

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 1 December 2010 at the Jordanstown campus

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Professor A Adair, Ms S Alexander, Dr G Armstrong, Professor R R Barnett, Dr D Barr, Professor N D Black, Miss C Cochrane, Professor T Cook, Professor C Curran, Dr D Gray, Professor K Greenan, Ms A Honan, Mr N Macauley, Professor N McClenaghan, Professor M McColgan, Mr L McCurry, Mr D McGivern, Professor M McHugh, Professor H McKenna, Mr M McKinney, Professor R J Millar, Professor I Montgomery, Professor P Ó Dochartaigh, Dr I Taylor

APOLOGIES

Professor J Allen, Professor P Carmichael, Mr C Nelson

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr A G Faulkner

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

10.174 MINUTES

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2010 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

10.175 Composition and Membership (Min 10.133)

The Committee noted that Senate at its November meeting had approved the replacement of the National Teaching Fellow category by the Director of the Centre for Higher Education Practice ex officio.

The Chair welcomed Professor Greenan, Director of CHEP, and also Dr Denise Gray, the new representative from the Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment. It was noted that Dr Tracy Irwin was the Faculty of Social Sciences' new representative. Professor McAlister expressed thanks to Mr Hanna and Dr Zacharapoulou for their contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Chair reported that Library, Information and Student Administrative Services Committee would retain responsibility for graduation and that the Emerging Technologies Sub-Committee would now report to that Committee.

10.176 Copyright Compliance for Online Materials (Min 10.134)

At the October meeting the Committee had noted that, although the current Copyright Licensing Agency audit was restricted to print and scanned course packs, copyright compliance applied equally to electronic resources. Consequently, it had been agreed that a systematic self-audit would be undertaken this year.

Ms Alexander presented paper TLC/10/48 which set out changes to the VLE module access system and VLE service pages from 6 December 2010. It was noted that links to the copyright guidance pages would now be prominently displayed at log-in. The current transition period for the VLE upgrade would provide a further opportunity for staff to review the use of copyright-protected resources within their VLE-hosted teaching materials (min 10.210 refers).

An all-staff email would be sent to clarify the action being taken.

The Committee noted that the data presented showed variations by Faculty in the use of the Library scanning service and the number of new or updated Library module resource lists available (as at November 2010). Members were advised that these might be considered by Faculties as indicators of copyright compliance.

AGREED that:

- i) the Copyright Management Group provide to the Committee a timetable for the self-audit process;
- ii) in due course an internal audit (KPMG) to determine the extent of compliance should be considered.

10.177 Non-Credit Bearing Programmes (Min 10.137)

The Committee noted that Professor Curran had agreed to chair the Working Group which would consider the feasibility of developing a centralised system for the development, management and administration of non-credit bearing programmes. Professor Curran sought the Committee's approval to extend the terms of reference of the Group to include consideration of other activities such as credit-bearing short courses, in order to enable consistency and coherence of approach in relation to approval and application. Consequently, it was proposed that the name of the Working Group be changed to the Non-Award Bearing Working Group. It was also proposed that an invitation be extended to the Chief Finance and Information Officer to nominate a representative from the Strategic Development unit to ensure that consideration was given to the reporting and planning of such activities.

The Committee noted that it had previously been determined that the Banner Student Records System should only include information relating to credit and award-bearing programmes and free-standing modules which derived from award-bearing programmes and that short courses be administered separately. In line with the current discussion of the Working Group, the Director of Student Administration had asked for the approval of Teaching and

Learning Committee for a proposal to include programme and student information for non-credit bearing short courses in the central system; the University's internal auditors had previously reported the recording and administration of such data outside the Banner system as a matter of risk.

AGREED that:

- i) the proposed changes to the title, terms of reference and composition of the Working Group be approved;
- ii) the Director of Student Administration should proceed to plan for the inclusion of information on non-credit bearing activity in the Student Records System.

10.178 The Undergraduate Awards of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Min 10.138)

The Chair reminded Deans of the need for staff to be proactive in encouraging applications from students for the 2011 competition (deadline for first round: 17 December 2010; second round: 18 March 2011; third round: 30 June 2011). The Students' Union would also take steps to promote the competition. Details were available at: <http://www.undergraduateawards.com/award>.

10.179 Calculation of Summary Mark for Awards (Min 10.163)

The Committee noted that Dr Scott had stated that the Information Services Department had confirmed that the new method for the calculation of the summary mark for awards would be implemented from this semester.

10.180 Plagiarism (Min 10.164 refers)

The Committee noted that plagiarism in examinations would be considered by the 2011/12 Working Group.

The Chair reported that the Director of Student Administration had confirmed that it would be possible to enhance the central Plagiarism Register to ensure that records were only saved if the correct type code (undergraduate or postgraduate) was used and to provide the facility to search by the date of detection.

It was noted that Professor S Steacy, Chair designate of the Working Group, had asked that Faculties be reminded that the key purpose of the Register was as a real-time record, so that the number of previous offences was known to ensure that the correct penalty was applied. The final date for recording in September related to Faculty and Teaching and Learning Committee's overviews, and should not delay the updating of records.

AGREED that:

- i) the proposed enhancements to the Register be made;
- ii) Faculties ensure that cases were recorded on the Plagiarism Register at the time of detection.

10.181 BSc Hons Accounting (Min 10.171)

At the October meeting the Committee had agreed that the Faculty should give consideration to a more robust analysis of the impact on performance of the Level 5 contribution to classification of this degree within the pilot study.

Dr Armstrong reported the intention to undertake, with CHEP, an analysis in summer 2011 with a report to the Committee in October. Given the importance of all students starting year 2 (or level 5 – part-time mode) in 2011/12 to know the contribution of level 5 to final classification by the start of the next academic year, the Chair proposed that the pilot be extended to include the 2011/12 session. Interim reports would not be required during 2010/11.

AGREED that:

- i) the level 5 contribution to classification of BSc Hons Accounting be extended for a further year to include students entering level 5 in 2011/12;
- ii) the Faculty's report on the study be considered at the October meeting of the Committee.

10.182 Refurbishment of Teaching Rooms at Coleraine (Min 10.173)

The Chair reported that Physical Resources Department had investigated the question of the refurbishment of three teaching rooms at the Coleraine campus raised by Professor McClenaghan at the previous meeting. The Director of Physical Resources reported that the rooms concerned had not been part of any scheme and had been deliberately left in a shell-finish condition. No requests or business cases had been put forward for development and use of the rooms by the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that plans to bring the rooms into commission as part of a staged campus development process were included in the new Estates Strategy to be considered by the Senior Management Group on 6 December.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

10.183 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

The Chair reminded Faculties that, although the final deadline for the submission of internal applications for 2011 was 7 January 2011, early application (reflected in the University's internal deadline) was valuable in giving time for preparatory support. Faculties were encouraged to be strategic in creating scope for submissions from high-calibre candidates through, for example, the Developmental Appraisal Review process. The importance of the letter of support from the Dean was emphasised.

10.184 Joint Consultation on Public Information about Higher Education

HEFCE, UniversitiesUK and GuildHE had recently published a joint consultation on proposals to improve information for prospective students about courses and their accessibility. A Key Information Set was proposed for each course, to be

published on university and college websites. This would include information on graduate destinations, earnings, teaching and assessment methods, and contact hours as well as the results of the National Student Survey.

The University was setting up a steering group to look at the implications of the proposals. An initial scoping exercise would inform the University's response to the consultation, the deadline for which was 7 March 2011. Faculties were encouraged to consider the consultation documentation (available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10-31>).

It was expected that information sets would be available from 2012/13 to help inform 2013 entrants. They would be subject to QAA review.

10.185 Retention and Progression of Full-Time First Year Undergraduates

The Chair reported that Senate, at its November meeting, had considered the annual report on retention and had noted that the University's performance continued to fall short of its benchmark and remained a serious issue for most faculties, despite the effort and resources directed to it. Six actions would be taken forward under the auspices of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

Faculties had been set attrition targets for 2010/11, with the overall aim of achieving convergence with the HESA benchmark by the end of the current Teaching and Learning Strategy.

The Academic Development and Enhancement Committee would consider terms of reference and composition of a University Retention Implementation Group. It would have a remit to disseminate good practice, promote consistency and comparability of approach, and monitor and report on compliance with the University's retention policies and procedures.

Faculties were reminded of the importance of updating the Student Records System in a timely manner so that accurate statistics were generated.

The Examinations Office would be asked to take over responsibility from the Student Retention Co-ordinator for updating the leaflet '*What happens Next?*' and for its distribution to course directors along with Communication of Results forms.

The question of the timing of first year Semester 1 examinations was considered under min 10.194.

The paper had recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of exit awards in order to certificate accredited learning achieved by students who left before completing the award for which they had enrolled. The Committee noted that any exit award must represent a coherent programme of study with distinct learning outcomes and not seek to compensate for failure or non-completion. It was not intended that awards should be developed for the simple accumulation of credit or for small volumes of study. They could be introduced through the evaluation and revalidation process or through the course revision

(CA3) process and would require the provision of a programme specification and amendment to regulations.

AGREED that:

- i) Faculties consider the possibility of introducing meaningful exit awards (CertHE and AB) in their degree provision where they did not already exist;
- ii) such exit awards should not normally be introduced for the successful completion of programmes with a credit value of less than 120 credit points;
- iii) although the provision of AB exit awards in Combined modular programmes had previously not been permitted by the Committee, the Campus Co-ordinating Groups might consider whether exit awards could be developed for specific subject combinations where there was sufficient correlation between the Major and Minor subjects to present adequate breadth and depth in the Minor after 80 credit points.

10.186 SUB-COMMITTEE ON WORK-BASED LEARNING

Professor Millar presented the report of the meeting held on 9 November 2010 (TLC/10/49).

10.187 Rebranding of Placement Awards (Item 1)

The Committee noted that two electronic surveys of employers and recent graduates on the rebranding of the University placement awards would be undertaken. The Market Intelligence Manager had investigated placement awards in other institutions and the results would be considered by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting.

10.188 Self-Employment as an acceptable option for a sandwich year for DIS Award (Item 2)

It was noted that the Ulster Business School's Placement Tutor Group had set up a sub-group to produce guidelines on how students might participate in placement through self-employment. A report would be considered by the Sub-Committee at its March meeting.

10.189 Health and Safety (Item 3)

A briefing from the ASET Seminar 'Health and Safety for Student Placement' held in November was to be circulated to members of the Sub-Committee. Feedback had also been given to Health and Safety Services, as the University was reviewing its Health and Safety guidelines.

10.190 Placement Employer of Year (Item 4)

Promotion of the 2011 competition was underway and it was noted that the level of interest was already higher than in previous years. Deans were encouraged to work strategically in encouraging nominations.

10.191 Monitoring Placement (Item 5)

Professor Millar reported that steps were being taken to provide reliable monitoring of the non-availability of placement as requested by the Committee (min 10.151 refers). A report would be presented to the Committee in Semester 2, 2010/11. It was hoped that the monitoring process would be made more efficient in future years by using the Student Records System.

10.192 Sub-Committee on Employability (Item 6)

The Committee noted a proposal to expand the remit of the Sub-Committee to encompass the employability and skills agenda and to provide a more strategic focus for its work. The Committee considered the proposed terms of reference and composition of a new Sub-Committee on Employability and Skills.

Professor McAlister advised that much of the work identified was already being undertaken in the University but it would benefit from a clearer reporting structure in some areas. Whilst accepting that the proposed terms of reference represented a challenging agenda, priorities would be identified and managed in line with the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy action plans and reflect the institutional priorities as set out in the University's new Corporate Plan.

The Chair considered that the terms of reference should include explicit mention of the scrutiny and analysis of data relating to placement and employability.

Some discussion took place regarding the inclusion of 'Skills' in the name of the Sub-Committee and its terms of reference in regard to whether the intended focus was on graduate skills and the relationship to the work of the Study Skills Working Group. It was noted that its remit would not be restricted to graduate skills as the skills of postgraduates and research degree students also needed to be addressed.

AGREED that:

- i) 'Skills' be not included in the title of the Sub-Committee;
- ii) subject to some revisions to the draft terms of reference to identify the overarching focus of the Sub-Committee and explicitly to consider scrutiny and analysis of relevant data (revised terms of reference and composition at Appendix), the Sub-Committee be established from Semester 2, 2010/11.

10.193 **WORKING GROUP ON ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The Committee received the proposed terms of reference and composition of the Working Group (Paper No TLC/10/50) to be chaired by Professor Curran.

Faculties had been invited to forward information in advance of the first meeting of the Group next semester. The Group would report to the Committee by the end of the current academic year.

AGREED: that the terms of reference and composition be endorsed.

10.194 SEMESTER 1 EXAMINATIONS

The Committee, at its October meeting, had discussed the potential impact of the proximity of the Christmas and New Year holiday to the first week of examinations on student performance and retention, and agreed that student members comment on a proposal to delay the start of Semester 1 examinations for first year students. Student Administration had also been asked to comment on its feasibility (min 10.140 refers). It was noted that Senate, at its November meeting, had been supportive of the proposal.

The Committee considered paper TLC/10/51 which set out the Students' Union response based on consultation with class representatives and a *vox populi* poll, and the Director of Student Administration's comments on operational implications.

Ms Honan commented that while around two-thirds of student responses had initially favoured a delay, further discussions revealed concerns that the extra time might not be used constructively and could possibly increase stress levels with less time available for preparation and revision between examinations. There was, however, support for the suggestion of the provision of revision classes in the first week.

The Committee noted the principles (set out in order of priority) previously approved for the construction of the examination timetable and the convention to avoid using the final week of the three-week period. A number of options were explored in the report from Student Administration and the Committee noted various constraints and implications. It was suggested that, as an increasing number of two-hour examinations were being used, the Examinations Office could consider scheduling three sessions on some days.

Committee members expressed concerns about the practicality of mandatory revision classes and also the implications of the proposal for the time available for staff to mark Semester 1 work and to prepare for Semester 2 teaching.

The Students' Union representatives concluded that the timing of the start of Semester 1 examinations was not a major issue for students in general, and indicated their willingness to work with the University in other initiatives to support retention such as peer mentoring.

AGREED: that no change be made to current examination arrangements.

10.195 TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY: ACTION PLANS

The Committee, at its October meeting, had endorsed the 2010/11 action plan, subject to Faculties and Departments providing missing performance measures and sources of evidence (min 10.156 refers). It was noted that

some amendments had been advised and the Information Services Department intended to compress its list of activities. The final version would be made available on the Academic Office website.

The summary overview for 2008 – 2011 had identified six key supporting objectives for which no activity had been recorded or proposed. As a consequence, Faculties and Departments had been asked to identify any known past activity relating to these objectives, and also to propose additional activities for 2010/11.

The Committee received paper TLC/10/52 which identified past activity related to two of the objectives, 1 iv) – scholarship/research-informed teaching, and 1 vii) – studies advice/peer mentoring. For the latter, it was noted that CHEP considered the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) activity under 1 vi) also served objective 1 vii).

The paper proposed the following four additional activities for 2010/11:

1 iv) scholarship/research-informed teaching – a CHEP project on the Research/Teaching nexus;

1 vii) development of personal tutoring/studies advice/peer mentoring - to ask the new Study Skills Working Group to consider explicitly the roles that these systems might play in developing study skills;

3 viii) extend the entrepreneurship agenda to include non-SET constituencies – specific activities within the Ulster Business School's action plan;

4 viii) monitoring PDP in promoting employability - the new Sub-Committee on Employability to consider.

Consequently, only three objectives remained without activity mid-way through the Strategy:

1 viii) – to enhance possibilities of EU and international exchanges and outreach for students;

3 xii) – to keep under review established internal funding mechanisms in order to counter any perceived disincentives to collaboration between schools and faculties;

Cross-Cutting Aim 2 ii) – to review space management procedures to ensure effective decision-making processes.

AGREED: that the additional activities for 2010/11 be endorsed.

10.196 Summary Report

The Chair presented a summary report on reports and responses for the 2008/9 and 2009/10 academic years and the schedule of proposed activity for 2010/11 (TLC/10/53a).

The Committee noted that a number of reports and/or responses in respect of some visits had not been received by the Committee. The Chair reminded members that the Committee's oversight of Faculty responses represented an important factor in PSRB confidence in the University's quality assurance processes, and confirmed the University's protocol for dealing with reports. The Committee did not need to receive an analysis of the report, but rather a course team's response following Faculty approval. Where a professional body did not expect a formal response, a letter of acknowledgement should still be sent. All reports and responses should be provided to the Committee through the QMAU unless a joint validation was undertaken. Occasionally, if a less than favourable report was received, Faculties should provide a draft to QMAU for consideration. The Committee noted that final approval of the MArch and BA Hons Architecture was still pending with the professional body.

AGREED: that Faculties provide Mrs J Alleyne, QMAU, with information on the likely timescale for provision of missing reports and responses for visits which had already taken place and of any other proposed visits scheduled for 2010/11 not included in the paper.

10.197 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Reports

The Committee received ETI reports and Faculty responses in respect of:

Certificate in Teaching (Paper No TLC/10/53bi);

BSc Hons Community Youth Work (Paper No TLC/10/53bii);

PGCE Programmes, with a Focus on Literacy and Numeracy (Paper No TLC/10/53biii).

The Committee noted that the overall conclusion in respect of all provision was 'very good' and that some features had been identified as 'outstanding'. The responses set out actions to address areas identified for improvement.

The Committee noted the good work being undertaken by the course teams involved and congratulated them on the outcomes of the inspections.

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS (2009/10)

10.198 Annual Overview Report

Professor McAlister presented her annual report identifying general issues arising from the reports of external examiners for the 2009/10 academic year (Paper No TLC/10/54a) tabled).

As at November 2010, 361 reports had been submitted, the majority of which reported that standards were appropriate. The University's quality management and standards assurance processes had once again been firmly endorsed as aligning with best practice in the sector.

In many instances external examiners had commended specific aspects of the University's procedures but a few had made critical comments. Course/subject committees were expected to take action to address these concerns and report their response on a timely basis to the external examiner(s).

10.199 Participation in the Process

The Committee noted that most external examiners were satisfied with their involvement in the moderation process and many praised course directors and Faculty support staff for the information forwarded to them. A relatively small number had indicated that their late appointment had limited their involvement, particularly with regard to the prior approval of examination papers and coursework schemes. Some externals complained that they were not afforded sufficient time to view work prior to the Board of Examiners. One external examiner had commented that he had been involved (albeit inappropriately) in the marking and assessment of final year projects.

A small number of externals commented on their active involvement (or perceived lack of it) in Boards of Examiners' meetings. It was noted that these instances might indicate that there was some misunderstanding of the requirements of the QAA Code of Practice and/or that there was something unusual with the organisation of Boards of Examiner meetings in a particular Faculty. The Chair stressed the importance of the Faculty induction in ensuring that externals had a clear understanding of the expectations of their role and the way in which Boards operated at the University, including the respective powers of preliminary meetings and main boards.

The Committee noted that the University's induction programme and the External Examiners' and Assessment Handbooks had once again been praised.

10.200 Assessment

The overwhelming majority of externals had been satisfied with assessment standards but there was a number of exceptions, with particular concerns expressed about generous marking and poor feedback to students. External examiners, in the main, had praised the use of explicit and transparent assessment criteria and frequently cited instances of excellent practice.

However, many reported that there were further opportunities for enhancement through more widespread dissemination and adoption of such practice. Many instances of excellent formative feedback to students were identified in the reports but several referred to missed opportunities to advise students, including better performing students, as to how their work could be improved upon and/or patchy student feedback. Recurring themes were the extent to which students were being over-assessed and an over-emphasis of group work assessment, which it was felt benefited weaker students.

These comments reflected similar findings on assessment and feedback from past National Student Surveys.

10.201 Marking Standards

Marking standards were generally considered to be appropriate. There were a few exceptions where some externals noted inconsistency in marking, variable standards and, exceptionally, a lack of consistency of moderation practices across sites. The latter criticism applied mainly to the University's validated provision under collaborative arrangements.

It was noted that reference to instances of detected plagiarism in student work was less common than in previous years. In those cases the external examiners felt that the University had dealt appropriately with the matter.

10.202 HE in FE

As with the University's own provision, marking standards were generally considered to be appropriate but with a few exceptions. The main concerns related to the procedures for cross-moderation of student work and generous marking.

Several examiners had highlighted the lack of administrative support for course directors and the need for enhanced library resources, in particular extended library opening hours and increased availability of core texts. Administrative arrangements for one Access Diploma had been severely criticised.

Further issues identified included the perception that students were over-assessed and the need for the growth in group work assessment to be carefully monitored and reviewed.

A recurring theme in externals' reports for this provision had been the excellent support arrangements provided to students including study skills, particularly to students on Access programmes.

10.203 Quality, Learning and Comparability

In a number of instances externals noted that courses were amongst the best they were aware of and many praised the course teams and individual module co-ordinators for innovation, pastoral support and their high level of professionalism. A number of externals referred to the need to provide students with additional support and guidance in relation to presentation and

writing skills. The need for enhanced and more reliable information to be provided to students was highlighted. Opportunities for work-based learning and placement were highly commended and it was felt that a number of programmes clearly contributed to the employability of graduates.

10.204 Administration

The majority of examiners praised the administrative arrangements, particularly those that involved the course directors facilitating the preparations for Boards of Examiners.

10.205 Other Matters

A small number of examiners reiterated concerns about resourcing issues eg staffing matters for particular courses.

It was noted that where external examiners had made highly negative comments about aspects of standards assurance and/or quality management practices these had been raised directly with line management and corrective actions taken.

The University had also been asked by individual examiners to consider arrangements to support their access to WebCT, the sensitivity of degree classification boundaries to individual module marks, and to divorce classification from strict percentage mapping.

With regard to the latter two points, there was some discussion of the possibility of Campus Co-ordinating Groups organising a preliminary board meeting to ensure that the position of students on combined programmes was fully considered. It was noted that a themed audit undertaken in 2007/8 had concluded that there was no evidence that such students performed less well than Single Honours students. The Chair indicated that the practice at other institutions in relation to degree classification boundaries might be explored.

10.206 Committee Discussion

Professor McKenna raised the matter of external examiner awareness that their reports and comments might be made available under the Freedom of Information Act. It was noted that the External Examiners' Handbook referred to this obligation.

Professor McClenaghan requested more guidance in the Assessment Handbook and External Examiners' Handbook on viva voce examinations to ensure a more consistent approach, on account of the prospect of an increasing level of litigation. The Chair advised that the Handbooks were clear about the purposes of viva examinations and offered guidance on their conduct, but it would not be appropriate to determine a single arrangement at institutional level. To allay student anxiety and to ensure that students were dealt with equitably, it would be good practice for each course to make explicit their arrangements in advance.

Professor Millar raised a concern that the University's expenses policy only reimbursed external examiners' car mileage at the public transport rate, which was not the practice in some other institutions.

10.207 Reports from Chief External Examiners and Responses from Campus Co-ordinating Groups

Mr McCurry presented the annual reports from the Chief External Examiners for the Combined undergraduate provision on the Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses and the responses from the Coleraine and Magee Campus Co-ordinating Groups (Paper No TLC/10/54b). A response from the Jordanstown Camps Co-ordinating Group had not yet been received. The Committee noted that all three reports were very positive, and that issues raised had been or would be addressed.

The Committee noted that a recommendation from Professor D Moran, the Chief External Examiner for the Coleraine campus, had been addressed at the October meeting through the revised method of calculating the summary marks for awards (min 10.179 refers). Professor Moran's second recommendation, that students registering for more than the required amount of modules should have their full load recorded on their transcript, should be addressed through implementation of the recommendations of the Module Data Quality Enhancement Working Group (min 10.101 refers). The Committee noted that a comment about the 'new' rules for extenuating circumstances was a reference to the consistent application of the existing rules.

Professor Moran had also suggested that consideration be given to making available part-time degrees, particularly in Arts, to which students might transfer, following the model in the Business subjects. Professor Ó Dochartaigh explained that this was not feasible for specified subjects, but the Faculty would discuss the possibility of developing a part-time general humanities degree.

10.208 **CAMPUS CO-ORDINATING GROUPS: ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE COMBINED STUDIES PROGRAMME 2009/10**

Mr McCurry presented the annual report from the three Campus Co-ordinating Groups (Paper No TLC/10/55).

Over 1150 students were enrolled on Combined Honours degrees across the three campuses. Overall, procedures and processes were well settled, with each campus addressing its own priorities.

At Magee a working group had been set up to consider the student experience at registration. This had resulted in a co-ordinated induction and registration event which had been a considerable improvement on previous years. At Coleraine there were ongoing induction and timetabling issues, the latter being addressed through the Timetabling Working Group. At Jordanstown the Campus Co-ordinating Group planned to review its operation, and to consider enrolment numbers, the viability of combinations with very small cohorts, and to compare campus performance across single honours and combinations.

Mr McCurry raised the question of those students who wished to take combinations, only available in full-time mode, on a part-time basis and for a temporary period in light of personal circumstances. It was often inappropriate to seek to offer the course in a genuine part-time mode, as there was unlikely to be sufficient demand. He was informed that in such instances an application could be made by the Faculty to vary a particular full-time student's attendance pattern through a 'slow track' arrangement. Such applications were considered by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) through the approved process and reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee. The student's record was amended to part-time attendance mode.

Professor Ó Dochartaigh reported that the withdrawal of a number of subjects at the Coleraine campus might threaten the Faculty's common approach of allowing students to take three subjects in their first year with delayed choice to the end of year one. He agreed to bring this matter to the Academic Planning Sub-Committee for discussion.

The Chair thanked the three Directors of Combined Studies, Mr McCurry, Dr Fomin and Dr Rhys for their valuable work during the year.

10.209 PRIZES

The Committee received Paper No TLC/10/56 which proposed five new prizes in the Faculties of Computing and Engineering (1+ S.r.l. Healthcare Technology Prize) and Life and Health Sciences (MPharm - ALMAC Pharmacology Prize; Nicrobrand Pharmaceutical Award; Mawhinney Pharmacy Law Prize; Movianto Pharmaceutical Award).

An amendment to the criteria for the Mona Gray Research Award for the BSc Hons Nursing in the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences was also received.

AGREED: that it be recommended to Council, through Communications and External Affairs Committee, that the new prizes and the terms of the revised award be approved.

10.210 VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT UPGRADE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Ms S Alexander presented a paper on the proposed implementation plan for the upgrade of the VLE (Paper No TLC/10/57).

The Committee noted that the VLE was being upgraded from Blackboard Vista 8.x (Bb Vista) to Blackboard Learn 9.x (Bb Learn) with a planned 'live' implementation date of September 2011. The paper summarised the proposed transition arrangements and timeline.

The Committee noted that the transition would be pedagogically led with an appropriate communication strategy, a phased migration and maintenance of parallel systems, and training and technical support. Students would also have advance access to Bb Learn to give them time to become familiar with the environment, using a student orientation area.

It was proposed that the upgrade process would be governed by a VLE Upgrade Implementation Group, with membership from key stakeholders, to include all Faculties and relevant central departments.

Initial information concerning the upgrade would be communicated to Deans, Heads of School and Faculty Teaching and Learning Co-ordinators. In February 2011, an all-staff email would raise awareness about access to the Bb Learn environment and the availability of Semester 1 modules. Students would be made aware of the changes in early April 2011, in an all-student email.

The Committee noted that performance testing and system enhancements would take place between February and July 2011, to ensure that the system was ready for teaching in September 2011. The performance testing would include defined tasks involving staff and a variety of student groups.

AGREED that:

- i) the proposed VLE Upgrade Implementation Plan be endorsed;
- ii) the establishment of a VLE Upgrade Implementation Group to govern the transition process be endorsed;
- iii) the Implementation Group include a representative from Corporate Communications.

Duration 2 ¾ hours

4 January 2011

AGF/CA/lh

SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1 To keep under review and as appropriate advise and make recommendations to the Teaching and Learning Committee on employability matters with particular regard to:
 - a) student career development;
 - b) personal development planning;
 - c) work experience, placement and skills and their contribution to student learning;
 - d) the development of graduate qualities.
- 2 To receive and consider reports from Faculties and the Career Development Centre on placement and work experience opportunities and graduate destinations and to undertake relevant research and analysis.
- 3 To keep under review, advise and make recommendations on the maintenance and development of links with employers.
- 4 To contribute to support for the Higher Education Achievement Report and associated initiatives as they relate to the development and recording of the employability of students.
- 5 To receive and consider reports on the “Study USA” programme.
- 6 To keep under review and develop policy and procedures in its areas of responsibility and to consider staff development and training needs.
- 7 To establish working groups and advisory groups as appropriate to advise and report on any of the above matters.

In reaching decisions the Sub-Committee will have due regard to their impact on, and implications for, the University’s commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and good relations as outlined in its Equality Scheme, and associated policies, and where possible and practicable the Sub-Committee will ensure that its actions are proactive in this respect.

Composition

Chair: Professor Richard Millar
Two representatives from each Faculty
Representative from the Students’ Union
Director of CHEP
Representative from the PDP Forum
Representative from Student Marketing
Head of the Career Development Centre
Employability Development Officer (CDC)
Work Experience Development Officer (CDC)
Work Experience Consultant (CDC)