Report from Director of Teaching
M Rovatsos, Teaching Committee, 22nd May 2014

1. Improving Informatics Feedback
In semester 2, our performance on timely return of feedback was down to 57% within 10 working days, and 90% returned within 15 working days. There are still a couple of courses with delays over a week, and one course with a delay of more than a month. We need to continue attempting to stick to these deadlines.

2. Survey response rates
Our final response rate for the National Student Survey, which has now closed, was 67%. This is an improvement over last year’s 60%, but still below the 70% target and among the lowest across the University, despite our efforts to incentivise students by promising to raffle an iPad among them if they achieved more than 70%. We will now have to wait until the summer to obtain the results, and see if our efforts to improve feedback scores have paid off.

3. Appeals and special circumstances
We have been approached by College to look into how we can reduce the number of (mostly unsuccessful) appeals from students on our MSc. Almost all of the appeals involve Special Circumstances information that is not made available before exam boards take place. It is important for PTs to remind students to report such circumstances in good time for them to be considered prior to board meetings, and to also advise against filing appeals that have little chance of being upheld. We are also encouraged to reconvene exam boards (e.g. electronically) to review our decisions where information comes to light that warrants reconsidering specific cases.

4. Curriculum for Excellence – Karen Petrie visit
As members of this Committee will be aware, a major reform of the Scottish schools education system is currently underway, which also effects how computing is taught in the secondary school system, and which will have an impact on the qualifications future students with Scottish qualifications will have. The SICSA Director of Education Karen Petrie from Dundee will give a talk about this on the afternoon of the 23rd of June, all teaching staff are invited.

5. Coursework design workshop
At a recent meeting with a representative from the Institute of Academic Development and Informatics colleagues we discussed ways of helping course lecturers develop or improve their assessment and feedback practices. We decided to plan a half-day workshop where we can look at concrete coursework from select courses so as to provide an opportunity for colleagues to scrutinise their coursework, and in order to spread awareness of good assessment and feedback design practice across the School. This is scheduled to take place during the second half of June, and all interested staff are invited to participate.
6. **Web tools for course registration**

We have been approached by Physics to consider the PATH tool developed by Maths for use within Informatics. In its most basic form, PATH provides a (much) improved user interface to DRPS data that makes it easier for students (and PTs) to browse courses and degree programme requirements in order to make appropriate course choices. More advanced use of its functionality (which requires moderation and periodic update) includes course survey and discussion forum functionality, and it provides a facility for adding further course and programme information and advice. For our School, as much of this functionality is provided by Theon and other web-based tools, we are unsure as to whether we should adopt PATH. A small group involving staff and students has been formed to help make an informed decision on this, and is about to meet soon.

7. **News from College Learning and Teaching Committee**

*The Committee will meet on 21st May so a summary of relevent items is not available at the time of preparation of this report.*