Report from Director of Teaching
M Rovatsos, Teaching Committee, 12th March 2014

1. Improving Informatics Feedback
Data gathered regarding return of feedback indicates that 64% of our assignment marks and feedback are returned within 10 working days, and 94% within fifteen working days. Only 1% of all assignment marks have been returned more than a week late. While encouraging, these numbers say little about the quality of feedback, and we will only see from the survey responses obtained later this year to what extent student satisfaction will improve.

2. Survey response rates
Response rates are down on the ESES (non-final-year undergraduate, closed), NSS (final-year undergraduate, open until April) and PTES (postgraduate, open until July) surveys compared to the same time last year. We need to focus on increasing NSS response rates, as the results will not be returned unless we achieved at least a 50% completion rates. We have already emailed all students about this, organised call-outs at lectures, and are updating public displays of our completion rates on a weekly basis in our teaching spaces. We will strengthen this by posting the “You said, we did” reports from last year in the teaching spaces. A social event will be organised after Honours Project submission which will involve students completing their surveys. It is essential that Honours Project supervisors and Personal Tutors now approach their students personally to encourage them to participate.

2. Exploring new mechanisms for staff-student engagement
A second “Informatics Conversations” lunchtime event open to all students and staff was successfully run on 27th February in collaboration with EUSA, with a more formal agenda and plenary debate. We did not manage to increase the numbers of student and staff participation compared to the previous event (around 50 people attended the event), but those present engaged in extensive debate (on the topic of programming teaching).

3. News from College Learning and Teaching Committee
The University is adopting a new policy to publish exam board results (both regarding marks and degree awards) exclusively through EUCLID/MyED in the future. This will be initially rolled out only for final-year undergraduates this year. It is important that Personal Tutors and other staff do not “leak” results in the future to comply with this policy.
A new framework for attendance monitoring is being rolled out, mainly to implement UKBA requirements for overseas students, but it is envisioned that this will be applied to all students. The framework will involve ten “checkpoints” during the academic year to capture student participation in programmes. The School will prepare a plan for implementation of this framework that suits the structure of our programmes and teaching calendar.
The University is keen to **tighten the appeals process**, asking Schools to pre-empt appeals through more internal decision making. Since we have a high rate of MSc appeals, we are one of the Schools under scrutiny.

Efforts are underway to pilot **for-credit undergraduate placements** across various Schools. The proposed single-semester 60-credit model does not work well for our degree programmes, but whole-year (120-credit) or summer (e.g. 20-credit) options may be attractive and proposals for this could be developed further if there is sufficient interest from students and staff.

The **Institute for Academic Development** provides many services to support the development of teaching and staff training which are not sufficiently taken up by Schools. We are encouraged to engage with them and help shape their offerings.