NOTES FROM A MEETING OF THE FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS/SUB-DEANS’ GROUP HELD FRIDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2010 IN THE SENATE ROOM

1. UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Sylvia Lang provided the following update on the Academic Council meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2010:

(i) **RESTRUCTURE OF STUDENT PERCEPTION OF TEACHING (SPOT)**

Feedback was referred to the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) concerning the lack of an option to place additional specifically tailored questions on the form. It was noted that this feedback had been provided by faculties also at an earlier stage.

(ii) **ITEM FROM THE BOARD OF COURSEWORK STUDIES – ITEMS FROM THE BACHELOR OF ARTS INTERIM BOARD OF STUDIES**

All majors and units listed on the Council agenda were approved for offering in 2012. The list is available as Attachment G at the following link:
http://committees.intranet.uwa.edu.au/acaboard/academic_council_(from_2010)/agendas/2010/3_november

(iii) **ITEM FROM THE BOARD OF COURSEWORK STUDIES – ITEMS FROM THE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE INTERIM BOARD OF STUDIES**

The major and units listed on the Council agenda were approved for offering in 2012. The list is available as Attachment H at the following link:
http://committees.intranet.uwa.edu.au/acaboard/academic_council_(from_2010)/agendas/2010/3_november

(iv) **ITEM FROM THE BOARD OF COURSEWORK STUDIES – TRANSITION FROM BACHELOR OF SCIENCE**

Council approved that:
from 2012 the BSc(AdvSc) be gradually phased out and replaced with the BPhil(Hons);
the BSc(AdvSc) not be offered to new students from 2012; and
any student enrolled in the BSc(AdvSc) beginning 2012 be offered the opportunity (but not be obliged) to transfer to the BPhil(Hons) in 2012 with appropriate advanced standing.

In making the recommendation it was noted that some students may face some constraints in transferring, such as in relation to completing broadening requirements.

(v) **ITEM FROM THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – STUDENT TRANSITION WORKING PARTY INTERIM REPORT**

Sylvia noted that the 30 recommendations from the STWP interim report were approved. It was noted that students would be encouraged to transfer to new courses where feasible but that there would be no obligation to do so, or for faculties to introduce new units ahead of their scheduled date.

(vi) **UNIVERSITY POLICY ON DUPLICATION OF UNIT CONTENT**

Sylvia noted that the policy had been presented to Council at an earlier meeting but had been referred back due to concerns re content. The revised policy was approved, noting that the earlier concerns re had been addressed.

(vii) **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW COURSES STRUCTURE**

Ian Reid spoke to his report on progress with NC2012, noting the work that had been done and thanking the faculties for their support and contributions. It was noted that there was considerable work yet to be done on fine detail.
The following were noted:

- UWA student (Jackie McArthur) has been awarded the 2011 Rhodes Scholarship for WA
- UWA student has been successful in being recommended for the Australia-at-Large Rhodes Scholarship
- ARC outcomes re project grant applications have not been favourable for UWA, or for other GO8 universities. The outcomes of Linkage grant were exceptions to this with UWA achieving a high success rate.

2. **NC2012 POSTGRADUATE COURSE RULES**

Members noted that postgraduate courses at UWA are currently broadly governed by the University General Rules along with University-wide policies and procedures and Faculty-specific rules, policies and procedures.

Members also noted that postgraduate courses from 2012, it is proposed, will be governed by a stand-alone set of rules for each individual course along with any University wide policies and procedures that may apply. A draft example of a stand-alone set of rules for a master’s course had been attached to the agenda.

Members were advised that existing University General rules will be either incorporated within the new Student Rules, or in stand-alone postgraduate course rules or will become a part of existing or new University wide policies and procedures. Existing faculty-specific rules will also follow this route. Members had before them a spreadsheet of faculty-specific rules across the faculties.

Members noted that to assist faculties in aligning their postgraduate course rules with this new format, it was proposed that new templates for certificates, diplomas, master’s etc be provided and that faculties would then be asked to review the revised course rules, with any changes, subject to the normal approval process.

As a first step faculties were asked to consider their faculty-specific general rules and provisions to determine whether there were any that would need to be incorporated into stand-alone sets of course rules. A schedule, including some suggestions, was attached to the agenda.

Members were reminded that through the FAO and sub-Deans Group there had been an aim over the years to achieve consistency across faculties wherever possible. In this spirit, the following questions were posed for consideration at the meeting:

(a) **Is it possible to find a common definition of satisfactory progress for Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas and Master’s degrees?**

(b) **Should students proceeding to a thesis (in a master’s by thesis and coursework course) be required to perform at a higher level than those who are not?**

(c) **Should all students intending to undertake a research project (ie complete a dissertation or thesis) be required to demonstrate research preparation? If so, how should they do this? Must it be done prior to enrolment or could/should it be as part of the relevant course?**

(d) **What should the outcome be of failure to make satisfactory progress in a postgraduate course?**

(e) **Should a general policy on credit prevail or is there good reason for having specific credit provisions for some courses? For Discussion……**

Sylvia noted that the purpose of discussing this item was to provide feedback and was not a decision-making process at this stage.

Sylvia noted that it was hoped that there may not be a need to update the existing rules year by year for existing courses that are being phased out once the new process has been put in
Therefore the rules in force at the beginning of 2012 and any transition arrangements would apply.

James Mitton and Paul Lloyd noted that it would be preferable to have this freedom.

It was agreed that, if possible, a consistent approach across faculties would be preferable.

Sylvia asked the following question to the group: Is it possible to find a common definition of satisfactory progress for Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas and Master’s degrees?

Paul Lloyd commented that a standard process across faculties would be good option, preferably with 2 sets of ‘satisfactory progress’ rules: one for ‘conversion’ master’s and one for other master’s

There was some support for this approach. It was noted that professional postgraduate courses in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Science might be possible exceptions given that there current satisfactory progress rules were much more stringent.

Sylvia asked the group how ‘Satisfactory Progress’ for master’s other than conversion master’s might be defined.

One suggestion was satisfactory completion of 75% of units attempted.

In relation to Faculty’s General Rules and Provisions faculties were asked to review these and let Claire McIlroy know whether they needed to be retained or could be deleted.

Sylvia noted that the NC2012 rules appear differently in the Handbook to the current format. It has been suggested that the Course Code would be the unique identifier for courses and rules. She advised that attempts would be made to minimise the work involved for faculties in converting to any new format.

James Mitton queried the notion of using graduate diplomas as bridging courses, noting that this had been originally suggested but the idea appears to have lost traction. Members were advised that such a notion was current in relation to the new professional master’s in Engineering.

Concern was expressed about the possibility of return to a combined course model if there was a proliferation of diplomas that students could take concurrently with a bachelor’s degree.

3. TIMELINE OF TRANSITION ACTIVITIES – NC2012

Members noted a timeline of transition activities prepared by Rachel Schmitt (Marketing Manager NC2012), Public Affairs, including feedback from the faculties and other useful information over the next 12 months, a copy of which was attached to the agenda.

Members were requested to forward any comments to Rachel Schmitt.

4. REVIEW OF POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK ADMISSION PROCEDURES AT UWA - UPDATE

Members noted that Wayne Betts and Jon Stubbs continue to work together on revisions to the draft Issues and Options Paper. Members also noted that an online survey of postgraduate coursework students is currently being finalised with assistance from the Institutional Research Unit (IRU).

5. FACULTY BOARD/FULL FACULTY AGENDAS AND MINUTES – RECORD KEEPING

Peter Miller from ARMS spoke to this item.
Members were reminded that:

“The minutes and agenda of University committees are vital records that document the decisions that have shaped the University’s policies, procedures and strategic directions. They are the core records of the University’s corporate memory and, because of this, minutes and agenda are considered of archival or permanent value. Therefore, the University has a statutory obligation to ensure that these records are captured, preserved and, where appropriate, made accessible to the University community and the public.”

Members noted that the agendas and minutes for Faculty Board & Full Faculty should be sent to ARMS to ensure that the University has a full set for each year. Information regarding the retention and storage of University Committee minutes and agendas is available at http://www.archives.uwa.edu.au/toolbox/advice_sheets - (Advice Sheet 10).

For more information or assistance, please contact Peter Miller (ext 3208).

Peter also encouraged faculties to consider moving to electronic records management noting that some faculties have already done so. Members are encouraged to contact Peter for advice and/or assistance.

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