

University of Glasgow
Academic Standards Committee - Friday 20 February 2009
Report from Scottish Agricultural College and University of
Glasgow Liaison Committee

Lesley Fielding Senate Office

1. Remit and Membership

The Committee noted that Professor Caie, Clerk of Senate had replaced Professor Nash as Convener with effect from 24 November 2008. The student representative was welcomed to the Liaison Committee. The Committee resolved to **recommend the membership** to ASC.

The representatives from SAC asked that an expression of thanks be noted for the help and support offered by Professor Nash in his role as Convener of the Liaison Committee.

2. Purchase of Pebblepad

The Committee noted that a pilot using Pebblepad had taken place during session 2007-08. As use of the package was on a voluntary basis, it was not possible to accurately assess the success of the exercise.

3. Future Validations

The Committee learned that the Applied Poultry Science Programme was not running during Session 2008-09, however, it was planned that the Programme would be re-validated for Session 2009-10 as a part-time distance learning option only.

4. Issues Arising from the Annual Monitoring Reports

4.1 The Committee discussed the plans for the relocation of various campuses. SAC advised the Committee that the scattered nature of the campuses was historic and whilst it could be problematic its dispersed nature was accepted by the SFC as part of their institution.

4.2 The Committee learned that, despite a good working relationship with Inch Nursery, there were a number of practical drawbacks evident such as the reduced opening hours of the facility. SAC hoped to develop facilities at the King's Building campus in Edinburgh over the next two years. In the interim it was planned that SAC would collaborate with other partners to resolve any issues arising at Inch Nursery.

4.3 A number of staffing issues were raised (1) the number of staff changes and the difficulty in getting staff in some areas, (2) the high numbers of part-time staff appointments. It was agreed that the appointment of part-time staff offered a wide spectrum of experience, but it was acknowledged that such appointments had limitations and placed additional pressure on

other staff. This situation was currently being monitored. Whilst there were plans to appoint full-time staff, the Committee acknowledged that that part-time appointments offered benefits such as specialist and industry expertise which was invaluable to students.

The Committee discussed the problem of the lack of opportunities for younger members of staff to engage in research or consultancy work. The Committee learned that whilst it was unlikely that staff would have the opportunity to do research, SAC encouraged staff to be active in scholarly activity. To date, SAC had not made a decision to apply for research funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), as it would be necessary to ensure that the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (SERAD) would not withdraw their funding if SAC successfully achieved research funding from the SFC. This issue was not expected to be resolved for approximately two years.

- 4.4 The Committee noted that there had been poor student feedback in some areas. It was acknowledged that feedback was voluntary and that staff had encouraged the student body to complete the surveys

There was discussion about problems in Edinburgh regarding the moderation of assessments. The projects had not been marked in time and had not been submitted to External Examiners as marked dissertations. SAC had implemented procedures to resolve this.

- 4.5 The Committee noted that there had been some concerns regarding the calibre of the students applying to the Auchincruive campus. This was attributed to perceptions that the Auchincruive campus would be closing. It was hoped that the new development with the University of the West of Scotland would address such misconceptions.

- 4.6 First Year Student Drop-out Rate

The SAC representatives explained that the high incidence of first year student drop-out was, in part, due to the high number of late applications which was identified as a widespread issue in the issue of retention. SAC had offered additional support to those students identified as struggling and further classes were offered to those students most at risk.

- 4.7 BSc Horticulture

The Committee learned that the poor success rates for the BSc Horticulture were mostly due to the high number of students on the course for whom funding had become an issue. This was most evident among mature students.

- 4.8 Plagiarism

The Convener enquired as to the extent of the problem of plagiarism at SAC and learned that it was not considered a problem. The Committee ascertained that due to being a small institution, staff at SAC knew their students well which enabled them to detect any obvious changes in written work.

- 4.9 External Examiner Reports

The members discussed the issue where examiners were required to find additional marks to amend the classification of borderline students. The Convener advised the SAC representatives of the University system without amending the marks.

4.10 Recognition of staff as teachers of the University

The Committee noted a full list of SAC staff teaching on the Glasgow-validated programmes and brief cvs of newly appointed staff not previously notified to the University. The Committee **resolved to recommend** to Academic Standards Committee that the members of staff listed in items 8.1 and 8.2 of the report be approved as Teachers of the University for the purposes of teaching on courses leading to Degrees and Postgraduate diplomas of the University. A list of all staff not previously reported follows:

Caroline Daniel, BSc, Lecturer in Economics and Management

David Lamb, MA, PG Dip, Food Marketing Economist

William F Mackay, BA, PGCE [PSE], Lecturer

Peggy McGregor, BA, MBA, Lecturer

Drew Wallace, BSc, MSc, Lecturer

4.11 Issues which SAC wishes to draw to the attention of the University

SAC advised that following the development of a new process of internal subject review, revalidation of programmes would occur when the timing was appropriate. In some cases this would mean revalidation occurring earlier than normal.

5. **Intercalated Degrees.**

The issue of intercalated degrees had been raised by Veterinary students at the Edinburgh campus who wished to study on an honours degree at SAC. The normal practice at Glasgow was that students had to study for 2 years in order to get an Honours degree. The Committee concurred that this should be referred to Education Policy & Strategy Committee (EPSC) and possibly Senate. It was agreed that a paper would be prepared at SAC outlining the details of the proposal and would pass this to the Senate Office.

6. **Publications**

Members were reminded of the need for the University to monitor the publications of its Associated Institutions. It was requested that copies of the SAC prospectus, course handbooks and induction materials, including web material, should be sent to the Senate Office on a regular basis to ensure that information relating to those areas for which Glasgow was responsible were accurate.

Membership of the Liaison Committee

2008-09

ASC has been invited to approve the recommended membership of the University of Glasgow/Scottish Agricultural College Liaison Committee which is provided below.

ASC is also invited to note a correction to the coversheet for this paper: 4.10 of the report (not 5.10) is the second recommendation it is asked to approve.

Membership

<i>University</i>	
Clerk of Senate [Convener]	Professor G Caie
Director of Senate Office (or nominee)	Dr J Aitken
Dean of Biomedical & Life Sciences	Professor P Hagan
University Member (Biomedical & Life Sciences) and member of the SAC Student Liaison Committee (alternate years)	Dr R Aitken
University Member (Dumfries Campus) and member of the SAC Student Liaison Committee (alternate years)	Dr D MacLeod
<i>Scottish Agricultural College</i>	
Principal or nominee [Vice Convener]	Professor W McKelvey
Vice-Principal (Education and Training)	Mr D McKenzie
Academic Services Manager	Professor A Walker
A student representative	Ms Claire Convery
<i>In Attendance</i>	
Teaching Group Managers and/or Programme Leaders, as and if required	
Academic Policy Manager, Senate Office	Ms J McCluskey
Assistant Academic Policy Manager, Senate Office, Clerk	Ms L Fielding