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Learning and Teaching Committee

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 06 May 2015**

Duration of meeting: **14:00 to 15:45**

Location: **G5.05, Gateway Building, 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
Teresa Moore	Applied Management & Law	Ex-officio
Ray Batchelor	Design, Craft & visual Arts	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Richard Jones	Enterprise, Security, Resilience & Computing	Nominated by HoS 2014-2015

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Ursula Crow	Library	Ex-officio
Allen Stroud	Media Production & Performance	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Lesley Bridges	Advanced Health Care	Nominated by HoS 2014-2016

Karen Harrison-White	Pre-Qualifying Nursing & Vocational Health Care	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Mike Mousley	Society & Health Applied Education	Nominated by HoS 2013-2015
Paula Kavanagh	Aylesbury College	Appointed by Chair 2014-2016
Miriam Moir	Academic Quality Directorate	Co-opted
Annette Gimbert	Human Resources Directorate	Co-opted

Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
N/A		

Welcome / Apologies for absences

15.52 Apologies for absence were as noted above. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

15.53 No conflicts were declared.

Minutes of previous meeting (04-Feb-2015)

15.54 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes not appearing on the agenda

15.55 There were no further matters.

Status of actions from the previous meeting

15.56 Noted, with the following comments:

- a) Staff Development Days (Minutes 15.19 and 15.46)

The Staff Development Day scheduled for the 22 May 2015 had been cancelled, with two days per year now planned.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

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

Chair's Report

15.58 The Chair noted that the committee structure was being reviewed by the Vice Chancellor, with the possibility of QEC, L&TC and SEC being merged into two committees. Members were reassured that the committee business and actions would remain in any new format.

Learning and Teaching Directorate Update

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

a) CPD Framework

An application was submitted to the HEA for accreditation at end of March 2015, with a decision pending from the April panel meeting. Two Principal Fellowships and six Senior Fellowships had been confirmed this academic year, with more being processed.

In future HESA data concerning Academic staff with HE qualifications and professional recognition is to be published. An estimate for Bucks New University was placed at 66%, thought to be above the sector average.

b) Bucks Fellowship Award

The Panel was to meet 11 May 2015, with an awards lunch to be attended by the Vice Chancellor, 22 May 2015.

c) National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS)

Three nominations had been made, with the decisions to be announced to applicants on 22 May 2015. There would be no public announcement until June.

d) Bucks Professorial Routes

These will be reviewed during the upcoming summer by the Director of Learning and Teaching in consultation with HR and research colleagues, at the request of the Vice Chancellor.

e) Enhanced Student Experience Package (ESEP)

ESEP Grants were underspent at the time of the meeting. Faculties needed to ensure finance was re-claimed through Robert Coldwell. The Panel last met 29 April and approved several awards for 2015-16, with a relatively low application rate but of a good standard. Further call would be made in September, with promotion through faculty events.

f) Guided Independent Study Hours

The December 2014 Senate meeting requested a project to explore hours outside timetabled teaching. The ethics approval was gained in March for a student and staff survey. The Literature review is complete, and the Survey went live in March with 170 student and 38 staff responses to date. Interviews are currently being held with students and staff. Data analysis and reporting will take place through summer and autumn.

g) Staff Development Day

The event on 10 March achieved a record attendance and received very positive feedback. The development day scheduled for 22 May had been cancelled and a decision made to hold two events per annum. This would form part of a more comprehensive staff development calendar of events being coordinated in partnership with AQD and HR.

h) HERD

The group met in March, with a core group formed and activities to be coordinated through Liz Rider-Grant of the Academic Enhancement team.

i) NSS

A 70% response rate had been achieved, with the final tally to be confirmed shortly via a Digest announcement. The Committee thanked all parties for

helping to increase the participation rate from 63% to 70% over the last weeks. A paper with recommendations for future practice is to be considered by SMT.

j) **Careers & Employability**

The Minutes Secretary was congratulated on his new post as Alumni Relations & Mentoring Coordinator.

Students' Union Report (Paper not received)

15.60 The item was introduced by the Students' Union representative who noted that the report had not been finalised. It would be taken forward in the new committee structure.

15.61 A concern regarding the cancelation of lectures (especially at short notice) was introduced. A brief poll conducted via social media suggested students were concerned, especially in relation to 'value-for-money' and against expectations. The Committee recognised the need for a wider discussion and investigation.

15.62 It was further agreed that a thorough, fair and balanced approach was needed, noting the following areas for consideration:

- The number of cancelled lectures should be investigated for a truer picture of the scale to emerge.
- Are lectures re-scheduled, or the contact hours extended elsewhere?
- Incoming SU Officers had this matter high on their agenda for the next academic year.
- Room audit data to be analysed further and shared.
- Some students are concerned that tenancy agreements extend further than timetabled teaching without a clear reason.
- Could Module Evaluations be used as a means to survey the problem/perceived problem?
- Good practice among lecturers to be shared where appropriate.
- Lack of continuity an issue, both in working practice and communications.
- Should the attendance of students be part of the same discussion?
- How would this project overlap with the other senior committees' remits?
- SMT have been approached by the SU to reply to an article in the SU newspaper covering the matter.

The Academic Enhancement Manager would be asked to create a draft action plan for consideration as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action: Julie Irwin

15.63 Members asked for clarification in relation to the Students' Union proposal to run a programme of short courses. Examples of appropriate training were noted as including First Aid, Door Security, and Social Media Profile Awareness. Concerns were raised about the appropriateness of other suggested courses, especially those that contained elements of modules taught within the degree subjects offered at the University. The lack of communication and consultation was also highlighted. The following points were raised:

- Consultation meeting should take place between the SU and other interested parties, including representatives from faculties and support services such as Careers, Learning Development Unit;
- Proposals should be shared more widely;
- Accreditation of the training must be appropriate;
- Proposed course presenters / leaders should be of a sufficiently high standard or have the appropriate professional qualifications as relevant;
- The close working relationship between the SU and Careers formed during the planning and implementing of recent Activities Weeks should be maintained where relevant.

It was agreed that a consultation meeting would be arranged.

Action: SU Vice-President: Education

Outcomes of Learning Resources Task and Finish Group (Paper LTC15.16)

- 15.64 The paper was noted, with a reminder that a supplementary survey had been launched jointly by the Academic Enhancement Team and the Library, focusing on the staff knowledge and usage of library resources.

Careers and Employability Policy (Paper LTC15.17)

- 15.65 The paper was introduced by the Head of Careers, with a request to approve the policy as a replacement for the Careers Education, Information and Guidance policy written in January 2005 which would thereby be rescinded.
- 15.66 The policy outlined the services offered by the Careers & Employability Service (CES) and the projects supported by the service as of May 2015, including BucksTemps, Enterprise, Alumni, Mentoring and Employer Engagement. The policy was supported by a mapping document, aligning service and project delivery with the University's Strategic Plan, Learning and Teaching Strategy, the QAA UK Quality Code (primarily B4, March 2013), and the AGCAS Code of Practice (2014).
- 15.67 It was noted that the policy represents both actual delivery and ongoing work with the aspiration of enhancing students' career planning, career management and employability skills. It was further highlighted that the document referred to two supporting documents ('Guidance on the Bucks Employability Award' being developed by both CES and Academic Enhancement, and the 'CES Working with Employers' procedures) with these documents due to be presented for approval to the appropriate body later in 2015.
- 15.68 The Committee considered that the mapping exercise supplied clearly demonstrated the scope of the offer for Students (EEA and international), Staff, and Alumni, and the effectiveness of the strategy in assisting students to secure employment or career progression.
- 15.69 The Chair noted the quality of the document in both range and strength, but also suggested the boundaries of the offer should be more explicit in regards to partnership college students. Equality analysis should also be completed prior to formal approval. Chair's action would be taken to approve the final documentation.

Action: Kath Dunn

Personal and Professional Development (Paper LTC15.18)

- 15.70 The item was introduced by the Head of Careers. The project originated from an ESEP Grant awarded to the authors of the paper, to ultimately create a system through which students could better articulate and reflect on the expertise developed outside of the taught experience, and to store information and better seek opportunities. The scoping exercise identified the experiences of e-Portfolio platforms, both within Bucks and wider research nationally.
- 15.71 The paper summarised the benefits of:
- Starting from students' existing preferences where possible; and,
 - Using platforms that can move from the University setting with students.
- 15.72 The next stage of the project would be to establish a working group with a selection of staff and students, to develop and trial an approach incorporating e-Portfolio and skills recognition via an award. By starting from existing portfolio preferences the reflective process taught within degree courses could be integrated within the project.
- 15.73 Further areas for development were highlighted as being:
- CES to further support the development of course modules;
 - Ethics panel submission for a focus group to ensure students incentivised;
 - Awards to recognise course specific achievements.
- 15.74 The Committee Members approved the project, noting the meaningful way whereby students' achievements could be recognised and celebrated, and how it supported the integration of existing (social) media.

Bucks Exemplary Practice Awards (Paper LTC15.19)

- 15.75 The paper was introduced by the Open4Learning representative. It was noted that the scheme was to be added to the existing Bucks Fellowship Awards programme, to award badges of merit to Blackboard shells which met standards of excellence in design and content. Staff would nominate themselves, with a panel categorising a design as gold, silver or bronze. Winners of the awards would be put forward to the national Blackboard Catalyst Awards Program to be assessed as an example of good practice.
- 15.76 It was also noted that these awards may help assist applications for National Teaching Fellowship applications, and that the criteria highlighted the scope of Blackboard's potential.
- 15.77 The Committee approved the award.

Learning Partnership Agreement – Amendment (Paper LTC15.20)

- 15.78 The item was introduced by the Students' Union representative. A consultation exercise had been undertaken, including workshops involving PSE, Academic, and SU staff, along with students.
- 15.79 Committee Members that had attended the workshops testified to their effectiveness and applauded the ambitious ideals which underpinned the document.
- 15.80 The Committee Members agreed that the communication of the LPA should *not* be done separately from existing channels, as utilising the ways by which staff and

students currently share information (i.e. the Student Handbook, student briefs) would allow it to be a 'living' document.

- 15.81 It was agreed that the document would be shared at each of the Senior Committees before then going to Senate.

Action Learning for Enhancement (ALfE) (Paper LTC15.21)

- 15.82 The item was introduced by the Academic Enhancement Manager. It was highlighted that this was a new project funded by an ESEP grant and was designed to offer support to staff new to post, including those new to the University or who had recently been promoted. Key facilitators within the faculties would be trained to deliver the programme, along with members of the AE team who already had this expertise. A report on the success of the pilot would be reported back to the L&T Committee (or its replacement Committee) in due course.

Action: Julie Irwin

Equality Statistics – Student HESA Data: 2013-2014 (Paper LTC15.22)

- 15.83 The item was introduced by the Secretary, included in the Committee business schedule to ensure policies and procedures reflect best practice.
- 15.84 The Committee discussed the increasing numbers of students with either learning difficulties (dyslexia or dyspraxia) or mental health issues and agreed that more support and training for staff was needed to in turn support the growing number of students declaring a disability. It was also considered likely that some students may have chosen not to declare their disability, or be receiving professional help elsewhere further increasing this need. It was agreed that the Secretary would write to the Director of Student Services noting the Committee's concerns that staff are appropriately prepared.

Action: Secretary

- 15.85 The Committee members noted that as well as the Disability Service, students could access advice and support from the Learning Development Unit and the Careers and Employability Service.
- 15.86 Attention was drawn to the reduction in Disability Service Allowance for the next academic year. The Chair confirmed that ESEP funds totaling £38k had been ring-fenced to contribute to specific requirements, e.g. up to £200 towards the purchase of a laptop.
- 15.87 The Bucks Temps agency was also discussed as a potential resource for disabilities support, as well as a means by which students with disabilities often found their first paid work experience.
- 15.88 The Committee noted that the DHLE statistics demonstrated that employment rates for graduates of Bucks New University with disabilities was ahead of the sector average.

Executive Summary; Academic Year Planning Group

- 15.89 The Chair introduced the item, highlighting the following:
- The 2016-17 Calendar had been agreed and shared on Blackboard.

- The Corporate Outlook Calendar had been published.
- Graphic Design students had been asked to redesign the Academic Calendar.
- Exam room space had been resolved.
- More work to be done to track the number of courses that did not share the 'normal' timetable, i.e. short courses or those starting mid-term or year.

Executive Summary: Timetabling Group

- 15.90 The item was introduced by the Chair of the Timetabling Group, who noted that the group had been created in 2012 when there were significant difficulties. These have since been resolved, and the Committee Members agreed that the Timetabling Group was no longer needed and could be abolished.
- 15.91 The Chair thanked the Chair of the Timetabling Group and her team for taking on the project and seeing it through to a successful conclusion.

Membership Update (Paper LTC15.23)

- 15.92 Given the planned revisions to the Committee structure (minute 15.58 above), the Paper was withdrawn.
- 15.93 It was noted that Chair's Actions would be the responsibility of the Director of Learning and Teaching until a new Chair could be appointed and the new committee structure confirmed.

Action: Secretary to update Committee Members on both points

Committee Effectiveness Review (Paper LTC15.24)

- 15.94 The paper was introduced by the Secretary, who highlighted the need to ensure the committee business and terms of reference remained current, and that nothing had been overlooked.
- 15.95 The Chair noted that the Committee had been hard working, productive and had gained positive traction, and that it had been a real benefit to the university. She thanked Members for their attendance and their strategic and focused contributions. Members in turn noted the positive effect the Committee had on the institution, and formally thanked the Chair for her exemplary contribution and guidance.

Date of next meeting

- 15.96 The next meeting of the Committee would be confirmed following announcements regarding the new structure.