was approved.

15.31 Committee members noted that the communication of the procedures was a separate and ongoing issue. The revised policy would be promoted at a future Bitesize meeting and other events.

Action: Steve Hoole

HR Academic Staff Development Report

15.32 The Human Resources Representative gave a verbal update. Representatives from HR, Learning and Teaching and AQD had met to develop a single approach to

training and development opportunities across the University. A joint calendar of events would be prepared and would be reported through an annual report to QEC.

- 15.33 It was noted that Sharon James in HR would be able to record all training opportunities undertaken by staff across the University. Details should be emailed to Sharon (sharon.james@bucks.ac.uk) to be updated on the HR database. It was noted that the employee portal could be used by staff to track activities.

University Assessment Regulations update (Paper LTC15.07)

- 15.34 The Academic Quality Directorate Representative informed the Committee that the project had temporarily been put on hold due to issues surrounding intermediate/exit awards, arising from publication by the QAA of the revised FHEQ.
- 15.35 The conferral of intermediate/exit awards in the University is currently based on credits attained; the FHEQ requires that they be based on the achievement of specific programme-level learning outcomes. It was noted this would have affected 11% of students in the previous academic year.
- 15.36 Committee members supported the recommendation to continue to make intermediate exit awards. Issues raised by the Committee members included how the new policy would affect referrals, placements abroad that substitute modules, and the ongoing validation process.
- 15.37 A paper being prepared for QEC in February 2015 will propose an institutional response. The Chair asked for a Task and Finish Group to meet to consider recommendations for QEC.

Action: Liz Bell / Miriam Moir

AGCAS code of Practice and quality considerations (LTC15.08)

- 15.38 The paper was introduced by the Head of Careers. The paper was for note.
- 15.39 Further to the paper it was noted that KD had joined the 'National AGCAS workgroup group for quality', and was mindful of guidelines published by NASES (National Association of Student Employment Services), and that the university remained 'Two Ticks' accredited.
- 15.40 It was noted that the Careers and Employability Service continued to work alongside the Student's Union and LDU as well as with Academics, to ensure the highest quality of provisions and resources.

Observation of Practice: Progress update (LTC15.09)

- 15.41 Consideration of the item was postponed to check further against existing university policy.

SCONUL Stats Update (LTC15.10)

- 15.42 The paper was introduced by the Library Representative, who highlighted that the NSS results for the library are 9% below the sector average. However, they have made year on year improvements, and the Library spend per student is significantly below the sector average.
- 15.43 A 'Task and Finish' group was currently investigating the extent to which electronic views are 70% behind the UK average is a result of the software interface, the university culture, training issues, course design, or the embedding of resources. Staff and students have been surveyed, the responses from which (including over three hundred comments) are being analysed.

The Committee suggested:

- Guidance relating to the use of professional journals should be included within course modules and encouraged during lectures, and those journals should be complete versions wherever possible.
- The issues raised through the NSS survey and SCONUL comparison should feed into the Library Strategy documents.
- The university website was a more appropriate hosting location for library resources than Blackboard.
- Students would benefit from retraining in their second and third years when they are most likely to be relying heavily on the library resources.
- Academics working alongside subject librarians to continue to be encouraged.
- The University's preparations for RDAP should have a knock-on effect in promoting scholarly activity

15.44 It was agreed that the Chair would present the paper to SMT for consideration of the implications.

Action: Chair to take the final report to SMT

Executive Summary: Academic Year Planning Group (Paper LTC15.14)

15.45 The Item was introduced by the Chair. The paper was noted.

15.46 Dates of L&T Directorate activities planned for 2015-2016 would be confirmed with the Secretary of the Academic Year Planning Group. It was agreed that Kath Dunn would be responsible for Enterprise Month and Julie Irwin for both NSS and Staff Development Days.

Action: Kath Dunn / Julie Irwin

Executive Summary: Timetabling Group (Paper LTC15.11)

15.47 The item was introduced by the Chair of the Timetabling Group. It was noted that the implementation of the timetable for the 2014-'15 academic year had begun smoothly, the Principles Policy had been written, and all IT problems had been resolved.

15.48 It was agreed that the Timetabling Group would meet formally twice per term, rather than once per month.

15.49 The Timetabling Manager had left the department, with the post to be filled in due course.

Any Other Business: Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

15.50 There were two items of Any Other Business

a) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

The Academic Enhancement Manager asked for confirmation that as with the NSS results the PTES results should be reported to the L&T Committee. It was agreed that it should, along with PRES.

Action: Julie Irwin

b) HEA Partnership Manager Update (LTC15.12)

The paper was noted.

Date of next meeting

15.51 The next meeting of the Committee will be at 1:30pm, 6 May 2015 in Room G5.05, High Wycombe Campus.