A meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee was held on Monday 12th March 2012.

Present: Mr J Baldwin, Professor D Coates (Convener), Mr S Fitzpatrick (DUSA), Dr M Frame, Mr D George, Mr I Kennedy (DUSA), Dr N Laker, Dr L McLellan, Dr E Monk, Dr W Murray, Ms C Normand, Ms G Pallis, Dr R Parsons, Dr F Smith, Dr D Walker, Dr K Wilkie.

In Attendance: Dr M Glover.

By Invitation: Mr G McKee (for Item 3).

Apologies: Professor D Bearn, Mr S Cross, Professor G Mires, Dr K Petrie. Professor R Soames, Dr W Whitfield.

1. MINUTES

Resolved: to approve the Minutes of the meeting of 15th November 2011 which Senate approved without observation, at its meeting of 8 February 2012.

2. Matters Arising

Assessment and Feedback Working Group

The Committee heard a report from Dr Walker about the on-going work of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group.

Noted: that the SPARQS Toolkit has performed well in testing and there will be a final pilot in Life Science.

Noted: that the LLC would be leading a team on the HEA Change Programme – involving the TESTA project and focusing on the student use of feedback at the programme level.

Noted: that the Working Group will develop the Code of Practice in the light of the findings of the HEA change programme.

Minute 2(1): AV/IT Equipment in Centrally Managed Teaching Accommodation

Noted: that a lack of staff resources had caused a delay in producing an initial report on responsibilities and co-ordination of various aspects of
teaching accommodation but that the Deputy Principal would be convening a meeting to discuss these issues and would report to the next meeting.

Minute 3: Three Year Degree Working Group

Noted: that the approval of the new three year programmes had been carried out without a specially convened Composite Approval Board and that the emphasis would now move to induction and support of 3 year degree students.

Minute 5: Rationalisation of Teaching Awards

Noted: that staff from the LLC are in the process of co-ordinating and consolidating teaching awards and will report to the next meeting.

3. Strategic Framework

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Strategic Planning on aims 1-3 of the University’s Strategic Framework.

Noted: that the report presented a mixed picture of progress in meeting aims and targets in the framework – progress on recruitment, progression and retention, in particular, fell short of original targets.

Noted: that the University can change performance indicators where measures prove unrealistic or unreliable. In addition, the current consultation on the new strategy will enable input from the Committee on how best to measure performance across a range of indicators.

4. External Examining of Taught Programmes

The Committee considered a review of the Guidance on External Examining of Taught Programmes.

Noted: that the QAA consultation on the relevant section of the new Quality Code had highlighted some aspects of the current policy that needed modification and modernisation.

Noted: that internal business processes also needed to be reviewed with each College now expected to take responsibility for external examining arrangements and for the scrutiny and oversight of quality issues in appointments and feedback from examiners.

Resolved: to approve the amended Guidance on External Examining of Taught Programmes.

5. National Student Survey
The Committee considered the responses to the 2011 survey and received an update on the progress of the 2012 survey.

**Noted:**
that, as in previous years, assessment and feedback scores were an area of concern.

**Noted:**
that the current survey was showing good response rates but with some variation across Schools. DUSA were now in a position to help with publicity in order to maximise student participation.

**Resolved:**
to ask that each Head of Learning and Teaching identify areas of concern in each College and to help analyse reasons for poor results in some areas – reporting back to the Deputy Principal and to the Director of Quality Assurance.

### 6. Consultation on Academic Year  
**PAPER E**

The Committee considered a consultation document on possible changes to the academic year.

**Noted:**
that Professor Davey had agreed to help co-ordinate the consultation exercise via working group. A full consultation document would follow but that there was no predetermined outcome to the process.

**Noted:**
that one of the main issues for the Committee to consider was the place of examinations in the academic year. The timing of resits and of Semester 1 examinations in particular posed problems. The current situation of Semester 1 examinations before the Christmas vacation was popular with students but disliked by many staff.

**Resolved:**
to welcome the current consultation exercise as a way of starting debate over the issues so that, as far as possible, a consensus view can emerge.

### 7. University Learning and Teaching Strategy  
**PAPER F**

The Committee discussed the ongoing development of the University Learning and Teaching strategy.

**Noted:**
that the timescale for final approval of the new strategy document had changed so that the Court Retreat in September would consider and approve the final draft. This would allow a broader consultation and more detailed feedback in the meantime.
Resolved: to continue to provide information and feedback to the Sub-Group – in particular on any proposed development of performance indicators and strategic aims.

8. Postgraduate Affairs Sub-committee PAPER G

The Committee received the report from the Sub-committee meeting on 27th February 2012.

Minute (3): PhD by Publication

Resolved: to approve the draft regulations subject to a covering document that gave a full rationale for the degree and an explanation of why its availability is limited to current staff.

Minute (7): Reorganisation of Postgraduate Affairs Sub-committee

The opinion of the Committee was divided on the proposal to reorganise the Postgraduate Affairs Sub-committee into two separate committees, one for taught courses and one for research degrees. While the distinction between TPG and RPG programmes is an important consideration some members of the Committee questioned the current remit of the University Research Committee with regard to quality assurance issues.

Resolved: to recommend that the remits and memberships of both the new Sub-committees and the University Research Committee be clarified with regard to quality assurance responsibilities.

Resolved: for its part, to approve the report of the Sub-committee.

9. e-Learning Sub-committee PAPER H

The Committee received the report from the Sub-committee meeting on 24th February 2012.

Resolved: to welcome the proposed strategic needs questionnaire and the enhanced eLearning catalogue as a way of informing the developing University Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Resolved: for its part, to approve the report of the Sub-committee.

10. SHEEC/QAA Enhancement Themes PAPER I

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Principal on planned institutional work with regard to the QAA Enhancement Themes programme.
Noted: that the three strands of the supporting the curriculum theme, staff, student and curriculum focus were each being addressed within the institution as a means to promote and support strategic development.

Noted: that Mr Baldwin would act as the institutional lead for the Enhancement Themes programme.

11. Standing Item: Schools Issues

Noted: that the recent DUSA elections saw the re-election of Mr Kennedy as DUSA President for 2012-13 and that all but three Schools (Environment, Business and Medicine) had elected new School Presidents for next year. The new Student Representative Council will fill the remaining places in September.

Noted: that the main issue from College of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing was ongoing discussion regarding the future intake of courses based in Fife.

Noted: that the College Board of Art, Science and Engineering had reaffirmed a clear quality assurance role for the College Head of Learning and Teaching.

Noted: that a teaching awards presentation has been arranged by the College of Arts and Social Sciences.

12. Any Other Business

Annual Monitoring of Learning and Teaching Plans

Noted: that the proposed annual monitoring of Learning and Teaching Plans had been communicated to Deans and would be extracted from operational plans in the first instance – although some schools will need to augment this information.

Main Library Development Plans

The Committee received a report from the Librarian on planned capital projects to transfer the Law Library, renovate the ground floor of the main library and to increase both stock and capacity.

Resolved: to welcome the plans and to recommend them for consideration by the Senior Management Team.
eVision and Publication of Examination Results

The Committee discussed the serious performance issues that caused problems for students accessing Semester one examination results. The Director of Information services reported that the problems were complex and involved a demand over ten times the capacity of the system.

**Noted:** Discussions with Tribal/SITS indentified a solution that involves pre-generation of results, although this may cause a delay in publication.

13. Dates of Next Meetings

14th May 2012 10am in River Room 3.

Professor David Coates
Convener