ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICY COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 24 August 2016
Senate Room, Quadrangle (A14)

Members Present: Professor Jane Hanrahan (Chair); Helen Agus, Science; Associate Professor Tim Allender, Faculty of Education and Social Work; Associate Professor Alex Chaves, Veterinary Science; Associate Professor Tania Gerzina, Dentistry; Associate Professor Peter Gibbens; Engineering and IT; Thomas Greenwell, President, SUPRA; Kerrie Henderson, Office of General Counsel; Dr Peter Knight, Medicine; Associate Professor Tony Masters, Chair of the Academic Board; Associate Professor Mark Melatos, Arts and Social Sciences; Associate Professor Maurice Peat, Business School; Associate Professor Jennifer Rowley, Sydney Conservatorium of Music; Dr Debra Shirley, Health Sciences; Professor Greg Tolhurst, Law (until 3pm).

Attendees: Matthew Charet (Secretary); Hilde Driessen, Change Specialist SAS; Myrophora Koureas, Policy Analyst, SAS; Lynda Rose, Office of the Provost.

Apologies: Dr Frances Di Lauro, Arts and Social Sciences; Associate Professor Glen Hill, Architecture, Design and Planning; Associate Professor Veysel Kayser, Pharmacy; Professor Pip Pattison, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

MINUTES

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

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS
2.1 Minutes of Meeting 4/2016 on 20 July 2016
Members confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 July 2016.
Resolution ASPC16/5-1
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 4/2016, held on 20 July 2016, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising
No updates on the actions of the last meeting were provided.

3 STANDING ITEMS
3.1 Report of the Chair
The Chair advised members that the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to amend the Coursework Policy 2015 to enable the award of Honours to students with an average mark of 50% and above, was approved by the Academic Board. The Board also approved the adoption of the new Academic Honesty Procedures 2016, subject to clarification of several small points which are expected to be resolved soon.
Resolution ASPC16/5-2
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 17 August 2016
Noting the written report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters drew the attention of members to the change of day for meetings of the Board in 2017 (from Wednesday to Tuesday), and to the earlier starting time of 1pm.
Resolution ASPC16/5-3
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 17 August 2016.
ASPC Minutes of Meeting held 24 August 2016

4 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4.1 Student Discipline Rule

The Chair introduced this item by advising that the Rule had not been presented to the committee for approval, but rather as an opportunity for members to provide feedback to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar), Professor Carlin, who attended the meeting to speak to the item.

Professor Carlin contextualised the draft Rule by advising that policy governing student misconduct is currently located within Chapter 8 of the University of Sydney By-Law 1999. The By-Law is complex and necessitates cross-referral of decisions between the Registrar and the Vice-Chancellor, extending the time taken to resolve any investigation of misconduct. Because it is government legislation, amendment to the By-Law is also difficult, and it is therefore proposed to replace this section of the By-Law with a new Student Discipline Rule. Like the By-Law, this Rule establishes streamlined procedures and responsibilities for assessment of matters of student misconduct, as well as rights of appeal. Identification of when the Vice-Chancellor needs to be involved in the process, clarification of the interaction of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) and Vice-Chancellor, and procedural fairness have all been incorporated into the draft Rule.

In discussion, Mr Greenwell asked that section 4.6(1)(d) addressing misconduct in connection with the Residential Colleges be made stronger, especially in light of ongoing student concerns with aspects of College culture and behaviour. Professor Carlin advised that the University is bound by joint-investigation protocols and that because the Colleges are independent entities, the University cannot dictate how they operate. This section of the draft is consistent with these protocols.

Professor Tolhurst sought clarification as to why clause 4.2(3)(a)(iv) should not be mandated, and was advised that 4.2(3)(a)(i) permits a student to be referred for counselling or other support services, and that this does not constitute “no further action”. Professor Tolhurst also questioned the assignment of action under clause 4.5 to a nominee and was advised that the decision remains with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) but that the preliminary investigation (that is, establishment of facts) can be conducted by a nominee. The cumulative requirements in clause 4.5 were noted to be absent from clause 4.4 and Ms Henderson took this under advisement.

Limitation of who may raise a complaint under clause 4.2(1) was discussed, with the intention of tightening this up to prevent vexatious claims. Professor Carlin advised that an evidentiary threshold needs to be met before proceeding with any matter, and it is therefore undesirable to limit who may raise a concern. The option for the investigator not to interview a witness (provided for in clause 4.6(5) could be exercised, for example, when there was good documentary evidence. It was agreed that the use of gender-binary language be avoided where possible and references to “his or her” be changed throughout.

The challenge of preventing students who have been excluded from campus from being on University property was raised, and members were advised that it is intended to put such students in a “position of peril” if they act against the exclusion. Campus Security and/or the police will be used to address any infringement if necessary. Protections for people reporting misconduct were also discussed, with Ms Henderson advising that the Reporting Wrongdoing Policy 2012 and Resolution of Complaints Policy 2015 set out the University’s position on this matter, with consideration to procedural fairness to preserve where reasonably possible the anonymity of complainants.

The simplification of the Rule in comparison to Chapter 8 of the By-Law was highlighted as a
means of ensuring that processes are clear, involve as few transactions as is consistent with good
practice, and should both speed up processing and reduce the grounds for appeal.

**Resolution ASPC16/5-4**

*That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee consider the proposed Student Discipline
Rule and provide feedback to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar)*.

### 4.2 Definition of ‘academic honesty’

This item was raised by Dr Knight, who asked whether the matter of student publication or
dissemination of assessment questions or responses, whether for profit or not, needs to be
explicitly addressed in a University-level policy. Noting the challenge of addressing this matter via
existing Academic Honesty or Learning and Teaching policies and procedures, the possibility of
including provisions to prevent such action in the Student Discipline Rule was suggested. In light
of the discussion of Item 4.1 above, Ms Henderson advised that if this is to be accommodated in
policy, it would be more appropriately located in the Academic Honesty Policy 2015 than the
Student Discipline Rule, as the Rule provides high-level responsibilities and processes and is
more difficult to adjust. If a student is explicitly instructed not to disseminate assessment tasks or
responses, breaches can be addressed by recourse to the Student Code of Conduct and the
Academic Honesty Policy; the Employment Law team in the Office of General Counsel are able to
advise on how to proceed in such cases. The Chair undertook to contact the Director, Educational
Strategy, to clarify this.

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Ms Henderson suggested the following addition to clause 7(2)
of the Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015:

(m) providing assessment questions or answers (for payment or otherwise) to operators of
websites, or other third parties, which or who the student knew (or ought reasonably to
have known) may use them to facilitate academic dishonesty or other improper use of the
material.

This amendment will be proposed to a future meeting.]

### 4.3 Simplified End of Semester Examination Arrangements – Changes to Assessment
Procedures 2011

The Chair advised that this proposal provides a refinement of clauses 8(3), 8(4) and 8(5) of the
Assessment Procedures 2011 to reduce the number of exam durations and standardise reading
time for formal examinations. Professor Carlin advised that the proposal has arisen from a desire
to improve the academic integrity of examination conditions (such as use of venues and
invigilation), and will also simplify the administration of examinations (which is currently
exceedingly complex).

Clarification was sought as to whether writing of any sort was permitted during reading time, and
Professor Carlin undertook to consider the matter. In the absence of an explicit definition, he
suggested that the common-sense definition of ‘reading’ is ‘reading’, and not ‘reading and writing’.
The issue of ‘take-home’ exams was also briefly discussed, with advice that Business has seen an
increase in the number of UoS Coordinators who assign take-home exams rise since
implementing a more rigorous exam schedule. The Chair advised that in her opinion, a ‘take-home
exam’ is an essay, and does not fall under the definition of an exam.

The proposed amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011 was endorsed as presented.

**Resolution ASPC16/5-5**

*That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that Academic Board approve
the proposed changes to the Assessment Procedures 2011, with effect from 1 January 2017.*

### 4.4 Academic Delegations of Authority

Ms Henderson contextualised this item with the observation that the current Academic Delegations
of Authority are old and in many cases out-dated. Amended Delegations have been under
development for some time, and the current organisational changes to the University provide an
opportunity to update the document. A draft was circulated with the agenda, which provides cross-
references to current policies where they explicitly identify responsibility for an academic activity.
In some cases, this is different to the current Delegations.

Members were asked not to concentrate on nomenclature, but to determine whether the proposed
levels of decision are appropriate, and to ensure inclusion of all issues that need to be covered. Mismatches between current and future structures for sub-faculty level academic administration were discussed and members were advised that the development of a more consistent faculty structure and nomenclature is in progress, with the specifics of definition to be refined as the organisational design work continues. The desirability of having a level of delegation between Dean and Associate Dean, especially in the larger faculties, was raised, and feedback was requested as to what activities might be undertaken by a position at this level (such as currently undertaken by a Pro-Dean or Deputy Dean).

The purpose of delegation was briefly discussed, and members were advised that the day-to-day management and administration of the delegated activity can be undertaken by others but that the named delegate is responsible for “making the call” and cannot sub-delegate the final decision.

Further refinements to the draft will be developed and distributed for consultation in due course, with any feedback to be returned directly to Ms Henderson.

**Resolution ASPC16/5-6**

*That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee discuss the proposed framework for a new University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority – Academic Functions) Rule 2016.*

4.5 Lecture Recordings

Associate Professor Masters advised that several comments have been received by the Academic Board from the SRC regarding lecture recording, with some lecturers reportedly circumventing the University’s policy on mandatory recording. Members were reminded that the Unit of Study Coordinator, not the lecturer, must make a case to opt out, and that lecturers who elect not to record a lecture are in breach of policy. Associate Professor Masters is preparing a paper for SEG and the Board which will provide guidelines to aid deans in considering opt out requests.

Members were advised that approximately ten per cent of the population have a disability and that it is therefore almost certain that any sizable unit of study will have at least one disabled student. To better enable access for these students, the University arguably has a moral obligation to record lectures, which can also be used by students with carer responsibilities or timetable clashes. Members were requested to communicate these impacts of non-recording to their faculty colleagues and remind all staff that lecture recording is mandatory unless an opt out is approved by the Dean.

In discussion, concern was expressed as to protection of intellectual property and Associate Professor Masters advised that recordings are removed from availability at the end of each semester. The potential use of lecture recordings as part of the academic performance review and promotion processes was also raised. Associate Professor Masters advised that in his experience as a panel member, panels invariably look at how staff reflect on and improve performance based on feedback and that encouraging a reflective culture is paramount. He also advised that the University has just concluded an ‘open door’ week to encourage lecturers to attend classes delivered by their colleagues in order to enable reflection on their own lecture practice.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 2017 Meeting Schedule

Members noted the 2017 meeting schedule as presented.

**Resolution ASPC16/5-7**

*That the Academic Standards & Policy Committee note the 2017 Committee meeting schedule, as approved by the Academic Board at its meeting of 17 August 2016.*

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

Associate Professor Masters informed members that he had received a request from a student for permission to not undertake the Academic Honesty training module, and that he had declined the request.

Support for carers was further discussed, with primary carers covered by the Coursework Policy
but not by Special Consideration. Ms Henderson advised that carer responsibilities are better accommodated under Special Arrangements, although Mrs Agus observed that Special Arrangements currently require advanced notice; this may therefore need to be refined.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Wednesday 12 October 2016**
Senate Room, Quadrangle

Remaining Meeting Dates for 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: sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/ac_stands/ac_stands_agendas.shtml.