CONFIRMED MINUTES OF MEETING (15/1) OF THE COMMITTEE OF CHAIRS HELD AT 7.30AM, FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2015, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATIONAL MEETING OF CHAIRS OF ACADEMIC BOARDS/SENATES, A SATELLITE EVENT OF THE UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2015, IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, CANBERRA, ACT.

PRESENT: Paul Wormell (UWS) (Chair), Joanne Gray (UTS), Margot Hillel (ACU), John Jenkins (SCU), Mark Jones (UoN), Peter McCallum (USYD) (Deputy Chair), Prem Ramburuth (UNSW), Jo-Anne Reid (CSU), Nick Reid (UNE), Dhamendra Sharma (UoC), and Dominic Verity (Macquarie).

IN ATTENDANCE: Gillian Brown (Secretary), Liz Milward (Deputy Chair UoN), Peter Spolc (UWS), Kirsten Zinner (UoC).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all members, and especially Associate Professor Joanne Gray, the new Chair of the Academic Board at the University of Technology Sydney.

Also warmly welcomed to the meeting was the Deputy President of the Academic Senate at the University of Newcastle, Associate Professor Liz Milward, with a general invitation to the Deputy Chairs/Presidents of the other members Academic Boards / Senates.

Farewells

The Chair passed a vote of thanks to Professor Neville Weber who had retired as the nominated Chair of the Technical Committee on Scaling and welcomed the incoming Chair Dr Rod Yager.

Apologies: Wilma Vialle (UoW), Nicolas Glasgow (ANU)

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26 NOVEMBER 2014

It was resolved:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2014 as a correct record.

3. ORDER OF BUSINESS AND STARRING OF ITEMS

There were no changes to the order of business.

Starred items:

› Item 4.1 ANU Extension Courses
› Item 6.2 Meeting with NSWVCC DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee
› Item 6.3 Academic Standards and Quality
› Item 6.4 Revised Governance Documents for the Committee
› Item 8 Next Meeting

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Item 4.3 Australian National University Extension Courses included in ATAR

On 28 February 2014 the Committee established a working party to give advice and inform the Committee’s decision about the proposal that ANU Extension units should count towards the
An update was provided to members at the 26 November 2014 meeting noting that the matter was progressing slowly as a number of relevant factors were currently under review. It was acknowledged that the ANU University Developed Board Endorsed Courses (UDBECs) can only be counted in the NSW ATAR with the Committee’s agreement, and endorsement would also be sought from the NSWVCC owing to the State-wide implications. It was noted that these courses currently contribute to the HSC but not the ATAR.

The ANU UDBECs involve Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry and are designed to provide a pathway into University and for the enrichment of HSC studies. Members noted that a comparatively small number of students are involved in this program. However concerns were raised regarding the effect on the integrity of the ATAR calculation when drawing on external courses, and the Committee has been reluctant to approve the specific request by ANU, as at this stage it relates to a relatively small and geographically localised cohort, whereas the ATAR is intended to be equitable across the State; also this decision would lead to inconsistencies in the way that university-level study by high-school students would be treated for university admission purposes.

Members were also concerned that, given the large number of universities and other providers in NSW, a plethora of small and potentially overlapping extension courses could eventuate and this would be contrary to the recent decision by BOSTES in cancelling courses with small cohorts.

Constructive discussions were held at the NSWVCC DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee meeting in the context of the UAC Future Directions Project. They indicated that there may be a move away from the sole use of the ATAR for University admissions, with the possible consideration of additional student accomplishments. The NSWVCC DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee did not support the proposal to amend the NSW ATAR at this stage but agreed that it would be appropriate to consider the ANU proposal and other gifted and talented programs under the Future Directions Project.

The Committee agreed that at this stage it did not support the inclusion of the ANU Pathways in the NSW ATAR, but endorsed the following course of action to encourage motivated, high-ability students to undertake university-level study and have it counted for university entrance purposes:

That the Committee pursue the request from ANU more formally with the NSW DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee, for urgent consideration as part of its work in developing a new admission model through the UAC Future Directions project, including the possibility of considering additional student accomplishments. This could allow universities to use a wider range of student achievements than the initial request by ANU, including the work that ANU and others are doing on MOOCs, and university units that are already being offered to high-school students but that cannot be counted towards the HSC or ATAR, for example in HSC–University Pathways for Talented Students.

It was noted that changes along these lines may be quicker to implement than any changes to the ATAR, which involve very long lead times when they affect students’ choices of HSC courses. Essentially this could be an "ATAR Plus" approach for very able and motivated students, complementing the work that might be contemplated for other groups of students.

Action: Chair to advise NSWVCC and seek approval for this course of action.

4.2 Item 5.3 NSW Vice-Chancellor’s Committee – Request for Advice

At the 28 August meeting the Chair tabled a confidential paper from the NSWVCC, in which the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) was asked to seek advice from the Committee of Chairs on the alignment of marks from the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program with the NSW ATAR. It was noted that this lies within the Committee’s terms of reference.

Members agreed that a national approach was preferred and welcomed the Chair liaising with the NSWVCC to approach UAC regarding the provision of finer grained data for the IB to provide a national solution.

The NSWVCC noted the advice from the NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs and welcomed the Committee’s collaborative and consultative approach. They agreed the matter was best pursued by UAC at the National level. UAC has been advised to approach the DVCs (Academic)
Committee of Universities Australia to seek direction to undertake a review of the IB/HSC calibration with ATAR at a national level.

5. BOARD OF STUDIES TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS / NSWVCC

5.1 Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) Decisions
The decisions of the BOSTES meeting held on 9 December 2014 were noted without comment.

5.2 NSW Vice-Chancellors’ Technical Committee on Scaling Committee Nominee
Members noted without comment that the nominee for the NSW Vice-Chancellors’ Technical Committee on Scaling is Dr Rod Yager from Macquarie University.

5.3 Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) Business Services Industry Curriculum Committee Nominee
Members noted without comment that the nominee for the BOSTES Business Services Industry Curriculum Committee nominee is Associate Professor Rae Cooper from the University of Sydney.

6. ACADEMIC BOARD / SENATE ISSUES

6.1 Report of Committee of Chairs to NSWVCC
It was noted without comment that the Chair submitted a report, on behalf of the Committee to the 9 December 2014 meeting of the NSWVCC.

6.2 Meeting with NSWVCC DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee
On 26 February 2015 the Chair attended a meeting of the NSWVCC DVC/PVC (Academic) Committee and discussed a set of topics of mutual interest, including the respective roles of the committees and the ANU Extension courses (see agenda item 4.1). The Chair provided a brief report on discussions which included a clear delineation of the roles of the two committees and the areas of mutual interest with the possibility collaboration.

6.3 Academic Standards and Quality
Members were invited to comment on any aspect of Academic Standards and Quality currently influencing their institution, including those which emerged from the Higher Education Conference on the previous days.

It was noted that the date for AQF compliance (1/1/2015) had been passed with institutions achieving required tasks. The courses that do not fit the AQF requirements need to be advertised as non-AQF courses or if an industry need is indicated, such as some overseas students requiring postgraduate bridging courses, an application for an addition to the AQF made. These short postgraduate courses which lie between a level 7 and 8, highlighted by Queensland Universities, were discussed noting that a general survey conducted by the Council of Deans may assist in identifying these gaps.

Action: Members agreed to seek advice by email circulation regarding any identified gaps in the AQF or developments in non-AQF courses.

6.4 Revised Governance Documents for the Committee
At the 12 June 2014 meeting the Chair reported on the establishment and previous reviews of the NSW/Territories Committee of Chairs terms of reference. Subsequently a set of revised terms of reference was endorsed via rotary circulation on 17 October 2014 and approved by the NSWVCC at their 9 December 2014 meeting.

Draft revised Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure, based on the existing governance documents were provided for discussion. Due to time constraints at the current meeting, the draft documents will be circulated to members via email for comment and agreement.

6.5 Priorities and Projects for 2015
At the 26 November 2014 meeting members suggested the following areas of focus for the
Members expressed an interest in an OLT proposal on the role of the PhD in the preparation of the future academic workforce. It was noted that Peter McCallum would be speaking on this proposal at the National Conference following this meeting and further discussions postponed until the next meeting.

Members supported the sharing of information about the nature and method of reporting information to university governing bodies, allowing for sensitivities and confidentiality, and providing quality assurance in academic areas (from Mark Jones UNew).

Members supported a sector scan of academic boards/senates’ terms of reference, agenda format, business papers and minutes from across an academic year to report variability in volume and focus and assist in streamlining processes and sharing best practice (from Nick Reid UNE).

Members noted the synergies between the second and third items.

Mark Jones reported that conversations are progressing with the new Chancellor at the University of Newcastle to achieve an efficient and concise method of reporting information to university governing bodies.

Professor Nick Reid is initiating a sector scan of NSW/Territory Academic Board/Senate Business Processes following agreement by members at the 28 August and 26 November 2014 meetings. The intention of the scan was to inform members about current business practices of NSW and Territories Academic Boards and Senates to establish benchmarks and assist Chairs and their Secretariats in streamlining processes and sharing best practice.

Members were requested to provide all the information received by their Academic Board/Senate for one ordinary meeting, as per the provided schedule. Confidential material is not expected, only open material and a brief indication of the nature of any confidential matters. The provision of these documents in the simplest form possible to minimise colleagues’ work load and to facilitate analysis is suggested.

Members agreed to share the details of their meetings and Annual Work Plans.

It was considered that there are sufficient participants in this committee to provide worthwhile data for a final report by the end of the year and for sharing with the national group of chairs, if members so agree.

*Action*: Members provide information as per the provided schedule by 29 May 2015.

It was also agreed that visiting the Board/Senate meetings of other members was considered a valuable exercise, and it was agreed to circulate the list of meeting dates for each member’s academic board or senate. Members are requested to provide this information to the secretary.

*Action*: Members provide information regarding meeting dates and times to the secretary by 29 May 2015.

Due to time constraints suggestions for ‘Hot topics’ and possible external speakers will be discussed at the next meeting.

7.  **ROUND-TABLE**

Roundtable discussions were not held at this meeting.

8.  **NEXT MEETING**

The proposed meeting dates and venues for 2015, listed below were agreed, subject to confirmation by the hosting Chair:

**Friday, 26 June 2015**

Full meeting held at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst Campus.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, 2 September 2015</strong></td>
<td>Full meeting held at UNSW, Kensington Campus.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, 13 November 2015</strong></td>
<td>Short meeting held in conjunction with the National Conference at Cairns.</td>
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Information regarding the meeting schedule and other resources are available at the website location [http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/uws/academic_senate](http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/uws/academic_senate) Meeting dates will be posted on the web site at [http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/uws/academic_senate](http://www.uws.edu.au/about_uws/uws/academic_senate)

**CLOSURE**

The Chair thanked members for their attendance.

*The meeting was closed at 8:50am.*