

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING 5/08**

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, University of Melbourne.

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Professor Hawthorne (Chair), Professor Bhalla, Professor Moffat, Associate Professor Wlodek, Associate Professor Baker, Professor Cameron, Associate Professor Guillemin, Professor James, Professor Wigglesworth, Professor Slocombe, Mr Fijn, Associate Professor Haslam, Dr Ford, Associate Professor Holloway, Professor Meek, Dr McLean, Ms Daroesman, Ms Jonas and Ms Bishop.

**Observers**

Ms Harrison

**In Attendance**

Professor Elliott attended for Professor McPhee. Professor Considine attended for Item 4.8.1, Dr Mann for Item 6.2.1 and Ms Menezes, Committee Secretary.

**BUSINESS**

**1. FORMAL MATTERS**

**1.1 Welcome**

Professor Hawthorne welcomed Professor Meek, Director of the L.H. Martin Institute, to the meeting and noted Professor Slocombe's new role as Deputy Chair of TALQAC.

**1.2 Apologies**

The Committee received apologies from Professor McPhee, Professor Gelder, Associate Professor George, Dr Campbell, Associate Professor Watty, Mr Ewen, Professor Pattison, Professor Huggins, Mr Choo and Mr Khoo.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of TALQAC meeting 4/08 held on Thursday, 8 May 2008 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the addition of the sentence, 'This practice does not raise any additional

concerns about privacy because forms are returned to the Department in any case.’ for the report under Item 7.4 - Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **3.1 Action Sheet**

Item 1 – Specialist Advisor Training: This was addressed under Item 6.2.1 on the Agenda

Item 2 - Reports from students dissatisfied with the fee process: The Committee received and noted the response from Ms Willoughby, General Manager of Enrolment Management Services. Professor Bhalla commented that the invoice sent to students must have on the front rather than on the reverse side of the invoice, the information that the fee amount is due within seven days of the invoice issue date and the due date must be clearly displayed. Dr McLean to deliver this feedback to Ms Willoughby

Item 3 – Characteristics of subjects with low QoT scores: This item will be presented in 2008 when UPO commitments permit commencement of work on this project

The following item is to be added to the Action Sheet; Report on remedial action taken by Melbourne Consulting and Customs Programs (MCCP) for the two subjects, *Fundamentals in Catchment Management* and *Clinical Research Context and Practice* which received low results. The report will be provided by Professor Sterling to TALQAC in September.

The Deputy Chair queried if administration of MCCP QoT Surveys can be brought into alignment with the University evaluation cycle instead of being conducted separately. Ms Daroesman will check the feasibility of this with the University Planning Office and report back.

### **4 OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

#### **4.1 Matters from the Provost’s Office**

There was no discussion under this item.

#### **4.2 Academic Programs Management Committee (APMC)**

Professor Slocombe will provide a report at the July meeting of TALQAC

#### **4.3 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)**

There was no discussion under this item.

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> July meeting of TALQAC, Academic Board has approved the merger of UGPC and PCPC to form the new Academic Programs Committee commencing January 2009.

#### **4.4 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)**

The next PCPC meeting is scheduled for Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008

#### **4.5 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TALDEC)**

Professor James noted that there was discussion at TALDEC in relation to a paper from Ms Deborah Jones and Mr Jon Peacocke on attributes of LMS Community sites and Sakai, the latter being a collection of software tools designed to help lecturers, researchers, and students create websites for collaboration. Expansion of the functionalities of the LMS for purposes beyond teaching e.g. Knowledge Transfer, will be significant.

The University has joined ‘iTunesU’ with a group of five other Australian universities enabling lectures to be downloaded to any internet connected computer or transferred to an iPod for portable use. The University has made a number of lectures and resources available on iTunesU and will be adding to the list.

TALDEC will release a position paper soon on e-portfolios at the University of Melbourne.

Professor James also reported that CSHE is developing policy on the implementation and assessment of group work as well as training and support for sessional teaching staff.

#### **4.6 Melbourne Experience Committee (MEC)**

Dr McLean noted that MEC received the Semester I 2008 Orientation Program Report which reported on the success of the Program overall, in particular new initiatives such as Academic Advice Days organised for students enrolling in New Generation Degrees. The Committee recognised the undergraduate focus of the report and has requested MSGR to present a report on Orientation for research students in June.

#### **4.7 Policy and Procedures Working Group**

The Committee received the update prepared by the Policy and Procedures Working Group. In relation to the Assessment Policy, the Chair noted the diverse assessment protocols prevalent in the Honours programs reviewed by TALQAC in 2007 (as well as across the University in other Honours courses) and the wide distribution of grades received as a result. This has the potential to disadvantage students' GPA, especially for those considering further study in the US and students applying for scholarships for RHD programs. Professor Slocombe suggested that a short term solution would be to extend the MAGPA process as a means for adjusting marks after an undergraduate experience at Melbourne for selection into +2 programs, but there should be a longer term objective to better align grading practices for Honours and Masters across the University. This latter process is likely to encounter difficulties noting the entrenched processes currently in place in Departments and hence an interim measure may be needed to handle all students equitably.

#### **4.8 Reports from Student Representatives**

##### **4.8.1 Faculty of Arts Response to TALQAC's Concerns**

The Committee received the reply from the Dean of Arts, Professor Considine, to the report *UMPA Response to the Implementation of the Arts Renewal Strategy* discussed by TALQAC at the May meeting. While student representatives expressed concern at the 'tone' of the reply, Professor Considine reiterated that the Faculty welcomed dialogue with students to resolve issues at the Faculty level. Professor Hawthorne recommended a synthesis of the discussion relating to significant issues; such as supervision, reduction in the number of staff and subjects offered, payment of tutors, as well as recommendations made by the Committee to both the Faculty of Arts and UMPA be prepared by the Secretary for approval by TALQAC at the July meeting. Once approved this will form part of the Committee's Report to Academic Board. TALQAC has received assurances that the continued close eye on supervisory relationships for postgraduate students will be maintained.

## **5 EMERGING INNOVATIONS**

There was no discussion under this item.

## **6 EVALUATION CYCLE AND QUALITY MEASURES**

### **6.1 Evaluation Cycle**

#### **6.1.1 Melbourne Experience Survey 2007: Report on First Year Experience**

Members received and noted the *Melbourne Experience Survey 2007: Report on First Year Experience* conducted in 2007, which will provide some baseline data on the experience of first year students prior to the implementation of the Melbourne Model in 2008. 5,863 students responded representing a response rate of 38%. It was noted that caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of the data as respondents are reporting on a single semester's experience

and time is required for students to adapt and become familiar with the tertiary academic and social environment. While specific areas have been highlighted for improvement in the report it is significant that low numbers report an overall poor experience.

69% of students describe their overall experience as good or excellent, a percentage similar to that of later year students, with a low 5% reporting a poor experience. The social aspect of university is a common theme when describing the *best aspect* experience of University life with some students positive about the diversity of the student population and range of cultures and activities on campus. Approximately 30% commented on the academic experience, noting the high quality of lectures and the intellectual stimulation of the learning experience. 94% identified their chosen field of study as an important factor in their decision to enrol in their course, and 82% and 75% respectively reported improved job prospects and training for a specific job/vocation as important reasons.

#### *Mixed confidence levels – about fitting in*

While about 70% feel confident about meeting the requirements of their course, fewer (62%) feel confident that they have the ability to meet the required standard of work and only 36% feel they are able to organise their time to complete academic work. In addition, only 59% agree that they are confident making friends and even less, 53%, report feeling as though they belong to the University.

#### *-and about their learning*

While 63% of students reported that they were clear about the objectives of their course, only about half (52%) feel confident about their direction and what is expected of them. 30% reported that they did not always know the standard of work expected with about a third, 33%, noting that they did.

#### *Students want feedback*

Students have expressed the desire for more feedback, a view supported by the QoT and CEQ survey data. Fewer than half, 40%, agree that staff gave them helpful feedback with only 26% agreeing that staff put a lot of time into commenting on their work. Students expressed the need for more assessments to assist them with understanding their progress better

#### *Sharing culture and community*

While 72% of students reported that they *really like being a university student*, only 53% agreed that they felt part of a group of students and staff committed to learning. Only 41% agreed they were able to explore academic interests with staff and students and a low 35% agreed that they regularly get together with other students to discuss course work. These results are consistent with post completion CEQ data which also show low levels of agreement for questions on the *Learning Community* scale.

#### *Learning how to belong*

Reduced time on campus hinders students' sense of social integration leading to a diminished experience. Students seem to spend little more than their normal weekly contact hours on campus (average 20 hours a week); this combined with the finding that around 18% spend less than 5 hours and about two-fifths spend 5-10 hours a week studying suggests that a group of first year students spend less time on their academic and campus activities than is recommended.

#### *Implications for the University*

Specific findings relevant here are the importance of students having realistic expectations of University study, friendship support and organisational skills. Disengagement or disconnection from study is related to a poor experience and closer physical connection to campus as well as presence on campus is associated with a positive overall experience.

#### *Recommendations:*

The report made five recommendations noting that while many of the suggested programs are currently offered at the University, consideration needs to be given to ensuring that these reach students and specific cohorts that do not participate and are in danger of becoming disengaged. Recommendations include exploring means of encouraging students to remain on campus during the week to assist with forging relationships with their social and academic community; participation by first year students in skills training to prepare them for independent learning; continuing emphasis on high quality and expert specialist course advice which needs to cover information and guidance on course requirements and sequencing as well as graduate study and career options. Active and consistent communication with first year students is vital so that information disseminated during Orientation about relevant services available on campus is not lost and devising additional methods for identifying students at risk of disengagement from academic programs as well as participation and involvement in University activities is strongly encouraged.

Further analysis of the MES 2007 data will be undertaken including comparisons with the MES Survey administered to the 2008 first year cohort enrolled under the Melbourne Model. Reports focussing on specific aspects will be forthcoming over this year.

TALQAC members noted the opportunity for studies to be undertaken correlating the data collected. An example given was determining the connection between students away from campus for large periods of time and their experience of learning community.

## 6.2 Quality Measures

### 6.2.1) Student Advice Program – Report to TALQAC

Members received and noted the report prepared by the Academic Programs Management Unit. The Student Advice Program Report to TALQAC outlined the training delivered to the three identified tiers of University staff; Enquiries Officers, Student Advisers and Specialist Advisers working in student contact roles. The training programs are relevant to staff servicing undergraduate, postgraduate, local, international, New Gen and continuing students. Participants have been assessed using a variety of techniques such as quizzes and interactive face to face methods. Training sessions have been positively received by staff. Members noted that in future TALQAC would prefer reports with actual rather than potential attendance figures.

The following table with actual attendees has been provided since the 12<sup>th</sup> June meeting of TALQAC.

#### STUDENT ADVISER AND ENQUIRIES OFFICER TRAINING (attendees as at 25 June 2008)

<b>Student Advisers</b>	Fully Trained (4 modules)	Partially Trained (less than 4)	<b>Enquiries Officers</b>	Fully Trained (4 modules)	Partially Trained (less than 4)
ABP	4	2	ABP	3	5
Arts	15	4	Arts	2	2
Eco_Com	9	4	Eco_Com	4	1
Edu	4	3	Edu	3	0
Eng	3	5	Eng	4	0
Law	2	0	Law	3	0
LFR	4	3	LFR	1	2
MDHS	6	1	MDHS	4	2
Mus	1	0	Mus	0	0
Sci	14	3	Sci	3	2
VCA	0	0	VCA	0	0
Other	2	1	Other	6	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>

**TOTAL of Staff Fully Trained = 97**

**TOTAL of Staff Partially Trained = 42**

## TOTAL of individual professional staff through the Program = 139

**SPECIALIST TRAINING** – Attendees by Session (mixed cohort of Academic and Senior Student Centre staff; not delineated by Faculty)

	Specialist Session # 1	Specialist Session # 2	Specialist Session # 3a	Specialist Session # 3b	Specialist Session # 4	TOTAL
TOTALS	45	45	38	25	14	167

While impressive training outcomes have been achieved to date, some concern was expressed at (a) the variable level of training to date across Faculties (some being strongly engaged, others minimally) and (b) the relative lack of training up-take to date by academic staff (an important component of the Student Advice Model). These issues need addressing.

In response to members' queries in relation to keeping staff up to date it was noted that the Unit runs follow up modules, emails electronic newsletters and has a web presence to inform staff of changes that affect their student facing roles. The Chair enquired about the scope for students to evaluate the service received from trained staff as the 2007 MES Survey reports less than optimal results in the quality of student advice provided. It has since been noted that the Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar will be discussing potential questions to be included in the MES Survey with the Melbourne Experience Group. The MES Survey will be administered in Semester II 2008 and some of the data here will reveal the effectiveness of the student advice training delivered. The Chair questioned if training had occurred for service delivery in non face-to-face situations such as those occurring over the phone and electronically. It was noted that some Faculties are delivering customer service training in this area.

## 7 WORKING GROUPS

### 7.1 Course Evaluation Strategy and Design Working Group

The Committee received and noted the *Interim Guidelines for Course Evaluation 2008* designed for the evaluation of courses in the School of Dentistry, the VCA and the School of Engineering in Semester II 2008. Members agreed that this be sent to appropriate academic staff for further consultation and the opportunity to provide feedback. TALQAC will reconsider the Interim Guidelines with suggested amendments at the July meeting prior to presentation to Academic Board for approval.

### 7.2 ABP Review Group

While there was no discussion under this item, Professor Hawthorne has contacted Professor Kvan, Dean of Architecture, to discuss the organisation of a formal follow-up meeting with the TALQAC ABP Review Group in July 2008 and to undertake focus groups with students to review ABP's progress in implementing the Action Plan presented to TALQAC in Semester I 2008. This is the only dimension of the 2007 evaluation still required.

### 7.3 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

There was no discussion under this item

### 7.4 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

There was no discussion under this item

### 7.5 TALQAC/TALDEC Working Group on Support Technology for Academic Honesty and other QA/IT Activities

There was no discussion under this item

**8 FOR INFORMATION**

There were no items for information

**9 OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no discussion under this item

**10 NEXT MEETING**

The next TALQAC meeting will be held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> July from 2.15 pm - 4.15 pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building.

The meeting closed at 4:00 pm.