

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

MEETING 2/05

A meeting of the Academic Programs Committee was held on Thursday, 3 March 2005 at 2.15 pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Conference Centre, Old Physics Building.

Present: Professor M Bryan in the Chair, Mr M Belleghem, Mr P Donegan, Dr M Emison, Associate Professor C Falk, Professor A Freadman, Professor D Holm, Dr S James, Professor D Jamieson, Mr D McDonald, Professor E Mackie, Professor D Merrett, Professor P Pattison, Mr R Reid, Professor L Skene, Professor L Sterling, Dr G Webb.

In attendance: Dr A Grigg, Mr R Hillbrich, Associate Professor P Tregloan and the Academic Secretary (Mr I L L Powell).

BUSINESS

1. Formal Matters

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor G Bowes, Associate Professor S Elliott, Associate Professor N Low, Associate Professor A McDougall, Professor P McPhee and Professor H Watson.

1.2 Change in Membership

The Committee noted that Dr M Emison had been appointed as Acting Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar to replace Lin Martin and that the consequential vacancy on the Committee for a nominee of the Senior Vice-Principal would be filled in the near future.

Secretary' afternote: Ms Carol Smith, University Planning Office, has been appointed as the nominee of the Senior Vice-Principal.

1.3 Acting Chair

The Chair commented that had the proposal for the joint Juris Doctor/Master of Business Administration not been withdrawn from the agenda he would have had to have stepped down as Chair for that item given his role as a Director of Studies for the JD.

1.4 Shepherding Duties

The Chair reported that as a result of several approaches to him by shepherds there would probably be some minor changes to shepherding arrangements.

2. Postgraduate Coursework Programs Sub-Committee Business

The Chair reported that the 25 February meeting of the Sub-Committee had been cancelled due to lack of business.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of meeting 1/05 held on 3 February 2005 were confirmed subject to the inclusion of Associate Professor C Falk in the list of apologies.

3.2 Action Sheet 1/05

Members noted the action sheet from meeting 1/05.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1 New Masters Courses in Engineering (minute 8.1)

The Chair reported that the Master of Distributed Computing and the Master of Engineering Management had both been approved by the Academic Board at its meeting on 24 February.

5. Policy Matters

5.1 Review of Student Awards Process

The Committee received for information a copy of the issues paper "The Role of APC in Approving Awards" that had been considered by the Committee at its July 2004 meeting.

The Chair reminded the Committee that the one remaining unresolved issue - eligibility restrictions based on nationality - was still under consideration by the University's General Counsel who would bring an authoritative document on the matter to the Senior Executive and other University committees including APC in due course.

5.2 Multiple Qualifications for Students Undertaking a Nested Postgraduate Program

The Chair commented that the Chair of Selection Procedures Committee, in the context of the new Masters courses in the Faculty of Engineering approved at meeting 1/05, had asked whether APC had a view on nested qualifications when a masters student could, for example, be awarded both a certificate and a diploma on the way to the masters degree.

Members noted that this particular matter had been addressed in the Committee's 2002 'Guidelines for Higher Degree Programs' and was also affected by the 2003 revision of the credit policy section of Statute 5.4 (Courses and Subjects).

Dr Emison commented that DEST now required universities to have a web site with credit rules so it was timely for the Committee to be clarifying any anomalies at this time.

In discussion, the Committee agreed that:

- Question 18.6 (Articulation Pathways for Postgraduate Courses) in the Course Change Submission Form be reviewed for appropriateness; and
- The matter be listed for discussion at meeting 3/05 with copies of the Guidelines and Statute being included in the papers.

5.3 Generic Skills

The Committee received a paper from Associate Professor Low titled “Generic Skills or Graduate Attributes” which identified some of the difficulties facing the University in developing meaningful and useful generic skills statements.

The Committee held a wide-ranging discussion over issues such as subject knowledge versus generic skills versus graduate attributes, differing requirements for generic skills according to discipline, the inadequacy of current Graduate surveys to elicit usefulness of generic skills statements, the need to determine what the current literature says about generic skills, and the extent to which the need to develop generic skills statements had modified processes of subject development at the individual lecturer level.

As the next stage, the Committee agreed to the formation of a working group consisting of Associate Professor Low, the Academic Board Vice-President and the chairs of APC and TALQAC to refine Associate Professor Low’s paper for circulation to faculties or the Academic Policy Forum, as appropriate.

5.4 Work Experience in Industry – Blue Book Entry

The Committee received a draft Blue Book entry for work experience in industry prepared by the Chair.

The Chair said that subject to any suggestions for changes from members, the Blue Book would be updated in the near future.

The Chair commented that drafting of a Blue Book entry for the associated issue, off-campus teaching, would probably be completed in the next month or two.

5.5 Low Enrolments Subjects

The Committee received a document from the Arts Associate Dean (Academic Programs) concerning the manner in which the Arts Faculty proposed to deal with subjects with low enrolments in 2005 following from the decision by the Planning and Budget Committee to withdraw low enrolment subjects from its Budget Incentives program.

After noting that section 6.1 of the Blue Book dealt *inter alia* with the suspension of subjects, the Committee agreed that every faculty had the right to request the President of the Academic Board to suspend subjects for whatever cause including low enrolments.

The Committee noted advice from Dr Emison that, notwithstanding the change in PBC Budget Incentives for 2005, the University would continue to monitor low enrolment subjects.

The Committee agreed that the wording of section 6.1 should be reviewed to make it clear, if it were not already so, that subjects could be suspended if enrolments were low.

6. Chair’s Report

6.1 Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee Report

Professor Sterling advised that the meeting held on 10 February had concerned itself principally with administrative issues associated with the 2005 work plan.

6.2 Teaching and Learning (Multimedia and Educational Technologies Committee) Report

Associate Professor Tregloan said that the meeting held on 1 March had reviewed the work of both its Evaluation Strategy Group, which was reviewing the impact of ICT, including TLMETC-funded projects, on faculty teaching and learning activities and also a working group which was developing guidelines for best practice for developing on line resources. The implementation of Blackboard 6 had also been discussed particularly a two month delay in the system going live with early adopter subjects.

7. Working Group Reports

7.1 Cultural Diversity in Curriculum

The convenor, Professor Holm, commented that he was close to finalizing the working group's membership for the final stages of its deliberations. The next stage in the working group's agenda is to continue with program of student and staff interviews which it embarked on in 2004. The final report is expected to be available before the end of Semester 1.

7.2 Assessment and Students with Disabilities

There was no report due to the absence of the convenor, Associate Professor Elliott.

The Chair indicated that he would contact the convenor for a progress report.

7.3 Cross-Communication Problems Experienced by Combined Degree Students

The Committee noted that a document setting out draft membership and terms of reference of the working group had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda.

The Committee endorsed the Chair's recommendation that the membership and terms of reference of the working group should be as follows. (Appointments made after the meeting are also shown.)

Membership

Two APC nominees – Professor M Bryan (convenor), Dr S James

Two TALQAC nominees – Professor L Sterling, tba

An Academic Board officer – Professor Pattison

A faculty undergraduate program manager – Ms F Pecoraro (Economics and Commerce)

A student representative – Ms S Munro (member of TALQAC)

Terms of reference

- 1) To consider the allocation of responsibility for the provision of course information to combined degree students, and
- 2) To make recommendations for improving the accuracy and quality of course information to combined degree students.

7.4 Communication with Students

The Committee agreed that the working group's deliberations be placed on hold pending a review underway in the Information Division on electronic communication between the University and students. The Committee agreed that once the outcome from the Information Division's review was known, a major discussion of the issue, which was broader than just email communication with students, be held at a later meeting, perhaps in April or May.

8. New Courses

8.1 Faculty of Law/Melbourne Business School

The Committee noted that an expected submission of a proposal for a combined Juris Doctor/Master of Business Administration degree had not eventuated but that it would be presented to the next PCPSC or APC meeting, as appropriate.

9. Course Changes

9.1 Course Change Proposals Involving Amendment Only to Entry or Selection Requirements

The Committee agreed that, unless there were exceptional circumstances, henceforth it would not consider course change proposals which involved amendments solely to entry or selection requirements. Such proposals will be submitted to the Selection Procedures Committee which will make a recommendation to Academic Board.

The Course Change Submission form and the 'Blue Book' will be amended to reflect this change.

9.2 Major changes to the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) and Bachelor of Creative Arts

The Committee received a proposal to change the process for awarding middle band bonuses for year 12 applicants for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) and Bachelor of Creative Arts courses together with a shepherd's report.

Noting that Selection Procedures Committee had this proposal under consideration, the Committee agreed that, in line with 9.1 above, to merely note the proposal.

9.3 Major changes to the Bachelor of Optometry

The Committee received a proposal to change the process for selecting for the Bachelor of Optometry course together with a shepherd's report.

Noting that Selection Procedures Committee had this proposal under consideration, the Committee agreed that, in line with 9.1 above, to merely note the proposal.

10. Student Awards

10.1 New awards/Major changes to awards

Nil

10.2 Minor changes to awards

The Committee noted minor changes to the following awards in the Faculty of Law:

Kiyoko Kinjo Prize, Jessie Leggatt Scholarship, Dean's Award for the Melbourne JD, Harmers Workplace Lawyers Prize.

11. Quarterly Reports

11.1 Faculty of Music

The Committee approved the Faculty of Music postgraduate quarterly report 4/04.

12. Matters Dealt with by the Shepherd and the Chair

The Committee endorsed action taken by the Chair and/or Shepherd in approving the following urgent changes. The Committee noted that the President of the Academic Board had subsequently approved these changes on behalf of the Academic Board, as set out below:

Shift from Semester 1 to Semester 2, 2005 : 208-501

Offer in alternate years; 208-119, 208-236

Change of co-ordinator: 485-301

Suspend for Semester 1, 2005 – 460-214

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Combined Bachelor of Agricultural Science (honours)/Bachelor of Commerce

The undergraduate shepherd for Land and Food Resources he had received an urgent request to approve a new combined course for a particular student so that a unique Merlin course identifier could be issued. The student in question was enrolled, on a HECS basis, in the honours year of the Bachelor of Agricultural Science course and had been also been accepted into the Bachelor of Commerce, on a fee-paying basis.

Several members from Central Administration commented that the matter appeared to be a purely administrative one relating to hybrid fee type only rather than being a policy matter requiring APC approval. As such the two faculties ought not to have been advised to submit a course change proposal.

Secretary's afternote – The Bachelor of Agricultural Science/Bachelor of Commerce is an approved combined course of many years' standing. An additional year of honours studies may be taken in either or both degrees.

14. Next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held Thursday, 7 March 2005 at 10.00 am in the Gorman Room, 1888 Building. Professor Hutchinson will chair the meeting in the absence of Professor Bryan.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm

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