

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

Minutes of meeting (06/3) of the Committee of Chairs held at 9.30 am on Friday 18 August 2006 in the Osprey Restaurant at Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour Campus.

PRESENT: Tony Baker (UTS)(Chair), Roger Bronks (SCU), Linda Connor (Newcastle), Tony Dooley (UNSW), Ruth Foxwell (Canberra), Majella Franzmann (UNE), Bruce Kercher (Macquarie), Andrew Smith (ANU), Bruce Sutton (USYD) and Peter Wilson (ACU).

IN ATTENDANCE: Des Petersen (UTS) and Colleen O'Brien (SCU).

1. APOLOGIES and WELCOMES

Apologies were received from Professors Anne Cusick (UWS), Peter Camilleri (ACU), Andrew Goodyer (Board of Studies), David Green (CSU), Malcolm Gillies (ANU), David Griffiths and Damien Considine (UOW) and Gordon Stanley (Board of Studies).

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Roger Bronks and Colleen O'Brien for their support with all the necessary arrangements for hosting the meeting at Coffs Harbour.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15 JUNE 2006

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. It was noted that under Item 4.1 (HSC Category A Course Reviews) English Extension included I and II.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

All known matters were listed on the agenda.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT/CONTRIBUTION

It was noted that invoices had been distributed to universities for the 2006-2007 financial year contributions. Outstanding invoices would be followed up at the end of August.

5. CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

The Committee noted that the National Colloquium of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates will be hosted by the University of South Australia on Monday 23 October and Tuesday 24 October 2006. An extract from the Minutes of a meeting held by the South Australian Colloquium of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates held on 19 May 2006 was tabled, in which ideas for the program for the 2006 national meeting were put forward. The Chair would stay in contact with the organisers, and provide Committee of Chairs members with program details as soon as they become available.

There was also a wide ranging discussion of the Bologna protocols. Points noted included the need to ensure that current student systems could handle any data requirements for Bologna processes. It was also noted that the area needing most consideration related to masters degrees.

6. NATIONAL PROTOCOLS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION APPROVAL PROCESSES

The Committee noted a presentation on the National protocols. It was noted that the critical detail would be in the Guidelines, which were in the developmental stage, with tenders closing on 23 August. NSW has developed a new set of guidelines which they hope will become the core of the national guidelines. In a broad discussion of the role of the Committee of Chairs in relation to this matter, it was agreed that the Committee had a general role in supporting the expansion of the higher education environment, including supporting the sector in communicating the role of universities and enhancing the broad social perception of what universities do.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Board of Studies Decisions

The summaries of decisions of the 20 June and 1 August 2006 Board of Studies meetings were noted.

7.2 Meeting Dates 2007

The proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2007 was adopted.

There was a general discussion about whether the Committee should allocate a full day for its meetings and perhaps include campus visits to justify holding meetings at a range of universities. While it was acknowledged that travel to and from regional campuses was expensive and time-consuming, it was nevertheless useful to continue this practice and to build up the program so that members are able to learn about local issues from these visits.

7.3 Comparability of Australian and US Bachelor Degrees

The Committee noted that this matter would to a large degree relate to the outcomes of the adoption of the Bologna protocols. It was agreed that the main point of comparison in relation to three or four year bachelor degrees should be between the levels of the final year of high school rather than the bachelor degrees themselves. Critical to this is the need to establish the assumed knowledge of high school leavers relevant to the degree courses they undertake. Any differences in levels of high school leavers is exacerbated by the fact that the US bachelor degree has a more generalised or diverse first year than most Australian bachelor degrees.

GENERAL

Bruce Kercher tabled for information a statement on academic freedom developed at Macquarie.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that its meeting scheduled for 12 October be cancelled.

APPRECIATION

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the staff of SCU for the hospitality, support and arrangements made for the meeting, which were greatly appreciated. As this was the last meeting for Roger Bronks and Majella Franzmann, the Chair on behalf of the group wished them well for the future and thanked them for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 12:45 pm.