**Minutes of the Meeting of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)
held at 2pm on Wednesday 13 March 2019
in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

1. Attendance

Present:

Professor Rowena Arshad	Head of Moray House School of Education (Co-opted member)
Professor Sian Bayne	Director of Centre for Research in Digital Education (Co-opted member)
Professor Stephen Bowd	Dean of Postgraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Ms Megan Brown	Edinburgh University Students' Association, Academic Engagement Co-ordinator (Ex officio)
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Ex officio)
Ms Shelagh Green	Director for Careers and Employability (Ex officio)
Professor Judy Hardy	Director of Teaching, School of Physics and Astronomy (CSE)
Professor Tina Harrison	Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)
Dr Sarah Henderson	Acting Director for Postgraduate Taught (CMVM)
Professor Charlie Jeffery (Convener)	Senior Vice-Principal
Dr Velda McCune	Deputy Director, Institute for Academic Development (Director's nominee) (Ex officio)
Ms Diva Mukherji	Vice President (Education), Edinburgh University Students' Association (Ex officio)
Professor Graeme Reid	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Sabine Rolle	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (CAHSS)
Professor Mike Shipston	Dean of Biomedical Sciences (Co-opted member)
Professor Neil Turner	Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, (CMVM)
Mr Tom Ward	University Secretary's Nominee, Director of Academic Services (Ex officio)

Apologies:

Ms Nichola Kett	Academic Governance Representative, Academic Services
Ms Philippa Ward	Academic Services
Prof Iain Gordon	Head of School of Mathematics
Melissa Highton	Director of Learning, Teaching and Web Services Division

In attendance:

Mr Barry Nielson	Director, Service Excellence Programme

Ms Sarah Harvey   Senior Service Excellence Partner
Dr Charlotte Matheson   Academic Services (minute-taker)

2.   Minutes of the previous meeting

LTC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019.

3.   Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4.   Convener's Business

4.1 Vice-Principal Students Post

The Convener advised members that interviews had been held for the Vice-Principal Students post on 11 March. The field of applicants had been particularly strong, and he was optimistic that the University would make an appointment soon.

4.2 Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

The Convener advised members that Dame Shirley Pearce had been appointed to conduct an independent review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). He had spoken with her via teleconference and contributed to forums including the Universities Scotland Forum and the Russell Group Forum. There was currently little support for subject-level TEF within these forums.

The main focus of the review is subject-level TEF, but institutional-level TEF is also being considered. There were a range of concerns in Scotland about the reliability of metrics on continuation and outcomes, the latter in particular because of the flexibility of degree structures in Scotland. There were wider concerns about the statistical reliability of the TEF methodology and the absence of international students from career metrics. Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance) had been involved in a TEF pilot, and confirmed wider concerns about statistical reliability.

It was noted that the current Higher Education minister did not appear to have the same commitment to TEF as his predecessor.

5   For Discussion

5.1 Review of Senate and its Standing Committees

5.1.1 <u>Externally-Facilitated Review of Senate - Update</u>

The Convener advised members that an externally-facilitated review of Senate was taking place. The review examined the effectiveness of Senate, including the relationship between Senate, Senate committees, and other university governance structures. This overlapped with and informed a parallel internal review of the structure of the senate committees. The external review report would be discussed at the

Senate meeting in May, and a more advanced draft would be available to key stakeholders soon.

Key messages from the review so far included the following:

- Senate should have greater visibility as the supreme academic body of the University. Even after reforms, Senate membership would be around 300 people, and this would be a very large group for decision-making, but a Senate of 300 could function as a deliberative forum.
- The University of Edinburgh typically did not incorporate discussion of research into Senate business. This was at odds with other universities, and unusual in view of the fact that it was the supreme academic body of the University.

5.1.2   <u>Review of the Structure of the Senate Committees – Initial Proposals for Consultation</u>

The Director of Academic Services, presented a paper outlining initial proposals for internal consultation on the structure of the Senate Committees.

The current committee structure had been set up around 10 years ago. There was now more focus on the broader student experience. It was unclear to what extent the Learning and Teaching Committee had responsibility for the broader student experience. Suggestions that were discussed included:
- The creation of a joint Court-Senate committee for student experience
- Including an additional number of Heads of Schools within the Committee to increase their involvement in decisions
- Widening the remit of the committee to include PGR students.

In discussing the paper, members agreed that it could make sense to include PGR students within the remit of the committee, although this ran the risk of PGR receiving less focus. Although it would be useful to include Heads of School within the Committee, it was not desirable to increase the size of the Committee any further, and it could instead be useful to set up stakeholder engagement meetings with Heads of School. A joint Court-Senate committee to address broader student experience issues could be useful, and would be a good space to feed into student issues. It would be important to consider the relationship between Court and Senate on these issues.

5.2 Final Report of Task Group on Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

The Director of Academic Services presented the final report of the Task Group on Using the Curriculum to Promote Inclusion, Equality and Diversity.

Following advice from the previous meeting, the task group had aimed for a steer that was partway between facilitative and prescriptive. The report now included a detailed action plan and a greater number of practical examples.

The Director of Academic Services indicated that, in feedback from Colleges, CAHSS staff were generally clear on the issues under discussion by the Task Group, but other Colleges were less clear. Without expectations being clearly articulated, it was difficult to take a more prescriptive approach and build requirements around curriculum

approval that specifically made reference to inclusion, equality and diversity. It was also important to find ways to have ongoing, open conversations about what a diverse and inclusive curriculum means. This would look different in each College and subject area.

In discussing communication of the plan with stakeholders, members agreed that it was important to emphasise the fact that 'curriculum' did not just refer to the reading list for a course, but included the pedagogy across the course. Some areas remained unsure about how this would work in practice, and there would be value in providing more examples, setting up a network of School champions and potentially establishing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee for the University to give greater visibility to the issue. It was important to consider a wider, more systematic perspective and understand the measures of success for the project.

The Committee approved the Principles, recommendations and associated implementation plan outlined in the paper.

5.3 Student Support Review

Barry Neilson, Director, Service Excellence Programme, presented an outline of the emerging project plan for a student support review, encompassing personal tutor provision, student support teams and professional services staff. The key task so far had been to identify colleagues to join the project team. Once the project team membership has been established, they will move into the phase of developing options over the summer. Final decisions and recommendations will be made by the end of December 2019, with a view to implementing these in September 2020. The project team itself will be small, and will rely heavily on engagement from the Committee and other colleagues across Colleges and Schools.

Members had mixed views about the decision to exclude PGR student support from the scope of the review. They noted that the timeframe for consultation may be challenging, given the need to engage with a broad range of people, including broad representation of the academic community. They emphasised that it will be important to have clear evaluation criteria for the success of the project, and Barry Neilson confirmed that one of the first tasks of the review team will be to identify these. Members were concerned that the review team will not be able to make recommendations about the new student record system, given the impact that this will have on student support. However, Mr Neilson clarified that the process for looking for a new student records system will not start until at least 2021, and the student support review could make recommendations for the requirements of the replacement system.

5.4 Senate Committee Planning

5.4.1 <u>Progress to Date with 2018/19 Committee Priorities</u>
This paper was provided for noting by the Director of Academic Services.

5.4.2 <u>Senate Committee Planning 2019/20</u>
The paper was presented by the Director of Academic Services. The Committee agreed with the suggestion that Senate Committee planning for 2019/2020 should focus on ongoing projects and anything that needed to occur for 'hygiene' reasons, holding off from any new major projects or changes.

5.5 Teaching and Academic Careers Project - Update
The Director of Academic Services presented an update on the Teaching and Academic Careers Project. The University Executive had now agreed there should be a combined path allowing academic staff in both teaching and research roles to progress from Grade 7 to Grade 10, without the need for a separate teaching track. This would be a flexible track that could allow staff members to move between a focus on teaching and research, but this flexibility would not be purely at the discretion of individual staff members and would depend on business needs within Schools.

At the Directors of Teaching Network there had been useful discussion about providing clear exemplars about the types of achievement that would be relevant for establishing grounds for promotion for staff in both teaching and research roles, and discussion about the need to provide staff with the capacity within their workloads to undertake academic development activities.

The Convener noted that this project highlighted the need for further institutional discussion regarding approaches to work allocation for academic staff, and that he plans to take forward a project on this as part of the Student Experience Action Plan. As part of this, he would like to explore whether there were some pieces of work that were traditionally part of the academic staff role that could be given to professional services staff instead, and whether there are opportunities to rethink how staff approach pedagogy and assessment.

5.6 Potential Curriculum Review Project – Relevant Areas of Work
The Director of Academic Services presented the paper, which summarised relevant work carried out by the Committee in relation to curriculum development over the last few years. Members noted the paper and suggested the following additions to the list:
- recent activity at School level on curriculum review, especially within Biological Sciences, Engineering, HCA, and Informatics
- work relating to the Edinburgh student experience, as part of the Student Recruitment Strategy
- articulation routes and graduate apprenticeships

5.7 Service Excellence Programme - Update
Barry Nielson, Director, Service Excellence Programme, presented an update on the Service Excellence Programme project on Student Administration and Support, presenting a proposed future model with a strong student focus. Service Excellence are recommending the implementation of student hubs to provide information to students without the need for students to understand a range of different University structures. The intention is that students will have a clear place to begin their enquiries, rather than having to move between a number of different areas, and that students will be better able to self-initiate processes such as online thesis submission. For the model to be effective, it will require clear responsibilities at University, College and School level. The proposed model will be presented to the Student Administration and Support Board at the end of April.

5.8 Student Experience Action Plan – Update
The Convenor gave a verbal update on the development of the Student Experience Action Plan. The current version was a large document that had been condensed into a set of financial estimates which would need to be prioritised. Current estimates

suggested that the plan would involve nearly 7.5 million pounds of additional spending for each of the next three years, in additional to spending that had already been allocated for this period, if everything in the plan was approved and funded.

Members questioned how priorities for the plan would be established and asked whether they could input into the prioritisation process.

> **Action:** Academic Services to contact Gavin Douglas requesting more information about (i) how the methodology for prioritising elements of the Plan will be decided, and how the Committee could feed into this process, and (ii) how this will fit in with recommendations with resource implications coming out of projects such as the Quality Assurance Committee's thematic review on BME student experience and support services.

6   For Information and Noting

The following item was noted:
6.2 Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (Meeting 18 January 2019)

7   Any Other Business

None.

Charlotte Matheson
Academic Services
18 March 2018