

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Meeting No. 5, 2008

Meeting No. 5, 2008 of the University Education Committee was held on Friday 12 September 2008 at 9.30 am in the R C Mills Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Deane, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) (in the Chair); Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Professor Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor; Professor Stanton, Pro Vice-Chancellor; Professor Anderson; Professor Beaumont; Professor Bottomley; Professor Byrne; Professor Cardew-Hall; Ms Carlin; Mr Carmody; Mrs Douglass; Ms Firth; Professor Glasgow; Professor Houghton.

By invitation: Professor Carroll; Ms Gouldthorp (Items 9.4 and 10.); Dr Hort; and Mr See.

In attendance: Ms Bruce

Disclosure of Pecuniary or Material Personal Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary or material person interest in matters listed in the agenda.

Use of Inside Information or Position

Under sections 24 and 25 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, a member of the University Education Committee must not make improper use of his or her position or of inside information to gain an advantage for himself or herself or to cause detriment to the University or to another person.

MINUTES

PART 1: PROCEDURAL ITEMS

ITEM 1. MINUTES

The minutes of Meeting No. 4, 2008 of the University Education Committee (922/2008) held on 15 August 2008 were confirmed (published at http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/Committees/040PP_Education/meetings.asp).

ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING

Item 10.1 A New Approach to the Allocation of Centrally Funded Merit-Based Undergraduate Scholarships

It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor has approved the Committee's recommendations and the funding arrangements for new scholars for implementation from the 2008 round.

Item 10.3 New Academic Courses and Programs

(i) *Processes for the Approval of New Academic Courses and Programs*

(ii) *Course Outlines: A guide for students*

It was noted that, in principle, approval processes remain unchanged with ANU Colleges asked to ensure that full consultation is carried out and recorded in the consultation field of the course and program information forms. The Associate Deans (Education) forum would

help inform academic program development (see 9.1 below). The adoption of common terminology in publications and the system was being pursued.

ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

3.1 Apologies were received from Mr Beckett, Mr Brown, Professor Oakes and Ms Rizvi.

3.2 Announcements

- **Director, Student Equity, Educational Enhancement and Quality Assurance, DRSS**

The Committee noted that Professor Marie Carroll has been appointed to the position.

- **ANU Colleges of Physical Sciences and Medicine, Biology and Environment**
Members noted that the introduction of two restructured Colleges replacing the College of Science would take full effect from 1 January 2009. A joint Colleges Education Committee was being established.

ITEM 4. STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14.1 and 15. The unstarred items were approved without debate as set out in the agenda.

ITEM 5. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS

No items of other business were foreshadowed.

ITEM 6. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no confidential items. Professor Clarke, Dr Fonteyne, Ms Gouldthorp, Dr Smith and Ms Yu attended as observers.

ITEM 7. MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION

The Committee noted that the following matters were under consideration:

- Education Management Plan
- Student Evaluations of Courses and Teaching
- Policies under Review:
 - . Granting of Awards in Exceptional and Unfortunate Circumstances
 - . University English Language Requirements for Admission (See Item 11.)
- Enrolment Processing Arrangements for New Undergraduate Students
- Policy and Schedule of program reviews
- Review of structure, arrangements for and management of combined degrees

PART 2: REPORTS AND POLICY MATTERS

ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Committee noted the report from the Chair on the following:

- **Inaugural ANU Festival of Teaching: 22 – 24 October 2008**
The Schedule of events (tabled) was being promulgated around campus with the assistance of staff and students and publicised in the Bulletin. Non-academic staff areas were also encouraged to attend.
- **2008 Institution Assessment Framework Information Collection**
ANU's submission may be viewed at: http://unistats.anu.edu.au/Pubs/IAFIC/IAF_2008/
- **Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement**
The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, has announced (media release tabled: see www.deewr.gov.au/higheredgraduation) the introduction of a Graduation Statement to describe Australian qualifications in the context of the Australian system and set out other achievements and activities that students have engaged in at university. The Statement would be part of Australia's response to the Bologna process.

ITEM 9. EDUCATION ISSUES

9.1 Academic Program Development: Associate Deans (Education) Forum

The Committee noted the report from the Chair on discussions with Associate Deans (Education) and that for the future, meetings of Associate Deans (Education) with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) would have a role as an "early warning system" and for identifying cross-campus collaboration on course and program developments and opportunities.

9.2 Advisory Boards

Professor Beaumont spoke to the paper *Program Advisory Boards* (799/2008).

Principal comments arising in discussion were:

- . the benefits of Advisory Boards were twofold:
 - . to assist with the planning and review of programs with advice from external stakeholders, and
 - . to form and secure partnerships. These offered the potential for scholarship support and research collaboration;
- . actions arising from board meetings should be monitored
- . one board for cognate areas, or possibly College-wide boards, for both graduate and undergraduate fields meeting once each year would have economies in terms of time and costs
- . board meetings should be well structured and with clear expectations of members for engagement to be fruitful, especially with industry partners

The Committee:

- (i) Supported in principle the broad directions of the paper *Program Advisory Boards* (799/2008) noting that their composition and operation would reflect different ANU College characteristics; and
- (ii) Referred the paper to Colleges with the request that they provide a short summary about how a new or existing Advisory Board would operate to the benefit of the College.

9.3 The “10% Rule”

The Committee noted

- *The 10% Rule - A proposal to allow coursework students greater choice of elective courses (923/2008).*
- Summary, and Responses (1079/2008) received to date from ANU Colleges, and from ANUSA (tabled).

Greater flexibility in coursework had been raised for discussion in light of student concerns that undue restrictions were sometimes placed on student choice preventing a logical selection of courses to complement their field of study and skills training or the choice of courses of interest. It was suggested that the current “special dispensation” approach should be replaced by a more enabling process.

Discussion of current offerings was wide-ranging with members noting that at least 10% flexibility was already built into single bachelor degrees (other than the MBBS). Prerequisite and professional requirements needed to be observed in all instances. Named single degrees were generally more structured. It was commented that transfer to less specialised degrees offering greater flexibility was also available to students.

The constraints on elective choice in some combined programs were a product of compliance with the minimum characteristics of the single degree, satisfying professional admission requirements – this was particularly the case in combined law degree programs - and the shortened time in which to complete the requirements for the award of two degrees. At some universities, a five-year combined degree program was the norm.

Graduate coursework programs, because of their shorter duration and professional focus, had less capacity for choice.

After discussion, the Committee endorsed the Chair’s recommendations that:

- (i) Overt references should be made in program descriptions to the flexibility currently available in single bachelor degree programs;
- (ii) The issue of flexibility should be taken-up in the review of combined degree program structures and duration;
- (iii) Taking account of the particular characteristics of graduate coursework programs, in particular professional focus and time constraints, cognate course choices should be available to students with the permission of the convener as at present. This principle should be widely promulgated to students.

9.4 Undergraduate and Graduate Course Information

- ***Publication of Course Information (924/2008)***

Members noted that the Study@ Working Party was currently addressing course and program requirements from conception to publication from a systems view point and to meet the needs of stakeholders.

After wide discussion, the Committee supported the following:

- (i) That ANU Colleges be asked to undertake annual reviews of all course offerings;
- (ii) For the 2009 Scheduling process (for 2010), the accessible pages of Study@ should contain descriptions for courses available for the current year of publication and for the next year only, and that such courses be clearly annotated. All courses without a scheduled availability should be hidden from view on Study@;
- (iii) That the study information published about courses and program should be identical in Study@ and in the *Undergraduate Handbook* and to ask the Study@ Working Party to explore how this may be achieved.

- **Course Outlines**

The Committee noted that, concurrently, discussions were in progress leading to the development of a template for the provision of information to students. This issue had been raised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) with College Deans and at the August Committee meeting which had considered the paper *Course Outlines: A guide for students* (863/2008). Comments about indicative course information given to students (paper 1090/2008) had been submitted by most ANU Colleges with discussions still in progress in ANU CASS and ANU CAP.

ITEM 10. EDUCATION POLICIES

Members noted progress with the review, foreshadowed at a previous meeting, of ANU's English language requirement framework including domestic student language requirements and guidelines in instances where English language competency has not been tested. The draft paper, *English Language Admission Requirements for Students* (1080/2008), incorporating the language waiver *pro forma* introduced by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2008 was received. This would replace the current policy: *English Language Admission Requirements for International Students* (789a/2005) (at http://info.anu.edu.au/Policies/_REG/Policies/English_Language_Admission_Requirements_for_International_Students.asp).

It was noted that:

- Discussion of ANU's English language admission requirements for international students should be informed by an analysis of performance and admission levels (i.e. IELTS and other pathways including Year 12 and "A" Levels) and where possible, a comparison with other international and domestic universities;
- The current admission requirement for an IELTS (and equivalent) score of 6.5 or 7 for those award programs identified as "language rich" should be retained pending the outcome of the analysis;
- If it is found that there is evidence that academic performance is reduced for students admitted in the IELTS 6.5-7.0 band, the University's response may well be the introduction of stronger English language support rather than a higher admission criterion;
- The waiver process should be linked into the policy statement. To date, it had been applied mostly to HDR applicants (about 20) presenting with compelling cases.

The Committee agreed:

- (i) To request an analysis of the relationship between performance and English language admission levels at ANU and English language admission requirements at comparator universities;
- (ii) To consider ANU's English language admission level once the analysis has become available;
- (iii) To support in principle the draft paper *English Language Admission Requirements for Students* (1080/2008) subject to revision to reflect current ANU English admission requirements;
- (iv) To note the waiver process and that any comments should be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

ITEM 11. GRADUATE STUDIES AND TRAINING

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to the proposed academic developments described in the paper, *ANU Graduate Studies and Training* (1091/2008). These were:

- . To expand the suite of awards by introducing a Master of Advanced Studies entailing 24 units of study at advanced or specialist level additional to the basic Master degree;
- . To enable a greater research concentration by offering a Master of Studies (Research) entailing a "research project" of 24 units which would normally be undertaken additional to the Advanced Master program. This program would also provide a potential pathway to the MPhil or PhD.

The paper also referred to modularised study opportunities for Graduate Studies Select which would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

The Committee:

1. Noted the paper *ANU Graduate Studies and Training* (1091/2008) which, following minor revision, would be made available to ANU Colleges;
2. Endorsed implementation of the proposal for enhancing the Master of Studies through "Advanced" and "Honours (research)";
3. Noted that ANU College Education Committees and the Board of Studies would be invited to review and comment on draft academic programs for the new awards;
4. Noted the intention to form a new organisational unit comprising the current Graduate Studies Program team from DRSS and the team from the Centre for Continuing Education.

ITEM 12. REPORTS FROM ANU COLLEGES

The Committee noted reports from:

- ANU College of Business and Economics (608/2008)
- ANU College of Science (771/2008)
- ANU College of Asia and the Pacific (419/2008)

PART 3. PROGRAMS AND COURSEWORK

ITEM 13. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

13.1 Changes to Existing Programs from 2009

ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

The Committee endorsed the following:

- Bachelor of Asian-Pacific Studies (1078/2008)
To permit earlier specialisation for those students seeking a narrower, but deeper, expertise by allowing one 'core' course to be counted as an introductory course. Elective courses in the contextual major would increase to three.

13.2 Discontinuation of Award Program

The Committee noted the discontinuation of the Bachelor of Arts (Asian Studies).

13.3 Undergraduate Courses

The Committee noted reports on course changes from the ANU College of Science (1082/2008) from 30 May to 18 August 2008 and from other ANU Colleges at Item 12.

ITEM 14. GRADUATE PROGRAMS

14.1 New and Changed Programs

ANU College of Science

Specialization in Environmental Science

The Committee endorsed the introduction from 2009 of a new specialisation in Environmental Science:

- . in the Master of Science, by coursework and research as described in paper 1085/2008 (48 units; ungraded);
- . in the Graduate Diploma in Science as described in paper 1086/2008; and
- . through the introduction of a Graduate Certificate in Environmental Science *Grad Cert Env Sc 24 units* as described in paper 1087/2008.

ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Graduate Studies in International Affairs: Master of Arts (International Relations) requirements (1089/2008)

The Committee endorsed the following revision of the entry requirement to the sub-thesis (15,000 words) component of the Master of Arts (International Affairs) as detailed in paper 1089/2008:

“Successful completion of the coursework at the level of distinction average or above (with no fails recorded), and with a minimum grade of 75% in each of the two 12-unit core Master courses, MA(IR)”.

14.2 Graduate Courses

The Committee noted reports on course changes from 30 May to 18 August 2008 from:

- ANU College of Science (1081/2008 and 1084/2008)
- ANU College of Medicine and Health Sciences (1083/2008)
- Reports from other ANU Colleges at Item 12.

PART 4. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 15. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME

jab/14 October 2008