

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

ACADEMIC BOARD

TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting 10/08 (13 November 2008)

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2:15 pm on Thursday, 13 November 2008 in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics Building.

Minutes

Present:

Committee Members

Professor Hawthorne (Chair), Professor McPhee, Professor Slocombe, Associate Professor Holloway, Professor Gelder, Professor Haslam, Ms Daroesman, Professor James, Associate Professor Watty, Ms Capp, Professor Wigglesworth, Dr Weatherley, Mr Fijn, Ms Quek, Professor Bhalla, Associate Professor Baker, Ms Jonas and Mr Khoo.

Observers

None

In Attendance

Ms Sleep and Ms Menezes, Committee Secretary.

Business

1. FORMAL MATTERS

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Professor Stevens, 2009 President of the Academic Board, to TALQAC, with a warm vote of thanks also made on behalf of the Committee for Professor Pip Pattison's exceptional contribution as President of the Academic Board in the past two years.

Apologies

The Committee received apologies from Associate Professor Wlodek, Professor Pattison, Associate Professor George, Professor Moffat, Professor Cameron, Dr Campbell, Mr Ewen, Professor Meek, Professor Huggins, Associate Professor Guillemin and Ms Bishop.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of TALQAC meeting 9/08 held on Thursday, 9th October 2008 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the inclusion of Mr Fijn as one of the attendees.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Action Sheet

Short Term Action Items

Item 1 – *Recommendations from Steering Committee on Integrating Language and Disciplinary Teaching* – Professor Slocombe reported that at the October meeting, Academic Board approved the constitution of an Advisory Group to co-ordinate and communicate between groups working on language integration projects and to be a source of expertise and advice to the University community. The Advisory Group is to report to MMC and TALQAC in relation to the QA of English language related teaching and learning issues.

Noting the role of TALQAC as outlined in the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Group, the Chair recommended the appointment of a member of the Committee to the Group. The Committee endorsed an amendment to the membership to formally incorporate a member of TALQAC.

Item 2 – Arts and Music Centre – At the October meeting of TALQAC, Mr Khoo reported that when he had emailed the Arts and Music Student Centre (AMSC) with a query and requested an appointment, he received a response to his question via email and was told that there was no need for a meeting. Professor McPhee agreed to follow up and reported at the November meeting that all Arts and Music students are provided with one on one course advice at the time of enrolment and course advisors are available to meet with students throughout the year. The AMSC is cognisant of the need to provide students with advice at key points throughout their degree and to facilitate this promoted October 2008 as Course Advice Month, well ahead of the re-enrolment and the course planning period. The response from students, particularly New Generation students, was extremely positive with additional appointment times offered to keep up with student demand. Given the success of this initiative, the AMSC will continue to be proactive in promoting and offering its services to students at strategic points throughout the year. All students seeking advice which cannot be dealt with immediately are encouraged to make an appointment with a Student Advisor. The Acting Manager of the AMSC reported to Professor McPhee that on receipt of Mr Khoo's query a decision was made that the matter could be satisfactorily dealt with via email and therefore there was no requirement for him to come in personally to the AMSC.

4. OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

4.1 Matters from the Provost's Office

Members received the Draft 2009 Office of the Provost Plan.

5. EMERGING INNOVATIONS

There was no discussion under this item.

6. EVALUATION CYCLE AND QUALITY MEASURES

6.1 Evaluation Cycle

6.1a) QoT Results for Semester I 2008 for M CCP

The Committee received and noted the M CCP QoT Evaluation Results for Semester I 2008. Highlights for M CCP included the receipt of an average score of 4.4 out of 5 and successful delivery of the subject *Fundamentals of Palliative Care* for the first time to provide the industry standard for professionals working in specialist palliative care.

Members queried the absence of the Quality of Feedback question where the University has traditionally received less than satisfactory scores. It has since been revealed that historically there have been differences between the University and the MCCC Questionnaire justified on the basis that the programs delivered and students attending differed substantially to those of the University. The University Planning Office is however working with MCCC to more closely align the evaluation and QA process. The Committee was pleased to note that in future MCCC reports will conform to University of Melbourne norms in terms of non-naming of specific staff on Evaluation Results.

6.2 Quality Measures

6.2a) Implementing the Student Services Model and the Impact of Student Centres on Quality Student Outcomes

Members received a preliminary report from the Vice Principal and Academic Registrar outlining the vision of the Student Services Model and strategies to realise this. Varied results have been received for the five KPIs;

- Students
- Staff
- Stakeholders (Academic and other providers)
- Compliance with University Policies
- Cohort participation in enrichment opportunities

Feedback from students indicates that significant improvement is still required in the provision of course advice, dissemination of information on graduate pathways and enrichment opportunities. There are also substantial difficulties experienced in some Student Centres with the organisation of a course advice appointment. While there is a little progress in relation to the delivery of course advice in comparison to 2007 results, there is no base line comparative data for responses to the other points. Both Student Centre staff and academics noted that communication, training and resources for timely delivery of quality service were areas that still require significant progress.

Student representatives commended the Science Student Centre model of allocating appointments to all first year students and noted the high response rate from students to this initiative. Members raised a number of concerns specifically in relation to the unacceptably large staff to student ratio in some Student Centres, the delay in students' ability to access Student Advisors at critical re-enrolment times and the varying levels of training that staff had received. TALQAC Review panels also reported the frustration expressed by some students where Student Centre staff were only able to offer very generalised advice and consultation with them only delayed discussion with academic staff who were able to provide the requisite course advice. The Chair requested an update from the Vice Principal and Academic Registrar on the engagement with training of academic and professional staff involved with Student Centres across Faculties/Schools. This has since been provided and will be presented at the February 2009 meeting of TALQAC.

The final report will be delivered by the Provost to Academic Board and Council at the respective December meetings.

7. WORKING GROUPS

7.1 Course Evaluation Strategy and Design Working Group

The Committee received and noted the draft Guidelines for Evaluating Teaching and Learning Outcomes. There was discussion concerning the appropriate scope of these evaluation guidelines (focused on TALQAC's specific evaluation brief, or designed to be applied more broadly). There was further discussion as to whether this was an historic opportunity when it could be timely and appropriate to review some of TALQAC's standard quality assurance mechanisms and procedures (e.g. in relation to facilitating quality of teaching feedback at a time when it could have a formative impact). Members acknowledged the challenges of creating a comprehensive set of formal evaluation guidelines. In terms of the QoT, there was support for a more consistent level of informal, formative evaluation/feedback to be conducted at the local level with the implementation

of improvement strategies clearly visible to students, in comparison to an overwhelming institutional reliance on the more summative QoT evaluation process, which student representatives noted was not filled out with the necessary diligence and accuracy by all students. Members also recommended formalising implementation by Faculties/Schools of the recommendations made in student evaluation reports to remove the disconnect perceived by students between voicing their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with aspects of the course and the execution of improvements.

Professor McPhee also noted that in addition to the Committee's focus on assessment of QA processes, going forward TALQAC should formulate policy directly about QA and what constitutes excellence in academic standards. This substantial role will make the role of this Academic Board Committee even more critical.

Ms Daroesman was commended by the Committee on the quality of the Guidelines. The final *Guidelines for Evaluating Teaching and Learning Outcomes* will be presented to Academic Board for approval in early 2009.

7.2 ABP Review Group

Professor Hawthorne reported that consultation with the Faculty and follow up with student focus groups has been completed. Results indicate that while ABP has made substantial progress, further improvements will need to be implemented. One of the recommendations will be the development of an action/implementation plan in consultation with the Provost. A draft report will be presented to the Dean for the Faculty response and then to TALQAC in February 2009.

7.3 Dental Science Review Group

Professor Haslam reported that Dental Science had not provided the accreditation documents for the TALQAC Dental Science review process to commence. The matter will be followed up in 2009.

7.4 VCA Review Group

Professor Wigglesworth reported that a draft report will be ready by the third week of November and presented to TALQAC in February 2009.

7.5 Engineering Review Group

Professor Hawthorne reported that consultations with the School of Engineering are complete, and that a preliminary discussion has been held with the Dean. While some improvements have occurred since the Broer's Review, there is still significant work to be achieved. The final review report will be presented to TALQAC in February 2009.

7.6 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group

There was no discussion under this item

7.7 Examinations Working Group (EWG)

The Committee received and noted the EWG Report. Members endorsed the proposed dates for Unsatisfactory Progress Meetings for Semester II 2008 as well as Semester I and II 2009, noting the need to adjust Supplementary Exam dates to enable the University to comply with the legislative requirements of both HESA and ESOS. The Committee understands that the report will be presented to Academic Board for formal approval by UGPC and PCPC.

Professor Slocombe proposed that TALQAC discuss the assessment issues that underpin the conduct of two and three hour exams for different subjects. The differing times cause disruptions when the exams are conducted in the same venue and financial constraints do not permit holding exams of different durations in different venues. Increasing formative assessment in the Semester and decreasing the final exam period to two hours may be one way to address this issue but the

financial implications for Departments across the University also need to be taken into consideration.

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

There was no discussion under this item

8. REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

8.1 Melbourne Model Committee (MMC)

There was no discussion under this item

8.2 Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC)

Professor Slocombe reported that the large number of late changes being presented to Academic Board for approval was an area of concern.

8.3 Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committee (PCPC)

Professor Slocombe reported that Associate Professor Misson was undertaking a revision of the *Blue Book* to reduce the complexity of the Course Approval Process.

8.4 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TALDEC)

There was no discussion under this item

8.5 Policy and Procedures Working Group (PPWG)

There was no discussion under this item

8.6 Reports from Student Representatives

There were no reports from student representatives

9. FOR INFORMATION

There were no items for information

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Professor Hawthorne thanked all the members whose membership on TALQAC will expire at the end of 2008 and invited them to re-nominate for another term if interested (Committee composition by definition to be determined the Officers of the Academic Board). Professor Hawthorne noted the significance of the work undertaken by Committee, at this historical point in time. Professor Hawthorne also noted that it would be beneficial to invite the new Professorial staff, who have been serving on different TALQAC Working Groups this year, to nominate for the Committee in 2009. The Chair thanked the University Planning Office staff for the exemplary support provided to TALQAC.

Professor Stevens thanked Professor Hawthorne for her leadership of TALQAC over 2007 and 2008 commending the important work the Committee has accomplished under her guidance and direction.

11. NEXT MEETING

The first TALQAC meeting for 2009 will be held on Thursday, 12 February from 2.15 pm - 4.15 pm in Moot Court, Old Quad.

The meeting closed at 4:00 pm.