UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on
Thursday 25 February 2010

Present:

Ms C Fyfe (Chair)
Mrs L Bailey          Professor Cashmore
Mr D Cox              Mr P Jackson
Ms L Jones            Dr M Rawlinson
Professor Salmon     Dr J Scott
Mr A Smith

In attendance: Mrs L Masterman (Secretary) and Miss K Pountney (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Bettles, Dr J Goodwin and Professor Thomas

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

10/M1  MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group considered the minutes of a meeting held on 5 November 2009.

The Group approved the minutes as a correct record.

Arising from minute 09/M3 (a), the Chair reported that the student focus group had been held on 8 December 2009. The meeting had focussed on the practicalities of joining the University and had been very useful. The Chair agreed to circulate her notes on the areas that would benefit from improvement, as identified by the students who attended. Various offices and services would now work to address these issues that affected the student experience in the first few weeks of term. The Chair reported it was pleasing that areas of concern identified at the previous focus group meeting had either not been raised this year or had been commended.

Arising from minute 09/M3 (b), the Group noted that the Government’s new Framework for Higher Education would now be discussed at its May meeting.

10/M2  CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair reported that:

a) She and the Vice-Chancellor hold termly informal question and answer sessions with course representatives. The latest meeting had taken place at the end of February. The Group noted with interest that many of the course representatives’ questions had been concerned with general issues relating to the HE sector, such as Government policy and funding.

/continued
Chair’s Report continued

b) The HEA link person would be visiting the University on 28 May.

c) She and Professor Cashmore were reviewing the recognition of teaching excellence in the promotion system. They would report back to the Group at its next meeting.

10/M3 ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK WORKING GROUP

The Group received reports of meetings of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group held on 11 November 2009 and 21 January 2010.

The Chair of the Working Group reported that the Working Group had discussed in detail the benefits and disadvantages associated with the anonymous marking of coursework. He had drafted some guidelines on behalf of the Working Group setting out the University’s approach. These would be considered at the next meeting of the Academic Policy Committee for inclusion in the Code of Practice on Examining.

The next project of the Working Group would be directed at students; encouraging them to engage with feedback and its different forms. The Chair of the Working Group reported that the Teaching Funds Approvals Group had recently approved a funding bid for this work.

10/M4 LEARNING SPACES

The Professional Development Co-ordinator (Academic Practice) reported that an evaluation of several learning spaces at the University was underway. The research was looking at specific suggestions that could inform practice.

10/M5 PERSONAL TUTORS WORKING GROUP

The Chair of the Personal Tutors Working Group reported that the Guide to the Personal Tutor System flyer would be circulated to staff and students shortly in order to encourage personal tutors and their tutees to meet before the end of term. The Working Group would reconvene to consider how the status of personal tutors might be raised and ideas for gathering and disseminating good practice within the personal tutor system. The Group proposed that the Working Group consider employing the ‘quick wins’ approach that had proved successful for the Assessment and Feedback Working Group.

10/M6 WORKING GROUP ON STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

The Group received minutes of a meeting of the Working Group on Student Employability held on 4 December 2009. The Group noted that departments were asked to include employability as part of the new annual developmental review return.

The Chair of the Working Group reported that the work of the Working Group on Student Employability might be combined with that of the Careers Advisory Committee or a possible successor to that committee. The Working Group would continue to meet in the meantime and proceed with its project to involve alumni in encouraging students to engage with employability issues.
10/M7 STUDENT-STAFF COMMITTEES WORKING GROUP

The Group received a report of a meeting of the Student Staff Committees Working Group held on 11 January 2010.

The Group noted that the Working Group was preparing a revised version of the current guidelines on the ‘Work of Staff/Student Committees’. The Group would consider these guidelines at its next meeting.

The Group was pleased to note that students from each of the four colleges were involved with this working group. The Group encouraged all of its working groups to include student representation in their membership.

10/M8 WORKING GROUP FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Group received reports of meetings of the Sustainability Working Group held on 5 November and 9 December 2009.

The Chair of the Working Group reported that she had recently attended a TRAC Development Group meeting. This national group was to adopt the Leicester approach of considering sustainability in the context of the student experience.

The Chair of the Working Group advised that the Working Group was reviewing practice in seven departments. Its next review would be of the School of Management. The Group suggested that when this review was complete it would be useful to hold a seminar to compare its findings with those from the review of the School of Biological Sciences.

10/M9 THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY: ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

The Group received for information the HEA’s Annual Institutional Report outlining work done with the University during the 2008-09 academic year.

The Group was disappointed to note that there were significant omissions from the report and it also contained several inaccuracies. The Group agreed that Professor Salmon would raise these issues with the Academy informally and report back to the Group.

10/M10 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

The Group received for information response rates for the National Student Survey as of 24 February 2010.

10/M11 TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS 2010

a) The Group noted that the University had nominated two members of staff this year for National Teaching Fellowships. Successful candidates would be announced by the HEA in June.

b) The Group noted the launch of this year’s University Teaching Fellowship Scheme.
The Group received a report from the Academic Affairs Officer of the Students’ Union on the “I Love My Academic: Rewarding Good Teaching” campaign. The aim of the campaign was to recognise academic members of staff whom students felt had particularly inspired and enhanced their learning.

The Group noted that every nominated member of staff would receive an e-certificate from the Students’ Union and their Head of Department would be notified of the nomination. The Academic Affairs Officer would select one overall winner per College based on the quality of the students’ submitted qualifying statements. The Group noted that this would count as qualifying evidence towards a University Teaching Fellowship should any of the College winners consider they met the criterion of the University award and submit an application for consideration.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Group noted the date of its next meeting:

Friday 28 May 2010  2.00 pm     Ken Edwards Building, Seminar Room 215

Duration of Meeting: Two hours     CHAIR