NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS/SUBDEANS’ GROUP HELD FRIDAY 4 APRIL 2008 IN THE SENATE ROOM AT 9:30AM

1. UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Sylvia Lang provided an update on the Academic Council meeting held on Wednesday 4 April 2008.

(i) International Agreements the following were noted:
- Addendum to include the MBA as part of the Student Exchange Agreement between The University of Western Australia and McMaster University, Canada
- Student Exchange Agreement between The University of Western Australia and Maastricht University, The Netherlands

(ii) Review of performance and operation of the Teaching and Learning Committee
The report was noted as being very positive in the main.

(iii) New Units and Deletions
- ECM new units were removed from the agenda as they formed part of the proposal for the major changes to the Bachelor of Engineering Chemical and Process Engineering Programme which had been removed from the agenda, with agreement of the Faculty.
- LPS new units were approved.

(iv) Report from the eLearning Standing Committee on On-Line Courses, Distance Education, Blended Learning
Sylvia advised that Academic Council had approved the report submitted by the Teaching and Learning Committee. Its main thrust had been that the focus should be on the best way to teach, including the mode of delivery, and that separate principles should not be formulated for online learning, distance education or blended learning. It had been noted at Academic Council that undergraduate courses must contain an element of face-to-face teaching. The principle reason for this was that, for the majority of commencing undergraduate students, it was their first experience of University life. There was therefore perceived to be a greater need for such students to receive support from staff, have opportunity to interact with fellow students and have general exposure to the University experience. It had been noted at Council that there was no major thrust towards digital learning at this stage. This was still a relatively expensive way to teach.

For members’ information, Sylvia read the Policy Statement contained in the paper “Blended learning at UWA: a discussion paper and draft policy.” It was noted that the policy was a statement of general principles to apply equally to all of the University’s teaching regardless of the location or the dominant mode of teaching.

Sylvia noted that amendments to the courses and unit outlines, as recommended in the Report, had been approved by Council and updated checklists would be available to members shortly.

Members were advised that changes to the checklists would also be made to reflect changes to the guidelines concerning ungraded passes and fails. In future faculties would be required to indicate in the new unit checklist whether the result for a unit would be recorded as “ungraded pass” or “ungraded fail” and, if so, which of the categories of exemption listed in the guidelines applied to the unit in question. Once the new unit had been endorsed by Council, SIMS Support would record that the result for the unit would be “ungraded pass” or “ungraded fail” and the exemption category that applied to the unit.

Executive Officer’s Note: The updated checklists will be available by Monday 7 April at the Secretariat site:
http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/courseunit/proposals The amended Guidelines for the provision of ungraded passes and fails will be available shortly.
It was noted that, in at least two faculties, a result of “ungraded fail” was given where a student failed one of two components of a unit both of which had to be passed in order to pass the unit. Sylvia advised that such units did not currently fall into any of the exemption categories in the guidelines.

**Executive Officer’s Note:** This matter will be pursued with the faculties concerned.

**(v)** *Report from the Student Learning Outcomes Coordinating Group (formerly OBE Coordinating Group)*

Sylvia noted that this group has been functioning for more than 6 years and was now disbanding. Responsibility for building on the work done to date would now fall to faculties.

The main focus of the group’s final recommendations was that student learning outcomes should not be forgotten. It was recommended that all school and course reviews include as part of their preparation a short report concerning the extent of uptake of student learning outcomes; that all new unit and course checklists from second semester 2008 include the listing of intended student learning outcomes and that students learning outcomes for each unit become a strongly recommended field in the Calliope online unit framework.

A copy of the full recommendations from the *Student Learning Outcomes Co-ordinating Group Report 2007* as submitted to Academic Council is attached. (Attachment A)

**(vi)** *Proposal for Major Changes to existing Courses for 2009*

- Proposal to include an optional Materials Engineering Major in the Bachelor of Engineering Mechanical Engineering Programme in 2009
  This item was approved.

- Proposal for Major Changes to the Bachelor of Engineering Chemical and Process Engineering Programme
  This item was removed from the agenda with agreement of the Faculty.

**(vii)** *Vice-Chancellor’s Report to Council*

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor who was presenting at the National Press Club as Chair of the Group of Eight. In his presentation the Vice-Chancellor had urged greater investment by the Federal Government in the development of intellectual talent, deeper immersion into international research networks, full funding of research and flexible block funding for research infrastructure. Professor Seares reported that the Vice-Chancellor’s speech had been well received at the Press Club. Sylvia pointed out that the speech would be repeated on the ABC and that details of dates were available on the website.

**Executive Officer’s Note:** Details of dates are available at http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/netw/200804/programs/NC0706H040D2042008T123000.htm

**(viii)** *Reviews*

- Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery and the Berndt Museum of Anthropology
  The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor had advised that the review had emphasised that both divisions were an important asset for the University. One of the recommendations of the review was that possible synergies between the two be explored, especially in light of the anticipated co-location. Professor Seares had advised that a response to the report would be submitted in the near future.
It was noted that some of the problems highlighted in the review had been persistent concerns for a number of years. There was a problem with respect to students who were entering with insufficient mathematics background and who were required to cover the required material in a short period of time. The main difficulty was in catering for those who were not strong in mathematics and who did not have a strong interest in the subject.

2. ITEMS ARISING FROM MARCH MEETING

(a) Prospective Students Page
Questions were raised concerning the prospective students pages regarding courses and areas of study. Members queried who was responsible for the information on the pages, how often they were updated, where information was drawn from and whether faculties were alerted that there was a requirement to ensure that information was up to date. Further it was stated that there appeared to be no standard approach to the kind of information that might be provided in relation to a course or subject area and that terminology used was different to the standard. It was agreed that Sylvia Lang pursue these matters.

Sylvia has discussed these matters with Wayne Bettts. Wayne is unfortunately unable to attend this month’s meeting and will also be unavailable for next month’s. However he will prepare some written information for circulation to members to clarify the situation.

Sylvia noted that Wayne would be circulating an update to members shortly.

(b) Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)
Jan Dunphy asked what would happen if a student had used up their SLE (eg a student in the Graduate-entry MBBS) and had not yet completed all requirements of the course. It was agreed that Anthony Turner would pursue this matter with the Director of Planning Services, Mr Rob McCormack, and report back in due course. Anthony has been investigating this issue and will let the group know as soon as he has obtained responses from the relevant parties.

Anthony advised of steps taken to date. He would inform members as soon as he had received responses.

(c) UWA Extension – recording of results on Academic Transcript
Paul Lloyd queried whether members agreed to the notion that units completed through UWA Extension should be recorded on academic transcripts. It was noted that students often required an official document showing Extension units completed for work/registration requirements.

There were some concerns, such as: what format might be adopted; whether the Extension units should be listed on a separate page to “for degree” details; whether the student could indicate whether or not he/she would like the units included on their academic transcript.

It was agreed that if the standard became to record units completed through Extension, students would have to be advised in advance that this would occur.

Sylvia Lang was asked to investigate the matter and provide information at the next meeting.

Harvey von Bergheim has discussed the issue further with Mary Carroll. The following information is provided for members’ consideration.
The local development that produces the formal academic records (UWAR0460) for students could be adjusted as follows:

- Current record would print as normal (without Cont-Ed program) with End of Transcript displayed at bottom of last page
- Separate page would print with the Cont-Ed program and details with End of Transcript displayed at bottom of page

This would not require major adjustments to the locally developed program and could be implemented fairly quickly subject to staffing resources.

If members accept the above arrangement, Extension will be asked to alter their brochure accordingly for 2009.

There was general agreement to accept this proposal. Harvey will be contacting UWA Extension to move ahead with implementation.

(d) Withdrawal with Academic Penalty
Members considered a proposed amendment to University General Rule 1.2.1.2 to include a final date for withdrawal with penalty. The 'end date' for the unit had been proposed as that final date. However the group was advised that there was inconsistency of approach on this for non-standard semesters and that the end date may or may not include the assessment period. Sylvia Lang confirmed that, when surveyed, the general consensus of faculties had been that they did not wish students to be able to withdraw once the examination period had commenced.

Discussions are continuing as to how this matter can best be resolved and a proposal will be brought back to the next meeting.

Sylvia noted that Anne Gilkes was currently on leave and unavailable to attend the meeting to report on progress but advised that it has been suggested to use the 'end of period of instruction' as the 'end date'. Faculties were currently required to provide this date to allow calculation of the final date for withdrawal without penalty. Sylvia suggested that this include the date for submission of assignments. However it was pointed out that the date for submission of assignment may fall after the end of semester and therefore would not necessarily be appropriate.

The importance of catering for the majority (ie those studying in standard semester) was stressed. Non-standard semester units may have to be dealt with separately in the rules. Sylvia noted that draft rules would be circulated for consideration and feedback in due course.

3. Other Business
(a) Special Consideration
For members' information, current members of the Special Consideration 2nd Stage Working Party are:

Sylvia Lang (Chair); Gina Barron; Nikolas Barron (Guild President); Zan Blair; Mary Carroll; Clare Hannell; Beverley Hill; Paul Lloyd; James Mitton; Zarrin Siddiqui; Jon Stubbs; Harvey von Bergheim

Sylvia noted that progress on this matter had been slow to date and that the proposed meeting in February 2008 had been delayed as information required had not been available. Sylvia advised that Anne Gilkes had been appointed as project officer and was currently investigating policy and practice in relation to special consideration at other universities. At the request of the Working Party a questionnaire had been
circulated to faculties to enable information about what was happening in the various faculties with respect to special consideration to be updated.

Sylvia noted that it was envisaged to draft a policy on special consideration for circulation to the faculties for consideration and feedback in due course.

(b) Callista Upgrade
Mary Carroll advised that the upgrade to the next version of Callista is planned for the weekend of 10/11 May. Mary noted that the changes relate to statistical reporting and do not affect functionality.

(c) Exam Register
A proposal to establish a working party to address a review of the exam register was suggested and accepted. Mary Carroll will be contacting members (familiar with the register) to organise a meeting in the third week of April. It is anticipated that any changes will be implemented for second semester results.

(d) Trimester Query
There was a query regarding manual checking of progress in trimester units. Harvey confirmed that Callista is not currently programmed to check trimester progress. Such checking was done manually. In consideration of the small number of students involved in the instance in question, it was proposed this was best managed manually.
Policy statement

This policy is a statement of general principles that apply equally to all the University’s teaching regardless of the location or the dominant mode of teaching.

1. The University encourages staff to make informed decisions, within the context of available resources, when selecting from the full range of available teaching modes those which provide a learning experience which is student-centred, appropriate and effective.

2. Through its staff training and development programmes the University will support its staff in the acquisition and development of relevant skills, including the use of emerging teaching and learning technologies.

3. Through its provision of technical and physical infrastructure and of resources the University will facilitate the adoption of the full range of teaching modes.

4. Through its student support services, faculties and schools the University will support students to acquire and develop the relevant skills to engage fully with the learning modes which are employed.
Attachment B
(taken from the Student Learning Outcomes Co-ordinating Group Report, 2007)

Concluding Recommendations………..

Anticipating its imminent demise, the Group recommends as follows in relation to Student Learning Outcomes, and related areas in future:

1. that the Student Learning Outcomes Co-ordinating Group (previously Outcomes Based-Education Co-ordinating Group) be disestablished, after an update of survey results to the end of 2007, in keeping with the IRU survey previously devised, by March 2008;

2. that work and planning proceeding from the Review of Course Structures as it may relate to learning outcomes, UWA Educational Principles, or similar, take into account the faculty and university reports from this Group for the period 2002-2007;

3. that Deans or their delegates, in consultation with their Student Learning Outcomes faculty representative, devise an appropriate strategy to ensure the final uptake of an outcomes approach in all units and majors in their faculty by September 2008;

4. that all school and course reviews include as part of their preparation, a short report concerning the extent of uptake of student learning outcomes, to include consideration of the extent of outcomes statements and assessment demonstrably tailored to align with such stated outcomes;

5. that all new unit and course checklists from second semester 2008 should include the listing of intended student learning outcomes, and affirmation that assessment is explicitly tailored to such outcomes;

6. that student learning outcomes for each unit become a strongly recommended field in the Calliope online unit framework;

7. that the CATLyst network continue to provide, as part of its brief, ongoing support for outcomes-based practice among teaching staff;

8. that the remaining central funds ($8902) from the Teaching and Learning Development Fund 2004 OBE grant, be provided to CATL, to:

   a) upgrade Student Outcomes resources on the web (especially in relation to assessment) during 2008;

   b) co-ordinate and support the presentation of an outcomes-related session at Teaching Month in 2008;

   c) provide up to two small grants via its Improving Student Learning scheme, to assist staff seeking to make further progress on outcomes and assessment in their field beyond 2007;

   d) reproduce the Learning Outcomes brochure for distribution at staff orientation sessions in 2008/09;