

Faculty of Science

Progress Report Academic Board Review Phase 2

Goal 1: Quality of Teaching

Recommendation 1	The Review Team notes that the project on group work is in its early stages but also noted continuing student concerns. It recommends that students be informed of the existence and progress of the project. <i>(See 4.3.5)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The TIF (2003) project group work has been reporting back through the T&L Committee. Their final report will be disseminated to the rest of the Faculty (expected May 2004).
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A report has been presented to the T and L Committee and the group was commended for its efforts. The report will be posted on the Faculty T and L website (to be created early 2005) and a workshop arranged to disseminate outcomes to members of the faculty
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Evaluation will be developed following implementation in 2005

Recommendation 2	The Review Team commends the work being done in the Faculty in relation to feedback on assessed work and assessment standards, and recommends that these areas of good practice be promulgated throughout the Faculty. <i>(See 4.4.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The Faculty is conscious of the need to give good feedback and has reminded all unit coordinators of this need. Standards of assessment across the Faculty are being investigated by the T & L Committee to see if there is a way of improving the consistency.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A review of the methods of giving feedback to students will be undertaken in 2005 and a set of guidelines for staff produced. Examples of good practice will be posted on the website and a seminar workshop organised on this topic. Two education research projects are currently investigating feedback. Presentations will be made to SCIFER and a wider Faculty audience during 2005
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Ensure all UoS following guidelines Check results of uSE and SCEQ for improvements in student perception of feedback
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 3	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty considers ways of ensuring the consistency of the application of marking schemes within schools. <i>(See 4.4.6)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	Marking practices between tutors is a difficult problem in a large faculty with multiple markers. There is a continual endeavour to get tutor/demonstrator marking to follow the marking schemes set by the unit coordinators. There is now a tutor/demonstrator training program in place (2003) which is ongoing. It is hoped that the collegiality of this program will enable casual markers to confer with one another and to follow the procedures set for them so that marking becomes more consistent.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	It will take another year or two in a faculty of this size to close this loop. Better guidelines are needed and better faculty communication both up and down is required. The program's usefulness is the subject of a current small research project (Stewart, George, Peat). Further information on school activities will be collected during the exercise on feedback. Examples of good practice in marking will be posted on the faculty T and L webpages.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee is taking responsibility for this program from 2005 and a review of its success will be conducted by the tutor training working party at the end of 2005. Special attention will be paid to areas dealing with assessment practices.
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 4	The Review Team noted the Faculty's involvement in the ITL research-led teaching project and recommends that it investigates ways of disseminating its success in this area across the University. <i>(See 4.5.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The Faculty was commended on its activity in this area but the Faculty itself believes that its own report on the diversity of the ways in which research-led teaching is embedded within curriculum is not disseminated sufficiently within the Faculty.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The Faculty will take it upon itself to make sure all staff are aware of the excellent report that was prepared by Professor Andrews for the University Working Party. A workshop on good practice will be incorporated into a series (starting in 2005 with feedback and groupwork) to communicate these outcomes to faculty. Communication of good practice will be a focus of T and L efforts in 2005.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	An evaluation of SCEQ and USE data is in progress during 2005 (funding by a large TIF grant). Research-led teaching is an area for investigation within this survey.
Action taken by the Faculty	We are including examples of good practice in this area on the faculty website and organising seminars to demonstrate initiatives.

Recommendation 5	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty continue to monitor student concerns on tutor training and make arrangements for tutor training known to students. <i>(See 4.7.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	See Recommendation 3.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	See Recommendation 3.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Need to review outcomes of the program in terms of changes to teaching practices. Check SCEQ and USE.
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 6	The Review Team recommends that areas of good practice in relation to informing students on the outcomes of their feedback should be disseminated throughout the Faculty. <i>(See 4.7.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The understanding was that all unit coordinators will make sure that by 2004 there is a suitable paragraph on feedback and how it has been addressed in the 2004 unit notes or on the WebCT site. The T&L Committee is checking if this has been done.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A faculty TIF project is trialing a program which will allow coordinators to provide feedback on USE data directly to students through a unit website.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 7	Whilst acknowledging that the management of double degrees is a University wide issue, and that steps have been taken to improve communication and advice to students undertaking combined degrees, the Review Team suggests that the Faculty ensure that students are provided with consistent guidance on the structure of each degree. <i>(See 4.11.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	This has largely been taken over by the Special Committee of the Academic Board – Governance of Combined Degrees. In addition the introduction of 6 credit points for units of study will allow better uniformity across degree programs.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The idea is that one person will have responsibility for the double degree and this will be the “professional” program eg. An Engineering/Science degree will be managed by Engineering; a Nursing/Science degree by Nursing, etc. There will be some exceptions. At the same time and during the change over period there is a person from the Faculty responsible in advising students about the double degrees that are available.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	It is too soon to evaluate the outcomes of these moves by the University.
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 8	The Review Team noted the current strategies and suggests that the Faculty puts further processes in place to manage the expansion in postgraduate coursework student numbers. (<i>See 4.12.1</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	A quota has been placed on GradDipSc(Psych) numbers and there is a quota on MN&D students. The main pressure on numbers was in IT (although numbers have stabilised) so action has been directed towards improving that situation. This was done by (a) increasing the proportion of continuing academic staff in relation to casual/contract staff and (b) appointing a Director of Coursework Programs in SIT. Section 4.12.1 mentions NESB students. In degree programs where options are available, students choose their own options and are not discriminated against on the basis of their background. IELTS values have already been raised for the Nutrition degrees (from 6.5 to 7.5).
Further action planned but not yet implemented	IELTS levels in the Master of Environmental Science & Law are likely to be raised from the existing 6.5.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The effectiveness of quotas in allowing for quality learning will be evaluated at the end of 2004. Quotas for MN&D and GradDipSc(Psych) enrolments are working well, allowing for approp levels of supervision of research projects. The appointment of a Director of Coursework Programs has been most successful. Each student is interviewed and advised on their choice of units at the commencement of study in each semester and the Director, who also teaches in the program, is available for student consultation on most days.
Action taken by the Faculty	The position of Director of Coursework Programs in SIT is to continue and quotas will be maintained on intakes to MN&D and GradDipSc(Psych). In response to difficulties experienced in verbal communication by some NESB students, IELTS values have been raised in 2005/2006 in the MEnvSc&Law and MAppSc(PsychCoach) where verbal and written communication skills are essential.

Recommendation 9	The Review Team recommends that the faculty bring together some new timelines into a postgraduate review policy so that its quality assurance processes in this area are transparent. (<i>See 4.12.2</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	Degree programs are reviewed at 5 year intervals as required by the Academic Board. Where improvements can be identified over shorter time frames, these are introduced as soon as feasible. A list of Science Faculty Postgraduate coursework degrees, with review dates and review history, is attached. The majority of coursework programs were introduced since 2000 so will reach their formal review period in 2005 onwards.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The Nutrition degrees were formally reviewed in 2001. These degrees will be prepared for continued accreditation at the end of 2004 when it is planned to conduct a full review (even though this is not required until 2006).
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Review dates and review history were attached with the original documentation. The Nutrition degrees were reviewed in 2001 and will go through an accreditation process in 2005. A formal review of the programs will take place following accreditation. The IT degrees were reviewed in late 2003 and granted provisional accreditation for 2005. A formal accreditation review is currently being conducted by the professional body.
Action taken by the Faculty	Recommendations of previous reviews have been assessed and implemented where relevant and possible. Program Chairs will be circulated with a timetable for proposed review of degree

Recommendation 10	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty improves awareness of the Academic Board policy: The use of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students in postgraduate courses and ensure compliance with, and consistency in, its application in all departments and schools. (See 4.12.3)
Action taken by the Faculty	The Academic Board's policy on parallel teaching was emailed to all Program Chairs and emphasised at a meeting of the Programs Chairs (Feb 2004). The issue was discussed at this meeting and, where some parallel teaching was identified, rectification has proceeded on a unit-by-unit basis (eg video-taping of some lectures where introductory material is covered at both senior undergraduate and beginning postgraduate levels).
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The issue of parallel teaching will be reported on at next semester's meeting of Program Chairs. This was done in Semester 2, 2004.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Compliance – individual units in which some parallel teaching occurred were identified; parallel teaching in one case was phased out in semester 1, 2004 and in another will cease at the end of 2004.
Action taken by the Faculty	Meetings of Program Chairs will provide an avenue for continued monitoring and compliance with the Academic Board's policy on parallel teaching.

Goal 2: Diversity, Access and Equity

Recommendation 11	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty be more proactive in seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for its courses and suggest using the Koori Centre and the School Outreach program for this purpose. It further recommends the establishment of a foundation program targeted to the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. (See 5.5.1)
Action taken by the Faculty	This issue has been taken on board by the College. There is a research project which is starting in May in the Koori Centre. In addition UniServe Science will investigate aspects of "science and aboriginal students" through its teacher network as part of its schools outreach programs.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Suggestions for interesting "science snippets" that should be available for dissemination to Koori populations could include nutritional research (Jenny Brand-Miller). There is a need to think science from an Aboriginal perspective. It was suggested that Noel Dickson in CREO could be useful in finding out some of the outreach issues for the College in regional areas. With respect to a new Foundation Program, it is acknowledged that there is a Continuing Education University Preparation Program for the science, which has considerable faculty involvement. The College will take the initiative to investigate examples of science that may be of interest to aboriginal children. This will be one of the priorities in the CST T&L plan.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Action taken by the Faculty	

Goal 3: Excellence in Research

Recommendation 12	The review Team recommends that the Faculty further investigate opportunities for formal international and local benchmarking in this area in order to assist planning the next stage of the Faculty's growth. <i>(See 6.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The Faculty, in collaboration with the office of the DVCRI, is undertaking a fully fledged research assessment exercise which will benchmark it against national and international competitors and allow strategic planning at the school level.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The results of the RAE will be analysed by discipline and school, to provide strategic direction for research support within the faculty, in order to maximise the faculty's research standing.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Action taken by the Faculty	

Recommendation 13	The Faculty is advised by the Review Team to improve communication to students and staff regarding the University Intellectual Property Rule. <i>(See 6.5)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first time, a compulsory question regarding IP was included in the 2003 Annual Progress Form for students to answer indicating compliance or otherwise with the University IP rule. • IP is covered at the University Postgraduate Induction Days, and reinforced at School induction sessions for new students. • Heads of Schools and Postgraduate Coordinators have been asked to arrange presentations from BLO staff in their Schools.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up audit of Schools to ascertain whether formal IP presentations have occurred • Annual monitoring of responses to IP question on Annual Progress Form.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of an IP question on the 2003 Annual Progress form was highly effective in identification of students who did not understand, or had concerns, regarding IP. • The Associate Dean, via the relevant postgraduate coordinators, contacted all students who failed to answer the IP question, or were unsure about IP, to clarify the IP associated with their research.
Action taken by the Faculty	Units of study dealing with IP will be included in the proposed Bachelor of Science and Technology Degree

Goal 4: Internationalisation

Recommendation 14	The Review Team suggests that the Faculty address issues relating to the entry standard and support for international students, especially in relation to ensuring that NESB students have the necessary language skills to do the courses. The Review Team further recommends that the Faculty investigate the provision of an induction program for all students arriving at non-standard times. <i>(See 7.2.3)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	Faculty is making a submission to the Academic Board to set the required IELTS score for all Science degrees at 7.0 (minimum 6 in every band).
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	International enrollment dates are to be moved back by at least one week to ensure that commencing students can participate in the Faculty's orientation programs such as the Transition Workshop for first year students. There are still some negotiations to be finalized with the International Office about this change.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Action taken by the Faculty	

Goal 5: Effective Management

Recommendation 15	The Review Team noted the concern of students about the clarity of the Faculty handbook, and suggests that more resources be invested in preparing a user friendly and understandable publication. <i>(See 9.5)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	In response to the comments about the difficulty students were having reading the handbook, a set of introductory pages were incorporated into the 2004 Handbook that are called "the handbook made simple". They include pathways through some of the degree programs to help the student to map their own learning pathways.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	
Action taken by the Faculty	