
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICY COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Tuesday 14 March 2017

Senate Room, Quadrangle (A14)

Members Present: Professor Jane Hanrahan (Chair); Helen Agus (Science); Isabella Brook (President, SRC); Associate Professor Alex Chaves (Veterinary Science); Karen Cochrane (Nominee of the President, SUPRA); Dr Frances Di Lauro (Arts & Social Sciences); Dr Kelly Freebody (Education & Social Work) (for Associate Professor Robyn Gibson); Associate Professor Geoff Frost (Business); Associate Professor Tania Gerzina (Dentistry); Associate Professor Peter Gibbens (Engineering & IT); Professor Manuel Graeber (Medicine); Dr Jenny Green (Nursing) (for Dr Vasiliki Betihavas); Kerrie Henderson (Office of General Counsel); Associate Professor Glen Hill (Architecture, Design & Planning); Associate Professor Veysel Kayser (Pharmacy); Dr Peter Knight (Medicine); Georgia Mantle (Student, Arts & Social Sciences); Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair of the Academic Board); Associate Professor Mark Melatos (Arts & Social Sciences); Associate Professor Maurice Peat (Business); Associate Professor Jennifer Rowley (Conservatorium); Professor Anne Twomey (Law); Amy Wenham (Student, Nursing).

Attendees: Professor Tyrone Carlin (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) (for Item 4.1); Dr Matthew Charet (Secretary); Dr Glenys Eddy (Committee Officer, Secretariat); Associate Professor Annette Katelaris (Sydney Medical School) (for Item 4.1); Associate Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy).

Apologies: Associate Professor Tim Allender (Education & Social Work); Dr Vasiliki Betihavas (Nursing) (Dr Jenny Green attending instead); Associate Professor Robyn Gibson (Education & Social Work) (Dr Kelly Freebody attending instead); Professor Pip Pattison (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Dr Debra Shirley (Health Sciences).

2/2017

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed new and returning members and conveyed apologies from those unable to attend.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Meeting 1/2017 on 14 February 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

Resolution ASPC17/2-1

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 1/2017, held on 14 February 2017, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Business Arising

The Chair advised re: Action 1/2017 that procedures relating to when replacement examination papers must be provided is now live, and confirmed that both primary and replacement exam papers must be submitted at the same time. The Secretary undertook to follow up with Ms Koureas re: Actions 2/2017 and 3/2017.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair advised that she had nothing to report.

Resolution ASPC17/2-2

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of Academic Board

In addition to the written report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters advised that the report of the external review of Academic Board has been formally received by the

Academic Board and will form the focus of discussion at the Board's 28 March meeting. Resolving the future composition of the Board is the main time-dependent activity as any changes will necessitate the amendment of the *University of Sydney (Academic Governance) Rule 2003 (as amended)*. These changes must be drafted and discussed before approval by Senate, ideally at its May meeting, to enable communication with faculties prior to elections taking place in Semester 2. A working party has been set up to agree on a composition model for endorsement at the March Academic Board meeting.

Resolution ASPC17/2-3

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 28 February 2017.

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Variation of Semester Dates

The Chair informed members that this proposal was briefly discussed at the last meeting of the Academic Board, at which the Registrar was asked to provide further information to the Academic Board. Professor Carlin spoke to the written proposal, advising that it has arisen from the development of key aspects of the education strategy regarding international study opportunities for undergraduate students, and that extensive consultation has been undertaken during the development of the proposal.

An intended outcome from this proposal is the delivery of the required learning outcomes in 12 weeks and it is not intended to 'chop' a week from the curriculum to enable this. It is anticipated that some adjustment to teaching will accompany the transition to the new semester length, and that these adjustments will differ between units of study and between courses. In some cases, it may be desirable to provide pre-reading in advance of Week 1 of teaching, or to move forward the commencement of practical classes such as labs and tutorials that currently do not commence until Week 2, or to take better advantage of innovative or technologically-enabled teaching to deliver the required content in a reduced timeframe. This will need to be worked through on a case-by-case basis, and members were informed that the transition to shorter teaching periods has been successfully undertaken at other Group of Eight institutions. It was also recognised that change in curriculum is a constant. Several members expressed discomfort with the timing of this proposal in light of current preparations for delivery of the new undergraduate curriculum in 2018, with the expectation that the curriculum will need to be revised twice in two years. This will create additional workload.

Ms Brook requested additional information regarding the consultation process, and Ms Cochrane sought clarification as to whether postgraduate coursework students had been consulted. Professor Carlin advised that feedback has been provided by individuals and groups across the University, including both academic and professional staff. The current and earlier versions of the proposal have also been discussed at a large number of University committees; with Professional Service Units; and at the Senate Retreat, as well as at the February meeting of the Academic Board. Professor Carlin assured the Committee that consultation has been undertaken across a very wide range of stakeholders over an extended period and that this process has resulted in changes to the original proposal.

The Committee was advised that programs that are not tied to the current semester model may continue to request that the Academic Board approve individual semester dates, and numerous examples were cited as to programs that are delivered outside the current standard semester model, particularly to accommodate practical or internship requirements in the professional degrees. Professor Carlin assured members that a process to accommodate such programs will be retained, although it is desirable to avoid exceptions to standardised dates wherever possible to enable students to have maximum choice in unit of study selection.

Management of courses that may be impacted by the later return of Semester 2 results or by a shorter Summer break have been reported through the consultation process and a solution to minimise impact will be sought. Ms Brook expressed concern that later return of results will mean that students have less time to seek advice before results are finalised. Professor Carlin advised that the current proposal represents a compromise on the original conception, and that the official end of Semester 2 is only one week later than presently. There are a number of challenges relating to University closedown, including both return of results and UAC admissions processing,

and these will need to be addressed. Currently, there are similar challenges with the shortness of the mid-year break that will be alleviated by the proposed change. The proposal will enable additional study opportunities in Winter School and a paper is currently being prepared for the University Executive proposing to make Summer and Winter School Commonwealth-supported rather than fee-paying.

Noting that part of the rationale for the proposal is to enable international educational opportunities (both outgoing and incoming), it was questioned whether the proposal would facilitate the achievement of ambitious mobility targets. Professor Carlin advised that the educational strategy does not intend to require a semester of international study by the majority of students, but might perhaps include a 6-8 week international experience, which could be completed in a longer mid-year break. It is recognised that there are opportunity costs as well as financial impediments to students currently impeding mobility, and it is intended to make available financial support to facilitate the strategy.

It was observed that it is sensible for the University to align its semester dates with international institutions. It was also observed that several local competitors start one week earlier than Sydney; moving Semester 1 forward by one week was suggested as an alternate solution to eliminate Semester 2 processing difficulties.

The proposal was endorsed by show of hands for presentation to the Academic Board, with thirteen in support of the proposal and seven against.

Resolution ASPC17/2-4

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposed semester dates for 2019;*
- (2) approve the adoption of twelve week semesters in place of thirteen week semesters; and*
- (3) approve the preservation of the current commencement point of semester one and delay the commencement point of semester two by a fortnight relative to present practice with effect from 1 January 2019, as presented.*

4.2 Policy on Continuing and Extra-curricular Education and non-AQF courses

Associate Professor McCallum spoke to this item and advised that the paper enacts the findings of a 2015 working party. It calls for the development of a policy to govern Continuing Education, professional development and other non-AQF courses offered by the University. It has been observed that the University's current lack of short courses may place a competitive stress on our postgraduate coursework offerings and development of this policy will facilitate future development in this area. The policy will help address quality assurance and governance of areas such as the Centre for Continuing Education, the Centre for English Teaching, Maths Learning Centre, the Conservatorium's Open Academy and other primarily externally-facing areas of adult education, and will clarify responsibility for running courses and staffing, as well as helping to avoid overlap with existing offerings.

In discussion, Ms Henderson sought clarification of the anticipated timeline for the development of this policy, advising that there are a number of significant policy projects currently under development which may be impacted, and asked that the name be further discussed as part of the development of the policy and not endorsed in its current format.

Resolution ASPC17/2-5

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee endorse the aims, scope and governance and section on partnerships of the proposed Policy on Continuing and Extra-curricular Education, as presented.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 Implementation of Anonymous Marking

Associate Professor McCallum advised that this paper presents a revised timeline for the implementation of anonymous marking, with Semester 1 2018 the new date for institution-wide compliance with this provision in the *Learning and Teaching Policy*. Inconsistency of current practice was noted, with systematisation desirable and being worked towards. The Chair advised that the Registrar has been informed of the need to have exam papers distributed in venues in SID order, and that exam paper coversheets will need to be revised to enable anonymous submission

as these currently include a field for student name. Technical issues with anonymous marking and turnitin will also be investigated prior to rollout.

The committee noted this report.

Resolution ASPC17/2-6

That the Academic Standards and Policy Committee note the Registrar's determination that anonymous marking be implemented by the commencement of Semester 1, 2018.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 3:49pm.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Tuesday 18 April 2017**
Senate Room, Quadrangle

A full copy of the Academic Standards and Policy Committee papers is available at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/secretariat/pdfs/academic-board-committees/academic-standards/2017/20170314-ASPC-Agenda-Pack.pdf>.