FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS/SUBDEANS’ GROUP MEETING

Notes from a meeting held on
Friday 9 November 2007 in the Senate Room at 9:30am

WELCOME

Sylvia welcomed the Registrar, Mr Peter Curtis, and the Director of Student Services, Mr Jon Stubbs, also Sam Millar and Robyn Wilson from Student Administration.

1. ONE-STOP-SHOP INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICE CENTRE

Peter Curtis introduced the item noting that the consultation process for the “One-Stop-Shop” Integrated Student Service Centre project was in its early stages. One meeting had been held with the Business School and further opportunities for discussion had been/were being organised with other stakeholders. Three submissions had been received to date, of which two had been positive and one negative.

Mr Curtis went on to say that the concept of the “One-Stop-Shop” was visualised as being a partnership model and all interested parties would be involved in the consultation process. The origins of the concept dated back ten years to when there was a push to co-locate student services as near as possible to the Student Guild. The impending relocation of the UWA Business School was seen as potentially providing an opportunity to rehouse current services.

Of major consideration in the development of the concept were physical relocation and interaction development. The Registrar gave examples of universities within and outside Australia in which a number of services to students, such as: the guild, library, computing services and student services, had been integrated.

The Registrar noted that in considering the physical relocation of the proposed centre, there would have to be a rethink of the quality and nature of the University’s services to its students with a focus on student needs. Currently such services were provided in a variety of locations and it was necessary for students to understand the various functions of the University in order to know where to find the information or service they required.

He went on to explain that the guiding principles for the project would be:

• integration
• shared infrastructure
• fewer and larger units allowing economies of scale
• better mapping of the structure of student services to the student life-cycle

The final organisation and physical design of the centre would be dependent on the made available by Planning Services.

The Registrar stressed the need to integrate face-to-face and on-line services for students and the importance of establishing effective interfaces with faculties, schools and all other stakeholders.

Questions and comments were then invited.

There was a query as to how the proposed centre would impact on services currently being provided by the faculties. The Registrar replied that he did not see a radical change in that faculties would continue to provide course specific and specialised information to students.

Jon Stubbs noted that quality procedures would be implemented to ensure that students would be efficiently managed at the appropriate levels.

In response to a query regarding who would staff the One-Stop-Shop, Jon Stubbs replied that this had not been determined as yet. He stated that it was possible that various faculty staff might be located in the centre at certain peak times of the year – eg enrolment time. He stressed that this would be an issue to be considered through consultation and having regard
to faculty/school cultures and other matters. He pointed out that IPoint was equipped to direct queries to appropriate administrative staff located within the faculties.

A member pointed out the importance of the sub-Dean or equivalent position in the faculty being able to interact readily with the Faculty Administrative Officer position.

The Registrar commented that the original concept paper provided only a beginning and that it was hoped to gather a variety of ideas from many different groups to develop a successful model.

There was some discussion about the consultation process relating to the proposal and how it had commenced. It was pointed out that there were many ways in which to start such a process. In this case a number of ideas had been put forward to provide a basis for discussion. The intention was to seek suggestions and feedback from stakeholders in accordance with the usual practice at the University.

A member stated that the diagram in the proposal could be read in a number of different ways.

As a considerable amount of background work had been done, for example on what occurred at other universities, it was requested that briefing notes be provided so that more informed comment could be made. The Registrar took this suggestion on board. He noted that the project would follow similar lines to others that had been undertaken, including the current Review of Course Structures, in that option papers would be provided further into the process. A reference group would be set up and a website established in due course.

In response to a query as to the timeframe for the project, the group was informed that the project was still in its infancy and a timeframe was not available as yet.

There was a query regarding the working parties that might be established, and whether there would be one that included faculty administrative officers. Jon Stubbs replied that it was envisaged that various working parties would be set up but their exact compositions had not yet been determined.

A member asked how the proposed One-Stop-Shop fitted with the Review of Course Structures – particularly if the latter resulted in only two courses being available at the undergraduate level. In response it was pointed out that both projects were high on the University’s list of operational priorities.

A member asked to what extent students had been involved in the process to date given the stated intention to have a student-centric facility. The group was advised that the President of the Guild of Undergraduates had already been involved and other student groups would be consulted along the way.

Jon Stubbs then led the meeting through a PowerPoint presentation on the one-stop-shop concept including features of IPoint. He showed the group a slide of an integrated student service facility at Monash University. The facility had 14 service points with access to a wide range of information required by students, including access to IPoint at each service point.

A member stated that IPoint was not currently catering well for queries regarding offshore programmes and that a separate page had been requested for this purpose.

Jon Stubbs acknowledged that there was a need for IPoint to do things better for certain cohorts. What had been achieved with IPoint to date represented only a very small exploration of what was possible. He expressed the view that IPoint was catering well for the broader range of students. Jon added that being an internet-provided service was a key issue and that the aim was to have the content correct for the readership. IPoint was a knowledge base that could be expanded. He pointed out that the IPoint system had a ‘relational database structure’ which meant it had potential to integrate with similar based systems such as Callista and TRIM and in future would integrate with Microsoft Word,
Outlook etc. There were plans to roll out the system to Student Services and Graduate Research and Scholarships in early 2008 and to Prospective Students in mid-2008. Approval in principle had also been given for its extension to the Library and the possibility of rolling it out to Human Resources was under consideration.

In response to a question regarding the maintenance of the knowledge base in IPoint, Jon replied that all information housed in the system was been assigned owners and review dates were put in place to ensure the information was kept up to date. The system was designed to prompt updates.

As there were a number of other items on the agenda, discussion was brought to a close. It was agreed that there should be a future meeting devoted entirely to IPoint.

Peter Curtis reminded the group that he would welcome written submissions to himself or Jon Stubbs under the “hopes and fears” banner.

Sylvia thanked Peter Curtis and Jon Stubbs for attending the meeting and providing information on the proposed “One-Stop-Shop” and noted that there would be many future opportunities for members of the group to provide input into the decision-making process on the proposal.

2. UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(i) **Discipline Groups**
Sylvia advised that a correction to the name of the discipline group *English and Cultural Studies* and changes to heads of discipline groups had been noted.

(ii) **Meeting dates for Academic Council/Board for 2008**
Noted

(iii) **Transfer of Domestic Fee Paying Students to Commonwealth Supported Places**
Sylvia noted that recommendation (ii) had been amended so that faculties in consultation with the Admissions Committee would determine the level of achievement to be attained by DFEE students before transfer to a Commonwealth Supported place was guaranteed. All other recommendations had been approved as set out in the agenda.

(iv) **Role of Supervisors in Thesis Supervision**
This item had been deferred as there was some doubt about the nature and purpose of the proposed amendments and no representative from the Board of the Graduate Research School was available at the meeting.

(v) **Review of Selection Process for Admission to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery or Bachelor of Dental Science**
This item had been approved. See Academic Council minutes for details.

(vi) **2009 Entry in Albany: Uni Smart Start Proposal**
Council had agreed that for 2008 only 19 year olds would be able to sit the STAT or MCT via the Uni Smart Start programme in Albany for entry to UWA in Albany in 2009.

(vii) **New Programme: Bachelor of Science (Climate Studies)**
Academic Council had praised this initiative and recommended to Senate that the course be approved for introduction in 2008.

(viii) **2008 Admission and Quota Policy**
This item had been approved.
(ix) ‘On The Spot’ Offers for International Students
Council had approved a proposal that appropriately trained staff in the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics be authorised to make on-the-spot conditional offers to certain groups of school students in India.

(x) Language (LOTE) Bonus for UWA
A proposal to boost a student’s TES by 10% of the scaled mark achieved in their best LOTE subject had been approved to apply to the cohort completing secondary study in 2010.

(xi) Acting Vice-Chancellor’s report to Council
Sylvia noted that the SDVC had commented on the competitive grants results which were slightly down from the previous year and had stated that processes would be implemented to improve future outcomes.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources, had advised that the Shenton Park Development has received in principle support from the Environmental Protection Agency.

3. USE OF DUPLICATE UNITS FOR RECORDING INTERNAL CREDIT

Mary Carroll spoke to the Group regarding a proposal to use Duplicate Units rather than Advanced Standing for internal UWA credit. From an administrative point of view, Mary noted that this process would be easily facilitated through Student Administration but that it required agreement across all faculties.

There was a concern that the change would be applied retrospectively. Mary advised that this would not be the case. Any changes would come into effect once the new system was in use.

A member spoke against the proposal pointing out that such a process was already operating at Curtin University and that the academic records were confusing to read in her view. Concern was also expressed about double counting and about crediting only passes, which would give a distorted view of a student’s academic record. There was also a concern about the effect that recording credits in this way might have on a student’s GPA.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the duplicate units would appear on both internal and official transcripts.

Some argued that the change was a positive one and if care was taken in relation to calculation of WAM or GPA would function well.

Given the lateness of the hour and as some members had already left it was agreed to re-address this item at the next meeting of the group.

4. ATHENA PROCESS FOR SCHOLARSHIP RANKING

Heather Williams was unable to remain to speak to this item but left hard-copy information for members.

5. ASSESSMENT MECHANISM STATEMENTS

The Academic Secretariat had been advised that assessment mechanism statements were not being provided for all units. Members were reminded that, apart from the disadvantage that this represented for the students concerned, failure to provide such statements was a breach of the University’s legislation and increased the likelihood of grievances and appeals. Members were asked to take whatever steps they could to promulgate information about the need to provide students with details of how they will be assessed in a unit. Members’ attention was drawn to the following legislation which was relevant:
(a) Course Regulations (http://calendar.publishing.uwa.edu.au/latest/partd/courseregulations)

“7. A faculty must publish in a handbook details of the units it offers which must include for each unit:

(a) the code;
(b) the title;
(c) the points value;
(d) the name of the unit co-ordinator;
(e) a brief description;
(f) details of the semester(s) in which it is offered;
(g) details of any prerequisites or co-requisites;
(h) details of any units with which it is incompatible;
(i) the number of contact hours and type of contact; and
(j) details of the method of assessment.”

University General Rules for Academic Courses (http://rules.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/rules)

“Assessment Mechanism Statement

1.2.1.19 Within the first two weeks of the semester in which a unit is offered, the school which offers the unit must issue a clear written Assessment Mechanism Statement which sets out the way in which the final result for the unit is calculated.”

A member pointed out that wording of the Course Regulations no longer reflected practice. Sylvia advised that any changes would have to be recommended by a faculty or faculties to Council. Changes to the Course Regulations required the approval of the Senate.

Sylvia reminded members that the online version of the Handbook was the definitive version.

6. STUDENT COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

The Acting University Secretary had asked that the following be brought to the Group’s attention.

“The Student Complaints Resolution Policy at 2.4.2.2.(o) provides:

If the committee in the course of its work identifies an issue of broader application than the individual complaint case, it will bring this issue to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor for consideration.

A University Student Complaints Committee was established earlier this year to hear a complaint. In their Report the following recommendation was made:

‘‘The Committee recommends that consideration be given to amending the policy in order that it is made clear that joint complaints from two or more named students may be submitted.’’

The Vice-Chancellor has accepted this recommendation and the following note has been inserted in the definitions section (1.1) of the policy (http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/griev?f=145100)

‘For the purposes of this policy any and all references to a “student” are to be interpreted as applying to an individual student or to more than one student. Thus a student may lodge a complaint under this policy jointly with another student or students.’’

Sylvia asked that members note that students can make a ‘joint’ complaint.
7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Enrolments**
Harvey von Bergheim advised that the enrolments would be held from 21 – 25 January 2008. As Winthrop Hall would be unavailable enrolments would take place in Hackett Hall.