

University of Glasgow**Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 April 2010****Report from the University of Glasgow/Glasgow International
College Joint Academic Management Board held on 21
December 2009**

Mrs Jackie McCluskey, Senate Office

1) MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to the membership discussed at the meeting held on 21 December. However, subsequent to the meeting and in light of Professor Nolan's new responsibilities as Senior Vice Principal, it was agreed that Professor Frank Coton, Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching, would assume the role of Convener.

2) STUDENT RECRUITMENT TO SCIENCES

Members were advised that GIC's sister U.K. Colleges, Liverpool and Sheffield demonstrated higher recruitment to Science and Engineering than GIC. It was not immediately clear why this was the case as KIC's marketing and recruitment team, in liaison with RIO, had put additional effort into recruitment to the foundation programmes. Members were advised, however, that UoG's profile in the Middle East continued to be low. It was agreed that KIC should seek to promote the profile of the city of Glasgow more effectively.

The Convener advised that the University was currently looking at the issue of progression scholarships with a view to providing 2/3 across all programmes. She confirmed that the intention was that the recently formed task group of the Joint Strategic Management Board (JSMB) would look at this for GIC students. The Director of Glasgow International College (GIC) advised that Kaplan International Colleges (KIC) offered financial incentives to attract students to their foundation programmes at GIC. However, it was not clear if there were any scholarships dedicated to Science and Engineering.

3) STUDENT PROGRESS TO UoG

The Board had been provided with the minutes of the Student Progress Meeting held on 2 November 2009 as well as the GIC student progression statistics for 2008-09. Members were assured to see that in, general, progress had been good, particularly in the Faculty of LBSS.

GIC Student Transition Report 2008-09

A number of actions were noted in relation to the findings of the interim GIC Student Transition Report for 2008-09. These had been identified by the members of the Collegiate Board of Studies (CBoS) at its November meeting, namely;

- *Improve communication on initial University course choices;*

It was agreed that the relevant Subject Moderators would visit students at GIC to provide more information on course choices and transition issues;

- *Provide more student awareness of the importance of time management;*
Members noted that the GIC students were not aware of the differences in approach to attendance within GIC and UoG.
- *Improve discussion skills;*
- *Improve essay writing skills;*
It was suggested that GIC should investigate the possibility of using the Arts Faculty on-line diagnostic test in Essay Writing skills. The Convener agreed to put Ms Main in touch with Professor Jenkins, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts;
- *Improve presentation skills;*
This had been based on feedback from students on their own abilities. However, it was noted that students' perceptions of their own presentation skills were seen as less generous than those of the staff;
- *Social environment;*
Members were advised that a task group had identified social integration as a priority and recommendations on how to improve integration. GIC had achieved much to in this regard and would seek greater partnership with the University to encourage more access by their students to visiting lectures, clubs and societies.

4) BA GLOBAL BUSINESS

The Board was advised that the BA Global Business programme had been reinstated as a pathway for GIC students. However, there remained concern about the low numbers of students coming into the programme. The Dean of Law, Business and Social Sciences was currently discussing this with GIC.

5) ISSUES FROM THE COLLEGIATE BOARD OF STUDIES

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Collegiate Board of Studies held on 11 November 2009 and the following issues were discussed.

5.1 Remit, Composition and Membership CBoS - 2009-10

Members approved changes to the membership of CBoS for 2009-10 which reflected recent retirements and secondments. It was noted that the intention would be to review the membership at a later date, following restructuring.

5.2 Module Monitoring

The Convener of CBoS confirmed that other than bedding-in issues no significant issues had been highlighted. The main issues discussed at CBoS had been poor student feedback rates; student attendance at UoG and the need for subject specific Academic Skills provision in Science. UoG had agreed to provide GIC with a list of key issues to emphasise to students prior to articulation such as the importance of attendance and other different University processes.

5.3 Diploma Programmes

It was noted that further discussion was required on the future of the Diploma programmes. UoG remained keen to work with GIC to consider alternative arrangements with a view to maintaining income streams.

5.3 *GIC Student Transition Report*

The CBoS discussions on student progress and the GIC Student Transition Report are covered under Item 3 above.

5.4 *Borderline Meetings*

CBoS had agreed that in future, the University would consider borderline cases only where documentary evidence was available to support a direct impact on students' performance. Members were advised that GIC was currently seeking data on the performance of GIC students at the University, including students who had been admitted in clearing in 2008 and 2009. A meeting with staff from GIC and the Planning Office took place immediately following the December meeting of JAMB with a view to investigating the availability of meaningful GIC student progression data from central University information.

6) **ANNUAL MONITORING**

Members received the GIC Annual Programme Reports (APRs) for 2008-09 for the following programmes:

- *The Foundation Certificate in Business*
- *The Foundation Certificate in Engineering*
- *The Foundation Certificate in Science*
- *The Foundation Certificate in Social Sciences*
- *The Diploma in Business*
- *The Pre-Masters for Business, Social Sciences and Law, and*
- *The Pre-Masters for Science and Engineering*

GIC confirmed that the reports were still subject to final approval at the annual review meeting at KIC. The KIC meeting reviewed common themes running across Colleges and proposed changes nationally. However, local recommendations for change were also possible. GIC did not anticipate any major changes to emerge from the KIC meeting but agreed to advise the University accordingly.

The following general issues were discussed:

- *Student Feedback:* Response rates for online student feedback had been very low, with some courses receiving no feedback at all. GIC had reverted back to paper for the 2009 autumn term and had an 85% response rate. They advised members of their intention to continue on this basis for the remainder of 2009-10.
- *Standardisation across the Academic Skills and English Language modules throughout Kaplan Colleges:* Members were advised that the first national KIC standardisation meeting was due to take place in January 2010 with a view to standardising the modules and course tutor moderation.

The Board considered each individual report and were assured of the standards in each case. The following issue was discussed in detail:

Foundation in Engineering

It was noted that the External Examiner had felt that the University's English Language threshold was too high and had proposed that the University consider accepting students with strong academic success, whose English language competencies did not

meet the progression thresholds. Members were advised that CBoS had discussed this and the opinion was that it was not appropriate to change the University's entry requirement. The Board was in agreement with CBoS's position and suggested that there was sufficient support provided by the English Language Centre in the form of a pre-session programme and ongoing support post entry both from the Language Centre and from staff in LBSS.

Following discussion it was agreed that members did not require sight of the detailed Annual Programme Monitoring reports in future. Instead it was agreed that it would be more helpful for CBoS and JAMB to receive a summary of the recommendations.

7) EXTERNAL EXAMINER PROCEDURES

The Director, Academic Development and College Operations (KIC) reported on the pilot exercise which had recently been held in relation to the External Examiner arrangements for the English Language and Academic Skills modules. He advised that the pilot exercise had gone well and following positive feedback both nationally and from the Examiners themselves, he proposed that the arrangements remained in place for the following session, with the continued scrutiny of CBoS. The intention with respect to the subject modules was to retain the current system. It was agreed that a formal proposal would be submitted to JAMB in July 2010. The Convener of CBoS confirmed that this issue had been discussed by CBoS and that the recommendation was that the proposal be supported. Members approved the recommendation of CBoS.

8) ARTICULATION PATHWAYS

Members were advised that although the Articulation Lists for the current session had been approved by JAMB in July, a number of amendments had subsequently been noted. It was emphasised that in line with the procedure previously approved by JAMB, the lists should only be amended annually. In addition, formal approval by the relevant Dean and Director of Recruitment and International Office was required. Subject to two amendments, Board members approved the amended Articulation Lists.

9) KIC UPDATES

The Director, Academic Development and College Operations (KIC) reported on a number of organisational changes within Europe, including the appointment of a new Managing Director. He confirmed that GIC would come under Kaplan Europe and Kaplan Professional had now subsumed the Education strand. Kaplan Europe was strong in South America and Central Europe and GIC would benefit from the additional marketing expertise. He also advised that there were ongoing discussions to establish new partner colleges and more information on this would be available in 2010.

Other issues discussed were as follows:

- There would be a new review process which would seek to bring forward any proposed changes to the University by late February/ March, annually.
- The new Student Placement Unit had worked well, ensuring that there would be places for students who had not managed to meet the entry requirements for Glasgow.
- Writing and academic skills - A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with Cambridge University Press for a contract from early 2010, for a European form of reference and language studies package, to support students as far as possible with materials to enable their transition to degree programmes.

- Graduate profile – To enable better integration, KIC was currently looking at the whole student profile, including integration in the community and wider society.
- GIC was perceived within Kaplan as a very well run College, with good student performance, attendance and attainment. Kaplan was very satisfied with their standards and quality of delivery.