

# **Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards/Senates of Universities in NSW and the ACT**

A meeting (00/3) of the **Committee of Chairs** will be held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 2 November 2000 in the Conference Room of the TC Lamble Building at the University of New England.

---

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies have been received from Professor Marie Carroll (UC), Professor John Coll (ACU) and Professor Rick Pashley (ANU).

### **1.0 MINUTES**

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting (00/2) held on 8 June 2000 are attached.

*To be taken as read and confirmed*

### **2.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

- 2.1 The Committee will wish to welcome Professor Joan Cooper, who has replaced Professor Rob Castle as Chair of the Academic Senate at the University of Wollongong.
- 2.2 Professor Tony Dooley is deputising for Professor Kevin McConkey as the UNSW representative at this meeting.
- 2.3 Professor John Coll (ACU) has advised that he is stepping down from the Chair of the Academic Board of the ACU at its next meeting. The new Chair, Professor Gabrielle McMullen, is based in Victoria. For this reason, the Australian Catholic University will withdraw from the New South Wales Committee of Chairs.

### **3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **4.0 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

#### **4.1 Membership of VET Advisory Committee**

- 4.1.1 The previous Chair of the Committee of Chairs (Professor Rob Castle) was a member of the VET Advisory Committee. At the 00/2 meeting, he stressed the importance of the Advisory Committee and suggested that the Chair should undertake this role.
- 4.1.2 Given the amount of travel involved from Newcastle, the Chair requests the Committee to consider the nomination of another representative.

#### **4.2 Meeting of NSW Board of Studies – 10 October 2000**

- 4.2.1 The Minister has approved investigation of the feasibility of further new Year 12-only 1-unit subjects, as the only such subject now available is Studies of Religion. The Board of Studies will undertake a scoping study with schools.

Members of the Committee are invited to suggest suitable discipline areas for such subjects.

*For discussion*

- 4.2.2 The Board is developing a K-10 curriculum framework, and revising the Years 7-10 English and Years K-6 and Years 7-10 Mathematics. It will be commencing

the consultation process for these developments shortly with implementation anticipated in 2003.

For noting

4.2.3 The Board is considering replacing Distinction Courses with the use of Open Learning Australia Courses which would have the following potential advantages:

- a much wider range of subjects
- a national framework
- extensive credit arrangements already in place with Universities
- a deferred payment option availability for HECS.

This item will be discussed by representatives of the Board (see Agenda Item 6)

4.2.4 The issue of the decline of LOTE in schools was again raised at the Board meeting.

This item will also be discussed by representatives of the Board.

## 5.0 **HSC ISSUES**

The Universities Admission Centre has referred the following correspondence to the Committee of Chairs:

### 5.1 **Aboriginal Studies – Calculation of UAI**

The Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW wrote to the Director, UAC on 3 October 2000 as follows:

Dear Mr Stanton,

We write in relation to the calculation of the Universities Admission Index.

The issue was raised in the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW's recent Annual Conference. The Federation represents 2100 school based parent organisations in government schools in all areas of New South Wales.

The Conference was concerned that students attempting the Higher School Certificate seem to be avoiding the Board of Studies developed course of Aboriginal Studies because of a perceived scaling disadvantage arising from study of the course when compared to the study of other courses.

The Conference believed Aboriginal Studies is a course of high quality and that study of the subject is vital to the progress of reconciliation with indigenous people. The potential social and educational benefits of Aboriginal Studies need to be maximised in order for this progress to be achieved.

As a consequence of the Conference's concerns and because of the pressing need for understanding of Aboriginal issues within the Australian community, we ask the Universities Admission Centre, and the universities using it, to provide bonus points when calculating the UAI to students of Aboriginal Studies.

We would be interested to learn of the Centre's views about this proposal and of any plans the Centre may have to maximise the equity and fairness of the university admission processes.

Thank you for giving the matters raised in this correspondence your serious consideration. We look forward to receiving your reply in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Warren Johnson  
Executive Officer

For discussion

## 5.2 Variable Top Mark

The Minister for Education and Training wrote to the Director, UAC on 27 September 2000 as follows:

Dear Mr Stanton,

I refer to the decision announced in the UAC News Vol.6 No.1 to modify the method by which the top scaled mark is set in each course during the calculation of the Universities Admission Index (UAI).

While I understand that the maximum mark for each course can only be determined during the calculation of the UAIs in December 2001, considerable uncertainty has arisen as a result of this decision. Teachers and students have expressed concern that particular subjects will have relatively low maximum marks when compared to other subjects.

I believe that UAC should provide further advice on the method to be used in calculating the top mark in each course and the rationale for adopting this approach. Where information is available on the likely impact of the change on each course through an analysis of past HSC data this information should be provided. It is also important that advice be provided on whether the change is likely to affect students equally at different points in the course candidature and the possible impact on the UAI.

Yours sincerely

John Aquilina, MP  
Minister

The article referred to by the Minister, "The 2001 Universities Admission Index (UAI)" by Professor George Cooney, will be circulated separately.

*For discussion*

## 6.0 **BOARD OF STUDIES**

Professor Gordon Stanley, President of the Board of Studies, and Mr David Patterson, Manager, Planning & Development, will join the meeting for discussion of the following items at 11.30am.

### 6.1 **HSC/TAFE Credit Transfer Website**

Professor Stanley will make a short presentation.

### 6.2 **University-based Extension Studies**

A discussion paper will be tabled.

### 6.3 **Languages in the HSC**

## 7.0 **CLOSURE/AMALGAMATION OF DISCIPLINES**

7.1 At the 00/2 meeting, members summarised the positions in their universities as follows:

- UNSW – As part of the UNSW 2000 exercise, Schools were given a timeframe to achieve goals and disestablished if they did not meet them. Staff members have been absorbed into new structures after closure of Schools and Departments but some staff have opted for redundancy or retirement.
- Macquarie - No disciplines have been closed but some have been severely affected.
- UNE - The Faculty of Arts will take the brunt of the cuts required to remedy the UNE's financial situation.

- Wollongong - The funding pressures have not been great enough to require closure of disciplines (Physics was not closed in 1997 but transferred to the Faculty of Engineering).

7.2 The Committee agreed:

- (i) to keep a watching brief on closure of disciplines (as opposed to structural units such as Schools and Departments);
- (ii) to consider collaboration between universities as a way of maintaining certain disciplines

7.3 Professor Alan Johnson (UTS) has raised this issue as one that could benefit from further discussion.

*For discussion*

## **8.0 POSTGRADUATE TIME LIMITS FOR COMPLETION**

8.1 At the 00/2 meeting, the Committee listed the issue of postgraduate time limits for completion for discussion at the November meeting.

*For discussion*

## **9.0 UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE – THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

9.1 At the 00/2 meeting, Professor Winchester undertook to report on the University of Newcastle governance structure at the November meeting.

9.2 The following documents are attached:

- (i) “Constitution of the Academic Senate”;
- (ii) “Rule - Governance of the Faculties”;
- (iii) “The University of Newcastle – Major Committees: Part A – The Council”;
- (iv) “Part B – Committee Relationships: Academic Senate”;
- (v) “Part C – Major Committees: Committees of the Vice-Chancellor”; and
- (vi) “Vice-Chancellor’s Advisory Groups”.

## **10.0 UNIVERSITY REPORTS**

10.1 Members are invited to provide a round-up of current issues and developments at their University, and to raise any issues that might have general interest (eg rationalisation of Academic Dress).

10.2 Members are requested to consider whether this round-up of current issues might usefully replace the present patchy circulation of agendas between universities.

## **11.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES –2001**

### **11.1 Dates**

11.1.1 On 17 June 1999, the Committee agreed to schedule its meetings to take place at least three weeks prior to the meetings of the NSW Vice-Chancellors’ Committee.

11.1.2 The following are the proposed 2001 meeting dates for the NSWV-CC, to be considered / adopted at their meeting on November 21st, 2000:

- 20 February 2001
- 19 June 2001
- 18 September 2001
- 20 November 2001

11.1.3 The first meeting is usually held in late March. However, as the Convenor for 2001, Professor Tony Blake (UTS), is unavailable in March he has proposed a February meeting.

11.1.4 The proposed 2001 dates for the Committee of Chairs are:

- Thursday, 31 May 2001;
- Thursday, 30 August 2001; and
- Thursday, 1 November 2001.

For discussion

**11.2 Venues**

11.2.1 Following the normal rotation of venues, the 2001 meetings will be hosted by:

- University of Newcastle;
- University of Technology, Sydney; and
- University of Sydney.

**12.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Distribution List:**

Professor Hilary Winchester (Newcastle) (Chair)  
Professor Rick Pashley (ANU)  
Professor Marie Carroll (Canberra)  
Professor David Green (Charles Sturt)  
Professor Alf van der Poorten (Macquarie)  
Professor Geoff Quaife (UNE)  
Professor Tony Dooley (UNSW)  
Professor Martin Hayden (Southern Cross)  
Professor Lawrence Cram (Sydney)  
Professor Alan Johnson (UTS)  
Associate Professor Marsha Durham (University of Western Sydney)  
Professor Joan Cooper (Wollongong)

Professor George Cooney  
Professor Gordon Stanley  
Mr David Patterson  
Professor John Mack