

# ACADEMIC SENATE

Circulated: 18 December 2015

Confirmed minutes of meeting 15/06 of the Academic Senate of Western Sydney University held on Friday 4 December 2015 at 9:30am in the Boardroom, Building AD, at Werrington North.

## Present:

Associate Professor Paul Wormell (Chair)  
Professor Michael Adams  
Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright  
Professor Ian Anderson  
Associate Professor Catherine Attard  
Dr Matthias Boer  
Mr Jarrod Bradley  
Associate Professor Bronwyn Cole  
Professor Kevin Dunn  
Associate Professor Craig Ellis  
Ms Ushi Ghoorah-Hurrychurn  
Associate Professor Betty Gill  
Dr Deborah Hatcher (Acting Dean of Nursing and Midwifery)  
Professor Annemarie Hennessy  
Professor Peter Hutchings

Mr John Juriansz  
Associate Professor Alana Lentin  
Ms Shaneen McGlinchey  
Dr Terri Mylett  
Associate Professor Janette Perz  
Dr Alpha Possamai-Inesedy  
Associate Professor Anne Power  
Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl  
Professor Michele Simons  
Professor Sheree Smith  
Professor Kate Stevens  
Professor Deborah Sweeney  
Ms Maxine Veale  
Professor Greg Whateley  
Dr Qinghua Zeng

## In Attendance:

Ms Gillian Brown (Secretary)  
Dr Kathleen Dixon  
Mr Matthew Hinde  
Ms Deirdre Lee  
Mr Ian Londish

Dr Olivia Mirza  
Associate Professor Julie Old  
Ms Kate Shane  
Associate Professor Surendra Shrestha  
Dr Vivek Thakkar

## Apologies:

Professor James Arvanitakis  
Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik  
Ms Ellen Brackenreg (Acting PVC Students)  
Professor Donna Craig  
Ms Sue Craig  
Professor Barney Glover (VC)  
Mr Michael Gonzalez  
Professor Rhonda Griffiths  
Professor Scott Holmes  
Dr Cindy Kersaitis  
Professor Denise Kirkpatrick  
Professor Donald McNeill

Professor Gregory Kolt  
Dr David Mahns  
Associate Professor Jane Mears  
Dr Christopher Peterson  
Dr Awais Piracha  
Associate Professor Leanne Rylands  
Professor Simeon Simoff  
Associate Professor Terry Sloan  
Professor Zhong Tao  
Associate Professor Linda Taylor

## Absent:

Mr Mitchell Klievens  
Mr Murray Robertson

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## **1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

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### **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, Western Sydney University 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, present and future, and to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are here today.”

The Chair foreshadowed the important items on the agenda for consideration today and thanked members for their attendance, achieving quorum, at a particularly busy time of year. The Chair congratulated Dr Catherine Attard and Dr Alpha Possamai-Inesedy on their recent promotion to Associate Professor. Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl was also congratulated on her re-election to Deputy Chair, acknowledging her keen and analytical eye and commitment to quality, which are important assets for her position on Senate. The Deputy Chair then congratulated the Chair on his re-election noting the calm, efficient and collegial nature of Senate under his skilful direction.

Members, some who have served Senate for many years, were farewelled, as listed below. On behalf of Senate the Chair acknowledged their contributions, noting the great benefit brought to Senate by their willingness to bring a range of perspectives, which reflect the voice of the academic community, and are influential in decision making.

#### **Elected Members –**

- Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright
- Dr Catherine Attard
- Professor Donna Craig
- Mr John Juriansz
- Associate Professor Alana Lentin
- Dr David Mahns
- Associate Professor Janette Perz
- Dr Awais Piracha
- Associate Professor Anne Power
- Associate Professor Leanne Rylands
- Ms Maxine Veale
- Dr Qinghua Zeng

#### **Ex-Officio and Appointed Members –**

- Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik
- Associate Professor Bronwyn Cole
- Associate Professor Craig Ellis

- Associate Professor Betty Gill
- Ms Shaneen McGlinchey
- Dr Alpha Possamai-Inesedy
- Professor Donald McNeill

The Chair made special mention of the exceptional contributions made over the years by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Associate Pro Vice-Chancellors (Education), Bronwyn Cole, Craig Ellis, Betty Gill and, most recently, Alpha Possamai-Inesedy. Their leading contributions to Senate in their various roles, and their work on various committees, including our former College Committees, had greatly benefited academic standards, the quality of academic policies, and the quality of education offered across the Schools.

The Academic Registrar, Shaneen McGlinchey was also acknowledged, in recognition that her contributions have been crucial to the work of Senate, and to the policies and processes that support the University's academic programs and students. Her knowledge and experience, good judgement, capacity to work calmly across the academic and administrative interface, and her 'student-centredness' have been of great value to the University over the years, and to Senate and its committees.

The Chair acknowledged Emeritus Professor MaryAnn Bin-Sallik's contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and education while she has been at Western Sydney this year, especially her contribution to the Vice-Chancellor/Chair of Senate Academic Forum on this topic.

The Chair welcomed the new members present and thanked them for attending the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were noted and accepted.

## **1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

No declarations of interest were reported.

## **1.3 STARRING OF ITEMS**

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

- 3.1 Report from the Chair
- 3.2 Report from the Vice-Chancellor
- 3.3 Higher Education Standards and Regulation
- 3.6 Red Tape Taskforce
- 3.8 Student Academic Integrity Framework
- 3.9 Review of Academic Senate Standing Committees and Self-Review of Academic Senate
- 3.10 Academic Senate Elections
- 3.12 Revised and Renamed *Courses and Units Approvals Policy*
- 3.13 Draft New *Disruption to Studies Policy*

It was agreed to star the following additional items:

- 3.14 Revised *Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy*

**It was resolved (AS15:06/01):**

*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.*

The Chair commended the large volume of work completed by the standing committees of Senate, including the School Academic Committees, Curriculum Quality Committees, Academic Planning and Course Approvals Committee and Research Studies Committee, in connection with the unstarred items which had just been approved.

**1.4 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Discussions concerning item 3.12 Revised and Renamed *Courses and Units Approvals Policy* occurred before item 3.9 Review of Academic Senate Standing Committees and Self-Review of Academic Senate to provide context to the proposed changes to Senate's standing committees.

**1.5 OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**1.6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Senate had before it the unconfirmed minutes of the Senate meeting held on 23 October 2015:

**It was resolved (AS15:06/02):**

*To confirm the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 23 October 2015 as an accurate record.*

**1.7 ACTION SHEET FROM LAST MEETING**

To assist members with monitoring the work of Senate, the action sheet from the meeting held on 23 October 2015 and previous meetings had been circulated and noted that all items on the action sheet had been completed.

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**2 BUSINESS ARISING**

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**2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**2.1 MINUTE 3.13 REVISED DOCTORATE POLICY**

Without discussion it was noted that arrangements were progressing to publish the revised *Doctorate Policy*.

### **3.1 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

Senate had before it a written report from the Chair covering activities undertaken on behalf of the Senate since 23 October 2015.

The Chair provided an update on recent developments not reported in other agenda items, and advised the following additional matters:

- The Board of Trustees met on Wednesday 2 December and approved the updates to the membership of Senate provided in the *Academic Governance Policy*.
- A broader paper about academic governance, including the roles of Senate's standing committees, was provided to the 2 December meeting of the Board of Trustees. This paper is available to members at [http://www.uws.edu.au/about\\_uws/leadership/academic\\_senate](http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/leadership/academic_senate)
- In 2016 the Senate Work Plan will be guided by the self-review of Senate, currently under way, and *Securing Success* and its underlying plans, especially the *Learning and Teaching Plan* and the *Research and Development Plan*. The work plan is also linked to the Strategic Risk Register, which greatly strengthens this aspect of Senate's terms of reference.
- Inclusion of the new Higher Education Standards Framework was noted, with work to be undertaken on the revision of policies, procedures and course documentation. This strengthens Senate's quality and standards work, and will be an efficient way of preparing for the University's re-accreditation as a higher education provider in 2018.
- The Chair noted that under the University's Act, Senate is a forum for academic discourse and debate, which allows lively discussion across the academic units and with students, and communicates back to the wider university community. He thanked the Vice-Chancellor, and Deputy Vice-Chancellors for bringing matters for discussion and comment by Senate. The Chair also acknowledged the Vice Chancellor for his responsiveness to feedback about *Securing Success*, both at Senate and in the Academic Forum on this topic.
- Members were referred to an email received that morning regarding outstanding results in the 2015 Excellence in Research for Australia results. The University's ERA results are available at: <http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ERA2015>.

Further information about some of the University's researchers is available at: <http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research-unlimited>.

### **3.2 REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

The Vice-Chancellor had provided his apologies for this meeting. His report to the 2 December 2015 meeting of the Board of Trustees will be provided to the next meeting of Senate.

### **3.3 HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS AND REGULATION**

Following the completion of the disallowance period on 3 December 2015, the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* has now been approved, to take effect from 1 January 2017. Work has commenced on adopting the Framework, starting with updating the University's course and unit approvals processes. The Framework is available at:

<https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639/c4f3ee84-99c9-4892-ad66-d46662c577ff>

The Academic Governance Working Party had been reconvened to consider a range of issues including the *Higher Education Standards Framework*. The chair of the reconvened working party, Professor Michael Adams, provided a brief update of discussions at the first meeting held on 25 November 2015 and proposed a slightly revised membership and terms of reference, which was agreed to by Senate members at this meeting.

### **3.4 SENATE WORK PLAN**

The Senate Work Plan is continuing to develop in response to the *Securing Success* implementation plans and their areas of focus for 2015. An updated Work Plan was provided for the 23 October 2015 meeting and is available at:

[http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/about\\_uws/leadership/academic\\_senate](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/about_uws/leadership/academic_senate)

No matters were raised at this meeting.

### **3.5 SECURING SUCCESS: DRAFT LEARNING AND TEACHING PLAN**

The *Securing Success 2015 - 2020 Strategic Plan* represents the cornerstone of the University's strategic planning process. Endorsed by the Board of Trustees in February 2015, it presents the strategic goals and objectives of the University.

As indicated above, the Senate Work Plan will be strongly influenced by the implementation and action plans for *Securing Success*, including the *Learning and Teaching Plan*. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced a first draft of the *Learning and Teaching Plan* to members at the 23 October 2015 meeting of Senate. The next draft of the *Learning and Teaching Plan* is being finalised for completion by the end of 2015 for the next round of consultation and approval in January 2016.

### **3.6 RED TAPE TASKFORCE**

The Red Tape Taskforce (RTTF) was established to review a range of administrative tasks required in support of teaching and research programs. This initiative of the Board of Trustees aimed to identify opportunities to free up academic time currently spent on administration, while improving efficiencies and processes.

This ongoing program continues to look at the efficiency of business processes and operate as a reference group to provide advice about opportunities and priorities for improving efficiency. As part of the continuing RTTF process, a grant program, with a value of up to \$10,000 for each successful application has been established.

The Senior Project Manager, Mr Matthew Hinde, provided an update at this meeting noting that a number of projects have been progressed or completed during 2015 as follows:

- A new travel and expense management system (TEMS) has been introduced, following a “best of breed” solution approach. There have been some challenges regarding the implementation due to inconsistencies with profiles and delegations in the systems that provide data to TEMS; these are to be addressed. Limited resourcing for training has also raised some concerns which will be overcome with increased familiarity and usage of the system.
- As part of the Course Approvals review, revised course concept and full course proposal forms, and new course process flows have been developed. Revised unit proposal forms are currently being developed. It is planned to pilot the new documents throughout January 2016, obtain feedback and then amend and implement the revised forms in March 2016.
- The *Student Misconduct Rule* has been approved by the Board of Trustees and implementation is proceeding.
- A paper regarding recommended improvements to the Compass system will be provided to the University Executive on 7 December 2015.
- A new “smart form” solution is being developed for Human Ethics applications with a target date of June 2016 for implementation.
- The graduation process for the Graduate Research School has been refined to reduce the number of systems involved.

Ten requests for process efficiency grants have been received and are under consideration. Members suggested an additional item regarding the process to develop, approve, publish and archive Unit Outlines. A consistent, simplified and seamless process is sought and members were asked to provide examples of best practice to the Project Office.

The Red Tape Taskforce will continue until red tape across the University has been minimised. Members are requested to let colleagues know that they should advise the Project Office of any efficiency projects currently underway to ensure duplication does not occur.

### **3.7 DEVELOPMENT OF 1 PARRAMATTA SQUARE**

At the 19 June 2014 meeting the Vice-Chancellor and President recommended that the development of the new Parramatta City Campus (1PSQ) be included as a standing item on Senate agendas to afford members the opportunity for academic debate regarding this project.

No matters were raised at this meeting.

### **3.8 STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FRAMEWORK**

Following discussion by Academic Senate at the 19 June 2015 and previous meetings, a revised draft of the *Student Misconduct Rule* was endorsed by Senate and approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on 9 September 2015.

As part of the implementation plan of the *Student Misconduct Rule*, the Academic Integrity Working Party has been developing the University’s academic integrity and honesty framework, including educative approaches, and appropriate terminology, thresholds and procedures for dealing with less substantial matters.

The draft *Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Inappropriate Behaviour* were discussed at the 23 October meeting of Senate and valuable comments were provided by members. This feedback was incorporated into a revised set of draft Guidelines, which were circulated on 19 November to afford members adequate time to review them and provide feedback directly to the Chair of the Working Party, Associate Professor Craig Ellis.

An amended set of draft Guidelines were provided to members for consideration at this meeting, noting that minor administrative amendments due to the recent changes in position titles will be required.

The Chair of the Working Party, Associate Professor Craig Ellis, thanked the members, past and present, on the work completed to date. Some work will be continuing next year on the broader context of 'Academic Integrity' with further student-facing resources to be generated which will include information on support available. The guidelines have been designed to empower staff by providing for the expert professional judgement of academics suitable for the educative situation. The guidelines encourage student-centred responses, with agreement from the student if possible, to ensure acceptance and remediation.

Members congratulated the working party on the work to date with this complex and difficult project. Additional feedback and comments were:

#### *Inappropriate Behaviour Guidelines*

- Some Schools still had concerns regarding the significance attached to the student's admission of inappropriate behaviour. They welcomed clarification of this point during the implementation phase.
- Members asked for clarification regarding the starting date for the new process, as training of sessional staff will be required. The introduction of a hotline or contact point for guidance was suggested, along with the provision of templates and flowcharts. Members were advised that the implementation working group was currently working on these items.
- Senate agreed to the removal of the following words from the end of Clause 5 (v), noting that they limited the function of the clause and were not required: "punishable by 12 months' imprisonment or more".
- Members proposed that further categories of Authorised Nominees recorded in Clause 10 (b) were required to deal with a wide range of situations, such as those that occur outside normal business hours. Suggested inclusions were: security staff and senior professional staff.
- Clarification of the process for identifying previous misdemeanours was sought (Clause 4 a ii) and members were advised that TRIM procedures are being developed to enable easy access to this information for appropriate staff; guidance will be included in staff training.
- Members discussed the provisions in Clause 7 (c) relating to resubmission or completion of additional work. It was agreed that this was part of the educative process and to fulfil the requirement for students to satisfy unit learning outcomes and mandatory elements of the assessment. Students who are provided with this opportunity to resubmit work will have the work marked. If the work obtains a pass, then the outcomes assessed will be deemed to have been met but no marks will be awarded. Therefore, should the student attain more than 50% with the accumulation of marks from other assessment elements, then they can still pass the unit, and the resubmitted task becomes a threshold assessment only. This will be clarified

with scenarios in the training material, and it is expected that Unit Coordinators will apply this Guideline in a way that is equitable for the class as a whole.

#### *Misconduct Panel Guidelines*

- The word “all” to be removed from Clause 6.
- Members advised that it may be difficult to fill the student position on the panels.

Members welcomed the inclusion of a review of the Guidelines in twelve months and looked forward to reviewing the Academic Integrity Framework to support the Guidelines, in the New Year.

#### **It was resolved (AS15:06/03):**

*That Academic Senate endorses the guidelines associated with the implementation of the Student Misconduct Rule from the date of publication.*

### **3.9 REVIEW OF ACADEMIC SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES AND THE MEMBERSHIP AND SELF-REVIEW OF ACADEMIC SENATE**

#### **3.9.1 Review of Academic Senate Standing Committees**

As advised in previous agenda papers, Academic Senate’s Standing Committees are being reviewed progressively, to identify any changes that would improve their operation and the flow of information between the committees and Senate.

Work has progressed on the course and unit approval committees through the Course Approval Process Review Working Party, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), and taking account of the recommendations from the Red Tape Taskforce.

The Working Party recommended changes to committee structures and delegations, and these were endorsed by Education Committee subject to further minor amendments to the documents by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) resulting from feedback invited from School Academic Committees.

Some amendments to the terms of reference for a number of Senate’s Committees, including changes to the structure of committees, delegations and management positions, were provided for consideration.

Details regarding the amendments to the *Award Courses and Units Approvals Policy* including the associated delegations, endorsed by Education Committee, were included for the consideration of Senate members at item 3.12.

Members noted that further changes to membership will be required in early 2016 following clarification of a number of new management roles and responsibilities.

#### **It was resolved (AS15:06/04):**

*That Academic Senate approves the proposed amendments to the membership and terms of reference of Senate’s Standing Committees.*

### 3.9.2 Self-Review of Academic Senate

The draft Senate Work Plan proposed that a self-review of Academic Senate occur in the second half of 2015, following the Performance Review of the Board of Trustees and its other standing committees, and informed by benchmarking with other academic boards and senates.

A survey instrument was endorsed by Academic Senate members at the 23 October meeting and had been distributed to members. Responses to the survey by Friday 18 December 2015 have been requested and all members were encouraged to participate. A report of the survey will be provided to the first meeting of Senate in 2016.

### 3.10 ACADEMIC SENATE ELECTIONS

Nominations for elected School and Research Institute positions had opened on 7 September 2015 and, following the close of nominations on 25 September, ten positions were declared elected unopposed, six ballots were conducted and three positions remained vacant. Results of the Ballots were declared by Wednesday 30 October. Following a second round of elections two positions remained vacant and elections for these positions will be held in January 2016.

The term of office for newly elected members will be from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Results to date are available on the [University Elections](#) webpage.

The Notice of Election and nominations for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of Senate were held during the month of November 2015. Ballots were not required for either position. Associate Professor Paul Wormell was declared elected Chair unopposed and Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl was declared elected Deputy Chair unopposed. The term of office for these positions will be from 1 February 2016 to 31 January 2018.

The Chair congratulated all returning and new members.

### 3.11 ACADEMIC POLICY REVIEW

An update on the academic policies prioritised for consideration and progress to date by the Academic Policy Advisory Group (APAG) is listed below.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Admissions</i>	A draft revised policy is being prepared by the Academic Registrar's Office in conjunction with the Pathways Project and will be considered at the 16 December meeting of APAG.
<i>Advanced Standing Policy</i>	A revised version was circulated to Schools for comment. Advice received from the Academic Registrar and Dean, Graduate Research School will be incorporated into an amended revised version then re-circulated via the Bulletin Board.
<i>Articulation Pathways Policy</i>	This policy will require amendments to reflect the changes to the course approvals process and arrangements for International Pathways.
<i>Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-based Assessment</i>	A Stage 1 revised version of this policy was approved by Senate Executive Committee on 24 September 2015, following extensive debate by Academic Senate.

<i>(Assessment Policy)</i>	Stage 2 revisions will be completed following the Assessment Review.
<i>Award Courses and Units Approvals</i>	A revised Stage 1 version, incorporating proposed changes to the course approvals process from the Course Approval Process Working Party was discussed at the 14 October meeting of APAG and is included for Senate's consideration at item 3.12. Further Stage 2 revisions will occur after the Course Design Policy has been developed.
<i>Course Advice to Students Policy (renamed from Academic Advising Policy)</i>	The current version of the Policy was placed on the Policy DDS Bulletin Board for feedback, and School Academic Committees and the Student Experience and Engagement Committee were invited to comment. A revised version of the retitled <i>Course Advice to Students Policy</i> will be discussed at the 16 December meeting of APAG and a revised policy for the consideration of Senate expected early 2016.
<i>Course Design Policy</i>	APAG and Education Committee supported the establishment of a new <i>Course Design Policy</i> to encompass the <i>Structure and Nomenclature of Bachelor Awards Policy</i> , <i>Associate Degrees Policy</i> and <i>Postgraduate Coursework Policy</i> .
<i>Disruption to Studies Policy (renamed from Special Consideration Policy)</i>	The review of this complex policy has been progressed by the Special Consideration Working Party and further benchmarking has been completed to create a new <i>Disruption to Studies Policy</i> to replace the <i>Special Consideration Policy</i> and is included for comment by Senate members at item 3.13.
<i>Misconduct – Student Academic Misconduct</i>	The revised version of the <i>Student Misconduct Rule</i> was approved by the Board of Trustees at its 9 September 2015 meeting for implementation by January 2016. The Academic Integrity Working Party has prepared Guidelines for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Academic Behaviour and for Establishing Student Misconduct Panels to be considered by Senate at this meeting. [Refer Item 3.8.]
<i>Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress</i>	The Progression Policy Review Group has identified suitable data and completed benchmarking. The Progression Policy Working Party will be reconvened to review this policy as a high priority in 2016.

Members are invited to submit expressions of interest in contributing to the review of particular academic policies (please submit these to [Gillian.Brown@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:Gillian.Brown@westernsydney.edu.au)).

### **3.12 REVISED AND RENAMED *COURSES AND UNITS APPROVAL POLICY***

The *Course Approval Process Review Working Party* was commissioned to:

- simplify the committee structures and streamline the curriculum approval process while maintaining a robust quality assurance process; and
- revise course and unit approvals documentation to reduce complexity and any duplication, while maintaining robust record keeping.

A paper was provided outlining the outcomes of the work completed by the working party, including proposed policy changes and amendments to associated documents. Members were provided with a track-changes version of the proposed revised and renamed *Courses and Units Approval Policy*. These proposed changes drew on the work undertaken as part of the Red Tape Task Force project.

Members noted that Curriculum Quality Committees had been removed from the streamlined process with some delegations being transferred to School Academic Committees and some to the Academic Planning and Course Approvals Committee (APCAC). The resulting proposed changes to the terms of reference and membership of these committees were considered at item 3.9.1, which included Deputy Deans directly representing Schools on APCAC.

It was acknowledged that this was the first stage of changes to policies related to the course approval process. Further amendments to other policies such as the *Structure and Nomenclature of Bachelor Awards Policy* are expected to come to Senate for consideration next year.

The course and unit approvals documentation has been revised, reordered and simplified, with embedded guidelines and a more logical sequence of data fields. There will be three more meetings of the working party this year to finalise the documentation for testing and feedback in January 2016.

Members had asked for guidance about the point at which a course variation is large enough to require a new course proposal for consideration through the University Executive Committee. This has been defined as changes with significant resource implications or when there has been more than a twenty percent change to the course.

It was noted that Clause 14 from the existing policy, dealing with Inherent Requirements, has been removed and included in the associated documents to the Policy. In addition, questions regarding the delineation between corporate governance, academic governance and management are being investigated by the *Academic Governance Working Party*.

The Chair acknowledged the diligence and effort by the *Course Approvals Process Review Working Party*, under the leadership of Associate Professor Cole, and recognised the considerable work completed by the representatives of the Academic Registrar's Office.

**It was resolved (AS15:06/05):**

*That Academic Senate approves the amended and renamed Courses and Units Approval Policy from the date of publication.*

**3.13 DRAFT NEW *DISRUPTION TO STUDIES POLICY***

The proposed new policy, *Disruption to Studies*, had been developed as a replacement for the *Special Consideration Policy*, and is the product of the *Special Consideration Working Party*. This group was formed at the request of Education Committee following the identification of a number of issues that were highlighted with the introduction of the Special Consideration e-form process in 2013.

A paper and draft version of the proposed renamed *Disruption to Studies Policy* was provided at this meeting to seek preliminary comments from members of Senate.

Members noted that the proposed new *Disruption to Studies Policy* (the *Policy*) had been developed following the review of the existing *Special Consideration Policy* and as a result of extensive benchmarking with relevant Universities.

The revised *Policy* has been developed to reduce the large number of applications for relatively minor matters that do not fall within the scope of the existing policy, and focus on the serious and unavoidable cases. It was also recognised that clear guidelines and processes for both students and staff were required.

The draft *Policy* has been discussed by student focus groups and is currently listed on the Policy DDS for comment. Additional feedback following this meeting is welcomed before being considered by Education Committee in early 2016. The next meeting of the *Special Consideration Working Party* is on Monday 7 December 2015.

Members congratulated the *Special Consideration Working Party* on the work to date and the helpful approach adopted. Additional feedback and comments were:

- Compulsory course and unit elements such as mandatory attendance could be dealt with via a less formal mechanism similar to the Request for Extension process. The Working Party is considering alternatives to address areas of minor impact.
- It should be recognised that this is a work in progress, and it is important to ensure that there are no inconsistencies in the *Policy*.
- There appears to be an inconsistency regarding advice to students in clauses (5) and (19) of the draft *Policy*.
- It was suggested that there should be specific mention of circumstances involving students attending the University Games, and other events known to students, such as the birth of a child.
- Fine tuning of the items covering unexpected work commitments was requested, especially to allow for flexibility for postgraduate students who often hold very senior roles. This would also assist in the reasonable application of the *Policy*.
- Input from the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education was recommended to ensure that cultural activities are appropriately addressed.
- It would be helpful to have some clarification or definition for the term 'critical study period' referred to in clause (9) d.
- It is important to ensure that students have a clear understanding of expectations regarding the due dates for assignments, emphasising that learning is a cumulative process. This was considered to be part of acceptable academic behaviour by students, and it is intended to address this as part of professional behaviour under the Academic Integrity and Honesty Framework currently under development.
- Members noted that data will be collected so that students who submit repeat applications can be identified and appropriate student services or other processes arranged.
- Members sought clarification regarding reasonable extension periods for students with Academic Integration Plans. This matter is to be referred to Student Disability Services, and members were advised that the new

template for disruptions to studies includes an impact assessment by the medical practitioner.

- A communication campaign will accompany the implementation of this new *Policy* which will include training for academic staff.
- As in the current policy, the new *Policy* will have hyperlinks to the associated documents and forms.
- Minor adjustments of wording were suggested, to provide for more positive language.

The Academic Registrar and colleagues on the advisory group were thanked for their considerable efforts to date.

### **3.14 REVISED PROGRESSION AND UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY**

Due to recently announced changes to senior management positions from 1 January 2016, amendments were required to the *Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy (Progression Policy)* to facilitate the consideration of progression appeals in January 2016.

Proposed minor amendments were provided to Senate members for their consideration and approval. The proposed revised *Progression Policy* was approved with the addition of the Deputy Chair to Clauses 48 and 49.

#### **It was resolved (AS15:06/06):**

*That Academic Senate approves the amended Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy, from the date of publication.*

### **3.15 APPROVAL OF SCHOLARSHIPS**

Academic Senate was requested to consider the following proposals for new University Donor Funded Scholarships, prepared by the Office of Advancement and Alumni:

**Sydney Water Engineering Scholarship** – This revised scholarship is intended for new or continuing students enrolled full-time in an Engineering degree who maintain a credit average.

**KPMG Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship** – This scholarship is intended for new or continuing students who identify as Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in a variety of bachelor courses and maintain a satisfactory academic record.

#### **It was resolved (AS15:06/07):**

*That Academic Senate approves the following proposed Scholarships:*

- *Sydney Water Engineering Scholarship*
- *KPMG Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship*

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## **4 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES**

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### **4.1 SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/07):**

*That Academic Senate notes the report of the Senate Executive Committee electronic meeting conducted between 10 and 16 November 2015.*

**4.2 RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

The Research Committee last met on 6 October 2015. The next meeting is scheduled for 2 February 2016.

**4.3 RESEARCH STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/08):**

*That Academic Senate notes the minutes of the 3 November Research Studies Committee meeting.*

**4.4 EDUCATION and ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES (including Student Engagement and Experience Committee)**

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/09):**

*That Academic Senate notes the report of the Education Committee meeting held on 2 November 2015.*

**4.5 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND COURSES APPROVALS COMMITTEE**

The Senate Executive Committee was requested to re-consider the major course variation for 3740 Bachelor of Engineering (Honours). (Refer to item 4.1).

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/10):**

*That Academic Senate notes the report of the 4 November meeting of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee and ratifies the recommendations contained therein.*

**4.6 BACHELOR (HONOURS) COMMITTEE**

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/11):**

*That Academic Senate notes the minutes of the 28 September 2015 meeting of the Bachelor (Honours) Committee.*

**4.7 THE COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Without discussion...

**It was resolved (AS15:06/11):**

*That Academic Senate notes the minutes of the 27 October 2015 meeting of the College Academic Committee.*

#### **4.8 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees met on 2 December 2015.

Summaries of Board of Trustees meetings, and minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, are available on the web-site at:

<http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/boardoftrustees>.

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#### **5 FOR INFORMATION**

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A revised layout for Senate meetings is currently being investigated. In this regard, the first meeting next year, on Friday 19 February 2016, will be held in Building EA, Second Floor, Room 29 (Case Study Lecture Theatre) on the Parramatta campus.

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#### **6 NEXT MEETING**

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This was the last Academic Senate meeting for 2015. Members noted that the first meeting for 2016 is to be held at the Parramatta South campus. Members commented on the difficulties they encounter in driving to Parramatta due to the volume of traffic and the limited parking at Parramatta South campus. They indicated that their preference was for meetings to be held at the Werrington North campus.

Academic Senate meeting dates for 2016 are as follow:

- Friday 19 February – EA.2.29 Parramatta Campus
- Friday 22 April – Board Room Building AD Werrington North campus
- Friday 17 June – Board Room Building AD Werrington North campus
- Friday 12 August – Board Room Building AD Werrington North campus
- Friday 21 October – Board Room Building AD Werrington North campus
- Friday 9 December – To be Advised

Specialist software to assist with the provision of the agenda and large volume of papers was recommended for investigation by the Secretariat.