UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
FACULTY OF INFORMATICS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting 6/04 held at 1.30pm on Thursday 21 October 2004 in the Faculty Meeting Room, Building 39, room 150A.

PRESENT: A/Prof F Naghdy (Chair), Prof S Bouzerdoum, Dr R Caladine, Mr M Freeman, Ms B James, Dr J Lukasiak, Ms A Meldrum, Dr A Porter, A/Prof D Siviter, Dr G Trott, A/Prof G Williams and Dr A Worthy.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Sheridan and Ms H Mandl (Library Services).

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

*1.1 Apologies/Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from: Mr P Castle

*1.2 Arrangement of Agenda

1.2.1 Items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2, 3.1, 4.1, 6, 8 and 10 were starred (*) for discussion.

1.2.2 A motion to adopt the draft resolutions for the unstarred items was carried.

*1.3 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting of 2 September 2004

The Committee confirmed the minutes of Meeting 5/04 held on 2 September 2004.

1.4 Business Arising from the Previous Minutes

There was no business arising from the previous minutes.

*2. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR – VERBAL REPORT

2.1 CEDIR Faculty Service Agreements

CEDIR provides free support to faculties and units under a Faculty Service Agreement for development of materials for teaching purposes.

Applications for the development period of Jan-June 2005 (for delivery in July-Dec 2005) are due to the Faculty Office by 7th November 2004. Applications will be ranked by the FEC Chair and the Dean before submission to CEDIR.
2.2 OCTAL and ESDF Schemes

The Chair noted the application/nomination deadlines for the following schemes:

- Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning (OCTAL) Awards – 29 October 2004
- Educational Strategies Development Fund (ESDF) Grants – 26 November 2004

2.3 Report from UEC meeting of 29 September 2004

The Chair reported on the following main items of interest discussed at the UEC meeting of 29 September 2004.

2.3.1 Use of the Turnitin Text Matching System

UCEC endorsed the procedures regarding the use of Turnitin and referred them to Academic Senate for approval and implementation. The final proposal varied significantly from the original proposal, with the initial emphasis moving from mandatory use across the University to recommended use as a help tool for Academic Units and students.

2.3.2 eduStream

Use of eduStream – The University’s system for recording, processing and delivery of learning materials via the internet – has been phased in over a three year period since 2003. It is currently available for use in rooms 20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.5, 67.107 and the Hope Theatre. There are plans to install the system in at least four more lecture theatres for 2005, including 35G45 and 14G01.

Dr Ric Caladine noted that the installation should be user driven so if there is a need within the Faculty, CEDIR is happy to install the system in that particular area.

3. REPORT FROM CEDIR/LEARNING DEVELOPMENT UNIT

*3.1 Verbal Report from CEDIR – Dr Ric Caladine

3.1.1 WebCT Replacement

Dr Ric Caladine reported on the progress of the planned replacement of the current WebCT Learning Management System.

The first stage, teaching and learning evaluation, has been completed, while the technical evaluation stage is underway and the tendering process should be completed by the end of November 2005. The platforms being considered are WebCT Vista, Janison and Blackboard.

The Committee discussed the replacement, noting that:

- There will be problems migrating the existing WebCT content, regardless of which new system is implemented.
- That any new system should include provisions for the use of mathematical symbols – this is not available in the current WebCT platform, or in the Janison platform. The inclusion of this capability would greatly assist staff and students in the Faculty, where mathematical symbols are often utilized in online material and quizzes.
The Committee agreed that a memo regarding provisions for the use of mathematical symbols should be forwarded to Professor Sandra Wills by the Dean.

**ACTION:** Faculty Officer to prepare memo from the Dean to Professor Wills regarding provisions for the use of mathematical symbols when considering the proposed Learning Management System.

Dr Caladine noted that there is a CEDIR website available which contains reports and evaluations regarding the process. Dr Caladine agreed to forward the web link to committee members.

**ACTION:** Dr Caladine to forward web link for website regarding the replacement of WebCT.

3.1.2 eduStream

Dr Caladine reported briefly on offshore developments regarding eduStream noting the installation of a server in Dubai and the running of tests with clients in Hong Kong.

4. REPORT FROM THE LIBRARY – ANNETTE MELDRUM & HELEN MANDL

*4.1 Access to Subject Reading Materials: Discussion Paper*

Ms Helen Mandl outlined the subject reading materials paper, raising the following main points:

- There are copyright compliance concerns about printed course packs/books of readings. A recent audit found that 20% of books of readings were not copyright compliant. This has revealed a flaw with the current self-regulated system.
- The library currently provides over 4000 electronic readings online, and the library would like the University to move to an electronic preferred policy for readings to ensure copyright compliance.

Members provided the following feedback:

- There are advantages and disadvantages of both methods.
- A book of readings or course pack collects all the material in one location which in some instances is more accessible and less expensive for students than accessing readings online and printing them.
- It was suggested that delivery via CD may be useful.
- If a policy is adopted and implemented, it is important that the option of printed reading materials still be available.
- Perhaps a revised process for ensuring copyright compliance of printed materials, such as submission via the Library’s Electronic Readings Service (ERS) prior to printing of material, is required.

Overall, Committee members agreed with the move to an electronic preferred policy for readings, noting that the option for print versions should still be available.

5. REPORT FROM STUDENT MEMBER – MARK FREEMAN

No report this meeting.
6. REPORT FROM QUALITY 101 WORKING PARTY

Dr Anne Porter tabled a report outlining the working party’s progress so far and an action plan for 2005.

Dr Porter reported that this year has primarily been an evaluation period. This has included the consideration of feedback received from student focus groups in 2002 and interviewing lecturers for the selected subjects who identified what they considered to be the next steps for improving their subjects. Common issues identified at this stage are:

- Importance of learning to be an independent learner
- Improved Tutor training is required
- Tracking progress and remediation needs to be improved
- Resource allocation

7. SCHOOL ITEMS

SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL, COMPUTER & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING

7.1 Subject Proposal – Revision of ECTE426/926

Resolved (FEC04/43)

That FEC recommends the approval of the revisions to ECTE426/926 – Power Distribution, effective from 2005.

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & COMPUTER SCIENCE

No items for this meeting.

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND APPLIED STATISTICS

See item 10.1.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & FEEDBACK

8.1 UOW Language Policy

Feedback received prior to the FEC meeting was briefly noted by the Committee.

The Committee noted that the report in Appendix 1 to the proposed policy is confusing and members were unsure if they were being asked to consider the raising of the English language entry standards, or to simply note that a study into the matter has taken place. This confusion comes about as the majority of this report appears to be advocating the raising of English language entry standards, whereas the final paragraph states that there is no justification for raising language admission standards.
Given this confusion, the Committee discussed whether or not the standards should be raised. In particular, it was noted that:

- Students who face the most difficulties are those who enter into one year Masters programs, as they only have one year to develop their English language skills. As a result, the quality of their written work is often not at a standard expected of a Masters student.
- It was suggested that perhaps English language requirements should be higher for students entering one year Masters programs.

The Committee discussed 2.2.2 of the policy, which notes “there are particular skills, such as critical analysis, summarizing, paraphrasing and referencing, which are not taught in an IELTS preparation course.” The following suggestions and comments were made:

- A learning development program that focuses on these skills should be compulsory for all students who come in with the minimum IELTS score (to a particular level), rather than just for those who have gained entry on the basis of a PVC(A) entry requirement waiver.
- An additional standard test for postgraduate students to measure ‘academic level’ English expression could be implemented in a similar way that ILIP currently operates.

After some discussion, the Committee then concluded that neither an additional test nor a separate generic learning development program would do much to improve analytical and ‘academic’ skills. It was agreed that the integration of English language assessment (as discussed in 2.1.1 of the policy) into targeted subjects in each degree is more effective as students will be able to relate their English language study to their degree content. This can be done by integrating English language criteria into subject objectives and assessment criteria so that students are marked on, and provided feedback on English language usage as well as the discipline specific requirements of the assessment.

The Committee discussed the impact of such an approach, noting that:

- It would have a significant impact on teaching practice and is very resource intensive.
- Teaching staff will require better support to assist them with the integration initially, as well as ongoing support and assistance.
- If the University is committed to improving the development of English language skills, as noted under 2.3 of the policy, then further support and resourcing is required to assist teaching staff to develop methods of delivering content to international students. For example, the development of a glossary of terms relevant to the content of the subject would greatly assist international students, however, a glossary is often low on the list of priorities for teaching staff who are trying to cope with many competing demands.
- The policy should speak to what support will be provided to teaching staff to improve the delivery of content to international students and to integrate the assessment of ‘acceptable academic English’ into assessment requirements. This is an important aspect that requires more prominence in the proposed policy.

Overall, it was agreed that raising entry standards will not necessarily solve the English language problems encountered by students.

**ACTION:** Faculty Officer to forward feedback to Secretariat by 12 November 2004.
8.2 Information Literacy Integration Policy

Ms Helen Mandl and Ms Annette Meldrum outlined the policy, highlighting the following points:

- The policy is intended to combine current practice and various existing policies regarding the integration of information literacy.
- The Library is already involved in the process of the development and review of courses and subjects through processes such as the course and subject approval process. However, it is hoped that the policy will improve the integration process.
- Just as there is a push to ensure learning development principles are integrated into targeted core subject for each degree, information literacy only needs to be integrated into key subjects so that students get the right skills at the right time.

The Committee discussed the intent of section 6.7 of the policy regarding the participation of faculty librarians in major reviews of all subject, courses and accreditation processes:

- It was suggested that the language in section 6.7 should be revised so that it is not so insistent.
- It was agreed that staff should be encouraged to contact library staff for advice on the improvement/integration of information literacy programs when courses or subjects are being reviewed, however, it is not a requirement that they be involved in all reviews.
- It was noted that current practices, such as the Faculty Librarian viewing new or revised course and subject proposals as part of the FEC, are appropriate to ensure that the Library is abreast of any revisions, particularly where they have not been involved in the early stages of the review.

The Committee also suggested that the policy be connected and/or cross-referenced with the course and subject review policy recently approved as part of the Quality Review Framework.

**ACTION:** Faculty Officer to forward feedback to Secretariat by 12 November 2004.

8.3 Faculty Objectives and Strategies – FEC Progress Report

A collated progress report on Education-related Faculty Objectives and Strategies was tabled at the meeting. Members agreed to form a small sub-committee to provide further feedback on the progress report. The following members volunteered to sit on the sub-committee:

- A/Prof Fazel Naghdy (Chair)
- Dr Jason Lukasiak
- Dr Anne Porter
- A/Prof Douglas Siviter

**Resolved (FEC04/44)**

*That FEC form a sub-committee to consider Faculty Planning matters, consisting of the following members:*

- A/Prof Fazel Naghdy as Chair
- Dr Jason Lukasiak representing SECTE
- Dr Anne Porter representing SMAS
- A/Prof Douglas Siviter representing SITACS*
8.4 School Education Committees

Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to defer discussion of this item until the next FEC meeting.

8.5 Use of Pass Conceded Grades

Dr Geoff Trott, Sub-Dean, noted that this issue was discussed by University Sub-Deans and has since been forwarded to the Educational Policy Review Subcommittee (EPRS) of UEC. Dr Trott was unsure at what stage the discussions were now at. As a consequence, it was agreed that no further discussion is required until the University-level committee(s) put forward a proposal for discussion.

8.6 Prize Eligibility Discussion Paper

Feedback received prior to the FEC meeting was briefly noted by the Committee.

Overall, the following feedback and concerns about the recommendations made in the discussion paper were raised by the Committee:

Recommendation 1
There is strong opposition to the recommendation that the prize be available to all students enrolled in that subject, regardless of degree. In particular, SECTE members noted that past experience shows sponsors are interested in contributing to education in a particular area, eg. A telecommunications company may wish for a prize to be awarded to the best telecommunications student (rather than computer or electrical engineering student) undertaking a particular subject. That subject may be specifically a telecommunications engineering subject, but there is no guarantee that only telecommunications engineering students are undertaking the subject.

Recommendation 2
The Committee agreed with the recommendation that the prize be open to students completing the subject at any time in the calendar year.

Recommendation 3
The Committee considered the following feedback received prior to the meeting:

- SITACS and SECTE are strongly opposed to the recommendation that a prize not be restricted to those studying at a particular campus or centre. In particular:
  - It would be an administrative headache, as off-shore sessions/years do not coincide with onshore sessions;
  - Sponsors are often local businesses who wish to sponsor a prize to benefit a student studying at the local campus, and should be given a choice about whether the prize is open to all campuses;
  - Are the results from offshore campuses are really comparative to those from onshore campuses? Results are moderated, but this does not occur at the same time as the onshore results are reviewed and usually occurs ‘after the fact’.
• Members of the Faculty International Office had mixed reactions to this proposal, two members agreed with the above comments and noted that it may be more appropriate to have specific prizes for off-shore students. A third member raised the following points:
  o Dubai is independent, has its own prizes and shouldn’t be assessed for UOW prizes. It is only the other offshore locations that need to be considered.
  o There is merit for extending prizes to other offshore students, as it provides them with a connection to UOW. Why should student not be able to get a prize just because they choose to study in their own country rather than in Australia?
  o However, administratively it requires the reporting of eligibility to be accurate. It should be possible to specify what offshore sessions should be included for each calendar year, however, from experience, we are unsure if current University reporting methods capture this information accurately.

• It will be impossible for the Faculty/Units to identify eligible students as they have in the past. High level support from SPU and ARD will be required to ensure that the class of eligible students is accurately identified.

The Committee agreed that the recommendation should apply to onshore campuses and centres only, and that – as an alternative to extending prizes to off-shore campuses – the Faculty should concentrate on raising funds for specific off-shore prizes.

**ACTION:** Faculty Officer to forward feedback to Secretariat by 25 October 2004.

9. ITEMS FOR NOTING

9.1 **Report on Compliance with Revised UOW Assessment Policies**

The Committee noted the report on Faculty compliance with the revised UOW assessment policies.

9.2 **Report on Compliance with New Code of Practice - Honours**

The Committee noted the report on Faculty compliance with the new Code of Practice – Honours.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

*10.1 **New Subject Proposal – MATH010**

A/Prof Graham Williams spoke to the subject proposal, noting that the new subject has been developed to assist the Faculty of Engineering with their proposed Enabling Course, which is being fast-tracked through the University’s course approval process. The Enabling Course will replace the bridging course previously held prior to the commencement of Autumn session.

SECTE representatives noted that the School might be interested in a similar subject which is pitched at a higher level than the MATH010 proposal. It would be particularly attractive and useful for TAFE students.
Resolved (FEC04/45)
That FEC recommends the approval of MATH010 – Enabling Mathematics for Engineers, to be offered from 2005.

11. NEXT MEETING


F Naghdy
Chair
4 November 2004