

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

A meeting (01/1) of the **Committee of Chairs** will be held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 1 March 2001 in the Senate Room, Main Quadrangle, at the University of Sydney.

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

If you are unable to attend, please contact Margaret Jollow on (02) 4921 5252 or by email on mjollow@mail.newcastle.edu.au.

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The minutes of the meeting (00/3) held on 2 November 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 Ray Cooksey who has replaced Professor Geoff Quaife as Chair of the Academic Board at the University of New England; and
- Professor Lesley Wilkes, who has replaced Associate Professor Marsha Durham as Chair of the Academic Senate of the University of Western Sydney.

2.2 Professor Lawrence Cram has resigned as Chair of the Academic Board, University of Sydney with effect from 28 February 2001, to take up the position of Program Manager with the ARC. The Committee will wish to welcome Professor Judyth Sachs as the Alternate Chair.

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES – 2001

3.1.1 After consultation with the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney, the meeting dates for the Committee of Chairs were revised to:

- Thursday, 1 March 2001 at the University of Sydney;
- Thursday, 31 May 2001 at Newcastle;
- Thursday, 23 August 2001 at UTS; and
- Thursday, 1 November 2001 (if required) at a venue to be decided.

3.2 NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM OF CHAIRS

3.2.1 Professor Carroll has proposed that the next meeting of the National Colloquium of Chairs be held in the second week of February 2002 at the University of Canberra.

4.0 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

5.0 HSC ISSUES

5.1 VARIABLE TOP MARK

- 5.1.1 The minutes of the Committee's 00/3 meeting were used by the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Conference as the basis for discussion of concern about UAI scaling for the new HSC, as expressed in correspondence from Sydney Grammar School, the Presbyterian Ladies College and the NSW Minister for Education.
- 5.1.2 The following is an extract from the minutes of the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Conference held on 21 November 2001:

Professor Cooney was invited to speak to his circulated paper which outlined the changes to the UAI scaling for the 2001 HSC. He noted that the recommendations in the document were first discussed by the Academic Chairs' Committee in 1998/1999 and then presented to the NSWVCC. An extensive briefing paper on the rules governing the calculation of the UAI was submitted to both the Chairs' Committee and the NSWVCC in 1999. UAC's role was confined to its advisory contribution to the Technical Committee on Scaling.

Professor Cooney made the following comments on the issue of the top mark:

- The Technical Committee on Scaling spent 18 months building a model for varying the top mark in a fair and equitable way. The ACT has used a variable top mark for 30 years and there is also precedence in Victoria.
- Statistical modelling based on past data suggests that the change has a minimal effect on the UAI of students in subjects such as Visual Arts.
- In keeping with former practice, schools were not consulted during the development of scaling procedures to meet the requirements of the 2001 HSC but an advisory service has been provided since the modified scaling procedures were approved. (Note the procedures for the 2001 HSC are based in the same principles as the previous model).
- The scaling procedures are intended to meet the objectives of the McGaw reforms which sought to improve student choice and enhance their skills and knowledge and to ensure that students did not choose courses because they hoped to gain a perceived advantage under the UAI scaling model.
- The Technical Committee examines carefully the final distributions of scaled marks, including the top and bottom marks, to ensure that no distortions have occurred and students are not advantaged or disadvantaged.
- The UAI Scaling Procedures developed for the 2001 HSC have an inbuilt review and modification clause; a review of the new model will take place after the 2001 results are analysed.

Professor Gordon Stanley, Chair of the NSW Board of Studies, commented that the range of courses available for the new HSC is very different from the former model. For this reason, schools are having to face a degree of uncertainty. The old assumptions will not apply and there could be a significant shift in the distribution of marks.

In the light of the advice received the Conference resolved as follows:

RESOLVED 2000/8

that the NSWVCC:

- (i) *reaffirm its approval of the UAI Scaling Procedures for the 2001 HSC as developed by the Technical Committee on Scaling and released in 1999, noting that, as in former years, the Committee will review the procedures and modify them as necessary in view of performance in the new HSC examination introduced from 2001;*
- (ii) *advise the NSWVCC Legal Officers that:*
 - (a) *the Conference has reaffirmed its approval of the Scaling Procedures (under (i) above);*
 - (b) *the Committee on Scaling may consider issues it considers appropriate but does not have an obligation to consult schools during the modification of the UAI Scaling Procedures for the HSC;*
 - (c) *when appropriate, information and explanation about scaling procedures may be disseminated to interested organisations*

Action: The Convenor undertook to consult with the Legal Officers in accordance with resolution 2000/8 above and add them to draft responses to the two colleges and the Minister for Education.

5.1.3 Professor Cooney will report on any further developments.

5.2 REPORT FROM CHAIR, TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SCALING

Attachment: Report of Technical Committee on Scaling (Doc CoC 01:1)

5.2.1 Production of the Universities Admission Index (UAI)

5.2.2 2000 Report of the Technical Committee on Scaling

5.2.3 Response to Grammar and the Minister

5.2.4 Articles

The following documents are attached:

- (i) "You Don't Have to be Perfect to Get 100!" (Doc CoC 01:2);
- (ii) "The Universities Admission Index – Myth and Reality (Doc CoC 01:3);
- (iii) UAC News Update – December 2000 (Doc CoC 01:4)

5.2.5 Acknowledgements

6.0 BOARD OF STUDIES

6.1 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:

6.1.1 National Developments in Recognition of VET in Schools Outcomes for University Entrance

6.1.2 Preparation for New HSC examinations 2001

6.1.3 Board Curriculum Projects

6.1.4 Board's Approach to University Courses in the HSC.

6.2 PROCEDURES FOR ELECTING MEMBERS OF BOARD CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND EXAMINATION COMMITTEES

6.2.1 The Board's Director, Curriculum (Mr Robert Randall) has requested that this item be included on the agenda. A paper will be circulated.

7.0 THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC BOARDS AND SENATES

7.1 In most Universities, the role of the Academic Board/Academic Senate is enshrined in the legislation/statutes of the University. However, in recent years the move towards more managerial approaches has often sidelined the Board from decision-making in key areas.

7.2 At the University of Newcastle, a recent review of the University's organisation and Structure has recommended, somewhat reluctantly, keeping the Academic Senate but altering some of the reporting arrangements.

7.3 A document, "Extracts from the Review of the University's Organisational Structures and Administrative Arrangements" (Doc CoC 01:5), is attached.

7.4 Members of the Committee are invited to reflect on the role and purpose of Academic Boards at the start of the 21st century.

For discussion

8.0 CLOSURE/AMALGAMATION OF DISCIPLINES

8.1 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).

8.2 The Committee agreed:

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

8.3 At the 00/3 meeting, the Committee agreed to place this item on the Agenda for this meeting.

For discussion

9.0 POSTGRADUATE TIME LIMITS FOR COMPLETION

9.1 The 00/2 meeting deferred discussion of this item to this meeting.

9.2 The following documents are attached:

- (i) "Guidelines for the Supervision of Postgraduate Research" (UNSW) (Doc CoC 01:6); and
- (ii) "Code of Practice for Research Higher Degree Candidature" (Newcastle) (Doc CoC 01:7)

For discussion

10.0 UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE – CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

10.1 Professor David Green will report on the Charles Sturt University governance structure.

10.2 A document, "Charles Sturt University Administration Manual – Management Structure" (Doc CoC 01:8), is attached.

For reporting

11.0 SERVICE TEACHING

11.1 At the 00/3 meeting, it was agreed that Service Teaching be placed on the agenda for discussion at the 01/1 meeting. The University of Newcastle and Charles Sturt University undertook to provide policy and guideline documents to inform discussion.

11.2 The following documents are attached:

- (i) "Service Teaching – Issues and Guidelines" (Newcastle) (Doc CoC 01:9); and
- (ii) "Service Teaching" (CSU) (Doc CoC 01:10).

12.0 AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (AQF)

12.1 An extract from the Discussion Paper, "Review of AQF Guidelines for the Bachelor Degree and Postgraduate Qualifications" (Doc CoC 01:11), is attached.

12.2 Professor Marie Carroll (Canberra) will introduce the topic.

13.0 "SOFT" MARKING

13.1 Issues of "soft-marking" have been reported in the media, and have ranged from specific instances of marks being changed to systemic influences of the impact of fee-paying students on assessment procedures generally. This is essentially an academic issue.

13.2 Members of the Committee are invited to discuss the issue.

14.0 UNIVERSITY REPORTS

14.1 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).

15.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.0 NEXT MEETING

16.1 The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 May 2001 at the University of Newcastle.

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 Ray Cooksey (UNE)
Professor Kevin McConkey (UNSW)
Professor Martin Hayden (Southern Cross)
Professor Judyth Sachs (Sydney)
Professor Alan Johnson (UTS)
Professor Lesley Wilkes (University of Western Sydney)
Professor Joan Cooper (Wollongong)

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