

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
ACADEMIC BOARD
TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING 4/08

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday, 8th May 2008 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building, The University of Melbourne.

MINUTES

PRESENT

Committee Members

Professor Hawthorne (Chair), Professor Pattison, Professor Moffat, Associate Professor Wlodek, Associate Professor Baker, Professor Cameron, Associate Professor Guillemain, Mr Ewen, Professor James, Professor Wigglesworth, Associate Professor George, Associate Professor Watty, Professor Gelder, Professor Slocombe, Mr Fijn, Mr Khoo, Ms Daroesman, Ms Jonas and Ms Bishop.

Observers

None

In Attendance

Professor Elliott attended for Professor McPhee and Ms Hammond for Dr McLean. Professor Sterling attended for Item 6.1a, Mr Jones for Item 7.4 and Ms Menezes, Committee Secretary.

BUSINESS

1. FORMAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

Professor Hawthorne welcomed Ms Hammond to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

The Committee received apologies from Professor McPhee, Professor Huggins, Professor Bhalla, Mr Choo, Associate Professor Haslam, Dr Ford, Associate Professor Misson, Associate Professor Holloway and Dr McLean.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of TALQAC meeting 3/08 held on Thursday, 10th April 2008 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Action Sheet

Item 1 - In principle approval of postgraduate courses by Academic Board: Associate Professor Misson reported via email that he had clarified to Professor Bhalla that although in-principle approval of the Master of Science course was given last year (with a sign-off from all interested Deans); details of the course including the contributions of other Faculties will be considered in depth by APMC and then by PCPC as soon as a full proposal is presented.

Item 2 – Specialist Advisor Training: Professor Elliott to present this at the June meeting

Item 3 - Reports from students dissatisfied with the fee process: This item has been deferred to the June Meeting

Item 4 – Characteristics of subjects with low QoT scores: This item will be presented in 2008 when UPO commitments permit commencement of work on this project

3.2 Email Response from Ms Luck to TALQAC's Recommendation for Suggestion Boxes to be placed in Student Centres

The Committee received and noted the email response from Ms Luck, Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar. Professor Elliott reported that the Provost has put in a request to Ms Luck that Suggestion Boxes be put into all Student Centres on a trial basis. While face to face interaction is preferable, given the power and age differential of the relevant parties in these transactions, members felt that students may not always be comfortable with this mode of communication and in some instances therefore anonymity is the favoured option. Committee members supported the implementation of the Provost's request.

4 OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND OTHER COMMITTEES

4.1 Matters from the Provost's Office

4.1.1 Update on Melbourne Model and MSSM Implementation

The Committee received the *Update on Melbourne Model and MSSM Implementation* report sent by the Provost. It was noted that part of the report does rely on soft data and anecdotal evidence as the Melbourne Experience Survey will be conducted in Semester II 2008. Issues in the report discussed by TALQAC were:

Breadth Enrolments and the New Generation Degrees

Enrolment in breadth subjects have revealed both expected and unexpected outcomes. While enrolments in languages as breadth has been high, enrolment in languages by Arts students, who are unable to do languages as breadth, has dropped. Other than languages, students have essentially made conservative/strategic decisions, choosing subjects aligned to their core discipline. Members were concerned if students were in fact experiencing the principles of breadth as enshrined in the Melbourne Model. Students who have stepped out of their 'comfort zone,' for example the small group of Arts students who have chosen Science subjects are finding this a challenge but assistance for this cohort is being addressed by subject coordinators. Student representatives noted that the low numbers of Arts students enrolled in Science could be a reflection of students' anxiety at the possibility of not achieving high grades, with a subsequent negative impact on their grade point average. Members were of the opinion that this was not confined to Arts students, achievement of a high grade point average could be one of a number of reasons why students are making conservative breadth choices. There has also been some disappointment in the low numbers who have undertaken Indigenous Studies as breadth.

Sequencing of breadth in many of the New Generation Degrees was another issue of concern with the necessity of stand alone subjects at second and third year affecting enrolments in the

subjects, making them vulnerable. It was noted that there was no impediment to a second year student enrolling in a third year subject provided they met the relevant pre-requisites. It was observed that the Curriculum Commission had noted the benefits of both sequencing and an eclectic mix of breadth subjects and sequencing was a mechanism employed to avoid students attempting to complete all their breadth requirements with level 100 subjects.

Members noted that with the Diploma in Foreign Languages no longer concurrent from first year, Arts students are unable to achieve two languages on the completion of their degree. APMC is examining third year entry into the concurrent diploma and the constraints this places on choices for Arts students.

Student Centre reports have been largely positive though there are major concerns in relation to infrastructure, a view shared by Property and Campus Services. There are also work load issues related to staff who have to upskill at a rapid rate.

4.2 Academic Programs Management Committee (APMC)

Professor Elliott reported that APMC had examined a range of subjects submitted as part of the approval process. A postgraduate degree had not been endorsed for the next stage due to insufficient consultation by the administering Faculty with other Faculties teaching into the degree, a confirmation of the rigor of the new course approval process.

4.3 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)

In the absence of Associate Professor Misson there was no discussion under this item

4.4 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)

The next PCPC meeting was scheduled for Friday, 9th May

4.5 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TALDEC)

Professor James noted that there was discussion at TALDEC in relation to evaluation of the LMS from a pedagogical and student experience perspective. TALDEC also discussed 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. Sakai is due to be fully implemented, and centrally supported from Semester II, 2008, and will include the integration of a suite of Neo e-learning tools from Semester I, 2009. TALDEC will also release a position paper soon on e-portfolios at the University of Melbourne.

4.6 Melbourne Experience Committee (MEC)

Professor Pattison reported that MEC discussed some of the significant issues raised in the document *Scholarly Information in a Digital Age – Choices for the University of Melbourne*, from the student experience perspective. Main points were reported to Ms O'Brien, Vice – Principal (Information) and her team who are keen to present a series of choices to the University incorporating feedback received from stakeholders both internal and external to the University.

4.7 Policy and Procedures Working Group

Professor Pattison noted that there would be an update at the June meeting of TALQAC outlining those policies that have been approved by Academic Board, policies that are with UGPC and PCPC for feedback and information on policies which are still in the developmental stage.

4.8 Reports from Student Representatives

4.8.1 UMPA Response to the Implementation of the Arts Renewal Strategy

The Committee received the report, *UMPA Response to the Implementation of the Arts Renewal Strategy*, noting as outlined in the report that some issues are beyond the sphere of TALQAC's particular responsibilities. Ms Jonas presented two student scenarios to humanise and personalise the report.

The Committee noted comments that the Faculty of Arts has consistently received reasonable QoT scores as well as the response provided by the VC at the April meeting of Academic Board outlining a detailed review of the Faculty, the University's commitment to the development of a comprehensive Arts Faculty and the extensive cross subsidisation to alleviate the impact of the deficit on students and staff.

While the Committee acknowledged the complexity of the current circumstances faced by the Faculty of Arts, in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the University, TALQAC was particularly concerned about the following issues raised in the paper:

- 'Disruption to supervision arrangements resulting from the restructure, relocation or removal of departments, such as Creative Arts;' and the processes that the Faculty has in place to insure that the quality of supervision is being maintained after senior academics who served as supervisors have left the University.
- The lack of 'an overall strategy to monitor and assess the impact of the 'teaching out issues' on students and staff [which] may result in further disparity of resources and support' with 'Recent accounts [reflecting] that individual students currently are attempting to negotiate their own satisfactory completions with a vastly reduced staffing profile ...'
- 'Decreased quality of coursework delivery due to the implementation of the Tutorial Payment Policy, departmental directives affecting staff, higher student to staff ratios and a reduced staffing profile;'
- UMPA's concern in relation to the lack of adequate training, resources and remuneration provided to postgraduate students delivering tutorials under the new Tutorial Payment Policy. TALQAC is concerned that this affects the quality of experience of postgraduate, in particular PhD, students for whom tutoring is a significant aspect of their preparation for a future teaching career
- The impact on the teaching and learning experiences of undergraduate students in tutorials conducted by postgraduate students under the above conditions

Following discussion the Committee concurred that prior to the UMPA report being presented to Academic Board, the Faculty of Arts be invited to respond to the areas elucidated in the paper which are of particular concern to TALQAC. The Arts Faculty response will be placed on the Agenda of the 12th June TALQAC meeting and a representative from the Faculty will be invited to present this report.

The Committee also agreed that resource based items in the paper need to be presented to PBC.

5 EMERGING INNOVATIONS

There was no discussion under this item.

6 EVALUATION CYCLE AND QUALITY MEASURES

6.1 Evaluation Cycle

(a) School of Enterprise; QoT Summary Results for Semester I 2007

Professor Sterling presented the School of Enterprise QoT results for Semester I 2007, informing the Committee of the change of name to Melbourne Consulting and Custom Programs to occur after approval by Council. The scores for most subjects were high and it was noted that teaching staff who did not achieve good scores were not invited to return. Members requested that the future results include the number of students and the response rate to assist with interpretation of the data. Professor Slocombe queried the remedial action taken by the School for the two subjects, *Fundamentals in Catchment Management* and *Clinical Research Context and Practice* which received low results of 3.6 and 3.7 respectively compared to other subjects that scored 4.0 or above.

Professor Sterling agreed to inform the School to provide TALQAC with a follow up report.

6.2 Quality Measures

6.2a) TALQAC Membership and Terms of Reference (ToR)

Members noted the need to amend the TALQAC Membership and ToRs to enable the Chair of UGPC and PCPC to send a nominee. Associate Professor Misson indicated via email that he would like to nominate Dr Marion Campbell from the Faculty of Arts to be the UGPC representative on TALQAC and for Professor Slocombe to provide the PCPC report.

Members were also in favour of the appointment of a Deputy Chair to ensure minimum disruption to the work of the Committee in the Chair's absence. Professor Slocombe has since agreed to serve as Deputy Chair until the revised form of Academic Board Committees currently under consideration is adopted.

7 WORKING GROUPS

7.1 Course Evaluation Strategy and Design Working Group

The Committee received the Draft Terms of Reference and membership of the Working Group. Professor Hawthorne reported that at the first meeting it was agreed that Associate Professor Guillemain and Professor Hawthorne would co-chair the Working Group. Ms Sleep noted that in addition to a review of the Course Evaluation Guidelines, the Working Group would also need to co-opt specific expertise to enable bench marking against international standards.

Members approved the work plan and timelines of the Group and agreed to invite Professor Meek, Head of the L.H. Martin Institute and a member of this Working Group, to attend future TALQAC meetings noting his particular expertise in evaluation. Mr Khoo will be the undergraduate student representative on the Working Group.

Ms Hammond recommended that point four under the Proposed Terms of Reference be amended to read 'To design evaluation strategies for aspects of the new generation degrees...' removing the word 'specific' and that a sixth point, 'integrated experience,' be added to the list.

7.2 New Generation Degrees Review Group

This working group has been subsumed by the Course Evaluation Strategy and Design Working Group

7.3 ABP Review Group

It was noted that the ABP Review Group will conduct a follow-up meeting in August 2008 to undertake focus groups with students and to review ABP's progress in implementing the Action Plan.

7.4 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

The Committee received and noted the Quality of Teaching Working Group Report. Professor Moffat reported that even if there is only one student undertaking the subject to satisfy a breadth requirement, then Departments will be provided with two summary sheets, the first will contain the overall result for the subject and the second the result for the breadth students.

7.5 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

The Committee received and noted the EWG Report

7.6 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, 12th June from 2.15 pm - 4.15 pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building.

The meeting closed at 4:05 pm.