NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS/SUBDEANS’ GROUP HELD FRIDAY 3 AUGUST 2007 IN THE SENATE ROOM

Sylvia opened the meeting and noted that she would be leading these meetings while Trudi was acting in the University Secretary position following Jackie Massey's resignation. Sylvia also noted that an Expression of Interest has been circulated for a Senior Legislative Officer until end 2007.

1. UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The following items were put forward at the Academic Council meeting on Wednesday 1 August:

(a) **Appeals**
This item was approved and allows an extension to the appeals deadline of 20 University working days for all students for the initial stage of an appeal.

(b) **New Discipline Group**
The proposal from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics to establish a new Discipline Group (Engineering Asset Management) was approved.

(c) **Amendment to University General Rules for Academic Courses**
Council approved an amendment to University General Rule 1.3.1.59(7) such that examiners of a resubmitted thesis would no longer have the option to pass the thesis submitted for the degree of PhD to pass for a Master, and that the Board of the Graduate Research School would retain the discretion to award the degree of Master, if appropriate.

(d) **Rescission of Courses**
All programme and course rescissions submitted to Council were approved.

(e) **Supplementary Assessment**
Council approved this item. It was noted that this allows supplementary assessment opportunities for all eligible students in all core units in the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Dental Science and Bachelor of Podiatric Medicine.

(f) **New and Deleted Units**
All items were approved.

(g) **Proposal to establish a Committee to advise Academic Council on Proposals for the introduction of New Courses (and Major Changes) and Programmes**
This item was not approved. However, it was suggested that faculties should provide early notification of any new course proposals or major changes to existing course before submission to Council.

(h) **Joint/Double Badged PhD Programmes**
This item was approved despite some concerns that other universities give their own testamur in relation to such courses. However, it was noted that a testamur from this University relating to a joint/doubled-badged course would always state that it related to such a course and would have the other university named on the document.

(i) **Awarding of Master of Architecture with Distinction**
This item was approved despite some concerns voiced that this was a new step and that the principle would be raised in due course through the current Review of Courses. However there was also concern to recognise excellence in the new master’s course to reflect the current practice of awarding honours in the Bachelor of Architecture, which it had replaced (Academic Council R9/07).

(j) **New Courses and Programmes:**
The following new courses were approved:
- Graduate Certificate in Maritime Archaeology (AHSS)
- Graduate Diploma in Integrated Human Studies and Master of Integrated Human Studies (LPS)
- Master of Infectious Diseases and PhD (LPS, BGRS)
- Master of Science (Urban and Regional Planning) (FNAS)
- Bachelor of Science (Agricultural Science) (FNAS)
- Bachelor of Science (Conservation Biology and Management) (FNAS)
(k) **Major Changes:**
- Graduate Certificate of Music Practitioner Studies (amendment to entrance requirements)
- Bachelor of Science (Exercise and Health) (programme name change following change of name of School)
- Combined Courses: Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Science; Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Science (inclusion of programmes)

2. **APPEALS PROCESS**

A member has advised that the following provision in the appeals procedure has given rise to concerns in his faculty in that it is seen as giving students two effective opportunities to appeal the same item of assessment where it is returned during semester, and is regarded as being of particular concern for pieces of work returned early in the semester.

“Failure to seek re-assessment of a written assignment (or other than final examination) in the course of the year will not preclude a student from lodging a formal appeal during the relevant period following the publication of the final result.” ([http://calendar.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/partd/appeals/procedures](http://calendar.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/partd/appeals/procedures))

He would like to find out whether there are similar concerns in other faculties.

**Trudi McGlade** has provided the following information in relation to this matter:

“**There was not a lot of discussion around this issue when the provisions were revised in 2004-2005. It seemed to me to be accepted that a student who may have done badly on an assignment but felt they could make up the mark on other assignments, but didn’t, could come back and revisit at the end. While it does provide two opportunities they can only exercise the opportunity once.**

Paul Lloyd brought up a query regarding the viability of having two opportunities for students to appeal an assessment of a piece of work and asked if other faculties had the same concerns.

Trudi noted a concern that, if students had the option to appeal only on the earlier occasion, there would be an increase in the number of appeals at that stage, and students might lodge an appeal where it may not have been necessary to do so.

Other faculties were in agreement and it was agreed that there was no support to change the current appeals process at this time.

**Members were reminded that, while there are two opportunities for a student to lodge an appeal in relation to an assessment of a piece of work, one after receipt of the mark for the work and the other following receipt of the final mark for the unit concerned, the right to appeal in relation to the assessment of the piece of work can only be exercised once.**

3. **STATUTE NO 8: THE FACULTIES**

Clause 4(1)(a) of Statute 8 states that each faculty comprises “the academic staff in all schools, centres and institutes funded by the faculty;”

Academic staff are defined in the Statute as “those staff members holding academic appointments on a full-time or 50 per cent or greater fractional basis other than those holding emeritus, visiting, adjunct, clinical or honorary appointments”.

Some faculties have now amended their governance and structure documents to include also all general staff in membership of the faculty.
Some FAOs have suggested that there are administrative difficulties associated with determining which academic staff (or general staff in relevant cases) are eligible for membership of the faculty. However, if a faculty is not properly constituted under the Statute then there are problems associated with any decisions made in these circumstances.

Sylvia noted that this item has been brought up primarily to provide advice but also for further discussion as appropriate.

She pointed out that in Statute 8 academic staff are defined as “those holding academic appointments on a full-time or 50% or greater fractional basis….” and asked members if, in their view, there might be support for amending the Statute to be more inclusive of part-time staff. Members were asked to consider what the repercussions might be of expanding faculty membership in this way.

Members were asked to advise whether it was administratively feasible to enforce the current provisions in the Statute, i.e., can Human Resources efficiently provide up-to-date lists of academic staff having 50% or greater academic appointments.

One member questioned what defined a 50% appointment, for example where an academic staff member’s position was funded partly by the University and partly by external research funding. Another questioned whether those members of staff who were, for example, .2 in one area and .3 in another would necessarily be picked up as being .5 overall.

Concern was expressed that, in those faculties which included general staff in their membership, such staff might find themselves in the position of being required to make decisions on matters (e.g., academic issues) that were outside their area of expertise. It was suggested that, to overcome this situation, the quorum for the faculty might include a stated minimum number of academic staff.

One member suggested that there might be issues of divided loyalties if a staff member was employed by two institutions and the percentage of time spent at this University was substantially less than that spent at the other institution. In response, it was stated that staff would be expected to display professionalism in such circumstances.

Faculties which included general staff in their membership were requested to ensure that their governance was equitable in relation to membership eligibility requirements in terms of the percentage appointment that must be held. Given that Statute 8 limited academic staff membership of a faculty to those holding full-time or 50% or greater fractional appointments, there would be concern from an equity perspective if membership was open to all general staff, irrespective of the percentage appointment held.

It was agreed that, as a first step, Sylvia would contact Human Resources to ask about the feasibility of providing up to date lists of staff appointments.

This item will be revisited at the next meeting once the relevant information has been received.

Members were reminded that faculties must be properly constituted in terms of Statute 8.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Special Consideration
Marion Bateman asked if there had been any progress in this matter.

It was noted that the matter was with the Teaching and Learning Committee and that there had not been any feedback as yet.

One member queried why a progress report had not been provided given the time that
had lapsed since the faculties had provided their submissions to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Concern was expressed also that there had been no follow-up with staff on the submissions that they had made.

A member expressed the view that the matter needed to be resolved soon, particularly in view of the fact that it was getting close to examination time.

Sylvia to follow up and report back at the next meeting.

(b) Student Suspension from a Course
Harvey von Bergheim noted that a suspension from a course was defined as being for a period of twelve months from that course but noted that there had been situations where students were returning to the course after only a six month suspension. Harvey advised that there were student record implications associated with this and asked what exceptions were being made and how and why this was happening.

One faculty noted that there were some situations where students had lodged a request for a waiver of the suspension with the faculty on the grounds of special consideration. Trudi advised that, in these situations, a request for a waiver should be forwarded in writing for approval to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and Chair of the Academic Board. This was not happening across the board.

Harvey noted that in order for a student to be re-admitted to a course following a suspension of only six months, the record of the suspension was required to be removed from the academic record. It was noted that documentation relating to the lifting of the suspension would be stored on the TRIM file. There was agreement that a note concerning the lifting of the suspension should be placed as a comment on the student internal record.

There was some concern relating to the fact that a student who had been suspended from one course could apply to transfer to another course. Most members were in agreement that they would not wish to remove the opportunity for students who had been failing in one course to transfer to another as it recognised that students sometimes chose a course to which they were not suited or simply had difficulties with a particular course. However, it was acknowledged that, in certain cases, the practice of allowing students to transfer could be seen as undermining the system of suspensions. For example, it could be possible for a student who was failing in a science course to transfer to an arts course in which the same or very similar units were available. It was proposed that a set of guidelines be developed to guide decisions relating to such transfer requests.

Other concerns were raised regarding the implications for certain offshore and international students, for some of whom there were continuous terms.

Members were reminded that the lifting of a suspension should only occur as the result of an appeal or a request for special consideration.

(c) Special Consideration
Harvey advised that the introduction of iPoint had implications for certain links between faculty and Student Administration sites. Harvey advised that he would be in touch with faculties in September regarding this matter.

(d) Callista Upgrade
Mary Carroll advised that the next upgrade was scheduled for 22-23 September and asked anyone having an objection to contact her ASAP on extension 7327.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:30am.