Minutes of the Student Representative Forum held at 9:00am on Friday, 29 October 2010 in the University Council Room, Building 36.

PRESENT: Mr Chris Whittaker, University Council
         Mr Saif Alsulami, University Council and Academic Senate
         Mr Joshua Parker, WUPA
         Mr Chris Monnox, WUSA
         Ms Beth Waterfall, Faculty of Law
         Ms Gemma Bach, Faculty of Science

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor Rob Castle, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
                Associate Professor Di Kelly, Chair Academic Senate
                Ms Megan Huisman, Academic Registrar
                Mr Joe McIver, Chief Technology Officer
                Ms Fran Walder, Senior Manager, Strategy
                Mr Brett Lovegrove, Senior Manager, Business Solutions
                Mr Rob Sim, Senior Manager, Enterprise Content Management
                Ms Paola Ciccarelli, Acting Senior Manager, Corporate Governance
                Mr Sean Blake, Management Cadet

APOLOGIES: Mr Chris Grange, Vice-Principal (Administration)

PART A - OFFICIAL BUSINESS

*A1 Welcome and Appointment of Chair

The Academic Registrar, Ms Megan Huisman, welcomed the Student Representatives to the Forum and spoke of the valuable feedback the Forum provides to the University.

University Council representative Chris Whittaker was elected Chair.

It was noted that the representative who raised the agenda items B2, B3, B4 and B5 was not present at the forum.

*A2 Arrangement of Agenda

The items B1, B2, B3, B5, B6 and B7 were starred for discussion.

*A3 Business Arising from the Minutes

A3.1 Student Study Spaces

A student representative advised he had received feedback from WUPA members that they would like after hours access to study space on campus. International students in particular are culturally accustomed to studying late at night, and the current study space closing time does not facilitate this. He identified the Hope Theatre foyer as a potential study space which students could utilise and would not require large security resources and suggested an extended operating hour trial be conducted.

The Academic Registrar responded that the current refurbishment of Building 11 and
construction of Building 23 may lead to some further study space. The detail of this space will be investigated and an update will be provided at the next Student Representative Forum.

**A3.2 Lecturer Evaluation Proposal**

A student representative asked if there had been any progress on the proposal to provide feedback about lecturer’s communication skills. An update on this item will be provided at next Student Representative Forum.

**A3.3 Student Feedback Responses**

A resolution in the April minutes referred to an interim report to be emailed to student representatives which would report on progress of items previously raised. The Chair noted that as there are only two Student Forums per year, it would be useful to have an interim report in between the two forums. The Academic Registrar advised that there are many ways that the University can provide responses to feedback and the interim report is one way to do this. However, it was agreed that a checklist of actions arising will be included at the beginning of future Agendas.

**A4 Confirmation of Minutes**

RESOLVED 2010/11

*that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 April 2010 be confirmed and signed as a true record.*

**PART B – COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**B1 Live@edu Student Email System**

Mr Joe McIver presented on the new Live@edu student email system. The system is supported by Microsoft and includes 10GB of email storage, a lifetime email account, 20MB attachment capacity, shared calendaring, 25GB online storage and the ability to work on office documents using online applications. He reported that at the time of the forum, 3500 students had voluntarily opted-in to the system. As of December 1st 2010, all accounts will be automatically activated.

Mr McIver commented that the strength of the promotional campaign and simple opt-in process led to the strong response. A new ITS support line (4239 2000) for students has been created to deal with enquiries arising from the new system, and may be expanded to include support for all student IT enquiries in the future. The frequently asked questions page is being updated constantly and some technical problems with compatibility are being solved as feedback is received.

A student representative thanked Mr McIver and ITS for their efforts on behalf of WUPA members. The Chair asked how the decision was made to go with the system in its current form. Mr McIver responded that a comprehensive review was completed on both Google mail and MS Live@Edu. Both systems were very similar in functionality. The main points of differentiation were the ability to place Live@Edu under UOW’s existing support contract with Microsoft, and the familiarity with Microsoft’s online office applications. He added that the majority of Universities in Australia have opted for a Microsoft system.
RESOLVED 2010/12:

that the Student Representative Forum note the proposed implementation of the Live@edu student email system and congratulate the University on the new system.

*B2 Social Media Use

Mr Rob Sim spoke to the item, advising the forum that the University has a Wikipedia page which includes UOW history, faculty information, rewards and recognition the University has received in the past. This page is updated by university staff on a regular basis with links directing users to the UOW website for further information.

The use of social networking by University staff is covered by the Web Management Policy and the Social Networking Guidelines. The University has a presence on a number of social media sites including the University’s YouTube channel, numerous facebook sites for Future Students, Alumni, Faculty specific and UniCentre. In addition to this there are a number of other social media sites such as the University Media Twitter pages.

Mr Sim further advised that a student communications working party has recently been established to review all student communications, of which social media is one aspect.

There was discussion regarding social media use and the following comments were noted:

- allowing feedback in a public forum can often lead to malicious or inappropriate responses;
- in some situations public feedback is not as useful as private feedback; and
- it is important for future students to see some public interaction through social media networks.

As a result of the discussion, an amendment was made to the draft resolution.

RESOLVED 2010/13:

that the Student Representative Forum recommend the University investigate ways in which the University can increase its social media presence and facilitate student engagement online but not at the expense of existing formal mechanisms of student feedback.

*B3 Student Enrolment Records

A student representative spoke to the item raising the concern that enrolment records that show withdrawn subjects is not a good look for potential employers. He added that there is usually a good reason why students need to withdraw from subjects before the census date. He further added that other Universities in Australia do not show withdrawn subjects on academic transcripts.

Another student representative raised the concern that some students enrol in subjects for the sole reason to view their timetable through SOLS, and are unaware that they can access the timetable through the Current Students website. A further student representative said that it would be beneficial to be able to see the subject timetables for 2011 earlier and to have subject descriptions and the timetable linked. It was clarified that the timetable and subject descriptions can be viewed simultaneously.
Mr Brett Lovegrove responded that there is difficulty in releasing the timetable before enrolment opens as the session resources can not be known ahead of time. He acknowledged that there could be a communication issue where students are unaware that they can view the timetable via the Current Students webpage and actions will be taken to resolve this.

In terms of the enrolment record issue, Mr Lovegrove added that there is a legislative requirement under the State Records Act to keep complete enrolment records including withdrawals before the census date. Mr Lovegrove made the distinction between an enrolment record, which abbreviates subject names and shows withdrawn subjects, and the academic transcript, which is not abbreviated and does not show withdrawn subjects.

A student representative asked why the academic transcript could not be printed from SOLS. The Academic Registrar responded that academic transcripts are printed on secure paper which has the University stamp. She further advised that transcripts are available from Student Central and can be requested over the phone or in person. A student representative suggested that on-line requests for academic transcripts be made available and that a sentence explaining the reason why withdrawn subjects are shown be added to the enrolment record. These suggestions drew support from the forum.

RESOLVED 2010/14:

that the Student Representative Forum recommend:
(i) the University investigate ways academic transcripts can be requested online
(ii) the University review the guidelines for subject titles on the enrolment record to ensure consistency and ease of interpretation.

B4 Student Representative for Accommodation Services

RESOLVED 2010/15:

that the Student Representative Forum create a representative position for a Senior Resident to attend the Student Representative Forum on behalf of the University Student Accommodation.

*B5 Quality Controls on Student Assessment Items

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) spoke to the item advising the forum that the University has created a strong policy environment regarding quality control on student assessment items including plagiarism and cheating. The Code of Practice - Teaching & Assessment and Code of Practice - Students both address these issues and any breaches of the either code are dealt with seriously.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) further advised that whilst it is seen as good practice for lecturers to provide model answers, it can at times lead to a formulaic response. It was also noted that there are privacy issues around releasing past student work.

A student representative queried whether essay questions are meant to be re-written for each session. It was noted that academic staff have a responsibility to not ask the same question in every session; Turnitin technology is a text matching system useful for small groups or for long essays detecting plagiarism; and that students have a responsibility to submit original work for assessment without plagiarising or cheating.

RESOLVED 2010/16:
that the Student Representative Forum recommend that:
(i) more comprehensive controls are introduced to ensure academic Standards and Policies are adhered to; and
(ii) act to further reduce the occurrence, and potential, of cheating in assessment items.

B6 Preparations for the AUQA (Australian University Quality Agency) Audit

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) spoke to the item advising that an AUQA quality audit is conducted every six years, with the next scheduled audit taking place in March 2011. The independent body will cease to exist in June 2011, and will be replaced by TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency). At the last AUQA audit in 2005, the University received 13 commendations, 5 affirmations and 13 recommendations.

The audit covers a wide range of areas and follows up on the recommendations made in 2005. The two themes for the upcoming audit are enabling undergraduate learning and international activities. The University’s performance portfolio will be submitted to AUQA in December. AUQA will interview staff and students on campus over 3-4 days during the week of 28th-31st March 2011.

A student representative asked whether postgraduate coursework students will be included in the Audit. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) responded that international postgraduate coursework students may be included because of the international theme. Another student representative asked whether students from other campuses and the innovation campus will be interviewed. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) responded that they will be included in the mix of students.

The Chair queried what changes will be forthcoming as a result of TESQA becoming the quality assurance agency. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) identified that TESQA will be looking at academic standards, however themes will evolve over time. The Deputy Vice Chancellor-(Academic) commented that the self-review process and identified improvements during the preparations for the AUQA Audit have been worthwhile exercises.

The Chair referred to the handout Impaqt, prepared by Strategic Planning and Quality Unit, and asked what pathway opportunities existed for students. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised there were a number of entry methods into the University apart from the HSC. Wollongong College Australia STEP and preparation courses and the STAT test are examples of this. Also, TAFE VET pathways allow for mature age students to enter University.

RESOLVED 2010/17:

that the Student Representative Forum note the information on the AUQA Audit preparations.

*B7 2011-2013 UOW Strategic Plan

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) spoke to this item advising that the University has a three year planning cycle and the 2011-2013 Strategic Plan, which was recently approved by Council, is the next phase of this process. The Plan now includes the University’s direction of where the University will be in 2020. Student targets have been set with teaching & learning, research and partnerships as the main themes of planning.
The major initiatives of SMART, IHMRI, iC Campus and the Graduate School of Medicine will continue to be implemented. Strategies to achieve the University’s objectives will be developed through the Enabling Plans and Faculty Plans.

A student representative noted that the vision statement in the 2011-2012 Strategic Plan was progressive and encompasses the values of the wider student community.

**RESOLVED 2010/18:**

*that the Student Representative Forum note the information on the 2011-2013 UOW Strategic Plan.*

**B8 Student Experience Questionnaire 2010 Results**

There was no discussion on this agenda item.

**PART C – GENERAL BUSINESS**

**C1 Other Business**

On closing, the Academic Registrar noted that October is feedback month at the University and student feedback is valued highly. She thanked all representatives and staff for attending the forum.

The Chair requested that an actions arising table be added to subsequent agendas under Business Arising from the Minutes.

The meeting was closed at 11.02am.