



ACADEMIC SENATE

Circulated: 9 July 2013

Confirmed minutes of meeting 13/03 of the Academic Senate of the University of Western Sydney held on Friday 21 June 2013 at 9:30am in the Boardroom, Building AD, at Werrington North.

Present:

Associate Professor Paul Wormell (Chair)
Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright
Dr Susan Armstrong
Professor Les Bokey
Professor Andrew Cheetham
Associate Professor Bronwyn Cole
Ms Sue Craig
Professor Gabriel Donleavy
Professor Kevin Dunn
Associate Professor Craig Ellis
Assoc. Professor Cecily Hengstberger-Sims
Professor Annemarie Hennessy
Ms Tahani Husari
Dr Stephen Janes (for Prof. Adams)
Dr Cindy Kersaitis
Professor Gregory Kolt
Professor Kerri-Lee Krause

Mr Terry Mason
Dr Peter Mauch
Ms Shaneen McGlinchey (also for Angelo Kourtis)
Dr Mary Mooney
Dr Michael O'Connor
Associate Professor Anne Power
Associate Professor Leanne Rylands
Prof Lynette Sheridan Burns (also for Prof. Hutchings)
Associate Professor Terry Sloan
Professor Kate Stevens
Professor Zhong Tao
Ms Maxine Veale
Mr Dean Walker
Dr Greg Whateley
Professor Steve Wilson

In Attendance:

Ms Gillian Brown (Secretary)
Ms Terri Anderson
Ms Diana Camilleri
Mr James Fitzgibbon

Mr Richard Kindness
Ms Deirdre Lee
Ms Kate Shane

Apologies:

Professor Michael Adams
Professor Ian Anderson
Associate Professor Berice Anning
Dr Catherine Attard
Professor Donna Craig
Dr Betty Gill
Professor Rhonda Griffiths
Professor Peter Hutchings
Mr Angelo Kourtis
Professor Donald McNeill
Associate Professor Jane Mears

Dr Awais Piracha
Professor Janice Reid (VC)
Mr Michael Richardson
Mr Michael Robertson
Dr Paul Rowland
Dr Seyed Shahrestani
Professor Simeon Simoff
Professor Clive Smallman
Professor Deborah Stevenson
Professor Deborah Sweeney

Absent:

Dr Terri Mylett

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 INTRODUCTION, WELCOMES, CONGRATULATIONS, FAREWELLS AND APOLOGIES

Welcome

The Chair of Academic Senate, Associate Professor Paul Wormell, chaired the meeting of the Senate, and opened it by reading an Acknowledgment of the Traditional Owners, as follows:

“As a matter of Indigenous cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, the University of Western Sydney acknowledges the Darug, Gandangarra and Tharawal peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in Greater Western Sydney.

In particular I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting today, and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are here today.”

It was noted that in addition to the electronic agenda and associated papers, there is a tabled paper with recommendations from the electronic APCAC meeting that concluded on 20 June 2013.

The Chair thanked all members attending today during this busy time of year. It was acknowledged that Ms Shaneen McGlinchey and Professor Lynette Sheridan Burns attended in two capacities at this meeting. Dr Stephen Janes attended for Professor Michael Adams.

The Chair welcomed the new student members as follows, noting the particular set of experience and expertise they bring to Senate:

- Ms Tahani Husari (newly elected to one of the two postgraduate student positions on Senate from 1 June 2013).
- Mr Dean Walker (newly elected to one of the two undergraduate student positions on Senate from 1 June 2013).
- Mr Michael Robertson (newly elected to one of the two undergraduate student positions on Senate from 1 June 2013). Michael had tendered his apologies for this meeting.

Apologies

Apologies as listed were noted.

1.2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were requested to declare any interests, in terms of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines, they may have in relation to the items on this agenda.

No members reported any conflict of interest in relation to agenda items.

1.3 STARRING OF ITEMS

Apart from procedural items, items starred on the agenda were:

- 3.1 Chair's Report
- 3.2 Academic Standards And Quality, including Draft Threshold Standards for Research and Research Training
- 3.5 Curriculum Planning – this item was unstarred as a new member of Senate, Dr Paul Rowland, is working on this project and sent his apologies for this meeting.
- 3.6 Academic Year Review
- 3.8 Blended Learning Update
- 3.9 Doctor Of Letters And Doctor Of Science Degrees Policy

It was resolved (AS13:03/01):

That the documents for all unstarred agenda items be noted and, except where alternative action is noted as appropriate, all recommendations contained in those items be endorsed.

1.4 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

1.5 OTHER BUSINESS

At the next Academic Senate meeting there will be a presentation on 'The Academy'; A new initiative to provide high achieving students with a bespoke learning and leadership experience.

1.6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Senate had before it the unconfirmed minutes of the Senate meeting held on 3 May 2013.

It was resolved (AS13:03/02):

To confirm the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 3 May 2013 as an accurate record.

2 BUSINESS ARISING

2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 MINUTE 3.10 – DOCTORATE POLICY

Without discussion it was noted that arrangements were being made to publish the new *Doctorate Policy* on the DDS system.

2.2 MINUTE 3.11 - EXAMINATIONS POLICY – MOBILE PHONE PROBLEMS IN FORMAL EXAMINATIONS PERIOD

Without discussion, it was noted that the revised *Examinations Policy* had been published on the Policy DDS.

2.3 MINUTE 3.12 - HONOURS IN BACHELOR AWARDS POLICY

Without discussion, it was noted that arrangements were being made to publish the revised *Honours in Bachelor Awards Policy* on the Policy DDS.

3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 CHAIR'S REPORT

Senate had before it a written report from the Chair covering activities undertaken on behalf of the Senate since 3 May 2013.

The Chair offered to answer any questions and reported the following additional matters.

The Chair and Professor Kate Stevens reported that the Vice-Chancellor Selection Committee process continues, and it is hoped that it will be possible to announce the new Vice-Chancellor in early August 2013, dependent on negotiations with the preferred candidate and their current institution. Interview questions were based on the selection criteria including research and academic leadership. The feedback collated from Senate and the Academic Community will also be used in the second round of questions for candidates.

The Chair advised of the development of The Academy at UWS and its focus on academic excellence, Advanced degrees, Graduate Attributes, engaged learning and educational opportunity and looked forward to the presentation to Senate.

The Chair's recent meeting with Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates from other Universities reaffirmed that they are engaging with the same issues as UWS, especially around flexible and blended learning; about how we can use technology as a tool, but not as a master; about the importance of supporting and engaging with students; about the need for supporting staff; and about ways of communicating with the University community. Some useful ideas from this meeting are being investigated.

A paper is being finalised regarding academic governance for TEQSA's advice, and to inform the Higher Education Standards Panel as it revises the threshold standards around university governance. The final paper will be presented to Senate for discussion as soon as available.

3.2 ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY, INCLUDING DRAFT THRESHOLD STANDARDS FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) led discussions regarding the Higher Education Standards Panel's recently released set of draft Threshold Standards for Research, Research Training, and Learning Outcomes (Research Training). The consolidated Research Standards document is available at <http://www.hestandards.gov.au/engagement/call-comment-number-2>.

It was noted that the document has also been referred to Academic Senate's Research Committee for comment. The closing date for comments is Wednesday 10 July 2013.

The Higher Education Threshold Standards are mandatory for all universities, and are the basis for regulation by TEQSA, affecting how Universities conduct research and supervise Higher Degree Research students.

The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) noted that the existing research environment is already well regulated, with the Australian Code for Responsible Research (ACRR), many ethics committees, grant conditions and conventions. The Higher Education Standards Panel has proposed that these standards would refer to a set of reference points including the ACRR and Guidelines developed by the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Research. The draft standards are based on the current research conventions but focus, formalise and in some cases tighten the requirements (for example research training and the formalisation of course work). The need to consider the implementation of these regulations carefully, with regard to the potential increase in red tape, was also suggested.

The aim of the draft Research Standards is to encourage a high level of response by providers but without unreasonable regulatory burden, and without inhibiting innovation.

Members provided the following comments:

- Discussions will be required to systematise the capturing and displaying of the students' additional knowledge and skills under the draft standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training, as this could be a fairly difficult task administratively, with the information currently collected on PhD documentation but not collated systematically.
- It would be important to ensure the alignment and consistency of Higher Degree Research (HDR) supervision between institutions. The draft standards were seen as providing a framework to ensure appropriate supervision of PhD students by someone who is research active and familiar with research principles.
- The standards should also include orientation of new staff and provide for their induction into the research aspects of their new roles in academic units. Although this already occurs in many cases, it is not formalised and should include items such as Intellectual Property and safety within the discipline area.
- UWS Graduate Attributes would have to be developed within the HDR programs, and this could involve a range of elements including course work. The MARCS Institute provides clear expectations for HDR students within its research culture, including special interest groups, as well as the motivation to ensure that research skills are developed. It was noted that the 'Bologna-like (Macquarie) Model', currently being investigated for introduction at UWS in 2015, formalises and specifies the learning outcomes for students.
- It was also noted that the formalisation of research skills in the Bologna-like Model focusses on entry to PhD and a separate plan may be required for post PhD training. This would provide HDR graduates with a clearer recognition of the skills that are required for the career paths that may be open to them, acknowledging that approximately half do not proceed into academic positions.

The Chair commented that the draft standards appeared to be attracting interest but not alarm, and they would have the effect of systematising many processes that had

already been introduced at UWS. The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) requested that any further comments be forwarded to him for inclusion in the University's response.

3.3 SENATE WORK PLAN

At the 22 February meeting Senate discussed the latest draft Work Plan, and agreed to a resolution that affirmed its commitment to the spirit and letter of its role as "the primary custodian of academic values and standards for the University", and its functions and powers under clauses (3) and (6) of the *Academic Governance Policy*.

At the 3 May meeting the Chair indicated that he will continue putting relevant items on the agenda, when they have not already been suggested by Senate Standing Committees. For this meeting, the relevant items included 3.5, 3.6 and 3.8 below, and some references in the Chair's Report under item 3.1.

3.4 OUR FUTURE ACTION PROGRAM

The *Our Future Program* is an integrated group of initiatives that were developed during 2012 in response to a set of resolutions by the UWS Board of Trustees that aim to strengthen the University's position in the increasingly competitive higher-education sector, both in Australia and internationally.

The *Our Future Program* website may be found at the following URL, and it includes the statement that "Academic Senate and its committees will be closely involved in the Program, with regular communication and engagement with the various academic projects."

http://uws.edu.au/our_future_program/our_future_program

The *Our Future Program* work falls within six broad activity streams:

1. Learning and Teaching Flexibility: Beyond the Classroom
2. Optimising the Use of the Academic Year and Infrastructure
3. Staffing for Development
4. Financial Sustainability
5. Academic Program and Pathways
6. Marketing the University: Branding and Identity

This is a standing item on Academic Senate agendas for 2013. Items 3.5 – 3.8 concern activity streams within the *Our Future Program*.

3.5 CURRICULUM PLANNING

This item relates to the "Learning and Teaching Flexibility: Beyond the Classroom" and "Academic Program and Pathways" activity streams of the *Our Future Program*.

This strategy and academic plan, to take effect from December 2013, will determine the shape and delivery of academic programming into the future. Distribution of an options paper to the wider University community is planned for August 2013.

The interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement, Strategy and Quality) has assumed responsibility for this project and will provide an update at the next Academic Senate.

3.6 ACADEMIC YEAR REVIEW

This item relates to the “Optimising the Use of the Academic Year and Infrastructure” activity stream of the *Our Future Program*. The initiative for this review came from the Board of Trustees and was premised on the need to maximise the use of resources as the University grew.

At the 3 May 2013 Senate meeting the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning) updated Senate members on the new UWS Summer, reporting that there would be 104 units offered, in different teaching modes, over three Summer session times at three campuses. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning) updated this information at the 21 June Senate meeting advising that there would now be 106 units, (now including a Badanami unit) being offered in the three Summer Sessions, over five campuses.

The new UWS Summer was launched on 18 May 2013 inviting students to reserve their place by registering their interest. A week after the launch 1200 students had indicated their interest and by 14 June this had increased to 2500. On 17 June students were able to enrol in Summer units and by 20 June there were 1840 enrolments.

A report will be provided to Schools each week regarding enrolments in units offered in the Summer sessions. This is to assist with the management of these units, especially with regard to viability. By the end of August the Summer timetable will be made available. From August a campaign to promote the new UWS Summer to external students will commence.

A working party has been established to review some IT matters, Library service hours and parking. Cross campus study without the need for Rule Waivers has been addressed.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning) congratulated the project team on a wonderful job to date, and advised that the project assistant, Dr Neville Ellis was leaving the University and wanted to publicly acknowledge his significant contribution to the project.

It is planned to complete a comprehensive analysis of the student and staff UWS Summer experience to illuminate what students prefer and to monitor the efficacy of the project over a three year period.

Members provided the following comments:

- Care should be exercised when considering the cancellation of any units that have been advertised, especially Summer units. Students may be awaiting results before enrolling into these units.
- Cancelling any units just before the Summer sessions commence, even those with low enrolment numbers, may have a long term detrimental impact and, without close management, may have severe impacts on some students' progression. Some students may have changed their Spring enrolments in the expectation that a unit will be offered in Summer, and their progression will be adversely affected if the Summer unit is then cancelled.
- It was noted that on average there were higher enrolments for those units that are usually offered in Summer, especially those offered in the School of Law.

This was considered to be due to the familiarity of this student cohort with the Summer School option.

- The need for financial commitment to ensure that all advertised units are run and a financial model that will provide for the long term success of UWS Summer. It was noted that a differential funding model is being discussed with the Deans.
- It was recognised that the maintenance of standards and quality of teaching and learning in the more intensive blended units, offered in the short summer session, would require considerable attention by academics. Assessments may be different from the version offered in the other sessions, but the learning outcomes would be the same. A streamlined curriculum approval form has been introduced for units that will now be offered in Summer.
- The new UWS Summer is seen as a pilot and therefore a learning experience to assist development into a sustainable model.

The Chair requested any further feedback to be forwarded to him and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning).

The Chair of Senate, with the Academic Registrar and Associate Director, Secretariat, have undertaken a preliminary review of the policy implications of the UWS Summer program and established a joint working party of APCAC and Senate Education Committee to further consider implications for academic policies and procedures, including curriculum, progression, assessment and graduations.

Recommendations will be made to Senate, through APCAC and Education Committee, with advice to the Academic Year Review team. The working party, in collaboration with other working parties of the Academic Year Review team, will also consider the implications for academic policies and procedures of the School of Business trimester model, both as a standalone arrangement and in combination with courses that are operating on an Autumn/Spring calendar. Again, recommendations will be made to Senate through the relevant Standing Committees.

3.7 RED TAPE TASKFORCE

The Red Tape Taskforce has been established to review a range of administrative tasks required in support of teaching and research programs. The project lies within the Financial Sustainability stream of the *Our Future* Program, and is being led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning), supported by the Chair of Academic Senate. Although creating additional work in the short term, this initiative is an opportunity to free up academic time currently spent on administration, while improving efficiencies and processes.

It is anticipated that Academic Senate will be asked to make a range of decisions about academic policies and procedures in response to project reports from the Taskforce established by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning). No matters were raised for consideration at this meeting, but further updates will be provided to later meetings.

3.8 BLENDED LEARNING UPDATE

Following on from the presentations on Blended Learning at the last Senate meeting, the interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) updated Senate on two further items

within the Curriculum Support and Curriculum Delivery Domain of the Blended Learning Strategy.

The Learning Space Design – Threshold Standards

These standards were endorsed by Senate Education Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2013 and provide a clear baseline for all Collaborative Learning Spaces and a default standard for flat floor teaching space (where space allows).

Overall these standards represent a successful collaborative effort between Information Technology Services, Capital Works and Facilities, and the academic community, and demonstrate a commitment to getting the face-to-face spaces right for students and staff. The drawings supplied in the Senate papers provide a visual representation of the social learning spaces, both dedicated teaching rooms and informal spaces. The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) advised that the recommendations had been warmly endorsed by the Education Committee, however, there is opportunity for feedback and improvement which is most welcome, no matter how large or small.

Discussions with the Timetabling group had provided valuable input to achieving a sustainable solution which meets the accommodation needs of both students and staff.

Members provided the following feedback regarding the new blended learning spaces:

- The Timetabling group has reported increased competition in booking rooms with the new learning space design.
- The School of Nursing and Midwifery reported that staff enjoy the flexibility of the new learning spaces, and that they are more conducive to small group learning.
- Advice about the rollout and the rooms that have been targeted to be redesigned to the new layout would assist Schools in identifying specific-use spaces which they would like to see maintained, and would provide information for the future planning of blended units.
- The increased use of the spaces outside the classroom was noted, although it was reported that this is sometimes necessary to ensure adequate wireless connectivity for iPads.
- The dedicated skills centres in the new clinical centres in Liverpool and Blacktown Hospitals have made a significant contribution to teaching and learning, and have been an exciting development providing access to simulation activities.
- The need for additional whiteboard capabilities for Mathematics classes has been solved with the iPad initiative as students photograph the work on the boards before being erased and reused.
- Ensuring the knowledge of the current blended learning specialists, on short term contracts, embed competencies in the continuing staff is important for the long-term success of blended learning strategies.

Measuring the Blend

The interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor then introduced a draft discussion paper by Dr Carol Russell and the BLADE network around student-centred measures of

embedded work and blended learning experiences. This had been endorsed by the Senate Education Committee at its meeting on 3 June 2013. Members were advised that the University's definition of blended learning has been discussed and tested across the University community, and the focus has now shifted to measuring the students' blended-learning experiences. This draft paper provided a framework for doing this, but comments on missing items, other impacting factors or suggested reframing were welcomed.

Members provided the following feedback:

- Some student activities which are neither face-to-face nor online had not been included; for example, essential student discussion activities that took place outside the classroom for a laboratory-based science unit.
- The face-to-face model is based on 10 hours per week per unit. The work load of a forty-hour week for four units was considered to be quite high, and this may require reconsideration to see if it is realistic.
- Updated methods of determining staff workload, including curriculum development, were seen as necessary, and the number of face-to-face hours was not an appropriate measure of the work required for developing and delivering blended learning units.
- A considerable effort was required to maintain blended units that deal with contemporary issues, where media and other resources change rapidly. Smart unit design would be needed to minimise and streamline the amount of rewriting and updating of online tutorial items, quizzes and similar resources to keep a unit up to date.
- Effective use would have to be made of the short-term blended learning contract staff to ensure that continuing staff develop the relevant knowledge and skills for sustainable development of blended learning at UWS. It was noted that most Schools had a three-year staged plan for blended learning, but there may be a longer-term need for technical staff with specialised skills.
- The age demographic of a School may also be a contributing factor in knowledge transfer, where older fully trained staff may leave the University over the next few years.
- The new Grade Mark and other online assessment tools were providing further assistance with teaching in the blended learning environment.
- A workshop will be held in early July for the School of Humanities and Communication Arts, utilising the professional recording studios to create high quality video lectures.
- It was noted that sessional staff should be provided with training.
- The School of Medicine reported a rapid acceptance of blended learning strategies as the efficiencies became apparent to tutors. The retention of technical assistance was seen as an advantage to maintaining the momentum into the future.

The IDVC (Education) thanked all School staff for their creativity and good will in accepting and developing the blended learning landscape for UWS. She also acknowledged the great things happening at the UWSCollege with the iPad initiative.

The IDVC (Education) welcomed all feedback regarding Blended Learning.

3.10 DOCTOR OF LETTERS AND DOCTOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES POLICY

A revised *Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Science Policy*, endorsed by the Research Studies Committee of Academic Senate, was provided to members. The changes comprised leadership and management changes that have taken place during 2012, to include references to both the Schools and University Research Institutes, and address clauses in which the Higher Doctorate Panel makes a confidential recommendation to Academic Senate about the award of a degree.

These rare degrees are not awarded via the standard Higher Research Degree process and are approved by the Board of Trustees following recommendation by Senate. Given the confidential nature of these awards, it was considered inappropriate to forward particulars to the many recipients of Senate papers, and therefore it was proposed to have these matters considered by the smaller Senate Executive Committee.

It was resolved (AS13:03/03):

That Academic Senate approves the revisions to the Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Science Policy, effective from the date of publication of the new Policy.

4 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES

4.1 SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/04):

That Academic Senate note the report of the Senate Executive Committee electronic meeting conducted between 13 and 16 May, 2013.

4.2 RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/05):

That Academic Senate note the minutes of the 7 May 2013 Research Committee meeting.

4.3 RESEARCH STUDIES COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/06):

That Academic Senate note the minutes of the 7 May 2013 and 4 June 2013 Research Studies Committee meetings.

4.4 EDUCATION and ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES (incorporating Student Experience and Engagement Committee)

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/07):

That Academic Senate note the report of the Education Committee meeting held on 3 June 2013.

4.5 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND COURSES APPROVALS COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/08):

That Academic Senate note the report of the 12 June 2013 Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee meeting, including the electronic meeting conducted between 17 and 20 June 2013, and ratifies the recommendations contained therein.

4.6 BACHELOR (HONOURS) COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/09):

That Academic Senate note the minutes of the Bachelor (Honours) Committee meetings held on 21 March 2013.

4.7 UWS COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Without discussion

It was resolved (AS13:03/10):

That Academic Senate note the minutes of the UWS College Academic Committee meeting held on 8 May 2013.

4.8 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees met on 5 June 2013.

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 September 2013. Summaries of Board of Trustees meetings, and minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, are available on the web-site at: <http://www.uws.edu.au/boardoftrustees>.

5 FOR INFORMATION

No items

6 NEXT MEETING

The next Academic Senate meeting is arranged for Friday 16 August 2013. Senate meeting dates for the remainder of 2013 are as follows:

- Friday 16 August
- Friday 25 October
- Friday 6 December (provisional meeting – to be held if necessary)

All the meetings start at 9.30 AM, and will be held in the Board Room, Building AD, at Werrington North.