

AGENDA ITEM 11**Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee****11.2 Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 11 February 2009**

There were present: The Acting Chair (Professor B Sutton) presiding; Associate Professors S Barrie, C Collyer, T Ho and P McCallum; Drs S Cattle, M Edmund, C Groenlund, J Jones, I Koprinska, N Lusty, H McKenzie, B Rooney, C Smith (for Dr R Saunders), C Taylor, L Treleaven (for Associate Professor M Freeman) and F Waugh; Ms S Hanfling, Ms R Kumar, Mr B Meikle, Mr J Saurine and Mr N White. Mr M Charet was in attendance.

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

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

11.2.1 Academic Board Faculty Reviews**(1) Faculty of Medicine**

The Academic Board Review Phase Three Report for the Faculty of Medicine was circulated as Appendix 1 to the agenda. The Committee was informed that since the Academic Board review, the Faculty of Medicine has reviewed its program of studies, internal management (including the relationship with the Area Health Services), student representation and participation and has worked on increasing student research in the faculty.

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

http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/oldcom/learn_teach/agendas/2009/Appendix_1_Phase_3_Review_Report_Medicine.pdf

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the Academic Board Review Phase Three Report for the Faculty of Medicine as presented.

(2) Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

F4-F5

The Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources provided the attached written update on progress in the twelve months since their review, noting that the faculty had retained a Public Relations firm to address several of the recommendations specifically relating to the placement of the faculty and its programs in the national and global market.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board note the update report from the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources as presented.

11.2.2 Proceedings of the Committee**(1) Ethical Principles regarding Special Consideration**

The Ethical Principles Regarding Special Consideration were discussed at the last meeting of the Committee and were a focus topic at the Academic Board meeting held on 12 November, an extract from the minutes of which was circulated. Professor Sutton spoke to the item, noting that it was expected that faculties would discuss these principles and bring any recommendations back to the Committee for discussion. It was observed that once the principles had been established, the process of turning them into policy and procedure would be relatively straightforward. It was suggested that ideally a centralised process needs to be developed and it was suggested that IT solutions to

assist with processing and tracking be investigated when policy had been developed further.

(2) Reports

The Committee noted the following reports:

- Report of the Academic Board meeting held on 10 December 2008
- Oral report of the Chair

Faculty of Science

FIRST PROGRESS REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHASE THREE

Recommendation 1	Monitoring, recruiting and supporting Indigenous students
Action taken by the Faculty	The main problem here is the lack of numbers of indigenous students in science. This is a problem for all science faculties and it is exacerbated at Sydney because of our maths requirements. We have drawn up a plan for a long-term project with various private and selective schools in the Sydney area, to identify potential future indigenous science students, and we will work with these schools and the DET to develop a career path for these students that includes a science degree at the University of Sydney. The Pro-Dean, Dr Tom Hubble, is leading this initiative. We are also working with the Faculty of Medicine to develop a pathways program for high achieving indigenous students, through our Advanced Science degree and Talented Student Program, to graduate medicine.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	We will complement this program with a tracking and support package to be developed.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	On track
Recommendation 2	Enhancing efficiency of teaching.
Action taken by the Faculty	The dean has held discussions with all heads and in some instances the entire academic staff, of schools (Mathematics and Statistics being the most recent example), to decrease contact hours in first year units of study, to bring them into line with Academic Board guidelines. This will not only decrease staff teaching loads but also save schools significant amounts of money. In addition, schools have been urged to continue to review their senior offerings with a view to reducing overlap and consolidating their units of study. Some schools are well on the way to achieving this.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	This will be monitored annually.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	This project has been met with considerable resistance by academics in some schools, but the recent request from the Vice Chancellor to cut spending by 6% seems to have engaged the heads of school and I am confident of achieving our target of five contact hours per six credit point first year unit of study over the next year.
Recommendation 3	Integration of faculty and school planning and activities.
Action taken by the Faculty	The faculty has participated in a pilot project involving development of school and faculty strategic planning using the balanced scorecard template developed by the planning office. This has been accomplished with the school of chemistry and will be rolled out across the faculty in 2009.

Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The faculty will implement strategy design sessions with heads of school and associate deans early in the year, to develop plans of action that can be readily incorporated into the detailed planning that occurs as part of the university's budget process.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	We have an 11 page spreadsheet detailing actions to achieve strategic goals associated with the budget process and this will be updated yearly.
Recommendation 4	Postgraduate coursework
Action taken by the Faculty	We have begun a careful cost analysis of our PG course work offerings and have placed several programs on notice to improve student numbers or face the axe. We are also undertaking market research and bench marking with competitors to determine new markets and new degrees. One of these will involve the Institute of Sustainable Solutions.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A new Director of PG coursework will be appointed in 2009 and this person will work closely with the marketing team to develop new programs.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Notwithstanding the above, the faculty needs to be clear about its core values and not get carried away with developing courses just to raise revenue. There needs to be clearly defined demand and the desire of staff to teach these courses and they must be aligned with our goals. Ensuring pathways to HDR programs will be a priority.
Recommendation 5	Feedback to research students
Action taken by the Faculty	The Director of PG research is developing new guidelines to ensure better and clearer feedback to students through annual reports. The Director of PG research held a discussion session with postgraduate coordinators at the October meeting of the Board of Postgraduate Research to ensure better and clearer feedback to students through the annual review process. Almost all candidates in the Faculty will have annual interviews with School based review panels as part of the APR process.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Some schools (noticeably, Physics) now include annual interviews with their PhD students and I am urging all schools to adopt this procedure
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Recommendation 6	Development of research students careers.
Action taken by the Faculty	The faculty is developing workshops to assist PhD students in obtaining employment after their degrees and to plan their careers.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	At the moment this is focused on research careers but we will work with Sydney Talent to present alternatives to HDR students in the new year.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of	A work in progress

action taken	
Recommendation 7	Support for research students to attend overseas conferences
Action taken by the Faculty	This matter has been referred to heads of schools as the faculty wishes to continue to devolve most of its research support funds to the schools. Most schools have a scholarship program for this purpose but I don't expect that this will be enhanced much in the near future as we have been urged to cut our travel expenses.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	