ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICY COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 8 June 2016
Senate Room, Quadrangle (A14)

Members Present: Professor Jane Hanrahan (Chair); Helen Agus, Science; Associate Professor Tim Allender, Education and Social Work; Associate Professor Geoff Frost, Business School; Associate Professor Tania Gerzina, Dentistry; Associate Professor Peter Gibbens, Engineering and IT; Professor Manuel Graeber, Medicine; Thomas Greenwell, nominee, SUPRA; Kylee Hartman-Warren, Postgraduate Student; Kerrie Henderson, Office of General Counsel; Associate Professor Glen Hill, Architecture, Design and Planning; Associate Professor Veysel Kayser, Pharmacy; Dr Peter Knight, Medicine; Associate Professor Tony Masters, Chair of the Academic Board; Associate Professor Peter McCallum (for Professor Pip Pattison); Associate Professor Mark Melatos, Arts and Social Sciences; Professor Greg Tolhurst, Law; Subeta Vimalarajah, Undergraduate Student.

Attendees: None.

Apologies: Associate Professor Thomas Bishop, Agriculture and Environment; Dr Frances Di Lauro, Arts and Social Sciences; Associate Professor Ann Elias, Sydney College of the Arts; Professor Pip Pattison, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Associate Professor Peter McCallum attending instead); Associate Professor Maurice Peat, Business School; Associate Professor Jennifer Rowley, Sydney Conservatorium of Music; Dr Debra Shirley, Health Sciences.

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
The Chair welcomed members and conveyed apologies form those unable to attend.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS
2.1 Minutes of Meeting 2/2016 on 15 May 2016
Members confirmed the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 May 2016.

Resolution ASPC2016/3-1
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolved that the minutes of meeting 2/2016, held on 15 May 2016, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising
There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

3 STANDING ITEMS
3.1 Report of the Chair
The Chair advised that she had nothing to add to the written report.

Resolution ASPC2016/3-2
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 18 May 2016
In addition to the written report, Associate Professor Masters advised that at a recent meeting of the NSW Chairs of Academic Board and Senate, the University’s adoption of HSC Mathematics as a prerequisite for admission to a suite of degrees was praised as “a game changer” and has already had a marked effect on driving student and teacher behaviour.

Resolution ASPC16/3-3
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 18 June 2016.
4 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4.1 Curriculum Framework

Associate Professor McCallum spoke to a proposal to amend the Coursework Policy 2014 and the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015 to accommodate the curriculum framework in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, following discussion of the amendments at the SEG Education, ASPC and Undergraduate Studies Committees. The Committee was advised that minor wording changes remain to be made to the Coursework Policy, including further refinement of several definitions. Faculties have the option of deciding in which pool their undergraduate degrees sit, with clarification now provided as to the definitions of Liberal Studies and professional or specialist degrees. A course resolution proposal for the Bachelor of Advanced Studies degree is anticipated for approval to August meetings of the appropriate committees.

In discussion, it was confirmed that at the moment the Bachelor of Advanced Studies was anticipated as a minimum AQF 7 qualification, but could be AQF 8 if it included an Honours component; there may also be merit to classifying the qualification as AQF 8 on the basis of the standards acquired and this would be a decision for the Academic Board to make in its assessment of the course when it is submitted.

A number of other suggestions were made: the inclusion of 5000 and 6000-level units of study under clause 9(k) was identified as problematic; the ban on use of third party learning technologies at 20(1) should be amended to allow such use, with the proviso that work must be able to be retrieved from such systems in the case of appeals, requiring some assessment of the tool by staff who are intending to use it; and the use of the term ‘faculty boards’ in Part 5(3)(a) was amended to ‘faculties’, noting that these responsibilities may be further impacted by forthcoming organisational change.

Pending these minor changes, the proposal to amend the Coursework Policy 2014 and the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015 was approved.

Resolution ASPC16/3-4
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommends that the Academic Board approve amendment of the Coursework Policy 2014 and the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015 embedding the curriculum framework of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, as presented.

4.2 Honours in Combined Degrees with Bachelor of Advanced Studies

Associate Professor McCallum spoke to a proposal to amend the Coursework Policy 2014 as it relates to Honours in combined degrees with the Bachelor of Advanced Studies. A model was presented for approval, presenting Honours as an integrated program rather than appended so no extra year will be required to complete an Honours qualification. Nomenclature would signpost where and how the honours component was undertaken, with the possibility remaining that students could undertake Honours in the primary Liberal Studies (non-Advanced Studies) degree, or in the area of a second major. It is also proposed that the faculty offering the honours component would administer the candidature, including definition of admission and award criteria.

In discussion, the Committee was advised that it would be possible for students who have completed undergraduate qualifications elsewhere to transfer into the program, and at present there is no need for policy amendments to allow stand-alone enrolment in the Bachelor of Advanced Studies 3rd Year to enable this. Associate Professor Frost noted inconsistence in Honours grading presented in clauses 95, 96, 97 and 98, and Associate Professor McCallum advised that the award of Honours 1 for integrated programs is currently set at 75%. The Committee was also advised that a proposal from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies (FEIT) is being submitted to the Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting of 15 June regarding the grading of Honours 3, necessitated by accreditation.

The setting of minimum standards for the award of a degree with Honours was raised, with an argument that an Honours result of less than 65% indicates that the student has not met the standard required for the award of Honours. Associate Professor McCallum advised that the grading for integrated Honours is based on different criteria to appended Honours, and is WAM-based rather than grading a dedicated program of study assessed against defined standards. The establishment of faculty-specific thresholds for Honours was flagged as problematic, but it was agreed to focus on the proposal as presented, rather than incorporating the potential proposal from FEIT into consideration.
The proposal was approved as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/3-5
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee:
(1) endorsed the model for honours and double honours in combined degrees with the Bachelor of Advanced Studies;
(2) recommend that the Academic Board approve changes to the Coursework Policy 2014 arising from the model; and
(3) flag an intention to consider moving appended honours programs for stand-alone Liberal Studies into the proposed combined degree model; as presented.

4.3 Learning and Teaching Procedures
Associate Professor McCallum spoke to a proposal to introduce a revised set of Procedures to accompany the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015. This is an update to a draft presented to the Committee at its meeting of 20 April, with changes requested by faculties during consultation highlighted for easy identification. It was noted that some of the text as originally proposed has subsequently been moved into the Learning and Teaching Policy 2015.

The proposal was approved as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/3-6
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend the adoption of the Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016, as presented, to the Academic Board and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education).

4.4 Simple Extensions – Amendment to Assessment Procedures 2011
Ms Henderson spoke to a proposal to amend the Assessment Procedures 2011 relating to simple extensions, arising from the previous approval of amendments to the Coursework Policy 2014 to reinstate a specific reference to the use of simple extensions. The amendments allow faculties to determine the process for managing simple extensions, with minimum requirements set. A system of permanent record-keeping has yet to be developed, although Mrs Agus advised that the Working Group discussed tracking and uploading email permissions to Records Online, with the importance of University-wide access to records of simple extensions flagged as a necessity to address equity concerns with exploitation and to assist in identifying students who may need additional support. Associate Professor Frost suggested that the proposed system for managing simple extensions may be over-managing, with the process likened to Special Consideration 'lite'.

To determine the level of take-up and administration of simple extensions, it was agreed that faculties be asked to report on instances of simple extension at the end of each semester.

The proposal was approved as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/3-7
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011, as presented, with immediate effect.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Phase 4 Faculty Review Report and Faculty Response – Health Sciences
The Phase 4 Faculty Review Report and Faculty Response for the Faculty of Health Sciences was circulated to the Committee, and noted as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/3-8
The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the Phase 4 Faculty Review Report and Faculty Response for the Faculty of Health Sciences, as presented.

5.2 Report of the Simplification of Examination Processes Working Group meeting of 23 May 2016
The Report of the Simplification of Examination Processes Working Group meeting of 23 May was circulated to the Committee, along with a confidential paper prepared by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) for the Senior Executive Group on Simplified End of Semester Examinations Arrangements.

The Chair acknowledged the work of the Associate-Professor Susan McGrath-Champ and the
members of the Working Group. In discussion, it was noted that the report of the Registrar only relates to written exams and members made a number of suggestions that they were encouraged to pass directly to the Registrar. While members of the committee were generally supportive of the proposed simplified measures, a number of issues were raised, and the Chair agreed to pass these to the Registrar.

Feedback from academic staff on examination processes for Semester 1 suggests that the new timetabling system is extremely inflexible, both as to timing and location. Concern was also expressed relating to special arrangements for alternative examinations or exam conditions managed through Disability Services, with possible impact on academic honesty. Clarification was sought relating to the number of alternate exam papers that staff might reasonably be expected to produce, noting a challenge to maintain standards and ensure equity of assessment. Access to seating patterns particularly with tiered seating arrangements, was requested, as well as the incorporation of de-identified and anonymous examinations.

Members were informed that assessment procedures are to be brought to the Committee in future, and that the Exams Unit is currently working with Records to develop an online reporting mechanism for exam misconduct. The impact on unit of study coordinators of the volume of material (especially new procedures) coming from the Registrar’s Office in recent months was also raised. The current requirement to produce exam scripts before all of the course content has been delivered was highlighted as a challenge, as is the lateness of availability of exam timetables, the latter especially impacting outgoing Study Abroad students.

**Resolution ASPC16/3-9**

*The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report of the Simplification of Examination Processes Working Group meeting held on 23 May 2016, as presented.*

5.3 **2015 Academic Dishonesty Reports reminder**

Members were reminded that 2015 Academic Dishonesty Reports are to be returned to the Secretary by 30 June 2016, for reporting at the following meeting.

**Resolution ASPC16/3-10**

*The Academic Standards and Policy Committee noted the report on the review of policies in 2016.*

6 **OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 **Any Other Business**

Clarification of the role of the Committee was requested, especially relating to the setting and maintenance of academic standards. It was agreed that the Committee checks performance against standards, but is not currently empowered to set these standards, nor to write policy. Associate Professor Masters informed the Committee that an external review of the Academic Board is anticipated to take place in the second half of 2016, and suggested that the role and scope of both the Board and its Standing Committees might best be addressed through the consultation process relating to this review.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:40pm.

**Next meeting:** 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Wednesday 20 July 2016**

Senate Room, Quadrangle

Remaining Meeting Dates for 2016:

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 20 July 2016
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 24 August 2016
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 12 October 2016
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 9 November 2016

A full copy of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee papers is available at: [http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/ac_stands/ac_stands_agendas.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/ac_stands/ac_stands_agendas.shtml)