

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
ACADEMIC BOARD
TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING 2/08

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday, 13 March 2008, in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne.

MINUTES

PRESENT

Committee Members

Professor Ron Slocombe (Acting Chair), Professor Pip Pattison, Professor Alistair Moffat, Professor Richard Huggins, Professor Prem Bhalla, Associate Professor Mary Wlodek, Associate Professor Su Baker, Associate Professor Nick Haslam, Associate Professor Marilys Guillemin, Dr Rebecca Ford, Ms Suzanne Daroseman, Mr Paul Fijn, Mr Shaun Khoo and Mr Jey Sern Choo.

Observers

None

In Attendance

Professor Sue Elliott attended for Professor Peter McPhee, Mr Bill Jones (Senior Analyst, University Planning Office) and Ms Leanne Fisher recorded the Minutes.

BUSINESS

1. FORMAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed new members: Professor Gillian Wigglesworth, Professor Camille Cameron, Professor Ken Gelder and Associate Professor Kim Watty.

1.2 Apologies

The Committee received apologies from Professor Peter McPhee, Associate Professor Ray Misson, Professor Richard James, Associate Professor Mark Crosby, Associate Professor Steven Holloway, Dr Pat McLean, Mr Shaun Ewen, Ms Tammi Jonas and Ms Onagh Bishop.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of TALQAC meeting 1/08 held on Thursday, 14 February 2008 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Action Sheet

Items 1 and 2: These matters will be dealt with at the April meeting, because Professor Richard James was an apology.

Item 3 (*Schedule of TALQAC Course Reviews*) was dealt with under Item 5.2(a) of the Agenda.

Item 3 (*Guidelines for Course Evaluation*): TALQAC will review this item at the April meeting.

Item 4: This item was deferred to the April meeting.

Item 2 — Long Term (*Errors in Examination Papers*): This item, in part, was dealt with under Item 6.6 of the Agenda.

4 OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND OTHER COMMITTEES

4.1 Matters from the Provost's Office

Professor Elliott reported that it has been a smooth introduction with the Melbourne Model this year.

Committee of Deans met on 12 March and the timeline for the teach out for all courses was confirmed at the meeting.

The Chair queried TALQAC's recommendations to the Academic Board for follow-up with Faculties. Professor Pattison advised that TALQAC's task is to identify issues and propose appropriate follow-up actions but it is the responsibility of management to ensure that those actions are undertaken. Professor Pattison recommended that this process should be clarified with the Provost.

In response to a question relating to members' reporting responsibilities to their faculties, the Chair commented that members are appointed to act in a University capacity rather than as representatives of their Faculties. Given that there is no direct reporting relationship between TALQAC and faculties or equivalent faculty committees, members' communications with their faculties about TALQAC matters would be at an informal rather than formal level.

4.2 Academic Programs Management Committee (APMC)

There were no matters to report, as Academic Programs Management Committee is about to meet for the first time this year. However, Professor Elliott outlined some key issues that the Committee is considering:

- Breadth subjects — what constitutes multi-disciplinary?
- Concurrent diplomas — a paper is currently being developed by APMC, examining problems with concurrent diploma enrolments, including reasons why students may not complete the diploma. Professor Elliott confirmed, in response to a question, that discussion paper also included languages diploma.

4.3 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)

There was nothing to report from UGPC.

4.4 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)

There was nothing to report from PCPC.

4.5 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TALDEC)

Associate Professor Watty reported on Professor James' behalf and advised that there were three items to bring to TALQAC's attention:

- Information Futures Commission — Mr Mark Brodsky presented on scholarly information and choices for the University. TALDEC discussed how stakeholders could be engaged more, i.e. public debate and 4-5 really engaging questions in order to gain interest.
- New Ideas — A report on what is happening in Second Life activities in the University will be provided to TALDEC and a discussion paper will be developed.
- LMS Guidebook — A booklet has been written to provide further suggestions and assistance with subject sites.

The Chair commented that Professor James is looking at new approaches and innovations within TALDEC. The Chair asked TALQAC if it would consider a new item to be included on the Agenda — Emerging Innovations. The Committee agreed that this should be a standing item on the TALQAC Agenda.

4.6 Melbourne Experience Committee (MEC)

There was nothing to report from the Melbourne Experience Committee.

4.7 Reports from Student Representatives

Mr Khoo raised concerns from Law School students that H1s were no longer double marked. Mr Khoo was advised that while there is a requirement in the Statutes for double marking of failures there is not a similar standard requirement for H1 grades. In response it was noted that while there may have been changes in marking in some subjects within the Melbourne Law School, it is not a School-wide policy change. It was not considered that single marking would have adverse effects on student grades overall.

Mr Khoo advised that some negative feedback had been received from students with regard to the Student Centres in Arts and in Environments, with students reporting having received conflicting advice. Positive feedback about new student centres, such as the Engineering Centre, had also been received from students who had reacted well to the new environment. In discussion it was acknowledged that the current space in Arts is inadequate for the number of students and that further discussions were taking place to redress this.

Mr Choo raised concerns by some international students, suggesting that staff may need further training in dealing with students who were not proficient in English. Professor Elliott advised that Student Centre staff are undertaking extensive and progressive training in a range of relevant aspects of student service. A series of metrics and KPIs are being developed to evaluate to measure and monitor the effectiveness of Student Centres and advice being offered. Three external companies have tendered to assist the University develop an appropriate evaluation strategy for Student Centres.

A real concern to students was that there are no feedback or suggestion boxes in the Student Centres for students. Professor Elliott advised that an online system of feedback is being developed, but not yet available to students. Professor Elliott also undertook to follow up whether suggestion boxes could be installed in the meantime so that student suggestions can be considered and responses provided.

5 EVALUATION CYCLE AND QUALITY MEASURES

5.1 Evaluation Cycle

- (a) Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching Report on Semester II, 2007 and Trend Data

Mr Jones briefed the Committee on the Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching Report. Analysis of results shows that students are largely satisfied with most, but not all aspects of their subjects.

Although this is an unchanged assessment from the previous semester, it should be noted that the level of agreement in key areas is at or below their three-year average. This suggests at least a pause in the gradual improvement observed in outcomes over the previous years, and suggests perhaps the need for new strategies in order to further improve students' perceptions of their subjects.

Undergraduate outcomes show a small reduction in the level of agreement for 7 of the 9 questions including the key areas of 'well taught' and 'overall satisfaction'. Postgraduate outcomes again show a high level of satisfaction, but also with small reductions in the agreement compared to the previous semester.

Areas for concern identified by the Semester 2, 2007 survey are unchanged from the previous report and include students' perception of feedback, their learning community, and the use of ICT in their subjects, subjects which are frequently rated low, and Faculties which have outcomes persistently below the University mean. Mr Jones advised that there were improved outcomes for the Faculties of Architecture, Building and Planning and Engineering including a large reduction in teaching load in poorly rated ABP subjects. The Faculties' results, however, remain in the bottom quartile of Faculty outcomes.

Students' perception of the feedback they receive on how they are going in their subjects continues to be poor, and there has been almost no change in the level of agreement since the Semester 2 2004 survey. In discussion it was acknowledged that there was ambiguity in students believed to constitute feedback and also perhaps financial constraints impacting the amount of time tutors can spend commenting on students' assignments. The Chair commented that subjects which have exemplary feedback or where there has been considerable improvement in outcomes can be used to provide examples of good practice for other subjects. The Committee also agreed that TALDEC be asked to consider better ways of providing feedback.

It was suggested that low rating subjects should be considered and that if significant improvement is not made, then perhaps the subjects should not be rolled over into the new Melbourne Model. Concern was also expressed that the response rates within some Departments were extremely low.

The Committee discussed the statistical significance of the small changes in the level of agreement from semester to semester and agreed that some simple statements should be developed and included in the Report to assist in the interpretation of outcomes. Professor Huggins, Mr Fijn and Professor Moffat were asked to consider and make recommendations to TALQAC on appropriate methodology.

In response to an inquiry from the Chair on whether there were any commonalities between subjects which were rated poorly, Mr Jones agreed to undertake this analysis for report at a subsequent meeting of TALQAC.

The Committee **endorsed** the Report and **recommended** that it be referred to Academic Board.

5.2 Quality Measures

(a) TALQAC Schedule of Projects 2008-2010

Ms Daroesman provided the Committee with a briefing on the Schedule of Projects 2008-2010, and suggested timetable for the remainder of 2008.. The Committee **endorsed** the TALQAC Schedule of Projects 2008-2010, subject to the inclusion of VCA in the 2008 course review schedule.

A series of working groups and review panels will be established at TALQAC's next meeting to agree on procedures for forthcoming projects.

(b) The Melbourne Model New Generation Degrees —
Reconceiving First-Year Teaching for 2008

A query on Recommendation 2 of this paper was raised, whether Associate Deans act on behalf of committees or report to them.

The Committee noted the Report.

6 WORKING GROUPS

6.1 TALQAC Honours Review Group

Ms Daroesman briefed the Committee on the TALQAC Course Review of Fourth Year Honours 2007 Report, and spoke to the changes made to the final report following TALQAC's discussion of the draft report in November 2007. The Committee commended Ms Daroesman on the Report and accepted the recommendations of the review panel.

6.2 New Generation Degrees Working Group

This matter was deferred to the April meeting.

6.3 ABP Review Group

This matter was deferred to the April meeting when Dr Greg Missingham, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) will report on the Faculty's progress in implementing the recommendations of the review.

6.4 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

The Quality of Teaching Survey was approved at Academic Board at its February meeting. Professor Moffat advised that since a member has left the Working Group, another member is required.

6.5 Student Advice Quality Assurance Design Working Group

Professor Elliott advised that the Working Group met once in 2007 and the meeting was more of an information sharing nature. Professor Elliott advised that she is unable to continue as Chair of the Working Group as the Student Centres are within the Office of the Provost, both Professor McPhee and herself have a conflict of interest. The Chair asked for Expressions of Interest to be forwarded to either himself or Ms Kathy Menezes. It was agreed that the membership and terms of reference for the Working Group should be reviewed.

6.6 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

It was agreed that discussion of the Working Group's lines of reporting would be deferred for the time being, as Academic Board is undertaking a review of its committee structure as part of a larger review of structures and reporting lines within the University.

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

This item was not discussed as Professor James was an apology for the TALQAC meeting.

7 FOR INFORMATION

The updated TALQAC Membership List for 2008 was accepted.

8 OTHER BUSINESS

Professor Pattison gave a vote of thanks to Professor Slocombe for his time as Chair of TALQAC, in Professor Hawthorne's absence.

9 NEXT MEETING

The next TALQAC meeting will be held on **Thursday, 10 April 2008**, in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Conference Centre, commencing at 2.15 pm-4.15 pm.

The meeting closed at 4:10 pm.