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 5/2016 on 24 August 2016

Members confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 August 2016.

Resolution ASPC16/6-1
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 5/2016, held on 24 August 2016, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising

Updates were provided on two items from the previous meeting.

Pursuant to Item 4.1 Student Discipline Rule, an amendment has been made to retain the ability of staff to request a student to leave campus, as in the current Chapter 8. This will apply to students interfering with or posing a WHS risk to themselves or others.

Pursuant to Item 4.2 Definition of ‘academic honesty’, an additional clause has been inserted in the Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 at clause 7(2)(m), as noted in the minutes of the previous meeting.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair advised members that Turnitin is a tool for detecting instances of possible breaches of academic honesty, and that the identification of plagiarism has not been devolved to an automated system but remains an academic decision.

Resolution ASPC16/6-2
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting, 14 September 2016

Further to the written report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters advised members that transitional provisions were in development to retain the existing structure of the
Academic Board and its standing committees into 2017, pending any recommendations on composition that may arise from the current external review of the Academic Board.

Resolution ASPC16/6-3
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 14 September 2016.

4 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4.1 Simplified End of Semester Examinations Arrangements

The Chair introduced this item by advising that the proposal had been presented to the Academic Board following endorsement at the last ASPC meeting. Concern was expressed at the ability of the Examinations Office to schedule examinations in the evenings to accommodate postgraduate coursework students, and the proposal was not supported. The proposal has now been revised, both to enable after-hours examinations and to allow local administration of examinations provided that University standards in exam management and invigilation are maintained. Associate Professor Masters advised that the proposal emerged from necessity, with concerns over the security of exam scripts and lack of consistency in the current management of the examination process. A question was raised as to the definition of 'test', and the Chair advised that this is defined in the policy. The policy also addresses mid-semester exams which do not need to be conducted under formal examination conditions.

The proposal was endorsed as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/6-4
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011, as presented, with effect from 1 January 2017.

4.2 Anonymous and De-Identified Marking

Associate Professor McCallum spoke to this item and advised that it gives effect to a previous in-principle endorsement of anonymous marking provided at an earlier meeting. It calls for student assessment tasks to be identified only by an SID and not by name.

In discussion, the possibility of seating students in examinations by SID was raised to facilitate marking. Members questioned whether anonymous marking would also necessitate additional administration as matching SIDs for return of results is more time-consuming than matching by name. Ms Vimalarajah advised that staff who already use de-identified marking were consulted in the development of the current proposal, and that processing time was not identified as an issue. It was noted that the effectiveness of the policy also requires compliance by students and that instruction will have to be provided that they not record a name on assessment tasks. A suggestion was made to set up a study to determine whether the implementation will cause additional processing time, and guidelines will need to be provided as to how to set up de-identified assessment return in the LMS. The Chair also undertook to communicate with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) regarding exam seating.

The proposal was endorsed as presented.

Resolution ASPC16/6-5
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011, as presented, with effect from 1 January 2017.

4.3 Student Recognition Awards Policy 2016

The Chair advised that this proposal amalgamates several existing Academic Board policies and transfers management of scholarships and prizes to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar). In discussion, the Chair advised that as the current Academic Governance Rule delegates responsibility for scholarships and prizes to the Academic Board, the proposed policy needs to retain this delegation until such time as the Academic Governance Rule is amended. This suggestion was supported. It was also recommended that the proposal be circulated to the HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee for consultation, as it may impact on the management of HDR scholarships (specifically in Part 4). The proposal will then be forwarded to the Graduate Studies...
Committee meeting of 19 October for endorsement to the Academic Board.

Resolution ASPC16/6-6
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the proposed policy be amended to retain the Academic Board as the delegated authority, and that the amended policy be forwarded to the HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee for comment and the Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement to the Academic Board.

4.4 Standard Assessment Table in Unit of Study Outlines
Ms Koureas tabled a version of this proposal updated from that distributed with the agenda, incorporating feedback provided at the 10 October meeting of the SEG Education Committee. The current version of the table draws from the types of assessment provided for in the Special Consideration decisions matrix.

In discussion, the composition of several of the assessment categories was queried, and the desirability of standardisation was suggested. Clarification was sought as to submission deadlines (close of business on the due date, 11:59pm, or 9am were suggested), with wide variation observed in current practice, leading to confusion by both staff and students. Associate Professor Masters advocated for the desirability of setting submission deadlines during business hours to enable students to obtain IT assistance if necessary, and it was agreed that whatever the time set, standardisation across the University is highly desirable. Possible ICT system impact arising from having a single submission deadline was raised as an area for further exploration.

The difficulty of excluding footnotes and references from the formal word count for assessment was noted, acknowledging limitations in current LMS platforms.

Professor Pattison undertook to seek further advice regarding system impact of a single submission deadline and LMS capacity to exclude references from the word count.

Subject to minor amendment, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution ASPC16/6-7
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the amendment of the Assessment Procedures 2011, as presented.

4.5 Academic Delegations of Authority
Ms Heesom advised that the current draft Delegations of Authority follow on from the presentation of the draft framework to the previous meeting, and represents the first time they have been presented in the form of a Rule. Concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding workload have been addressed by reference to Associate Deans, with core and optional Associate Deans (as determined by the new organisational design and by faculties) both provided for in the Delegations. Ms Heesom confirmed that this draft can be circulated more widely for consultation, and that further feedback is invited before 24 October. The Chair noted the new position of Program Director (name still to be finalised) that had not been proposed when the draft delegations were prepared. Delegation to this position may be used to alleviate some of the Associate Dean workload and ensure greater consistency of some decisions currently delegated to unit of study co-ordinators. The Chair has subsequently provided feedback to Ms Heesom on revised delegations that include Program Director.

Resolution ASPC16/6-8
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee discuss and provide feedback on the draft Academic Delegations of Authority.

4.6 University of Sydney (Governance of Faculties and University Schools) Rule 2016
Ms Heesom advised that this Rule is designed to replace several existing policies, and gathers together aspects of governance in a model reflecting the new organisational design. It represents a standardised approach to revise the current constitutions of faculties, and provides for both faculty meetings and an elected Faculty Board, with no external representation. The relationship between the Dean and the Faculty Board is subject to further clarification.

In discussion, Associate Professor McCallum suggested rephrasing the word ‘power’ throughout to ‘responsibilities’ as reflecting a more collegial approach, and this was supported. Tempering other language (for example, the word ‘control’) was also advocated. It was recommended to add a clause regarding the responsibility of Boards regarding the receipt of reports on Academic
Integrity, and it was noted that the version of the composition of the Board of Interdisciplinary Studies is an older one that has since been updated by the Academic Board. The Secretary undertook to forward the current version to Ms Heesom.

Further feedback on the draft was invited by 24 October.

Resolution ASPC16/6-9
That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee discuss and provide feedback on the draft University of Sydney (Governance of Faculties and University Schools) Rule 2016.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Educational Integrity Trend Report, Semester 1, 2016

Associate Professor McCallum advised members that the present paper is an interim report and that an annual report would be provided to a future meeting. Current technology enables the capture of more detailed data, and can detect at what point in a semester problems emerge. The current data suggests that there are higher instances of breach by international students, and there is also a difference between full-time and part-time students, possibly due to assessment load. To date, Semester 2 is tending approximately 20% higher than Semester 1 which may reflect earlier reporting of cases than in Semester 1. Members were encouraged to urge their faculty colleagues to capture cases in a timely manner.

The Educational Integrity Unit is working on faculty reporting templates to comply with Academic Board requirements. The data has also been shared with faculty Academic Integrity Coordinators so that issues such as the high number of “no impropriety” cases can be addressed at a local level.

Ms Smith advised that SRC caseworkers have received a number of inquiries from students concerned at the implications of breaches being recorded on their student records. Associate Professor McCallum advised that a confidential administrative file is maintained for students under investigation, and that this is only accessible to the Academic Integrity Coordinator and the staff who administer the process of investigation. Members were advised that breaches do not appear on student transcripts.

Resolution ASPC16/6-10
That the Academic Standards & Policy Committee note the Educational Integrity Trend Report Semester 1, 2016.

5.2 Award Course Review data

The Chair advised that this data has been collected as part of the Academic Board’s responsibilities regarding course review, and that other activities will follow from this data to ensure that the University is compliant with TEQSA. The Secretary and faculties were thanked for their efforts in compiling this data.

Resolution ASPC16/6-11
That the Academic Standards & Policy Committee note Award Course Review data, as presented.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

The Chair advised that it was Professor Tolhurst’s final meeting with the Committee as he is leaving the University to take up another opportunity. Professor Tolhurst was thanked for his contribution to the Committee and wished every success for his next endeavour.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 9 November 2016
Senate Room, Quadrangle

A full copy of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee papers is available at: sydney.edu.au/secretariat/pdfs/academic-board-committees/academic-standards/2016/20161012%20ASPC%20Agenda%20Pack.pdf