

The University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education
School Planning and Resources Committee

Minute of meeting held on Wednesday, 29 February 2012 at 2.00 pm in St John's Land, room 4.22

Present: Professor C Aitchison (Convener)
Dr C Anderson
Dr R Arshad
Dr S Benjamin
Dr S Coleman
Ms A Fleming
Mr M Lynch
Dr E McGregor
Dr J Ravenscroft
Mr H Ross
Professor S Riddell

In attendance: Ms K Derrick (Secretary)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr P Allison, Ms M Andrew, Dr K Cebula, Mr R Easton, Mr A Horrell, Dr G McCluskey, Professor D Raffe and Dr J Sproule.

An apology for early departure was given by Professor Riddell.

2. Minute of meeting held on 9 November 2011

(a) Accuracy of record

The minute was agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

(b) Matters arising

None.

3. Convener's business

The Convener reported on the following:

- Innovative Learning Week had proved a great success and it was the intention to try and capture and evaluate what had gone on. The School Executive would consider this at its next meeting. She thanked all involved with particular thanks to staff in the Undergraduate Office and in the Graduate School who had pulled the programme together
- Donaldson related developments were moving ahead with some creative and innovative solutions
- preparations for the REF were involving an enormous amount of work with the Director of RKE driving this forward on all fronts
- she thanked all involved in the Singapore initiatives
- the deadline for comments on the School Plan had been extended to 2 March. Discussions were ongoing about staffing
- a major recruitment drive would be carried out in the next few months with approximately 20+ new posts
- the sub-structure of management in the School was to be revisited and this would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

4. School Administrator's report

The School Administrator updated members on:

- staffing
- estates
- staff induction
- budget

Service Level Agreement between the Centre for Sport and Exercise and the Institute for Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences (Paper A)

It was noted that financial information had still to be confirmed. The agreement had been well-received by SPEHS. It was agreed to seek an amendment such that SPEHS could get priority booking at weekends if required. The Facilities Officer was to be consulted with regard to his post. SPRC approved the agreement, in principle, subject to clarification of the points above.

Singapore developments

(a) MSc Outdoor Education and MSc Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability Education (Paper C)

It was noted that the proposed programmes had been approved by Board of Studies for recommendation to College subject to timetabling conditions. The Head of IETL was to visit Singapore to finalise the agreement. While there he would check out library facilities and accessible learning issues.

(b) BSc Physical Education (2-year top-up, Singapore) (Paper B)

Board of Studies had had issues with the proposed programme and responses were to be submitted to the Board by 2 March 2012 for approval and onward transmission to CUGLAT. Staffing for this programme was outside of the School staffing plan. The closing date for students applying to the programme was 30 June 2012 with a mid-September 2012 start date. It might be necessary to limit the number of students entering year one in order to ensure that appropriate staffing was in place.

A student:staff ratio of 20:1 had been used in calculating staffing needs. It was agreed that the School needed to establish a notional SSR across all its programmes. The School Administrator undertook to discuss this with academic colleagues and the Director of Quality Assurance. The SSR could then be connected to the workload model. The School Administrator undertook to bring a preliminary report to the April meeting of SPRC.

(c) Republic Polytechnic

The Head of IETL was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding when he was in Singapore. One application had been received already and it was hoped the programme would start in September 2012.

5. Institute reports**(a) Education, Teaching and Leadership**

The Head of Institute provided an update of Institute activities including the following:

- two colleagues had given keynote speeches in South Sudan. This had been done via video as it had not been possible to get insurance to go in person
- consideration was being given to the re-employment of Teaching Fellows and secondees. The convener undertook to arrange a date to discuss this with Heads of Institute as soon as possible. The Head of ECS asked that Local Authorities be written to to let them know what the likely timescale would be for making decisions. It was agreed that for next year Teaching Fellow and buy-in requirements should be looked at in January
- the level of funding for Knowledge Exchange Centres in the Institute was the same as for last year
- there was to be an external review of SSC

- consideration was to be given to restructuring the Institute with a wider distribution of roles and responsibilities.

(b) Education, Community and Society

The Head of Institute updated members on:

- a proposal to establish a Centre for Higher Education was to go to the School Executive on 23 April and then to SPRC
- there had been several role changes in the Institute
- the annual review would be completed next week
- the dependency on Associate Tutors was being reduced and this would necessitate consolidation of core staff
- a key priority was the need for staff to become research active
- the Institute had supported a conference for Disability Month in Scotland and hoped to do so again next year.

(c) Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences

The Depute Head of Institute briefly reported on the following:

- the research seminar series had proved very interesting
- staffing needs
- there was an issue regarding the practicum for the Singapore programme which was to be discussed on Thursday.

6. Sub-committee reports

(a) School Undergraduate Studies Committee

The Deputy Director of Undergraduate Studies reported that writing teams were now shaping up structures for the new ITE programmes. He asked whether there was any resource available to pay for away days to help with the writing. It was agreed that he should submit two scenarios with costings to the Head of School and School Administrator for consideration. This should be kept confidential.

Help was being provided to aid the smooth running of boards of examiners. Guidelines had been developed in addition to University Regulations, which encompassed the roles of programme directors and programme secretaries. As part of the guidance staff would be encouraged to read and be familiar with regulations. The Deputy Director would attend key board of examiner meetings and extra training would be provided for anyone that required it. He thanked the Director and Deputy Director of Quality Assurance for acting as regulations experts.

Course secretaries/course organisers were to be asked to check the information in CCAM records to ensure it was correct.

(b) School Postgraduate Studies Committee

The Director of Postgraduate Studies updated members on:

- new MSc programmes which were being developed. Staff would be required in due course to serve on validation and review panels
- the organisation of dissertations for TESOL was impressive and would provide a good model for other programmes to follow
- consideration was being given to ways to advertise programmes in order to increase student numbers on programmes other than TESOL
- it was proving difficult to get academic staff to teach on the Research Methods courses
- the dissertation start date was to be brought forward
- Innovative Learning Week had been used to focus on research
- Dissertations were to focus on staff research areas and group projects were to be tried
- PhD student numbers had to be clarified and put into the School Plan.

(c) School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (including REF)

The Director of RKE reported on the following:

- new appointments would have a significant positive effect on research in the School
- staff were being encouraged to put in high quality proposals with peer review
- ideas were being developed for new centres
- the REF was at an early stage with a start having been made to gathering information for impact case studies and work on the research environment
- the College emphasis for the REF was on excellence. This meant that some valued publications might not be put forward. It was noted that while 2* (international) publications would be accepted for promotion they would not be acceptable for submission in the REF. It was agreed that this concern should be passed to College
- the PURE project was being run out across the University and would deliver a functional and usable research management information system, designed for researchers, administrators and managers.

Discussions would have to be held with staff about preparation for the REF and informing them of whether or not they were to be included. College wanted this to be done via the annual review process.

(d) School Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (Paper D – tabled)

The Director of Quality Assurance updated members on the following:

- the online course monitoring website had been launched and there had been positive feedback
- an online student questionnaire was available to course organisers. This was mainly being used by larger courses. Return rates were not high. It was suggested that the availability of final revision notes could be made conditional on students submitting the questionnaire thus increasing return rates. The Director of Quality Assurance undertook to investigate this possibility
- two successful staff development events had been held and a review of these was to be undertaken
- the Director and Deputy Director of Quality Assurance were holding a series of student focus groups to try to get to grips with the gap between students' expectations of assessment and feedback and what actually happened
- this year's NSS survey opened in mid-January and ways of maximising student participation were being discussed with UG programme directors
- an electronic system to track the progress of external examiners' reports was being developed
- guidance on course/programme approval documentation was being developed
- guidance on "closing the feedback loop" was being developed
- the School Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report 2010-11 had been accepted by College.

The convener thanked the Director of Quality Assurance for the amount of progress that had been made in a short space of time.

7. Future items of business

Not discussed.

8. Any other competent business

None.

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed to cancel the meeting to be held on 21 March 2012. Instead a meeting would be arranged in April after Easter. [A meeting was subsequently arranged for Wednesday, 25 April 2012 at 2.00 pm.]

(13 March 2012/KD)