UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Education Committee - Wednesday 12 May 2004

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Review of Crichton Campus - 27 February 2004

Ms Helen Butcher, Senate Office

March 2004

Review Panel

Professor A S Nash, (Convener)	Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) and Clerk of Senate
Professor D Bennett	Senate Assessor on University Court
Professor J George	External Subject Specialist, Open University
Dr A Lumsden	External Subject Specialist, University of Aberdeen
Dr R Matthew	Director, Teaching and Learning Service
Dr T Munck	Member of Cognate Department (Head of Department of History)
Ms H Butcher (Clerk)	Senate Office

Observing

Professor J Caughie	Dean of Faculty of Arts

Summary

Members of the Panel were impressed by the Self-Evaluation and supporting documentation received in advance of the review event, and also by the staff, students and surroundings they encountered during their visit to the Crichton Campus. The enthusiasm of the students and the positive, collegiate atmosphere of the Campus with its high level of integration between staff and students was particularly noted. The external members of the panel commended the University in its development of this innovatory academic unit at Crichton. During the course of the day, the Panel met with various groups of staff and students in order to explore further the University's academic provision on the Campus. In addition to the identification of key strengths, areas requiring improvement were highlighted and a number of recommendations were made in order to assist in this process.

A.   Introduction

A.1   The University of Glasgow has been offering a broad-based undergraduate Liberal Arts programme at the Crichton University Campus since 1999. The University has also registered a small number of postgraduate Research students at Crichton since 2000 (7 in 2003-04). The Crichton University Campus was established in 1998 on the site of the Crichton Royal Hospital in Dumfries and offers Higher Education from a number of providers: the University of Glasgow; the University of Paisley; Bell College, and the Open University. Dumfries and Galloway College is also exploring the possibility of relocation to the Crichton Campus.

A.2   The following University of Glasgow degrees are offered at the Crichton Campus:

MA (Liberal Arts) in Creative and Cultural Studies

MA (Liberal Arts) in Scottish Studies

MA (Liberal Arts) in Environmental Studies

MA (Liberal Arts) in Health and Social Studies

MA (Liberal Arts) in Liberal Arts

MA (Liberal Arts) Honours.

A.3   These programmes are delivered entirely by the University of Glasgow, whilst student support services such as IT, Library and the Student Advisory Service however, are offered under a joint arrangement with the other HE providers on campus. On the Liberal Arts programme 58 modules are offered, 48 of which were developed by Glasgow staff at the Crichton Campus and 10 are delivered from the Main Campus via video link.

A.4   Further degrees are planned including the MA in Heritage and Tourism and a part-time Liberal Arts degree programme delivered in the evening, both of which are expected to commence in September 2004. Discussions are also ongoing with the Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering regarding the development of a new BSc degree in Renewable Energy: Engineering in the Environment, to be introduced at a later date.

B.   Overall aims of the Department's provision

B.1   The overall aim of the Campus' provision was to provide Higher Education in the humanities to an area of Scotland historically underrepresented in HE. This involved collaborating with and meeting the needs of the local community by advancing widening access and social inclusion, and promoting employability in the student body in the locale. In addition, the Campus aimed to attract students from elsewhere in the UK and abroad to Dumfries and Galloway in general, and also to the University of Glasgow. The high quality of educational provision offered by the University of Glasgow will be reflected in the maintenance of the traditions of research-informed and research-led teaching alongside innovation in pedagogy.

B.2   The Director of the Campus advised the Panel that he hoped to increase CPD delivery at the Campus to meet local needs and that he had already commenced dialogue with the University's CPD Officer in order to take forward this development.

B.3   Professor Taylor also outlined to the Panel his vision of the Campus providing opportunities for educational development at the University of Glasgow.   Two examples of curriculum development were provided to illustrate this point.

B.4   Firstly, the area of tele-conferencing where the Campus has made significant developments in the provision of lectures and seminars via video-link throughout the local region and also to Southwestern College in Kansas, USA. Lectures delivered at the Gilmorehill Campus were also videoed to students at Crichton. In addition, in anticipation of the relocation of Dumfries and Galloway College to the Crichton Campus in September 2007, closer collaboration was planned with this institution in order to offer a distance education unit to serve the whole of the south-west of Scotland. The Campus Director would welcome closer links with the Glasgow University Initiative for Distance Education (GUIDE) which was located on the Main campus.

B.5   Secondly, the opportunity to disseminate innovation in assessment methods deployed at the Crichton Campus throughout the University was highlighted; and attention was drawn to current activity in developing the assessment criteria for oral presentations.

B.6   The Panel suggested that the educational development opportunities role for the Campus would be strengthened by an enhancement of links with support services on the main Gilmorehill Campus, particularly the Teaching and Learning Service (TLS), in addition to GUIDE.   The Panel **recommended** that the Campus, in dialogue with Gilmorehill, should seek to introduce into its strategic plan the educational development activity for the University; and that links with both the TLS and GUIDE should be strengthened in order to take this initiative forward.

C.1   Undergraduate and Postgraduate[1] Provision

C.1   *Aims*

C1.1   The Panel discussed the students' awareness of the overall aims of the Liberal Arts degree programme in the context of its structure which was highly modularised. Staff explained that the core courses on the programme were each designed to provide a particular set of skills for students to develop and use in their study of the rest of the curriculum. They drew attention to the programme specifications which had recently been developed and indicated that these provided explicit information on the overall aims of the programmes which had not been articulated previously. It was intended that the programme specifications would be offered to students to provide them with this information. The Panel was also advised that some students had demonstrated resistance to the core modules due to a desire to focus on their chosen interests/specialisms, and it was considered that the provision of programme specifications would facilitate students' understanding of the structure of the curriculum in relation to its overall aims.

C1.2   It was confirmed that some of the proposed new degrees would have different core courses to those currently offered.

C1.3   In its meeting with undergraduate students, the Panel sought comment from students on their understanding of the overall aims of the degrees.   The students echoed comments from staff, reporting that initially there had been some uncertainty surrounding the relation of the core courses to the rest of the curricula, but in third year, the underlying purpose of the programmes had become apparent to students, and they considered the broad base provided by the core courses to be a positive aspect of the degrees they were studying.

C.2   *Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)*

C2.1   Similarly to the aims, the Panel felt that the overall ILOs for the degree programmes were not currently made explicit enough to students, but it was acknowledged that the programme specifications could be used to disseminate this information.

C2.2   Although the Panel considered that in most cases the practices in teaching, learning and assessment were designed to meet the ILOs of both modules and the programme as a whole, there was a view that in a number of cases the link between the ILOs and the methods of assessment could have been made more transparent to students. In terms of understanding the underlying structure and coherence of the degree

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[1] Consideration of postgraduate provision related to Research degree students as there are not any postgraduate taught degrees offered at Crichton. Although Research students are not normally covered in the review of Departments' programmes of teaching, learning and assessment, it was considered useful to include a meeting with PhD students in order to gain an overview of all activity at the Crichton Campus.

programmes in terms of the ILOs, students suggested to the Panel that these issues became clearer as they progressed to more senior years of study. In this context, the students agreed that it would be useful for senior students to advise junior year students of their experiences over the duration of the programme in order to explain the importance and relevance of the early stages of the curriculum in relation to later years. The Panel therefore **recommended** that consideration should be given to the introduction of a student mentoring scheme whereby senior students mentored Level 1 students.

C.3   *Assessment*

C3.1   The Panel discussed assessment procedures with staff and students. It was noted that a variety of assessment tools were used throughout the curriculum and that no more than 50% of the assessment of any module developed on the campus was by written examination. The Panel pursued the statement in the Self-Evaluation document concerning the setting of criteria for the assessment of oral presentations (see Self Evaluation Report, paragraph 36). Members were informed that high value was placed on oral presentation throughout the modules, and that oral assessments were double- marked in order to ensure consistency. The Panel identified the need for staff to ensure that clear assessment criteria were set for oral presentations, and **recommended** that this should be referred to the Crichton Campus Learning and Teaching Committee.

C3.2   There was discussion surrounding the assessment of the reflective development which featured strongly in some areas of the curriculum. The Panel was advised that there was formal assessment of the Reflective Journals which students were required to produce on the Level 3 Placement and also in Honours year. Staff reported that grade related criteria were applied loosely to these, but that these were also triple-marked. The Panel drew attention to the tension of applying structured assessment criteria to the internal process of reflection.   It was suggested that, as the curriculum explicitly focused on the development of intellectual and personal skills, and since the sound and regular practice of reflection was an essential element in this, more consistent and overt attention should be paid thoughout the curriculum to this practice. This could be fostered by encouraging students in classwork to look self-critically at their strengths and weaknesses and ways of improvement; the message that reflection was part of learning could also be reinforced by weaving into all module assessment a strand of demand which required students in the early stages of the curriculum to look critically at their learning processes, and at Level 4 even to develop their own benchmarks and criteria. At the same time, it was important that staff demonstrated personal application of a reflective approach to their own professional practice and development.

C.4   *Curriculum Design and Content*

C4.1   The structure of the Liberal Arts programme differs from those offered at the University of Glasgow's Main campus at Gilmorehill.   The model is a broad-based programme containing four core modules (80 credits) which are taken at Levels 1 and 2, along with eight further modules (160 credits) selected by students from a choice of qualifying modules available for each of the five degree designations (Creative and Cultural Studies; Scottish Studies; Environmental Studies; Health and Social Studies; and Liberal Arts). During the third academic session students take three additional Elective Modules (60 credits) - two at Level 3 and one at either Level 2 or 3; they also elect to undertake either a dissertation (60 credits) for their degree designation or a work placement (60 credits) related to their degree designation. The MA (Liberal Arts) Honours was introduced in 2002, and is a non-designated degree. Thus students who progress from Level 3 to Level 4 move from a designated degree programme to

a non-designated degree at Honours which involves a Creative Enquiry Project (120 credits) whereby students work in groups following their specific academic interest, but under a common theme or themes. (In 2003-04 the Project title was " The Coastline").

C4.2   The Panel explored the articulation arrangements with Dumfries & Galloway College (D&G C) and was advised that students studying an HNC at D&G C were able to gain access to Level 2 of the Liberal Arts programme in Health and Social Studies by studying the Text and Communication module alongside the HNC, and at the same time, undertaking fast-track study of the Level 1 module Introduction to Social Studies via video lectures and tutorial support. It was confirmed that this articulation structure had been designed to prevent students from being over-burdened with Higher Education courses whilst undertaking their HNC studies.

C4.3   It was noted that two of the five designated MA (Liberal Arts) programmes had been found to require development in terms of their structure. Firstly the Liberal Arts designation which provided an Arts-based suite of modules (covering philosophy, languages, English literature and history) had been found to lack coherence, and difficulty had been experienced in providing adequate progression routes in all of the key subject areas. Current discussions were taking place to address these concerns, and some form of disaggregation of the key areas was anticipated. Secondly, consideration was being given to redesigning the Creative and Cultural Studies designation to Creative and Media Studies, in order to provide a more identifiable means of progressing ideas and knowledge, as the current theme of creativity in this designation had not been found to provide an adequate basis for curriculum development.

C4.4   In relation to this, the Panel discussed with staff the balance between subject detail (academic content) and (intellectual) skills development throughout the curriculum. The need to ensure a sufficient focus on the subject matter in each module was identified by members of the Panel, who considered that many of the modules at Crichton provided a higher focus on skills than was the case in traditional degrees. Staff indicated their awareness of these issues, and confirmed that the Liberal Arts designation was the only area where the lack of subject focus was providing concern, and as indicated above, was being addressed. Staff also suggested that the project-based approach at Level 4 allowed for sufficient focus on academic content alongside the development of intellectual skills.

C4.5   The Panel explored the degree structure with both staff and students. The structure of the degree programmes provided designated degrees up to Level 3 which led to the award of the MA (Liberal Arts) in the various designations, but reverted to a general degree at honours level with the MA (Liberal Arts) Honours. In identifying the benefits of this somewhat unusual structure, staff advised the Panel that delivery of the Honours project had revealed a good learning experience for students at Level 4 coming together from different subject disciplines. The structure of Level 3 which involved the selection of either a work placement or a dissertation was also considered to enhance the background for students entering into the Honours year. The senior level students who met the Panel were also positive about the structure of the Honours year with the single title of the Honours Project which they considered to fit into all of the preceding pathways of the degree. Students were enthusiastic about the integration with peers from other designated degree streams, and also suggested that the breadth of the curriculum provided a good background and preparation for the broad based job market.

C4.6   The Panel noted from the Module handbooks, that in some instances student contact hours seemed high, for example 3 hour seminars were scheduled for some modules. In a context where staff were over-stretched it was **recommended** that this aspect of

the curriculum could be reviewed, and in educational terms, the value of single sessions of this duration was questioned.

C4.7 The delivery of lectures by video-link was discussed in detail, with both students and staff being invited to comment on this aspect of the curriculum. Students reported that although they had been unsure of this method of delivery initially they had found the video-link lectures to provide a positive experience. The opportunity to watch video lectures again was considered beneficial and the back-up support of staff on-campus was such that students did not feel that the teaching from the main Gilmorehill campus to be remote. Both students and staff did comment however that lecture handouts were sometimes not available in time for the video-link transmission which did detract from the experience; and it was agreed that there should be an improvement in communication between the two campuses in order to minimise these delays (see Recommendation 2). Staff were also asked to comment on how well the video-link lectures, which had been designed for other curricula, fitted into the MA (Liberal Arts) programme. While some regarded the video-link lectures to be a transitional aspect of the curriculum in the medium-term, the medium is generally welcomed by staff. In addition staff saw longer-term potential in development of two-way links between Crichton and the Gilmorehill campus and the provision of joint courses by the two campuses. It was also considered that the Faculty of Arts could benefit from provision of Crichton modules, particularly to its General Degree.

C4.8 Half of the Level 3 of the programme (60 credits) comprised either a work placement or a dissertation and students were given a free choice as to which of these they selected. The Panel explored with staff the availability of student placements in the locality, and whether supply would continue to be sufficient if student numbers rose. Members were reassured on this aspect, since a number of placement providers had approached the Campus seeking further supply of students for placement. The Panel also noted from meetings with both students and staff that preparatory arrangements and orientation for the work placement were highly structured. Although this involved a high level of staff resource, the students' level of preparation for work placement was commended.

C4.9 Staff were asked how comparable the two key elements of Level 3, the Placement and the Dissertation were. Staff considered the placement and dissertation to be comparable in terms of the challenges they presented to students and the learning outcomes they provided. It was confirmed that they each met different requirements and therefore provided a choice to meet the differing needs of the student profile. The Panel was advised that generally younger students opted for the work placement, whilst older students preferred to undertake the dissertation. In terms of preparation for the dissertation, staff confirmed that the need to increase the level of guidance at the outset had been identified, and this was being addressed by the introduction of a workshop on dissertation preparation, planning and writing at the beginning of the module.

C.5 *Student Recruitment, Support and Progression*

C5.1 Although student numbers had grown since the first intake of students on the Liberal Arts programme in October 1999, numbers remained small, and the need to increase student numbers was highlighted as a significant issue for the campus.

C5.2 The Panel noted the Recruitment Strategy provided in the supporting documentation and that the main vehicle for this strategy was the Marketing and Recruitment Section which was a joint service with the University of Paisley. The focus of this department was to promote the Campus and the Universities of Glasgow and Paisley throughout the Dumfries and Galloway region, and thus increase recruitment from this area. The campus was reliant on the University's Student Recruitment and

Admissions Service (SRAS) to promote recruitment to the University of Glasgow programmes from outside the local region, both in the UK and abroad. Concern had been raised that insufficient attention had been given to Crichton in SRAS recruitment activity both in the UK and abroad. The Panel agreed that there should be a strengthening of links between the Crichton Campus and the University's Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS) in order to improve recruitment activity within and outside the local region (see Recommendation 2).

C5.3 The Crichton Summer School which had run annually since 1999 was identified as a significant recruitment tool for the campus. The Panel was advised that the Summer School had been re-designed in 2003, offering fewer places to candidates and, as a consequence, requiring less staff input. However the Summer School intake had been more targeted and the number of full-time students recruited to the Liberal Arts programme via the Summer School remained level with previous years despite the reduced numbers admitted.

C5.4 The diversity of student background at Crichton was seen to present increased requirements on student support arrangements and this was acknowledged by the Director of the Campus and other staff. The Panel was advised that the staff body was aware of the need to respond flexibly to individual student needs. The Director of the Campus suggested that the relatively small scale of the operation allowed staff to be approachable, available and flexible towards all students. The Student Advisory Service, Crichton Students' Representative Council (CSRC), the Effective Learning Adviser, and the Writing Centre were all facilities provided to students on campus.

C5.5 Students were also provided with academic guidance by their own Adviser of Studies, allocated to each student in a system mirroring that of the Main campus. The Panel was advised that in addition to guidance on curriculum construction, Advisers of Studies provided a significant pastoral role to students.

C5.6 The student retention figures provided in the supporting documentation for the Review indicated that a high number of students did not appear to progress through the degree programme (see *Student Numbers by Year of Course*, Annex 3 of Student Numbers Report, File B9). However, staff advised the Panel that there were not any significant concerns regarding student success rates for each module and that overall progress or 'wasteage' rates were difficult to determine as a significant number of students enrolled on individual modules as a one-off course of study.

C5.7 Arrangements for students with disabilities were discussed in the meeting with support staff and the Panel was advised that the University's Special Needs Service was involved, and that campus staff had strong liaison links with the Main Campus for advice and information on funding and various mechanisms for supporting students with disabilities. Much effort in this area was focused on pre-entry and linked to recruitment initiatives. Students were then considered on the basis of their individual needs when joining the campus and both the Adviser of Studies and Special Needs Adviser were involved in this process.

C5.8 The Panel was also advised that campus staff were in the process of negotiating with the local Educational Psychology Service in order to facilitate arrangements for assessment of dyslexic students. Students would be required to fund their assessment of dyslexia, although the hardship support funding could be used to assist in cases of demonstrated need.

C5.9 There was some discussion on PhD supervision arrangements at the meeting with Research students. The Panel noted that students were allocated two supervisors, usually one from Crichton Campus and the other from Gilmorehill, and at times they experienced a lack of consistency or coherence in the guidance provided by the supervisors. Although joint meetings with both supervisors took place occasionally,

most meetings were with one supervisor only. The Panel agreed that communications would be improved if both supervisors were present at every meeting and therefore **recommended** that all formal meetings between Research students and their supervisors should involve both supervisors, and that video-conferencing could be used in cases where supervisors from the main Gilmorehill campus were involved.

C5.10   The Research students were asked about the level of careers advice they had received in the course of their studies for their PhDs. The Panel perceived there to be a lack of careers advice for Research students and therefore **recommended** that the Campus should ensure that adequate careers advice was made available to its Research students, and that relevant careers advice activity at the Main campus should also be drawn to the attention of the Research students located at Crichton.

C.6   *The Effectiveness of Provision*

C6.1   The Panel identified the unique profile of Crichton Campus which provided a much broader base of provision than a typical academic department. This broad base coupled with the relatively small number of students (149 full-time and 86 part-time) provided significant challenges for the campus in terms of staff and other learning resources. Further detail of the effects of the lack of "critical mass" for the operation is provided in the following paragraphs of this section.

C6.2   The Panel considered that the supporting documentation for the Review indicated good practices in teaching learning and assessment at the Crichton Campus. Furthermore, teaching methodology and assessment practices were often matched to ILOs in innovative ways. The Module handbooks were commended and it was noted that in general, the key principles of the modules were made transparent in these documents. The inclusion of sample assessment exercises which occurred in some Module Handbooks was also commended, and it was suggested that the course documentation would be improved by a consistent layout, structure and content across the Handbooks. The students with whom the Panel met were positive about the programme and its content and commended the curriculum for containing much current material providing an up-to-date broad based degree which was ideal for the current employment market.

C6.3   There had been acknowledgement in the supporting documentation for the Review, that student workload was an area requiring further attention from staff managing the curriculum as its modular structure required an overview of the assessment load placed on students. Students did not raise any concerns on this aspect of their experience, but the Panel noted that the issue was to be referred to the Crichton Learning and Teaching Committee.

C6.4   In considering the effectiveness of learning and teaching for the Research students on the Crichton campus, the Panel discussed with students any taught courses available to them to assist with the transition to independent research. Although in some cases Crichton Research students were made aware of the various courses available to them, such as those in research methods, computing and library skills, this was not always the case, and therefore attendance at courses tended to vary. The Panel therefore **recommended** that the Campus should ensure that its Research students were provided the opportunity to attend the various research training courses offered at the Main Campus at Gilmorehill, including such courses which were specific to the discipline being researched.

C6.5   Throughout the review the Panel gave attention to staffing resources at Crichton Campus and held meetings with a broad range of staff. A number of issues were explored with staff, particularly focusing on the context of the small size of operations and the rapid development of the curriculum since 1999. This surrounded issues relating to the requirement for academic staff to be involved in a broad range of

activities beyond mainstream teaching; to be the sole subject expert in their particular discipline; and also to cover academic disciplines outside their original area.

C6.6   It was noted that at times staff had been under intense pressure and that workloads had been high, both in terms of work associated with curriculum development and also day-to-day student support. Students had commented positively on the strong feeling of community on the campus, and the approachability and availability of staff, which was seen as a great asset, building up the ethos of a Liberal Arts environment.

C6.7   In terms of staff numbers, the Panel was aware that in many cases, members of staff were working alone in their particular subject area, and that in others, staff were required to develop expertise and deliver teaching in less familiar disciplines. When questioned over issues of discipline isolation, staff recognised some of the challenges this presented, but highlighted to the Panel that they had been able to develop contacts with relevant academic staff in the locality (such as from the Scottish Agricultural College), and also felt a strong sense of ownership of the material they developed and delivered on the curriculum. Staff also commented positively on the small size of the campus with its collegial atmosphere which provided an encouraging environment where there was a high level of face-to-face interaction between all staff, including academic and support staff.

C6.8   In considering links with staff on the Main Gilmorehill campus, probationary staff considered that time constraints prevented the development of strong links between staff at the geographically disparate campuses. However, more established staff indicated that links with staff on the Main campus did exist, and effort was made to attend conferences and seminars offered there in addition to meeting with staff from relevant departments/disciplines. The issue of links with Gilmorehill departments was also raised in terms of staff research areas; and the Panel was advised of at least one case where a member of staff at Crichton felt under pressure from the Main campus to direct his research more closely to the specialised journals associated with the academic department at Gilmorehill. The Panel agreed that links between Crichton and the Main campus should ensure that the broader profile and portfolio of work undertaken by Crichton staff was recognised by academic departments at Gilmorehill, particularly in terms of the research activity of Crichton staff (see Recommendation 2).

C6.9   The induction process for new staff was explored and probationary staff again commented favourably on the collegial atmosphere at Crichton contributing to their introduction to the University.   However, the Panel was advised that many of the probationary staff had found difficulty in completing or taking part on the University's New Lecturer Programme (NLP) as this was delivered on the Main campus. Some elements of the NLP had been made available by video-link, although it was acknowledged that the NLP was designed to facilitate networking opportunities for new staff, and thus face-to-face contact was a crucial element.   The Panel identified this as one of a number of areas requiring further development of links between Crichton and the Main Campus, and that in this case consideration could be given to delivering part of the NLP at Crichton, thus providing staff at Gilmorehill with the opportunity to visit the campus (see Recommendation 2).

C6.10   The Panel was aware that there was a relatively high number of staff who were employed as University Teachers. The importance of offering this category of staff sufficient opportunity to develop their teaching skills and scholarship was stressed. The Panel noted that these staff, like University Lecturers, had been offered participation in the University's staff Mentoring Scheme, and each had been allocated a mentor on appointment. Furthermore, the Panel noted that the Human Resources Department had introduced training courses for mentors and mentees to

improve the Mentoring Scheme, and it was recommended that these should also be delivered at the Crichton Campus. (see Recommendation 2)

C6.11 In meeting part-time staff, the Panel considered that this staff group felt well-integrated with full-time staff on the campus and also found the small size of the environment to provide a welcoming and positive atmosphere. Staff did not however have a sense of belonging to the larger academic community of the University of Glasgow's Main campus. In the main, part-time staff commented enthusiastically on their experience at Crichton, reporting that they felt ownership of the courses they delivered to students. Staff did not appear to have a clear sense of opportunities or procedures relating to staff development, nor clear communication links with the management at Crichton Campus. The Panel therefore **recommended** the establishment of a Part-time Staff Liaison Group with representatives from part-time staff and management to provide a forum in which staff could discuss items of mutual interest and raise any issues of concern. This forum could also be used to focus on staff development opportunities for part-time staff.

C6.12 The Director of the Campus and the Director of Studies advised the Panel that the staff workload model developed in the Faculty of Arts was currently under consideration for introduction at Crichton with some modifications. Staff welcomed this move and had been advised that study leave was to be introduced during the next academic session which would present opportunities for increased research activity.

C6.13 On meeting support staff, the Panel identified a high level of pressure on these staff members, often relating to the fact that staff in the support services were working on their own. In particular, opportunities for professional development and attendance at events on the Main campus were found to be restricted due to the lack of available cover from other staff. Staff involved in joint services with the other providers on Campus (IT, Library and Student Support Services) in particular, identified the lack of networking links between Crichton and Gilmorehill. However, the administrative staff at Crichton reported good communications with staff at the Main Campus. The Panel agreed that support staff, including those involved in joint services, should be provided with increased staff development opportunities, and that staffing structures should enable cover to be provided to allow staff development activities to take place (See Recommendation 2).

C6.14 One further issue relating to support staff was highlighted to the Panel. It was reported that the IT Officer had offered a significant amount of teaching support to fourth year students engaged in a Group Project involving complex digital audio/visual editing systems. It is likely that insufficient specific training was offered to students as part of the course, and therefore extensive back-up was required from the IT support staff. The Panel agreed to **recommend** that the content and structure of the technical IT (audio/visual editing) element of the Honours Group Projects should be reviewed by academic staff to ensure that an appropriate level of technical training was provided for the Group Projects, and if necessary the content of the projects themselves should be reviewed.

C6.15 As a general issue, the Panel considered that links between the campus and Gilmorehill required to be strengthened, and therefore **recommended** that steps should be taken to increase and develop links between the University's Main Campus and Crichton both in terms of links between academic departments, and also staff support areas. The following were identified as requiring particular attention:

   i)   increasing on-site delivery of some services to staff at Crichton including, the New Lecturer Programme delivered by the Teaching and Learning Service, training for Staff Mentoring Schemes delivered by Human Resources *(see paragraph C6.9)*;

ii) increasing feedback on quality assurance results pertaining to video-link courses delivered by the Faculty of Arts *(see paragraph E3)*;

iii) improving communications relating to courses which are videolinked to Crichton (or from Crichton) by the appointment of a designated link person on each site to ensure the course documentation, handout distribution and quality assurance mechanisms are effective for these courses *(see paragraph C4.7)*;

iv) the development of links with key support staff (e.g. Special Needs Service, Effective Learning Advisers, Library staff) *(see paragraph C6.13)*;

v) there should be a strengthening of links between the Crichton Campus and the University's Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS) in order to improve recruitment activity within and outside the local region *(see paragraph C5.2)*;

vi) links between the two campuses should ensure that the broader profile and portfolio of work undertaken by Crichton staff was recognised by academic departments at Gilmorehill, particularly in terms of the research activity of Crichton staff *(see paragraph C6.8)*:

vii) improved links with the Teaching and Learning Service should be focused on ensuring that reflective practice is embedded in the curriculum (*see paragraph C3.2)*.

C6.16   With regard to physical learning resources, the Panel had the opportunity to tour the Rutherford & McCowan Building and was impressed by the resources available to students. The campus was praised by staff and students as contributing to the overall atmosphere at Crichton.   Students also commented positively on the level of IT provision available to them. Although of high quality, it was noted that some of the teaching accommodation was approaching maximum capacity with increasing numbers, and that further increases would necessitate the re-location of some lectures to larger accommodation. It was anticipated that this need would be met through the use of larger accommodation in the Browne Building from 2005-06 onwards.

C6.17   Both undergraduate and Research students did however voice some concerns regarding the library provision which included the following: lack of availability of books from Glasgow University Library (GUL), and the slowness of obtaining books from this source; the need to increase the number of journals available on-line; and, particularly for Research students, the short (one week) loan periods from the Crichton Library.   Arising from this discussion with students the Panel **recommended** a review of library procedures taking into account the resource requirements of both the Crichton Library and GUL; and assessing the use of the "hold" system at the Crichton Library with a view to increasing its effectiveness and thus reducing the demand for books from GUL.

C6.18   The students also reported that they were experiencing difficulties in obtaining academic texts from Ottakers, the main book supplier in Dumfries, although staff indicated that dialogue with this company was ongoing and they were therefore anticipating the provision of academic texts from this outlet in due course.

C6.19   With regard to resources for the Students' Representative Council, the Panel was advised that the Crichton SRC had not been allocated its annual share of 'Stint' money from the Main campus, as the allocation for Crichton had been included in the main SRC funding allocation and not passed on to the campus.   The Panel **recommended** that Crichton's share of the SRC 'Stint' money should be allocated directly to the Crichton Campus, and that a case detailing the CSRC's funding

requirements should be made to the Secretary of Court along with a request for a direct allocation of the 'Stint' funds.

D.   The Maintenance and Enhancement of Standards of Awards

D.1   The Panel noted that the focus on the maintenance of standards was generally at module, rather than programme level at Crichton, which was partially due to the relatively recent introduction of the degrees at the campus. The need to increase some focus to programme level, particularly in terms of transparency of overall aims and Intended Learning Outcomes was referred to by the Panel - see section C1.

D.2   The Panel noted from the documentation supplied that there was robust use of the External Examiner system and that External Examiners were appointed for individual modules, or for coherent groups of modules. The Panel noted that External Examiners' reports indicated that the provision at Crichton met the standards of similar modules taught elsewhere in the UK.

D.3   Furthermore there was evidence that feedback from External Examiners was used to review standards and amend procedures, for example double-marking of dissertation essays had been introduced in response to External Examiner comment. All External Examiner reports were submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration.

E.   The Maintenance and Assurance of Quality

E.1   The documentation submitted for the Review included the Quality Assurance Handbook which was issued to all staff. From this Handbook, and also the Self-Evaluation Document, the Panel observed that structured procedures were in place to monitor the curriculum at module level, and that these procedures involved consultation with students, staff and External Examiners. The main vehicle for monitoring was the Module Monitoring Report (MMR) which included data on student and staff feedback, External Examiners and examination boards. Heads of Designation, the Head of Core Modules and Conveners of the Placement, Dissertations and Honours year were then required to submit a report outlining the main points arising from the relevant MMRs which were then scrutinised by the Module Review Committee. Proposals for new modules also followed specific procedures involving scrutiny by External Examiners, the Learning and Teaching Committee, and the Crichton Board of Studies.

E.2   The Panel considered student feedback mechanisms noting that in some cases return rates for module questionnaires was low. The student feedback questionnaires were discussed with the students who met with the Panel, and there appeared to be a lack of understanding of how the results were considered, with a misconception that the questionnaires were not scrutinised by Crichton staff, but sent directly to Gilmorehill. The students also indicated that they did not receive any formal notification of changes made arising from their feedback. They went on to indicate however that there was a strong culture of informal feedback and that in this context they did consider that changes were made in response to issues raised with staff in the course of day-to-day interaction and communication. Staff also acknowledged that the current quality assurance procedures did not include formal feedback to students on curriculum changes arising from the feedback process. While the Panel viewed the current high level of informal dialogue between students and staff positively, the need to improve formal procedures for feedback was identified as being particularly important in a context where student numbers were increasing. The Panel therefore **recommended** that in its quality assurance procedures, staff should ensure that students understood the procedures relating to the feedback mechanisms, and that

systems were in place to ensure that students were advised of any actions arising from feedback. In addition, staff should consider formalising different forms of student feedback currently used, and also methods of improving return rates for student questionnaires.

E.3 The Panel discussed the issue of the interface of course monitoring between the two campuses with staff and noted that staff at Crichton campus received no information on the monitoring process of the modules delivered by video-link from the Main campus, despite the fact that feedback on these modules from Crichton students was provided to Gilmorehill. Similarly, procedures for advising the Faculty of Arts on module monitoring at Crichton were not yet formalised, although some steps had been taken to address this. The Panel suggested that as part of the process of strengthening links with the Main campus (see Recommendation 2) attention should be given to this area, and the Campus' involvement with the University's Faculty Quality Assurance Officer (FQAO) Group should be strengthened.

E.4 Consideration was given to student involvement in the committee structure, and the Panel noted that training for student representatives was not provided. Students also expressed some concern over the operation of the Student/Staff Council and indicated that this committee would benefit from more coverage of academic issues, and an improvement in the system of class representatives on the Council. After discussion of these issues with staff, the Panel **recommended** that there should be review of the operation of the Student/Staff Council to include a more robust system of student representation and that consideration should be given to the most effective means of training students who were to undertake the role of class representative. In this context, attention was drawn to the training organised by the SRC at the Main Campus.

F. Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

F.1 The Campus' relationship with the Main campus, and in particular the Faculty of Arts was explored. The Director of the Crichton Campus acknowledged that there was a need for a clearer structure of dialogue with Gilmorehill, and the Faculty of Arts in particular; although activity had been increased in the last 18 months in order to develop links with that Faculty, and the Panel agreed that this should be pursued in order to enhance the student learning experience. The Panel noted that some current areas of provision, plus new areas under consideration included disciplines (Environmental Studies, Tourism, and Renewable Energy) which did not fit particularly well with the Faculty of Arts.

F.2 The Panel considered the commitment to enabling students to develop skills to become more independent and responsible for their own learning (see SER, paragraph 43) to be a key feature in the enhancement of the student learning process. The Panel therefore explored with staff the development of reflection and the "self-critical learner" throughout the curriculum. It was noted that students were required to provide Reflective Journals as part of the Level 3 Placement and also the Honours project, and the Panel also investigated with staff, the extent to which reflective development featured in the earlier stages of the curriculum. Staff reported that reflective learning was also fostered at Levels 1 and 2 by various means such as advising students to re-draft work in order to develop writing skills, encouraging the use of field-notes and observation notes in various subjects. However, it was noted that in many cases this work was provided to students with little structure, and without feedback, which the Panel considered could result in the possibility of these activities involving minimal reflective process in some students. Taking into account these observations, and also those relating to the assessment of the Reflective Journals discussed in section C3 above, the Panel **recommended** that staff should develop and

build on existing work to encourage and assess reflective development throughout the curriculum with the assistance of the University's Teaching and Learning Service.

F.3 In a recent development, the Effective Learning Adviser had been offered full membership onto the Learning and Teaching Committee in order to ensure that students were given the best possible support in elements relating to academic support, such as study guidance leaflets.

F.4 The Panel identified a further area which could contribute to the enhancement of the student learning experience in **recommending** that the campus should seek student feedback from students after graduation in order to gain holistic feedback on the degree programme. In addition, links with graduates should be maintained in order to develop a profile of employment records associated with the degrees offered at Crichton.

G. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas to be Improved or Enhanced in relation to Learning and Teaching

G.1 The Panel identified many strengths in the provision at Crichton Campus, and were particularly impressed with the enthusiasm of the students, also noting their strong identity with the University of Glasgow. The campus was seen to present a positive environment for both staff and students providing a collegial atmosphere with a strong sense of community in which there were good channels of communication between and among staff and students.

G.2 The level of IT resources available to students was commended, and the accommodation in general was of a high standard, although increasing numbers were causing some overcrowding issues in the lecture room spaces which was being addressed.

G.3 In the course of the Review, the Panel found good practices in teaching, learning and assessment and also noted some innovative approaches in the teaching and assessment methodology deployed on the campus. The Panel was impressed by the focus on reflective development in the programme design and considered this to be an area which could be developed further, particularly with input from the University's Teaching and Learning Service.

G.4 A strengthening of links with the University's Main campus at Gilmorehill was identified as an area which could contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching practices, and specific areas for attention are highlighted in Recommendation 2 in Section H below. The Panel did however note that work in improving communications was underway, particularly with the Faculty of Arts; and the recent agreement that the Director of the Campus would also become an Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts was welcomed.

G.5 The Panel also noted that the structure and content of the Liberal Arts and Creative and Cultural Studies designations of the Liberal Arts programme were currently under review, and members were in agreement that these areas required the attention they were being given by staff.

G.6 In terms of the experience of Research students, the Panel identified a number of areas in which attention was required in order to improve the environment and develop opportunities for this small group of students: see Recommendation 12. Furthermore, the Panel advised that recruitment of Research students should be restricted to those subject areas where the provision of appropriate facilities, infrastructure and environmental needs could be guaranteed at the Crichton Campus.

G.7 Although the small size of the Campus was seen to provide many benefits for students and staff; for example, in terms of individual attention and service provided to

students and the strong collegiate atmosphere; the size of the operation was also seen to present some tensions, particularly in terms of pressure on staff resources.

G.8   The Panel therefore concluded that there was a critical issue of viability for the provision at Crichton and agreed an overarching **recommendation** arising from the Review, that it was essential for the Crichton Campus management team to focus on improvement of critical mass by implementing strategies to increase student numbers, develop mechanisms of delivery and enhancement processes in order to accommodate larger student numbers. These systems should be designed to require less intensive use of staff resources than current practices which were in part a reflection of the present size of the operation. To this end, there should be a review of current activity to ensure that all elements of provision were in accordance with the overall mission of the Campus (for example postgraduate research), and also consideration of developing links with external agencies, such as the Open University, to improve critical mass.

H.   Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, it was agreed that the following recommendations should be made in order to focus areas for improvement and enhancement. These recommendations are prioritised in their order of importance.

Recommendation 1

The Crichton Campus management team should focus on improvement of critical mass by implementing strategies to increase student numbers, develop mechanisms of delivery and enhancement processes in order to accommodate larger student numbers. These systems should be designed to require less intensive use of staff resources than current practices which were in part a reflection of the present size of the operation. To this end, there should be a review of current activity to ensure that all elements of provision were in accordance with the overall mission of the Campus (for example postgraduate research), and also consideration of developing links with external agencies, such as the Open University, to improve critical mass. *(paragraph G.8)*

Action: Director of Crichton Campus

Recommendation 2

Steps should be taken to increase and develop links between the University's Main Campus and Crichton both in terms of links between academic departments, and also staff support areas. The following were identified as requiring particular attention *(paragraph C6.15)*:

 i) increasing on-site delivery of some services to staff at Crichton including, the New Lecturer Programme delivered by the Teaching and Learning Service, training for Staff Mentoring Schemes delivered by Human Resources *(see paragraph C6.9)*;

 ii) increasing feedback on quality assurance results pertaining to video-link courses delivered by the Faculty of Arts *(see paragraph E3)*;

 iii) improving communications relating to courses which are videolinked to Crichton (or from Crichton) by the appointment of a designated link person on each site to ensure the course documentation, handout distribution and quality assurance mechanisms are effective for these courses *(see paragraph C4.7)* ;

 iv) the development of links with key support staff (e.g. Special Needs Service, Effective Learning Advisers, Library staff) *(see paragraph C6.13)*;

v) there should be a strengthening of links between the Crichton Campus and the University's Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS) in order to improve recruitment activity within and outside the local region *(see paragraph C5.2)*;

vi) links between the two campuses should ensure that the broader profile and portfolio of work undertaken by Crichton staff was recognised by academic departments at Gilmorehill, particularly in terms of the research activity of Crichton staff *(see paragraph C6.8):*

vii) improved links with the Teaching and Learning Service should be focused on ensuring that reflective practice is embedded in the curriculum (*see paragraph C3.2*).

Action: Director of Crichton Campus
Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)
Director of TLS
Director of Human Resources
Dean of Faculty of Arts
Convener, Faculty of Arts Board of Studies
Director of SRAS

Recommendation 3

Staff should develop and build on existing work to encourage and assess reflective development throughout the curriculum with the assistance of the University's Teaching and Learning Service *(paragraph F.2)*.

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)
Director of TLS

Recommendation 4

Staff should ensure that clear assessment criteria are set for oral presentations, and this issue should be referred for consideration to the Crichton Campus Learning and Teaching Committee *(paragraph C3.1)*.

Action: Convener of Crichton Campus Learning and Teaching Committee

Recommendation 5

In its quality assurance procedures, the staff should ensure that students understand the procedures relating to their feedback and that systems are in place to ensure that students are advised of any actions arising from feedback. In addition, staff should consider formalising different forms of student feedback currently used, and also methods of improving return rates for student questionnaires *(paragraph E.2, see also paragraph C3.2)*

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)
Quality Assurance Officer

Recommendation 6

The Campus should establish a Part-time Staff Liaison Group with representatives from part-time staff and management to provide a forum in which staff could discuss items of mutual interest and raise any issues of concern. This forum could also be used to focus on staff development opportunities for part-time staff *(paragraph C6.11)*.

Action: Director of Crichton Campus

Recommendation 7

Crichton's share of the SRC 'Stint' money should be allocated directly to the Crichton Campus, and that a case detailing the CSRC's funding requirements should be made to

the Secretary of Court along with a request for a direct allocation of the 'Stint' funds *(paragraph C6.19)*.

Action: Director of Crichton Campus
President of CSRC

Recommendation 8

Support staff, including those involved in joint services, should be provided with increased staff development opportunities, and staffing structures should enable cover to be provided to allow staff development activities to take place *(paragraph C6.13)*.

Action: Director of Crichton Campus
Director of Staff Development Service
Project Manager, Learning Works

Recommendation 9

There should be a review of library procedures taking into account the resource requirements of both the Crichton Library and Glasgow University Library (GUL); and assessing the use of the "hold" system at the Crichton Library with a view to increasing its effectiveness and thus reducing the demand for books from GUL. *(paragraph C6.17)*.

Crichton Campus Librarian
Director of Glasgow University Library

Recommendation 10

Consideration should be given to the introduction of a student mentoring scheme whereby senior students mentored Level 1 students *(paragraph C2.2)*.

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)

Recommendation 11

The Campus, in dialogue with Gilmorehill, should seek to introduce into its strategic plan the development of educational development activity for the University; and that links with both the TLS and GUIDE should be strengthened in order to take this initiative forward *(paragraph B.6)*.

Action: Director of Crichton Campus
Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching),
Director of GUIDE
Director of TLS

Recommendation 12

The following items were recommended in respect of Research students:

All formal meetings between Research students and their supervisors should involve both supervisors, and that video-conferencing could be used in cases where supervisors from the main Gilmorehill campus were involved *(paragraph C5.9)*.

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)

The Campus should ensure that its Research students were provided the opportunity to attend the various research training courses offered at the main Gilmorehill campus, including such courses which were specific to the discipline being researched *(paragraph C6.4)*.

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)

The Campus should ensure that adequate careers advice is made available to its Research students, and that relevant careers advice activity at the Main Campus should also be drawn to the attention of the Research students located at Crichton *(paragraph C5.10).*

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)
Director of the Careers Service

Recommendation 13

The content and structure of the technical IT (audio/visual editing) element of the Honours Group Projects should be reviewed by academic staff to ensure that an appropriate level of technical training was provided for the Group Projects, and if necessary the content of the projects themselves should be reviewed *(paragraph C6.14).*

Action: Director of Studies, Crichton Campus

Recommendation 14

There should be a review of the operation of the Student/Staff Council to include a more robust system of student representation and that consideration should be given to the most effective means of training students who were to undertake the role of class representative. Consideration could be given to interface with the training organised by the SRC at the Main Campus *(paragraph E.4).*

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)
President of CSRC

Recommendation 15

Staff:student contact hours were considered to be high for some modules and it was therefore recommended that these be reviewed; in addition, single sessions exceeding 2 hours should be re-considered in terms of the their educational value *(paragraph C4.6).*

Action: Convener of Crichton Campus Learning and Teaching Committee

Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)

Recommendation 16

The campus should seek student feedback from students after graduation in order to gain holistic feedback on the degree programme. In addition, links with graduates should be maintained in order to develop a profile of employment records associated with the degrees offered at Crichton *(paragraph F.4).*

Action: Director of Studies (Crichton Campus)

Prepared by: Helen Butcher, Senate Office

Last modified on: Tuesday 27 April 2004