

AGENDA ITEM 12**Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee****12.2 Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 31 October 2007**

The Committee met on 31 October 2007 when there were present: The Chair (Associate Professor G Ryan) presiding, Professors D Armstrong, D Guest, B Sutton and T Rudge, Associate Professors D Airey, C Collyer, M Freeman and P McCallum, Drs C Asmar, S Barrie, D Collins, S Cumming, M Edmond, J Jones, M Rosenman, K Sodersten, R Taylor, C Taylor, S Thomas and F Waugh, Mr J Clegg, A McFarland, J Saurine and Ms S Hanfling. Ms A Griffiths was in attendance.

12.2.1 Annual Reports**12.2.1.1 Learning Centre Annual Report 2006**

(The full report is available from the Committee's website at:

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/learn_teach/2007_agendas.shtml)

The Committee was presented the Learning Centre Annual Report, 2006, by the Head of the Centre, Dr Janet Jones. She informed the committee of:

- A general increase in demand for Learning Centre programs
- Successful SWOT lectures which been held at the beginning of the year
- Particular interest had been shown in the session 'How to avoid plagiarism'
- Approximately 1400 students had their literacy assessed by the centre
- NESB students had increased dramatically at the centre, now making up 60% of all students attending
- An increase in postgraduate students utilising the centres services. Postgraduate students now outnumbered undergraduate students.

All this had been achieved without an increase in staff, the Camperdown office operating with 6.2 FTE staff and Cumberland 1.6 FTE staff.

The Centre contributed to the University well beyond its teaching and research activities. In 2006, Centre staff also participated in:

- SWOT (Sydney Welcome and Orientation) Program
- Faculty orientation sessions
- Postgraduate Student Induction Program (Dean of Graduate Studies)
- Broadway and Mature Age students orientations
- AusAID orientation
- ISSU orientation sessions for international students
- Orientation for the Elite Athletes Program, Womens Sports Association, Sports Union
- Courses and Careers Day and the Prospective Students Information Days
- St Andrews College orientation

Mr Jack Glegg from SUPRA relayed that students report the 1:1 sessions as offered at Cumberland Campus more beneficial than group sessions and asked if it would be possible to increase the number of such sessions at Camperdown. Dr Janet Jones responded saying that 1:1 sessions were

considerably reduced at Camperdown for a number of reasons. One to one sessions are obviously more resource intensive and the Centre is running with low staff levels which make such sessions for the remaining 16 Faculties at the Camperdown/ Darlington campuses difficult to justify. The sessions also seem to work better at Cumberland, probably due to it servicing only one faculty. Dr Jones agreed that an increase in staff and funding levels would help the centre to continue to offer improved services to students on a number of levels.

Dr Taylor asked the difference in the faculty program the Centre offers. Dr Jones explained that the Central Program is not discipline specific. Faculty programs are tailored to the course needs of faculties and disciplines.

The large gap between female and male participation in Centre programs was questioned by a Committee member. The Centre has always attracted more female than male students to its programs, for a variety of reasons. Notably, 2006 saw the highest level of male participation at the Centre to date.

The Committee was unanimous in its support for the Centre and special mention was made of the fantastic staff. The Chair thanked Dr Jones for the report and commended the Learning Centre for its work.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report on the Learning Centre Annual Report 2006.

12.2.1.2 Mathematics Learning Centre Annual Report 2006

(The full report is available from the Committee's website at:

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/learn_teach/2007_agendas.shtml)

Dr Margaret Edmond spoke to this item. It was reported that there has been an 18% increase in enrolments for bridging courses, which are fee based. The Centre is particularly responsive to feedback, with lectures being developed from the recommendations of students.

It was noted by Mr Clegg that it is important that both the Mathematics and Learning Centres be proactive in seeking and requesting additional funding.

There was discussion of the Centres role in helping students to meet the requirements of courses and the difficulty of tutoring students who may be unable to reach such standards. It was mentioned, by way of example, that since the prerequisite of three unit maths had been dropped from Engineering that some students have required intense mathematics support. Dr Edmond explained that Centre staff are placed in a difficult position as it is not their place to advise students on course choices.

The Chair thanked Dr Edmond for the report and relayed the Committees appreciation of the work the Mathematics Learning Centre performs.

The Chair reminded members that if broader issues relating to learning and teaching come to their attention that they can be brought to the Committee meetings for discussion.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report on the Mathematics Learning Centre Annual Report 2006.

12.2.2 Proceedings of the Committee

(1) Other Reports

The Committee also noted the following reports:

- Report from the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) & Pro Vice-Chancellor
- the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 10 October 2007.