

AGENDA ITEM 12**Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee****12.2 Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 16 September 2008**

The Learning and Teaching Committee met on 16 September 2008 when there were present: The Chair (Associate Professor G Ryan) presiding, Professor B Sutton, Associate Professors D Airey, S Barrie, M Freeman, P McCallum and P McGreevy, Drs T Bishop, M Boughton, D Collins, S Cumming, M Edmond, E Fonacier, C Groenlund, J Jones, A Rubino, R Saunders and C Taylor, Mr A Cooper, Ms J Gavan, Mr S Greenland and Mr N Wilson. Drs R Ellis and T Hubble and Ms M Kemmis were in attendance.

The full agenda for the meeting may be accessed on the web:

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/learn_teach/2008_agendas.shtml

12.2.1 Academic Board Policy on Consultation with Students*pages G4-G7*

The Committee is currently involved in identifying and reviewing out-of-date policies. Over the past few months it has reviewed the existing Academic Board principles on Consultation with Students. This document has been reframed as an Academic Board policy with the aim of promoting student and staff dialogue at all levels of the University.

Attached is the existing document and the new policy. The Committee recommends that the Academic Board approve the implementation of the new policy with immediate effect.

Recommendation

That the Learning and Teaching Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the "Academic Board Policy on Consultation with Students" with immediate effect, as set out in the report presented.

12.2.2 Academic Board Review Reports: Faculty of Economics and Business

The Committee received and noted the report of the Academic Board Review of the Faculty of Economics and Business.

The full report is available at:

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/learn_teach/agendas/2008/EB_report_final_BS_120908.pdf

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report of the Academic Board Review of the Faculty of Economics and Business.

12.2.3 Report of the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor

The Committee noted a report from the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor as follows:

(1) Australian Learning and Teaching Council Standing Committee

Each year the Australian Learning and Teaching Council invites two student representatives to join their Award Standing Committee in selecting recipients of the Program, Teaching, Prime Minister's and Career Achievement Awards. All universities are invited to nominate two students (one undergraduate and one postgraduate) who have knowledge of learning and teaching and who may have held a leadership position within their institution. Mr Andrew McLeod, Undergraduate Student in the Faculty of Law and student

representative on the Academic Board, has been selected as the Undergraduate student member of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's Award Standing Committee. Andrew will participate in the full day meeting of the Award Standing Committee next month.

(2) Australian Learning and Teaching Council Grants Scheme

The University of Sydney has three ALTC Grant proposals which have been approved for funding in the 2008 round, as follows:

- **Dr Patricia McCabe** - *Communicating effectively with Indigenous people: a resource for health science students to learn culturally safe interviewing practices.* The University of Sydney is the lead institution working collaboratively with James Cook University
- **Associate Professor Joseph Davis** - *Curriculum renewal in postgraduate information technology education: a response to growing service sector dominance.* The University of Sydney is the lead institution working collaboratively with the universities of Queensland, Melbourne and New South Wales.
- **Dr Sue McAllister** - *Establishing infrastructure and collaborative processes for cross-institutional benchmarking of student clinical performance in speech pathology.* The University of Sydney is the lead institution working collaboratively with James Cook University, La Trobe University and the Universities of Newcastle and Queensland.

This year ALTC will be providing individual written feedback to every applicant who submitted unsuccessful expressions of interest and full proposals in the 2008 funding rounds. Those applicants with high rating expressions of interest will be encouraged to re-submit their applications as proposals in the next funding round.

(3) Learning and Teaching Strategy Group

The Group met earlier this month for a special meeting where the Senate Undergraduate Student Fellow Mr Angus McFarland was invited to speak to the group about his vision for a Learning and Teaching Master Plan and how this plan can be developed in the context of students and student benefits. The Chair of the Academic Board and chairs of the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies committees were also invited to attend to discuss the development of a Master Plan.

Angus outlined his ideas for a Master Plan, emphasising that new leadership at the top gave a sense of renewal, change and an opportunity to re-think where the University was going and provided a perfect opportunity to establish ambitious goals and targets.

He provided a sample of four main goals and targets which included:

1. The highest quality academic experience
2. A supportive and affordable learning environment and experience
3. A commitment to community development and social justice. A social inclusion agenda for Sydney
4. A green University where students learn principles and practices of environmental sustainability

The Group noted that there may be some difficulty in selecting and prioritizing targets because of competing interests within the University but agreed that it was an opportune time to be discussing drafting a plan for change. The next

step would be to take forward to the Senior Executive Group an outline of the broad themes from these preliminary discussions with examples to see whether there would be support for drafting such a plan.

(4) Learning and Teaching Forum for Heads of Schools and Departments

The Deputy Provost has arranged a Forum on Learning and Teaching issues at the University of Sydney for Heads of Schools and Departments to be held in early October. The Forum will involve various speakers providing their comments and views on present issues and future developments in learning and teaching at the University followed by further discussion and debate.

Professor Keith Trigwell will be speaking about the work of the ITL and its work with the faculties, in particular the relationship between cluster co-ordinators and heads of school. Two heads of school from the Faculties of Arts and Science have also been asked to speak about their experiences in the role, specifically in relation to relevant learning and teaching issues they may be facing. The Forum aim is to provide an opportunity for the wider academic community, specifically heads of schools and departments, to engage in discussion about relevant learning and teaching issues.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the report of the Deputy Provost (Learning and Teaching) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

12.2.3 Proceedings of the Committee

(1) Report of the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee

The Chair informed members that he attended the recent meetings of the eLearning Governance Group and the Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching). The minutes of the eLearning Governance Group were circulated to members of the Committee.

(2) Other matters considered by the Committee

The Committee:

- noted the report of the Academic Board meeting of the 27 August 2008; and
- noted a report from the Chair of the Academic Board on the current work of the Assessment Working party, noting that the two major issues being addressed were a review of the Special Consideration policy and the development of the principles that should underpin assessment at the University.

Existing policy



The University of Sydney

Consultation With Students

Approved by: Academic Board in June 1993
Date of effect: June 1993

1. Background

- (1) At its December 1992 meeting the Academic Board adopted the Chair's recommendation that annual reports from Faculties to the Board on student consultation and student representation were no longer necessary.
- (2) The Academic Board subsequently adopted the following principles as recommended by the Committee for Undergraduate Studies and commended them to Faculties to take into account when developing new procedures for student consultation and representation.

2. Principles

- (1) Establishment and maintenance by Faculties and Departments of procedures for seeking regular feedback from students on all matters affecting them in their studies and for involving them, where appropriate, in decisions and discussion affecting their learning, as recommended in the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee's Guidelines for Effective University Teaching (April 1993, 2.1.1, p5).
- (2) Stated recognition by Faculties, Departments and lecturers of the importance of individual interviews between staff members and students and that the responsibility to use feedback and input from students lies with the staff.
- (3) Maintenance and development by Faculties and Departments of Staff/Student Liaison Committees, and meetings with the Student Society in the Faculty, where applicable.
- (4) Appointment of student representatives on Faculty and Department Boards to serve on important standing committees whenever appropriate; appointment of students to new committees and working parties, especially where the agenda concerns students.
- (5) Preparation and publication of Faculty students' guides to consultation. The examples from the Arts and Science faculties have much to recommend them. The faculties that might find this the most profitable are the larger ones, those with more than one site, and those whose students may need especial encouragement to seek consultation. The use of electronic bulletin boards might also be considered.
- (6) Continuing appropriate use by Departments of course questionnaires to seek students' comments on courses taught. These questionnaires should be used

for purposes of formative development. The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) recommends that "information collected (on course evaluation) should include more than outcome measures. Since the quality of student learning is related to the way students learn, information from students on their learning processes can be an important component of evaluation". (Checklist on Valuing Teaching #8, p1).

- (7) When course reviews and course development are undertaken Faculties and Departments seek student comment widely, through questionnaires, membership on committees, and interviews, as recommended in the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's Guidelines for Effective University Teaching (April 1993), 2.2.1, p5. In this case, and in others, the term "students" might be best understood broadly to include past and future students.
- (8) Regular review of procedures by Faculties and Departments to ensure that objectives are being achieved.



The University of Sydney

Academic Board Policy on Consultation with Students

Approved by: Academic Board on 8 October 2008
Date of effect: 9 October 2008

1. Principles

The University is committed to promoting a culture that supports open dialogue with students and respect for student opinion. Free and open discussion with and among students is an essential component of academic discourse, intellectual debate and the evolution of ideas. Consultation with students and student representative bodies, and the involvement of students in collegial decision making is a foundational value of the University and a core element in maintaining and improving quality. Students constitute one of the University's principle constituencies: they make a crucial contribution to the formation of its values, and provide a vital perspective on its academic programs and operations.

The processes outlined in this policy are concrete expressions of a larger educational context that is committed to the exchange of ideas, and to genuine reciprocity in the student-teacher relationship.

2. Policy

2.1 The University will provide opportunities for students to participate in decision making processes of the University at all levels.

2.2 Students and student representative organizations have a responsibility to participate in the decision making processes of the University.

2.3 The University shall ensure student representation on the Academic Board and its subcommittees, on all Faculty Boards and their subcommittees, and shall ensure a role for the elected presidents of SUPRA and the SRC on the Academic Board, Senate liaison committees, and other appropriate fora.

2.4 Faculties shall maintain ongoing dialogue with students through the establishment and maintenance of Staff/Student Liaison Committees, and meetings with student representative organisations, where applicable.

2.5 A variety of other mechanisms will be used to provide opportunities for engagement with students, including (but not necessarily limited to):

- the election or appointment of students to new committees and working parties, especially where the agenda concerns students;
- seeking student input in course reviews and course development through such mechanisms as questionnaires, interviews, and membership on working groups. Where appropriate, the input of recent past students as well as present students will also be sought.

2.6 Faculties will make clear to students the mechanisms for consultation with students in Faculty handbooks, on Faculty websites and in other appropriate places.

2.7 Faculties will seek ongoing student feedback on courses and programs, in line with appropriate Academic Board policies

2.8 Faculties will provide students with feedback about responses and changes made as a result of student input, consultation and student evaluations of courses.

2.9 The University and its faculties will review student consultation procedures regularly, via the Academic Board Review process, and by other appropriate mechanisms to ensure that objectives are being achieved, and will publish the results of such reviews.