

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING 8/07**

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday 6 September 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, Professor Huggins, Associate Professor Guillemain, Ms Ahrens, Associate Professor Holloway and Mr Fijn.

**Observers**

Ms Harrison and Professor Slocombe (Chair of TALQAC October 2007 – March 2008)

**In Attendance**

Mr Jones for item 5.1a, Mr Brett for item 5.2a, Ms Holt and Ms Mann for item 5.2b and Ms Menezes (Committee Secretary)

**BUSINESS**

**1. Formal Matters**

**1.1 Welcome**

Professor Hawthorne welcomed Professor Slocombe, Chair of TALQAC from October 2007 – March 2008 while Professor Hawthorne is on secondment to the OECD.

Professor Hawthorne also noted Professor Considine's appointment as Dean of Arts, and thanked him for his contribution to TALQAC. Members noted that the vacancy created on TALQAC should be filled by an academic staff member from the Faculty of Arts. Professor Slocombe was informed that in discussion of TALQAC's Terms of Reference and membership at the October meeting, consideration needs to be given to appointing Lecturers at Level B and C to the Committee to facilitate generational change.

**1.2 Apologies**

The Committee received apologies from Associate Professor Crosby, Ms Daroesman, Professor Stockdale, Associate Professor O'Brien, Professor Borland, Professor Jackson, Professor James, Professor Pattison, Professor Bhalla, Ms Buckingham, Mr Choo and Ms Beattie.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of TALQAC meeting 7/07 held on Thursday, 9 August 2007 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the amendment of Professor Hawthorne being on secondment to the OECD for six not four months.

### **3 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

#### **3.1 Action Sheet**

Item 1 and 2: In the absence of Professor James these items were not discussed.

Item 3: Associate Professor Guillemin clarified that at EWG it was noted that if the University refurbishes the car parks as large, functional, EH&S compliant spaces, then the possibility of conducting examinations here should be considered.

### **4 Other Committees**

#### **4.1 MMIT Update**

Associate Professor Elliott reported that a number of recommendations have been put to Council for approval which include a review of academic structures to ensure that the University's academic programs are properly aligned and the introduction of the role of the Provost, responsible for integrating and implementing the academic and administrative dimensions of the Melbourne Model. The Committee of Deans, Chaired by the Provost and reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor, will have the Academic Programs Management Committee, the Research Training Management Committee and the Melbourne Experience Committee reporting to it. The NG Course Standing Committees will report to the Academic Programs Management Committee, Chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching, Learning and Equity. Associate Professor Elliott reiterated that the proposed new structure will not impact on the work undertaken by the Academic Board and its Committees in the areas of selection, Quality Assurance, approval of subject and course content, innovation in teaching and learning and academic policy. Members were of the view that the new structure should avoid duplication with work already being undertaken by other Committees and student representatives also requested representation on the Committee of Deans. Professor Moffat also queried the carriage of issues from Committees like the Academic Programs Management Committee to the Committee of Deans noting the substantially different membership, as opposed to the example of TALQAC, where members are part of Academic Board and can ensure that significant issues are carried through and discussed at Board meetings. Professor Slocombe also questioned how the Committee of Deans and Academic Board would manage the overlap of the pathways issue from the undergraduate level into Graduate Schools. Associate Professor Elliott noted that there was much that was still to be determined but agreed to take the concerns of staff and student members back to the Committee of Deans for consideration.

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

There was no discussion under this item.

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

Professor Misson reported that the Committee has discussed Advanced Standing (credit) and proposals for new Masters Programs. A working group is examining nomenclature of postgraduate courses under the Melbourne Model especially the new Masters programs.

Professor Slocombe reported that policy developed through the Policy and Procedures Working Group and approved by Academic Board will be published online at:

<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/policy/index.html>. As new policies are approved by Academic Board, they will be added to the site as will approved revisions to existing policies.

#### **4.4 Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TaLDC)**

There was no discussion under this item.

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

Associate Professor Elliott noted that it was anticipated that MEC membership and Terms of Reference will change in 2008 and it will report to the Committee of Deans rather than PBC.

#### **4.6 School of Enterprise Committee**

There was no discussion under this item.

#### **4.7 Reports from Student Representatives**

There was no discussion under this item.

### **5 Evaluation Cycle and Quality Measures**

#### **5.1 Evaluation Cycle**

##### **5.1 a) Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching: Report on Semester I 2007, Summer Semester 2007 and Trend Data**

The Committee received the report prepared by the University Planning Office. Undergraduate outcomes show modest improvement for six of the nine questions including minor increases in agreement for Question 2 (well taught) and Question 9 (overall satisfaction), up 0.4 and 0.1 percentage points respectively, which is their highest recorded level. The mean rating was 3.97 for undergraduate and 4.11 for postgraduate subjects for Question 2 and 3.90 for undergraduate and 4.06 for postgraduate subjects for Question 9. The trend shows the level of agreement for all questions to be above the three year average. While postgraduate outcomes show a small reduction in agreement across all but the information and communication technology questions, satisfaction remains high and stable.

As with previous surveys, low outcomes were recorded for students' perceptions of; Question 4 (feedback on their progress), Question 6 (learning community) and Questions 7 and 8 (the use of ICT in their subjects). However it was noted that while students' feedback to Questions 6, 7 and 8 continue to improve, responses to Question 4 (feedback on their progress) remained largely unchanged from the previous Semester. For Question 6, undergraduate student data revealed that 68.5%, compared to 67.5% in Semester II 2006, agreed they felt part of a group of students and staff committed to learning in their subjects; for Question 7, 57.2% agreed there was effective use of computer based teaching materials in their subjects up from 56.0% in Semester II 2006; and for Question 8, 57.6% agreed that the web-based materials in their subjects were helpful, up from 57.1% in Semester II 2006. However for Question 4, 55.7% agreed they received helpful feedback in their subjects, down from 56.0 % in Semester II 2006.

Other areas of concern include subjects which are frequently rated low where nearly half of the eighty one subjects with a mean rating of less than 3.2 on Question 2 (well taught) in Semester I 2007 have been previously rated low since 2002, with sixteen subjects receiving this rating on three or more occasions. While the Faculty of Economics and Commerce has made significant gains from the previous Semester, outcomes for the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning and Engineering remain low and have declined from Semester II 2006. Professor Stevens

questioned if for Faculties like Engineering where Semester II teaching content differs markedly from Semester I, comparisons between Semester II 2006 and Semester I 2007 are valid. Mr Jones noted that the Faculty of Veterinary Science also has dissimilar content without the fluctuation in outcomes in QoT data.

Professor Slocombe queried if students should have access to QoT scores at the time of subject selection rather than after enrolment as is the case currently where students can access this information on the LMS once they have enrolled in the subject. Professor Elliott agreed to forward this issue to Professor Pattison's Policy and Procedures Working Group for consideration.

Over 60% of Summer Semester subjects surveyed were in the Faculties of Economics and Commerce and Law and of these approximately 80% were undergraduate subjects. Higher levels of agreement were recorded with 81.8% of undergraduate and 87.7% of postgraduate students agreeing that overall they were satisfied with the quality of their subjects and 84.2% of undergraduates and 88.8% of postgraduate students agreeing that their subjects were well taught.

As per the Federal Government requirements of its Learning and Teaching Performance Fund, outcomes by Field of Education will be made available on the University website, excluding Faculty specific data.

## **5.2 Quality Measures**

### **5.2 a) TALQAC and the Disability Action Plan**

The Committee received the Disability Action Plan – TALQAC Report prepared by the Disability Liaison Unit (DLU), reviewing the University's performance against the Disability Action Plan 2004 – 2007 and outlining the progress made towards developing the Disability Acton Plan 2008 - 2011.

#### **Disability Action Plan 2004 – 2007**

It was noted that the University Disability Action Plan 2004 – 2007 lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has resulted in significant enhancements to the participation of students with disabilities. While considerable progress has been made in the achievement of all targets, an outstanding item is:

3.3.1 Guidelines for the provision of reasonable accommodations are developed specifically detailing the accommodations available and processes to be followed for students undertaking studies at the University which include:

- Subjects where practicum activities are an inherent academic requirement
- Subjects and courses where independent research activities are an inherent academic requirement

It was reported that a draft policy to address this issue has been prepared and was examined by the Policy and Procedures Working Group in the context of the Melbourne Model. This will also be sent to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework Programs Committees for review.

#### **Disability Acton Plan 2008 – 2011**

Mr Brett reported that there have been amendments to Disability Legislation since the development of the Disability Action Plan 2004-2007, so it is important to be vigilant in the development of the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2011 to ensure all issues are covered. It was noted that the Disability Acton Plan 2008 – 2011 will have a structure clustered by DEST defined

disability groups; Hearing, Vision, Mobility and Medical, with Mental Health Conditions forming a subgroup of the Medical Category. The Action Plan will be a summary of responses from organisational units to Disability Issues Papers relevant to that Unit. DLU anticipates that the responses will be appropriately integrated into relevant Unit planning processes.

DLU expects to present Information Access for Students with Disabilities to TALQAC in March 2008 after consultation with the Information Services Division.

Committee members endorsed the DLU recommendation that TALQAC continue to monitor progress of the University Disability Action Plan by seeking a report from the Student Equity and Diversity Committee on an annual basis.

## **5.2 b) Student Advising Training Implementation Update**

### **Student Adviser Training Implementation**

The Committee received the paper outlining the proposed structure, content and timeline of the University-wide Student Advisor Training, a priority target in implementing the Melbourne Student Services Model. Student Advisor Trainers, Ms Mann and Ms Holt, reported that while currently most of the training modules are directed at staff working with the undergraduate student cohort, some modules are applicable at the postgraduate level with more specific content to be developed for delivery in early 2008.

There are training packages designed for the Enquiries Officer, Student Advisor and Specialist Advisor levels. The Enquiries Officer training commences in October 2007 for front-line staff handling student enquiries both on the phone and over the counter. In this training module assessment was deemed necessary for QA purposes, to ensure consistency of information delivered across all Hubs and to enable an Enquiries Officer to be functional at any Hub. The Student Advisor training is also due to commence in October 2007 and is aimed at staff engaged in the provision of individual student advice encompassing more complex course, central enrichment and student services advice including triggers for referral. Specialist Advisor training is for staff responsible for specific areas such as RHD support, student welfare and international student services.

Since the TALQAC meeting an updated version of the report has revealed two additional modules developed for academic and management staff to ensure proper integration of academic staff into the Hub and acknowledge their fundamental role in advising students of career pathways and professional opportunities linked to their discipline. Work is being undertaken in conjunction with the Academic Connectedness and Advisory Group on an appropriate recruitment strategy for academic staff. It is anticipated that training content will continue to be enhanced with further delivery in 2008 dependent on future infrastructure changes and the establishment of new Hubs.

TALQAC members reiterated the importance of Hubs maintaining meaningful connections with and incorporating the significant contributions made by academic staff in the areas of student advice on career options and professional practice.

## **6 Working Groups**

### **6.1 TALQAC Review of Honours Programs**

A series of meetings, both on and off campus, are being conducted for the review of the five Honours programs chosen by TALQAC. Each Department is being asked to provide as much documentation as possible related to the items being evaluated and there is also one major site visit. Professor Hawthorne and Ms Daroesman will take principal responsibility for preparation of

the Honours Review report. The draft report will be presented to TALQAC at the November meeting to be revised and then forwarded to Academic Board in November, this is dependent on the speed of feedback/ revision. Professor Hawthorne reiterated that an important aim of the Working Group was to ensure the final report is both currently and prospectively beneficial for the University.

## **6.2 ABP Review Group**

Intensive meetings are occurring with the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (ABP). Ms Sleep and Mr Edwards from the UPO are taking primary responsibility for preparation of the draft ABP report, with contributions from Professor Hawthorne and Associate Professor Guillemin. The draft report will be considered by TALQAC at the October meeting and the revised draft forwarded to Academic Board either in October or November depending on the speed of the feedback/ revision process.

## **6.3 New Generation Degrees Working Group**

Associate Professor Elliott reported via email after the TALQAC meeting that Ms Reese from the Office of the Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar is getting a project underway that will list the subjects available as University and other breadth to students in each of the degrees, clarifying to students their options so that they are not required to make their own interpretations of whether a subject is "non-cognate" to their discipline and therefore available to them as breadth. It requires some funding and technical work but it will address the issue of what constitutes breadth for students, both current and perspective.

## **6.4 Quality of Teaching Survey Working Group**

Professor Moffat reported that the Group expects to present a discussion paper at the October meeting of TALQAC. He also reiterated that with the implementation of the Melbourne Model, it is vital to utilise the current QoT instrument to create comparable data. There are also resourcing implications with any change. Members queried if it was possible to add a question to check if a student is doing a subject as part of the breadth component of their degree. Mr Jones responded that while it is possible to add such a question, the degree program the student is enrolled in will give an indication if the subject is being undertaken as breadth rather than part of the regular course requirements.

## **6.5 Student Advice Quality Assurance Design Working Group**

Associate Professor Elliott reported that the Working Group will meet in the second week of October 2007 and asked if the regulations permitted the appointment of non-TALQAC members to the group. Associate Professor Elliott noted that the Working Group would benefit from the contribution of a professional staff member from one of the Faculties, preferably a member of staff involved in a Student Hub. Professor Hawthorne responded that co-opting members as deemed appropriate by the Working Group is encouraged to incorporate the expertise prevalent in the University community. Associate Professor Elliott also observed that liaison with Ms Gillian Luck, Hub Co-ordinator, was also important to ensure that multiple groups across the University are not working towards the development of a variety of QA instruments.

## **6.6 Examinations Working Group (EWG)**

There was no further discussion under this item other than what occurred under Item 3 of the Action Sheet.

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

There was no discussion under this item.

**7 For Information**

There was no discussion under this item.

**8 Other Business**

There was no discussion under this item.

**9 Next Meeting**

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

The meeting closed at 3:45 pm.