

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

ACADEMIC BOARD

TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING 7/07

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday 9 August 2007 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne.

MINUTES

PRESENT

Committee Members

Professor Hawthorne (Chair), Professor Moffat, Professor Goodwin, Associate Professor Elliott, Professor Stevens, Associate Professor Misson, Ms Daroesman, Professor Jackson, Professor Huggins, Associate Professor O'Brien, Professor Bhalla, Mr Choo, Associate Professor Holloway and Mr Fijn.

Observers

Ms Harrison, Ms Joanne Rao

In Attendance

Ms Boin for item 5.1 and Ms Menezes (Committee Secretary)

BUSINESS

1. Formal Matters

1.1 Welcome

Professor Hawthorne welcomed Associate Professor O'Brien, nominee for the Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Professor Elliott attending her first TALQAC meeting and Mr Choo, incoming President of MUOSS.

Professor Hawthorne also introduced Ms Joanne Rao, who will be co-ordinating the meeting schedules of the Working Groups convened by the Chair.

1.2 Apologies

The Committee received apologies from Associate Professor Crosby, Professor Stockdale, Professor Borland, Associate Professor Tregloan, Professor Considine, Professor James, Professor Pattison, Associate Professor Guillemin, Ms Buckingham, Ms Ahrens and Ms Beattie.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the TALQAC meeting 6/07 held on Thursday, 12 July 2007 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Action Sheet

Item 1 and 2: In the absence of Associate Professor Tregloan these were not discussed.

Item 3: Professor Hawthorne noted the Academic Board response to AUQA, incorporating TALQAC's contribution, would be submitted by prior agreement by Professor Pattison.

4 Other Committees

4.1 MMIT Update

There was no discussion under this item.

4.2 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)

There was no discussion under this item.

4.3 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)

Associate Professor Misson reported that the paper *Professional Degree with the Degree Nomenclature of Doctor* was presented to Academic Board and received a positive response. Associate Professor Elliott was commended on the quality of the paper.

4.4 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TaLDC)

The Committee received the TaLDC Report tabled via email by Associate Professor Tregloan. As Professor Hawthorne will be on secondment to the OECD for six months, members were invited to participate as the TALQAC representative on this Committee. Associate Professor Elliott noted that going forward TaLDC will be a vibrant Committee, providing advice and support to the University on innovations in teaching and learning in the context of national and international best practice, with out the restriction of teaching and learning as it related to technology only, in the way TaLMET was. Members agreed to request Professor Stockdale to be TALQAC's representative on TaLDC.

4.5 Melbourne Experience Committee (MEC)

Ms Daroesman and Ms Menezes gave a brief update on two items discussed at the July MEC Meeting. The first item was discussion and endorsement of the proposal for an Implementation Working Group to ensure high level information sharing, co-ordination and reporting of curricular as well as extra-curricular activities that will be offered as part of a distinctive Melbourne Experience. The second item was the preliminary *Transnational and Temporary: students, community and place-making in central Melbourne* report which explored how place-making (practices to foster community in place) can occur in central Melbourne with 40% of its resident population, international students, transnational and temporary rather than permanent. The paper examined ways in which social interactions are limited or enhanced by features of the local built environment and recommended that the internationalising component of the 'Melbourne Experience' must include cross-cultural interaction both on campus and in the surrounding environment.

4.6 School of Enterprise Committee

There was no discussion under this item.

4.7 Reports from Student Representatives

Mr Choo reported that there was discussion at the Student Services Committee (SSC) to 'brand' University events and activities, under one consistent brand name to ensure all students are aware of their inclusive nature. MUOSS has also received a merger proposal from UMSU and intensive discussion and consultation is currently being undertaken to consider this.

5 Evaluation Cycle and Quality Measures

Evaluation Cycle

5.1 a) Assuring the Quality of the Orientation Experience

The Committee received the report; *Assuring the Quality of the Orientation Experience* prepared by the Transition and Orientation Programs team as part of the MM08 Workstream on 'Academic Connectedness.' The paper recommended:

- moving towards more consistent policy and coordination of service delivery by allowing Transition and Orientation to develop Orientation policy, guidelines and templates in consultation with relevant stakeholders
- maximising student participation in Orientation, by making it 'compulsory' for undergraduate and postgraduate students. However noting the negative connotations of the word 'compulsory' the option of integrating Orientation into the semester calendar, possibly as a Week Zero, was also canvassed
- meeting the challenges of Course Advice and Orientation under the Melbourne Model whereby Transition and Orientation convenes Academic Advice Days (with whole-of University input) in late January and immediately preceding Orientation to facilitate course advice and subject selection, deliver student life information and determine teaching resource needs with Orientation week utilised by academic staff to showcase subjects, this being particularly pertinent to breadth subjects in 2008
- creating a cohesive Orientation timetable and aligning information delivery with other system developments such as the development of an on-line orientation programming system which will enable students to obtain a personalised Orientation Program
- improving the Host Program with an expansion of meeting times available for the host groups and the inclusion of an additional host activity incorporated into the Orientation timetable. Further development of the Host database is necessary to enable a better match of hosts and international students
- meeting the needs of diverse student cohorts and enrolment types, and making student services more accessible by shifting the Student Services Carnival to an afternoon-twilight event, convening a 'Reorientation Week' in week 4 of Semester 1, and enhancing the Semester II Orientation budget to enable mid year entry students to experience a similar Orientation to the Semester I cohort. The importance of the last measure was reiterated by members noting the increased mid year intake for the new Graduate Schools.
- enhancing the Campus Welcomes including a review of the Deans' Welcomes to ensure they fit into the continuum of information presented to students and a coordination of welcome information points across campus during Orientation and the first week of Semester.

After the Semester I, 2007 Orientation program, commencing students were surveyed online with a total of 1365 responses received, a ten fold increase over previous years. Formulation of surveys with more quantitative data will be undertaken by the Transition and Orientation Programs team to

enable prompt feedback into the QA mechanisms of all stakeholders. In addition to designing specific questions for certain cohorts to measure performance about the type and quality of information received at various points of contact, Transition and Orientation staff will also attend multiple Orientation sessions to provide feedback to Departments, Faculties and central services and to develop best practice models. Transition and Orientation Programs has put in a bid for increased funding to achieve these objectives.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations, highlighting that Reorientation Week will be beneficial to both late arrival international students as well as the commencing cohort as a whole as it will balance the information overload that tends to occur during Orientation. Professor Bhalla also suggested a program to bring students on regional campuses to Melbourne to enable them to experience the Parkville Campus Orientation Program, rather than have staff travel to rural and regional campuses to address students there.

Members were encouraged to send suggestions and feedback to Ms Boin.

Quality Measures

5.2 a) Review of TALQAC's Terms of Reference (ToRs)

It was noted that as part of the University response to AUQA, Committees reporting to Academic Board are required to undertake a review of their Terms of Reference. Members agreed that some Committee names included in the membership need to be changed such as TaLMET to TaLDC. Also to accommodate generational change and enhance the training of junior academic staff in the issues of Teaching and Learning, it was suggested that TALQAC membership be expanded to include 'two additional members at Level B or C, nominated by the President of the Academic Board.' Professor Stevens recommended that as new structures for 2008 are still being finalised, it was logical to postpone comprehensive discussion of the TALQAC ToRs to the October meeting.

6 Working Groups

6.1 TALQAC Review of Honours Programs

The Committee noted the email from Ms Beattie expressing concern that the Working Group was potentially moving to produce a report which measured the relative strengths of Honours vs. Plus 2 programs rather than reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the current Honours Programs to ensure the quality of courses being taught out. Members of the Honours Review group responded that while it is essential to be cognisant of the current debate in relation to this issue, the primary focus as per the proposed review outline and scope will be on the research component including supervision, infrastructure and support, and the examination process. Ms Daroesman will be preparing a new set of statements and the final report will be presented to TALQAC prior to Academic Board.

6.2 New Generation Degrees Working Group

An updated Terms of Reference document of the Working Group was tabled at the meeting. In discussion of Planning Tools in the new Student System, members canvassed various means by which breadth subject options can be presented to students. Professor Moffat suggested an 'I Feel Lucky' button, for students uncertain of what to take, which could display a random selection of subjects the student would be able to enrol in based on the student's timetable and degree rules. The second option was a clearly structured list of potential breadth subjects. The two options were presented noting that there would be no print Handbook for students to work through in 2008. Professor Stevens noted that tools are needed in the system to clarify to students not only what constitutes breadth but also what is possible and useful from a personal interest and/or employment perspective. Associate Professor Elliott reported that discussion is occurring with

staff in the Student System Unit to have the University Breadth Subjects timetabled in one particular slot. Professor Hawthorne reported that it would be useful to examine how breadth is construed in the US Higher Education sector and Professor James paper and Associate Professor Devlin's booklet on the issue will be valuable reading.

6.3 ABP Review Group

Professor Hawthorne reported that a positive meeting with ABP had occurred on 26 July 2007. An extensive audit of postgraduate coursework materials is currently being undertaken by Ms Sleep from the University Planning Office, taking into account areas of concern highlighted in the OPR and student feedback received by the Faculty. The TALQAC Review Panel will also interview key stakeholders prior to presenting a report to Academic Board in September.

6.4 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

Professor Moffat commended the University Planning Office on the work undertaken in this area. The first report will be available in October which will concentrate on highlighting best practice with the current tool. There will also be a review of the long term use of the QoT instrument. Professor Moffat noted that with the heightened expectation for QoT data in 2008, it is important not to create incomparable data with a radical change in the instrument and the nature of the degrees at the same time, rather the aim for some continuity to obtain analogous data is vital. Professor Stevens commended the work undertaken by the Working Group noting that this is an important area that AUQA will seek improvements in, when it conducts its next audit of the University.

6.5 Peer Review of Teaching

There was no discussion under this item.

6.6 Acquisition of Generic Skills

There was no discussion under this item.

6.7 HR Subgroup and

6.8 Student Advice Quality Assurance Design Working Group

Professor Hawthorne reported that given their common interests the above two are functioning as one working group for the time being. The Academic Connectedness Advisory Group is discussing the training issues that MSAM raises, with plans for a different program for academic and professional staff. There will be four meetings prior to Professor Hawthorne's secondment for six months and the Deputy Chair of TALQAC (to be appointed) will take over chairing this Working Group in that period.

It has since been confirmed that Associate Professor Elliott will be Chair of the **Student Advice Quality Assurance Design Working Group**, given the delayed timeframe for its deliberations.

6.9 Assessment Implementation Working Group

There was no discussion under this item.

6.10 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

The Committee received and noted the EWG Report. Concern was expressed in relation to the inappropriateness of the suggestion made that students undertake examinations in the University car parks due to the inadequacy of heating arrangements in the Royal Exhibition Building where

exams are currently conducted. Associate Professor Elliott agreed to follow up and report back to TALQAC.

6.11 TALQAC/TaLMET Working Group on Support Technology for Academic Honesty and other QA/IT Activities

The Working Group has yet to meet. With TaLMET disbanded, Professor James, as Chair of the new TaLDC Committee, will now convene this Working Group.

7 For Information

There was no discussion under this item.

8 Other Business

8.1 Professor Hawthorne reported that she attended her first Surveys Reference Committee meeting which has been set up to provide policy advice and co-ordination in relation to surveys involving current and perspective students, graduates, staff and other stakeholders of the University of Melbourne. Professor Hawthorne reported that the Surveys Reference Committee expressed concern in relation to the ethical issue of balancing the protection of students from the unprecedented volume of surveys directed at them not just from the University but also from corporate groups and obtaining the information the University needs to improve the quality of the programs and services delivered.

8.2 Ms Daroesman reported on the proposed integrated student survey, the Melbourne Experience Survey (MES), incorporating a 'first year experience', a 'current course experience' and a survey on student support services. UPO has consulted widely across the University and the Survey will be administered in the third week of August to approximately 34,000 undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students. Research Higher Degree students have been omitted from the MES as they will be surveyed as a group in 2008.

9 Next Meeting

The next TALQAC meeting will be held from 2:15-4:15 pm on Thursday 6 September 2007 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, University of Melbourne.
The meeting closed at 4:00 pm.