Minutes of the 2/2006 meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC) held at 9.30am on Wednesday 7 June 2006 in room 301 of Building 67.

Present:

Ms Y Kerr (Acting Chair) 
Dr A Abraham 
A/Prof R Albury 
A/Prof K Maxwell 
A/Prof D Vance 
Prof J Knowles 
A/Prof F Naghdy 
A/Prof H Yeatman 
Prof D Griffiths 
A/Prof M Kaidonis 
Dr G Lefoe 
Dr J Skillen 
Ms M Jantti 
Ms I Bowen 
Mr K Finlayson 
A/Prof R Vickers 
A/Prof T Bryant 
Dr A Abraham 
Dr A Porter 
Prof S Wills 

In Attendance: Ms T Hoynes (Policy and Governance), Ms J Payne (Executive Officer), Dr A Carew (CEDIR), Dr S Bennett (Education) and Dr K Maton (Education).

PART A Preliminary Business

A1 Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Prof R Castle, A/Prof D Considine, Ms N Conyer, Ms R Collins, A/Prof M McCrae, A/Prof B Walker, A/Prof G Hampton, A/Prof I Brown, A/Prof J McQuilton, Dr D Christie, Mr C Edmondson, Prof S Dodds.

The Chair welcomed Dr A Carew, Dr S Bennett and Dr K Maton to the meeting, who were in attendance to present on their projects which were successful in the recent Carrick Grants.

A2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved 2006/18

That the minutes of the UEC meeting of 19 April 2006 are confirmed as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

A3 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

A4 Starring of Items

(i) Items B2, B7, C2, C3 and D1 were starred for discussion.
(ii) The Committee agreed to the adoption of the draft recommendations for the unstared items.
A5 Chair’s Report

The Chair reported that the Coordinating Committee has met to consider applications for funding through the Teaching and Learning Fund. 52 applications were received, with approximately 16 successful applications receiving initial funding. The Committee saw merit in a number of other applications received, with a further eight applications being asked to resubmit or further negotiate their project.

The Committee has not yet considered applications which relate to ePortfolio, maths/stats education and classroom response systems. Discussions will be held with those who put in these proposals to develop a single university project for funding.

The Chair noted that a Working Party is likely to be established with representatives from relevant faculties to discuss matters relating to the teaching of maths and statistics.

PART B BUSINESS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

B2 Equity and Student Support Subcommittee

The Chair provided an update on the ESDP Student Equity Project and circulated a document summarising outcomes of the project to date. Staff and student consultation, existing strategy mapping, literature review, collection of national good practice, data collection, analysis and strategy formation has been completed. Priority areas identified through this research will be incorporated into the Student Equity and Diversity Framework.

Under the project various strategies will be implemented in Spring 2006. A Student Equity and Diversity Committee will be established to provide leadership for student equity, facilitate planning and monitor the achievement of equity and diversity at UOW. Student Equity and Diversity Liaison Officer (SEDLO) positions will be established. SEDLOs will work part time in each faculty and be responsible for carrying out initiatives identified in Faculty student equity planning and for providing other equity support activities. The Faculty Equity and Diversity Initiative Fund will be initiated to assist Faculties to resource student equity strategies. A new support tool EdStart will also be established to provide up to 760 undergraduate students with assistance to purchase educational expenses (students who meet financial need criteria).

Resolved 2006/19

That UEC note the update of the ESDP Student Equity Project.

B4 Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Resolved 2006/20

That UEC note the minutes of the Quality Assurance Subcommittee meetings of 12 April 2006 and 16 November 2005. Minutes of the 12 April 2006 are not yet ratified.
B6  Excellence, Diversity & Innovation in Teaching Subcommittee

Resolved 2006/21

That UEC note the minutes of the Excellence, Diversity & Innovation in Teaching Subcommittee meeting of 18 April 2006. These minutes are not yet ratified.

Resolved 2006/22

That UEC note the minutes of the Excellence, Diversity & Innovation in Teaching Subcommittee workplan as at May 2006.

B7  e-Learning and Teaching Subcommittee

A/Prof Rodney Vickers reported that eLTS is examining the introduction of an online Teacher Evaluation Survey for those subjects which are taught wholly online. In doing this, some of the questions on the existing hard copy survey will need to be altered to reflect the different (online) nature of these subjects. The Committee will provide more information about this matter at the next UEC meeting.

Resolved 2006/23

That UEC note the minutes of the e-Learning and Teaching Subcommittee meeting of 3 May 2006. These minutes are not yet ratified.

PART C  GENERAL BUSINESS

C1  Annual Audit of new Subject Proposals

Resolved 2006/24

That UEC note the final Report on the Annual Audit of new Subject Proposals as attached.

C2  Honours Code of Practice

A/Prof Ted Bryant spoke to this item. He noted that theses in some faculties are being submitted later than the timetable outlined in the Honours Code of Practice. This is creating a problem whereby assessment panels are unable to consider these documents in time to allow for students to graduate in the year of their enrolment. The Committee agreed that this issue be addressed as part of the next review of the Honours Code of Practice.

The Committee also agreed that it would be useful to direct this issue to the Honours Coordinators Group for consideration.

Resolved 2006/25

That UEC note the Student Awards Committee concerns regarding the lack of compliance of some faculties in adhering to the timetable inherent in the Honours Code of Practice and agree that this issue be addressed as part of the next review of the Honours Code of Practice.

C3  Subject Evaluation Survey Guidelines
Ms Julia Payne spoke to this item in Dr Christie’s absence, providing an overview of the history of the Subject Evaluation Survey (SES) and related issues. A number of Committee members questioned the value of role of the SES in relation to the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. Ms Payne noted that the survey must be conducted in order for the University to be eligible for this funding.

She noted that the SES Guidelines, which were first noted by the Committee in 2005 had been updated to provide further clarification about the handling of SES data, particularly free text response questions. The update Guidelines incorporated feedback received through the University Legal and Commercial Unit and external consultation, Mr Peter Timmins, to ensure that the University is complying with the Privacy Act in managing the various components of the survey. She also noted the communication strategy which was implemented across the University recently. This is aimed at increasing awareness of the survey among staff and students, as well as increasing the response rate which, to date, has been quite low, averaging 14% in 2005.

It was noted that the SES Reference Group would be reconvened to consider the future of the SES including response rates, communication of feedback to students and the embedding of survey information into review practices.

Some Committee members noted that they have received minimal communication about the survey from their Faculty. Few members have seen any of the PDF reports which summarise student feedback for each subject (where six or more student’s respond the survey). The Committee also expressed their concern that students are being over-surveyed and questioned the value of the SES.

It was agreed that Prof Castle be asked to consider if the SES Guidelines be sent to UEC for endorsement, as opposed to noting.

Resolved 2006/26

That UEC note the updated (April 2006) Subject Evaluation Survey Guidelines and that the Subject Evaluation Survey Reference Group take into consideration the various comments and issues raised by UEC when progressing this matter.

PART D  OTHER BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS

D1  Presentation – Carrick Awards

Dr Anna Carew, CEDIR and Dr’s Sue Bennett and Karl Maton from the Faculty of Education provided an overview of their respective projects which were successful in the Carrick Institute Competitive Grants Scheme.

Dr Carew is working in conjunction with Prof Tim McCarthy, A/Prof Paul Cooper and Dr Sharon Nightingale to investigate Teaching and Assessment Meta-attributes in Engineering. The project includes collaboration with Emeritus Professors Alan Bradley of Engineers Australia as well as researchers from the University of Queensland, University of Sydney and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The project focuses on Tran disciplinary research which includes change outcomes, knowledge creation and mutual learning outcomes.

Dr’s Bennett and Maton are working in conjunction with a team lead by Gregor Kennedy of the University of Melbourne and researchers from Charles Sturt University, on a project titled Education the Net Generation: Implications for learning and teaching in Australian Universities. The project will be conducted over three phases: investigate, implement, disseminate. Various project outcomes are anticipated, including resources for teachers, staff developers, policy makers and academic teachers.
A/Prof Albury thanked each of the presenters for their time and effort in presenting to the Committee and discussed how to prepare a strong project submission. She noted that those projects which were successful through the Carrick grants were those which had clear outcomes for students, involved collaboration, were professional and adhered to Carrick’s application requirements. She also stressed the importance of disseminating project outcomes.

Ms Hoynes suggested it would be useful for details of these projects to be included on the website to raise awareness among the University community.

D2 Other/Late Business

There was no other business reported.

D3 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 9.30-11.30am Wednesday 2 August 2006.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.30.