

## **COMMITTEE OF CHAIRS OF ACADEMIC BOARDS/SENATES OF UNIVERSITIES IN NSW AND THE ACT**

---

Minutes of meeting (07/2) of the Committee of Chairs held at 9.30 am on Thursday 14 June 2007 in the Chancellery at the University of Canberra.

---

**PRESENT:** Tony Baker (UTS)(Chair), Raymond Canning (ACU), Linda Connor (Newcastle), Anne Cusick (UWS), Tony Dooley (UNSW), Denis Goodrum (Canberra), David Griffiths (UOW), Jim Jackson (SCU), Michael Johnson (Macquarie), Eilis Magner (UNE), Kevin Robards (CSU), Andrew Smith (for Jim Williams, ANU) and Bruce Sutton (USYD).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Des Petersen (UTS).

**APPRECIATION:** The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed appreciation for the arrangements made by University of Canberra staff for the meeting.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** The Committee extended its congratulations to George Cooney on being made a Member of the Order of Australia "For service to secondary education, particularly through contributions to scholarship, research and policy development in the areas of curriculum, educational testing, and standards based assessment." The Chair undertook to convey the Committee's congratulations to him.

### **1. APOLOGIES and WELCOMES**

Apologies were received from Jim Williams (ANU).

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and extended a welcome to Raymond Canning representing ACU.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19 APRIL 2007**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

### **3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **Report on an Investigation and Systems Review of Corruption Risks Associated with HSC Take-home Assessment Tasks**

This matter was considered under agenda item 6.6.

All other known matters were listed on the agenda.

### **4. CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next national meeting of Chairs would be held later this year in Perth. Members were having difficulty committing to this important event in the absence of details regarding a confirmed meeting date. Suggestions for potential papers/agenda items included:

- legal aspects of university governance
- RPL and articulation practices.

The Committee noted that, if the national meeting continues to be convened in a different State each year, the 2008 conference should be in Queensland. It requested the Chair to recommend to an appropriate university in Queensland that a date and venue be set to enable members to plan ahead for their attendance. In the meantime, the Chair will continue to press Murdoch University for details of the 2007 meeting.

## **VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS**

To accommodate speakers visiting for a number of items, the order in which agenda items were discussed was varied. The minutes are recorded in the order of the agenda.

### **5. BOARD OF STUDIES DECISIONS**

A summary of decisions of the 8 May 2007 meeting was noted.

### **6. ACADEMIC BOARD/SENATE ISSUES**

#### **6.1 Role of Academic Boards/Senates in University Governance**

Stephen Bartos, Director of the National Institute for Governance, attended for this item. He posed a number of questions/scenarios for discussion, including:

- Councils want to engage with Academic Boards, and vice versa, but both bodies cannot find common ground for engagement.
- Councils are grappling with how to guide the academic core business of their universities.
- Is the role of Academic Boards as a gatekeeper or strategist? These different roles may require different skills.
- Are Academic Boards governing bodies?
- Are Academic Boards advisory to management?

In discussion there was some attention to:

- The role of Academic Boards as custodians of core values.
- The need for Councils, Academic Boards and management to work as the 3 key dimensions of university governance.
- The difference between governance and management.
- Educating Councils about academic work.
- The broad moral purpose of universities, which goes beyond the corporate model.

It was noted that the role of the Academic Board Chair as a member of Council is critical, as it is the Chair in this membership role who has legal responsibility and accountability in accordance with the fiduciary duty, and not the Board.

#### **6.2 AUQA Thematic Analysis**

It was noted that the paper by Tony Dooley would be published by AUQA in its occasional papers series. The Committee acknowledged the work involved in the paper and thanked Tony Dooley for the contribution and for keeping such issues active.

#### **6.3 Student Involvement in Academic Governance**

The results of a survey of members were noted. Linda Connor thanked members for their contributions. She outlined the full-day induction held at University of Newcastle for all student members on all committees. One of the outcomes of the workshop has been that student committee members can contact each other via a web site (perhaps later to be via 'Blackboard'). Inclusion of committee membership on students' transcripts was also a possibility (and would fit in with the Bologna 'Diploma Supplement' initiative).

#### **6.4 Student Charters in Diversified Higher Education Contexts**

This project is currently at the proposal development stage. Eilis Magner invited members to contact her if interested in becoming involved with this project.

## **6.5 “All my own work”**

A report by Anne Cusick on the development of the "All my own work" Board of Studies project was noted. It was recommended that all Academic Boards should list this matter for information on meeting agendas. The Committee resolved to acknowledge the valuable input into this Board of Studies project by Anne Cusick on behalf of the Committee.

## **6.6 Report on an Investigation and Systems Review of Corruption Risks Associated With HSC Take-home Assessment Tasks**

The Chair reported that he had established a small reference group comprising Linda Connor, Anne Cusick and Eilis Magner to follow up this matter.

## **6.7 Role of Academic Boards/Senates in Quality Assurance**

Colin Walters, Group Manager, Higher Education Group, DEST and Lois Sparkes, Quality Branch Manager, DEST attended for this item. In a broad outline of quality issues, the following were among the points mentioned:

- the need for national comparisons across particular issues, such as student attrition
- graduate attributes
- the differing meanings of ‘quality’ depending on the standpoint of the viewer
- English language proficiency, particularly of international students
- the different ‘audiences’ with which universities have to communicate.

## **6.8 UNE Policy Statement on Adjunct Appointments**

This matter was held over to the next meeting.

## **6.9 Student Discipline and Appeals Project**

Jim Jackson’s group has been successful in its Carrick Institute application for funding to examine Student Grievance and Discipline Matters across the Australian university sector. He tabled a paper and explained details of the project and the role that Chairs may be able to play if they wish, particularly in relation to the reference group. It was acknowledged in general discussion that the correct definition and understanding of key terms is essential (such as ‘due process’, ‘bias’, ‘procedural fairness’, ‘natural justice’).

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **7.1 Membership of the Committee of Chairs**

The matter of new private providers developing to university status and the role, if any, of the Committee of Chairs in mentoring them was raised. This led to a broader question of membership of the Committee of Chairs. The Chair agreed to follow up whether the University of Notre Dame is a member of the NSW VCC.

### **7.2 Next Meeting**

Anne Cusick informed the Committee that she would make available to the next meeting the UWS student death response protocol.

## **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 3:00 pm.