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Learning and Teaching Committee

Minutes

date: Wednesday, 7 May 2014
time: 2.00 p.m.
location: G5.05, High Wycombe Campus

14.17 Welcome / Apologies for absence

Apologies for Absence were noted and recorded separately. It was noted that Julia Oldham had been invited to attend and introduce agenda item 12.

14.18 Minutes of previous meeting (5-Feb-2014)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

14.19 Matters Arising / Review of Action Sheet

[a] Review of Action Sheet
(Action Sheet)

Actions were noted as per the status column. There were no further actions arising.

[b] Update on Learning and Teaching Activities

An update was provided by the Director of Learning and Teaching:

- CPD Framework – The project team attended a HEA residential in March. Plans were said to be progressing, with Barbara Dexter to present to SMT on 6 May 2014 to update and gain feedback. Members were asked to promote awareness of the framework among colleagues (academics and PSEs supporting learning and teaching activities).
- HERD – Cluster groups have been formed and initial meetings set for week commencing 19th and 26th of May. Interested parties were asked to contact Barbara Dexter.
- Staff Development Day – Requested that staff register for and promote the 21 May event. 2014-2015 dates confirmed as 18 September 2014, 10 March 2015 and 22 May 2015. These would be added to the calendars maintained by the Academic Year Planning Group so staff could put dates in diaries. A decision is to be made regarding which of the above events is to be held at the Uxbridge Campus.
- NTFS – Announcements to nominees due 22 May, with the official announcement to be made 12 June 2014.
- DLHE Statistics – This year's collection has just been completed. More analysis is to be undertaken before a full paper is brought to the committee in October 2014, but significant developments included an increase in employment rates of full time

undergraduates (92.3% from 84.4%), and response rates being above the set targets (83% of UK FT UG against a target of 80%, and 75% UK PT UG against a target of 70%).

- Teaching Activity Cancellations Pilot - Ann Van Duzer, Vicki Turner and Laz Wood are working on a Business Case for piloting an electronic form for teaching activity cancellations. The Committee will be made aware of progress in due course.

14.20 **Chair's Business**
[a] **Enhanced Student Experience Package**
(Paper LTC14.15)

The Chair noted that the package (and associated costs) had been approved by Council following consultation with SMT and the SU. Funds generated would support both students and staff (including the Learning and Teaching Directorate).

A steering group is to be responsible for ensuring the main benefits of the scheme are communicated and delivered effectively; that students from all three years are included, across all courses (with adjustments), and how incoming and prospective students are best informed.

It was noted that Council had agreed to include all undergraduate years in the package rather than only those students paying the new, higher fee. This ensured that there would be no differentiation in the student experience.

14.21 **Annual Business Schedule**
(Paper LTC14.09)

The paper was introduced by the Secretary, in the context of the need to reference the Committee's remit and terms of reference. It was noted the aim of the schedule was to ensure the committees business is distinct from other committees, structured, and committed to fulfilling its purpose.

After discussion it was noted the schedule should allow for the submission of papers encouraging academic research, and that the potential to publish the minutes on Blackboard or the university website should be explored. The Secretary noted that this formed part of a wider change in the University Committee Structure on which he was leading for AQD.

14.22 **Learning and Teaching Strategy – Review**
(Paper LTC14.14)

The Chair introduced the document. It was noted that the University (and the Committee) was making good progress on the implementation of the strategy. It was noted that the Strategy should be 'a live document' to maintain its current and to reflect the changes in the linked Research Strategy which was to be considered by Senate in due course. Accordingly, some minor changes were being proposed for recommendation to Senate.

The changes were recommended. The Chair asked that members should forward (via e-mail) any further suggested changes by the end of May 2014, prior to the Strategy being submitted to Senate on 11 June 2014 for approval.

14.23 **HEA Services from 2014-2015**
(Paper LTC14.10)

The Chair introduced the paper. It was noted that HEA faced a huge reduction in their budget but had made efforts to reassure the university of their value.

It was noted by the committee members that new subject route activity, employability,

the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme and Professional Standards Recognition Route all remain covered.

The Chair encouraged members to promote participation in HEA events and consultations.

14.24 TAPS Draft Project Report
(Paper LTC14.17)

The paper was introduced by Ray Batchelor (RB), School Representative for DMM (DC&V) and Project Leader.

It was noted the draft paper represents the end of this phase, of which the main outcomes have been to raise the profile of assessment practices, and to highlight the need for an awareness of current methods across the institution and sector.

The Chair confirmed she would contribute a paper and would forward the title to RB for inclusion in the report.

There was general agreement from the members for the need to continue with the work in progress, linking assessment where appropriate with the 'three week turnaround', HERD, and the Enhanced Student Experience Package.

It was further noted by RB that the 'Review Tool' would need to be remodelled to be less unwieldy, something that was currently being looked into.

Jack Badu's contribution to the pilot was described as being invaluable, in terms of both commitment to the project and as a voice on behalf of students.

The Chair endorsed the positive progress and the notable benefits (staff engagement being most prominent), especially when viewed against the HEA grant of £8,000.

The report would be finalised and submitted to the HEA for the forthcoming deadline.

14.25 Excellence Awards
(Paper LTC14.12)

The paper was introduced by the Director of Learning and Teaching.

Related issues noted to contextualise the paper:

- The Learning & Teaching Directorate and Students' Union were discussing the responsibility for organising future awards.
- Potential to further link the awards to the NTF / HEA.
- The current awards are still relevant when viewed alongside the L&T Strategy

The 'Options for change' section of the paper was discussed, with members endorsing the third (author's preferred) choice.

Discussion among the committee members raised the following points:

- Student, Staff and Self should be included as routes to nomination.
- Separate awards should be distinctive and clearly defined.
- The reasons why the award was won should be made clear, to learn from (and promote) best practice.
- Awards should be publicised and celebrated, around the building (through posters, photographs, information points) and on the university website.
- The need for awards as a 'thanks' and acknowledgement of excellence in the workplace.
- The success of awards ceremonies as a joint staff and student celebration.

- The need to interview and publish/promote the 'stories' from the winners
- Potential for a new Academic Developer appointment to have responsibility for taking plans forward
- Recognition of leadership and institutional research to be enhanced through awards

It was agreed that the final criteria for awards and the process itself would be prepared and presented to the Committee's 4 February 2015 meeting (or earlier if deemed necessary) for roll-out during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Action: Director of Learning and Teaching

14.26 **Observation of Practice** (Paper LTC14.13 / A&B)

The paper was introduced by Allen Stroud (AS), School Representative for DMM (MP&P).

It was emphasised that for the practice of observation to become successful and represent the uniqueness of Bucks it should focus on the observer rather than the observed, as opposed to other models documented (LTC14.13 A&B).

A discussion of the paper and of the topic in general raised the following points:

- A pilot should begin with a smaller group of interested academic staff before widening (potentially to PSE staff). A non-controversial and low profile initial approach was preferred.
- Exciting potential for cross-discipline and cross-campus observation.
- The clear links to NTF criteria should be exploited.
- An opportunity to build a portfolio of evidence for PDRs and Awards.
- Any feedback format should avoid being 'intimidating' or overly formal.
- Potential training to be considered; to explain the thinking behind, benefits of, and best practice when taking part.
- It would bring self-awareness to the fore.
- It would be marketable as a noteworthy example of the 'flavour of Bucks'.
- Potential to eventually widen the scheme to allow students to observe lectures that are not part of their course, tapping into the students experience more productively.
- The need for terminology to be carefully chosen (i.e. is the word 'observation' off-putting?).

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and asked AS to continue leading the project with the Committee to be informed of the progress made in due course. While the project could be expanded to other activities, the project should be restricted to teaching activities in the first instance. Members of the project team could be invited through a combination of open invitation and selection.

14.27 **Lecture Capture** (Paper LTC14.16)

The paper was introduced by Steve Hoole (SH), Open4Learning Representative. It noted that this related to an item in the IT strategy for 2016. The paper was discussed in terms of three potential systems measured against cost, technicalities and sector practice, and the overall benefits to the University.

In addition it was noted that in a Blackboard Survey staff had been asked:
'Is there a need for a lecture capture system that would record all lectures and make them available for students for review and revision purposes?'

Responses were No – 47%
Yes – 36%

It was acknowledged that this initial poll had not demonstrated support for such a

system, but this may be due to a lack of awareness.

Members discussed the proposal and raised the following issues:

- The quality of the recording must be appropriate for the audience (i.e. if it is displayed on the University website it should be of the highest quality possible for a potential world-wide audience).
- Suitable training to be provided on software, hardware and best practice, provided by the supplier and in-house (continual – possibly through ‘champions’).
- Licence models need to be investigated.
- Intellectual property issues need to be investigated.
- Student consent needs to be obtained
- Appropriateness (especially around certain courses and the need for confidentiality).
- System compatibility with Blackboard.
- Hosting (onsite / cloud).
- Static or movable cameras.
- Legacy of problems encountered during previous tests.
- Editing – costly, time consuming, and whose responsibility? All agreed this was a vital component of a professional end-product.
- Potential problems of not installing a system now but having to later (for example through accreditor’s requirements).

The Chair noted that the introduction of such a system contained a number of issues. She asked SH to liaise with Business Planning to turn the proposal into a project looking at issues of: Consent; Quality; Risks; and Corporate Image. These could then be explored alongside the various options presented and pricing considered. It was considered that a free pilot year would be beneficial ahead of any final decision.

Action: Steve Hoole

14.28 Reasonable Adjustments (RA) for disabled students
(Paper LTC14.08)

The paper was introduced by Julia Oldham from the Disability Services Unit who had been invited to speak about the formalisation of a policy.

It was confirmed that the document had been endorsed through the following committee structure for implementation from September 2014: Equality and Diversity; FQEC S&H; FQEC DMM.

After clarification the paper was endorsed for sending to Senate, subject to agreed minor amendments noted.

14.29 University Assessment Regulations: Update
(Paper LTC14.11)

The paper was introduced by Miriam Moir, AQD Representative. A timescale had been suggested but was subject to change.

It was highlighted that the consultation process for amending assessment regulations should be clearly communicated. For a successful academic debate those taking part need to be aware of the significant implications involved (both internally and externally when regarding professional bodies), focusing on the university’s principles and commitments.

The Committee noted the need for a wide consultation. A working party would be established to steer discussions. The Chair would liaise with MM regarding the timescale and membership of the working group.

Action: Chair / MM

14.30 Faculty reports against NSS targets
(Paper LTC14.18)

The paper from S&H was noted. No update from DMM had been received.

The Chair noted that the 2014 NSS survey had now closed. It was highlighted that the University's NSS response this year had increased to c.71% completion (an increase of 6% compared to last year) which was above the national average. Good progress had been made towards the University's target of a three week turnaround for feedback and it was hoped that this would be reflected in the NSS results

The Chair thanked those who contributed to the successful campaign. It was noted that there remain issues with encouraging students to engage with the NSS and actions would be taken forward to improve in this area.

It was noted that a formal report would be required for the 15 October 2014 Committee meeting.

14.31 Academic Year Planning Group (2 May 2014)
(Paper LTC14.20)

The paper was received. The Committee briefly discussed plans for Activities Week in 2014-2015. Chair's Action would be taken outside the meeting between the Chair and the Director of Learning and Teaching with follow-up meetings to take place with the SU and HR. An update would be circulated to members by email.

Action: Chair

14.32 Timetabling Group (28 April 2014)
(Paper LTC14.19)

The paper was received. Successes were noted, specifically the Auto-Schedule roll-out and Blackboard integration ('My Timetable') which had enabled 80% of events to be scheduled automatically. Committee members agreed that the new systems were a vast improvement.

Business Systems and Estates were to be consulted regarding ongoing and improved integration.

14.33 Any Other Business

[a] E-Submissions

Steve Hoole (Open4Learning Representative) introduced an item concerning amendments to the e-submission policy that would enforce a suitable time that student had access to Turnitin. This related to a recent complaint where a student had noted that the time set by the tutor for them to submit work was too short.

As an interim solution the Committee members agreed that it is good practice for tutors to set an initial submission date at the beginning of the module as this recognises that students may have multiple hand-ins. The University expects *as a minimum* that students will be given sufficient time to submit work through Turnitin, receive the Turnitin Originality Report, and make changes accordingly.

Guidance would be updated accordingly.

[b] Forthcoming departures

The Committee noted that Doug Cole and Julia Oldham would shortly be leaving the University. The Committee thanked both Doug and Julia for their work on behalf of both the Committee and the Directorate.

14.34 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be at 1:30, 15 October 2014, G5.05, High

Wycombe.