Minutes

University Education Committee

Minutes of the 1/2007 meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC) held at 9.30am on Wednesday 21 February 2007 in Moot Court, room 202 of Building 67.

Present:

Prof R Castle (Chair)
Dr A Abraham
A/Prof R Albury
Prof J Bushnell
Dr L Chisholm
A/Prof D Considine
Mr K Finlayson
Prof D Griffiths
A/Prof G Hampton
Ms B James
Ms M Jantti
A/Prof M Kaidonis
Ms Y Kerr
Dr L Lockyer
A/Prof J McQuilton
A/Prof K Maxwell
A/Prof R Vickers
Ms M Wallace
A/Prof G Williams
Prof S Wills

In Attendance:

Ms J Payne (Executive Officer), Dr P Harris (Creative Arts), Ms T Hoynes (Policy & Governance), Ms H Sainsbury, Ms C Perry-Beltrame (Policy & Governance).

PART A Preliminary Business

A1 Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from A/Prof I Brown, A/Prof T Bryant, Dr A Porter, Mr C Edmondson, Dr D Christie, M R Collins, Ms N Conyer.

The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee: Ms M Wallace (FEC Chair, Health & Behavioural Sciences), Ms B James (Learning Development) and Dr A Carew. He also welcomed Dr P Harris (representing Faculty of Creative Arts), Ms H Sainsbury and Ms C Perry-Beltrame, who were in attendance at the meeting.

A2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved 2001/1:

That the University Education Committee minutes of 8 November 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 were starred for discussion: B5, B7.
(ii) The Committee agreed to the adoption of the draft recommendations for the unstared items.

A5 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the University was awarded a National Teaching Award in November for the Knowledge Building Community Program, lead by Dr Julie Kiggins and A/Prof Brian Cambourne. This is the first time UOW has won this prestigious award.

The University was awarded $5.4 million through the second round of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund for best demonstrating excellence in teaching and learning for domestic undergraduate students. UOW was one of only two institutions to be ranked in the top Band of three of the four broad discipline categories in the Performance Fund.

Some ($3 million) of the funding awarded through the Performance Fund has been allocated to the University’s Capital Fund and will be used towards the upgrade of the Library and Hope Theatre. Other funding will be used to fund further space improvements, eTeaching and other specific Learning and Teaching projects. Prof Castle noted he will call for expressions of interest for projects to be funded through this funding in April or May.

Prof R Castle also reported on the Sessional Teaching Staff Project which was funded through last years Learning and Teaching Fund. A number of recommendations have been made as a result of the Project in order to address various issues affecting Sessional Teachers at UOW. Prof Castle noted he will be seeking expressions of interest from two UEC representatives to participate on a steering group for this project.

PART B BUSINESS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

B4 Quality Assurance Subcommittee

B4.1 Minutes of meeting of 25 October 2006

Resolved 2007/2:

That the University Education Committee note the minutes of the Quality Assurance Subcommittee of 25 October 2006.

B5 Teaching Facilities Subcommittee

Prof S Wills provided a presentation showcasing a range of Teaching Space upgrades which were made across UOW in 2006. Rooms to be significantly upgraded included: graphic design room, journalism studio, TV studio, engineering design lab, 38.G01 lecture theatre and building 20 lecture theatres. A number of informal teaching spaces were also established across the University to assist students and it is anticipated further informal teaching spaces will be established across campus in 2007.
Prof R Castle noted a Project officer will be appointed to work with faculties to determine specific teaching needs in computer labs across UOW. It is hoped that when upgraded, computer labs across UOW will better meet these teaching needs.

### B7 e-Learning and Teaching Subcommittee

Prof S Wills reported that the upgrade to eVista 4 is almost complete. Several problems were experienced during the transition period to this new program, particularly during Summer session.

Prof R Castle acknowledged the commitment of CEDIR and ITS in supporting the transition.

Prof Wills also reported that eduStream system has now been upgraded and improvements have been made to ePortfolio management. All students from the Graduate School of Medicine are using ePortfolios.

In 2007 eLTS will be looking at addressing the existing difficulties experienced by staff when establishing new eLearning sites.

### PART C GENERAL BUSINESS

#### C1 Special Consideration Working Party

**C1.1 Minutes of meeting of 8 November, 16 November and 1 December 2006**

**Resolved 2007/3:**

That the University Education Committee note the minutes of the Special Consideration Working Group Procedures of 8 November, 16 November and 1 December 2006.

#### C2 Student Survey Working Party

Prof R Castle reported that the Student Survey Working Party, which was established by UEC in 2006, has met on numerous occasions to date. The Working Party has identified a wide range of methods, including surveys and focus groups, currently being used across the University in order to gain feedback from students.

The Working Party is focusing on developing an effective means of combining the existing Teacher Survey with the Subject Evaluation Survey. It is currently trying to extend the current Teacher Survey to include a regular audit of subjects, to be used on a rolling basis. This would replace the existing Subject Evaluation Survey, which is administered through SOLS and available for completion for every subject in every session at UOW.

The UEC will be kept informed of actions arising from the Working Party on this matter in coming months.

#### C3 Audit Workshop

Ms M Jantti, Chair of the Quality Assurance Working Party, reported that a risk assessment workshop will be held in coming months to review auditing in the learning and teaching environment at UOW, and to develop a framework to ensure processes in high risk areas are identified and prioritised using a risk management framework.
The Audit Workshop will assist in the identification of high risk areas for learning and teaching and lead to the development of a prioritisation plan. Key benefits anticipated from the Workshop will include: approach include:
  • Improved awareness of good practice in auditing;
  • Expansion of knowledge of QAS and other academic areas of auditing and risk management practice;
  • Improved identification and allocation of resources required for audits;
  • A more strategic and systematic approach to auditing.

The Committee were asked to consider suitable representatives to participate in the Workshop. There was general agreement that FEC Chairs and Sub Deans would be the most appropriate faculty representatives. Ms Y Kerr, Dean of Students and Mr B Damachis, Director, Transnational Programs, were also suggested as relevant participants.

C4  Strategic Project Report: Development of student equity strategies, with emphasis on local school involvement

A/Prof G Hampton provided an overview of the Strategic Project ‘Development of student equity strategies, with emphasis on local school involvement’, which introduced in 2004 with the aim of linking schools in economically disadvantaged areas in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions with the University through a range of mentoring and academic development programs was aimed at increasing capacity and motivation to participate in higher education.

Progress with this project to date has been pleasing and approval has recently been given to allow for future funding of the project.

PART D  OTHER BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS

D1  Benchmarking at UOW

Prof Castle provided a presentation highlighting the importance of increasing benchmarking activities at UOW. Benchmarking is one of the key priorities identified in the Universities Quality Improvement Plan and will be an important issue for UEC in 2007.

Prof Castle noted that UOW is likely to have its next AUQA audit in 2011. It is understood that the next AUQA audit round will place greater emphasis on standards and performance outcomes and external benchmarking of institutional outcomes.

The University is currently trying to determine suitable benchmarking partners both domestically and internationally.

D2  2006 report against L&T Strategic Plan and 2007 Action Plan

Prof Castle noted the draft report on achievements made in 2006 against objectives of the Learning and Teaching Performance Plan. Members were asked to provide any comments regarding the report to Julia Payne as soon as possible.

D3  Committee self-assessment survey

Members were reminded to complete their self-assessment survey and provide to Julia Payne as soon as possible. A report based on feedback will be provided to the Committee in coming months.
D3  Next meeting

The next UEC meeting is scheduled for 9.30-11.30am on Wednesday 18 April 2007.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.40am.

Julia Payne
Executive Officer
UEC