

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (PSCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Professional Staff Consultative Committee** held at 10:00 am on Tuesday 10 February 2015 in The Committee Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Sharon Champness, Paul Munro, Greg Kerr, Kristi Granata (item 3)
NTEU – Fran Munt, David Rambaldi, Margaret Clarke, Lance Dale
CPSU – Jodie Ryan, Jann Jeffries

APOLOGIES:

University - no apologies
NTEU – no apologies
CPSU – Nick Koster

Chair – Margaret Clarke, NTEU representative
Note-taker – Jackie Fox

1. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

Paul Munro, Associate Director, ER distributed a draft report on the recent and current Organisational Change processes, which included the following areas:

- Academic Division – UON Students
- Academic Division – Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Vice-Chancellor's Division – Council Services and Chancellery

The report provided a comparison of the existing and proposed resources, outstanding tasks/actions and the timescale for their completion. It was noted that there still remains vacant positions within all three areas.

Mr Munro advised that the University is currently analysing figures provided by the HR Business Partners and further details will be provided to the PSCC, including details of outcomes arising from the Organisational Change processes (for example, the number of staff placed or detached).

In relation to the usage of the Employee Assistance Program, union representatives noted that restructuring has led to a rise in the usage of the service in 2014 (as outlined in the EAP Report 2014). Ms Champness indicated that it is great that staff are using the EAP to get advice on strategies for managing change and that this is a good use of EAP to support staff.

Action 1: University – provide further details regarding the status of the Organisational Change processes, including details of the outcomes (for UON Students, Centre for Teaching and Learning and Council Services and Chancellery).

1.1 Academic Division – UoN Students

Union representatives expressed a number of concerns regarding the UoN Students Organisational Change process, including:

- lack of transparency, fairness and equity;
- inconsistencies in the messages given to staff;
- lack of clear and accurate position descriptions and role clarity and therefore staff unsure of what position they have secured;
- lack of direction and role clarity from supervisors;
- poorly handled process for the filling of positions;
- staff treated poorly in process and not feeling safe/comfortable; and
- a perception that there were pre-determined outcomes.

In relation to the union concern about a lack of role clarity, Ms Sharon Champness, Director, People and Workforce Strategy, noted that while a position description helps to provide role clarity, generally role clarity would be provided from day to day discussions with a supervisor. Ms Champness recommended that staff raise any concerns about role clarity with their supervisor or, if they feel uncomfortable in doing so, consider approaching their supervisor's supervisor or their HR Business Partner. Ms Champness further noted that generally, supervisors place importance on providing role clarity, as they are ultimately responsible for the deliverables of their team.

Ms Champness advised that the University will undertake a review of the UoN Students Organisational Change process for consideration of improvements that could be made to future change processes. Ms Champness advised that the University has held preliminary discussions about the most effective way to seek staff feedback (for example, via surveys and/or discussions and focus groups).

General discussion took place about how the review could occur. Consideration was given to surveys with open questions and more detailed discussions, how the responses could be anonymous and who might facilitate the focus groups.

Action 1.1: i. University – provide feedback from the PSCC to the Director, UoN Students.
ii. University – undertake a review of the UoN Students Organisational Change process with the aim to consider/apply improvements to future change processes.

1.2 Council Services and Chancellery – no detailed discussion – see note at item 1.

1.3 Centre for Teaching and Learning

In relation to the CPSU's concerns regarding the two positions within the Centre for Teaching and Learning Organisational Change process, it was decided that the University will discuss the particular case with the CPSU separately.

1.4 Air-conditioning and use of planter boxes in the Hunter Building – additional item

Union representatives raised health concerns for staff about the proposal for the lack of air-conditioning and use of planter boxes (with potting mix) in the Hunter Building.

Discussion occurred as to where the proposal process was up to, including whether staff feedback is/has been considered. Ms Champness mentioned that generally health concerns should be dealt with by the Health and Safety Committee.

Ms Champness suggested that, if the matter does not progress and if staff health concerns have not been addressed, the unions should raise this again with the University.

1.5 Career Transition Assistance – additional item

Union representatives asked where the progress of the University's engagement of an outplacement provider was up to, in relation to providing career transition assistance for staff seeking employment outside the University where their position has been declared detached.

Ms Champness advised that the University has a contract in place with Career Link. Career Link have offered to provide a free consultation to staff before they choose one of the three options in the Redeployment and Redundancy clause (refer clause 22.1.2 of the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014).

1.6 Organisational Change processes – One person changes – additional item

Union representatives wished to raise matters of principle in relation to one person change processes. In particular, where decisions are made to create new positions and remove existing positions at a later date and where staff are not being made aware at the time of the new positions being created of the potential impact on their position.

Ms Champness agreed that this is a concern in principle; however, often this may be an unintentional or unexpected consequence. The challenge is in the need to encourage managers to think about the implications as they are working through such processes.

CPSU representatives highlighted the importance of consultation if an area is considering changing in direction. NTEU representatives agreed, and further explained that wider consultation is important given the implication of changes on external areas. Concerns were raised that there is a narrow interpretation of the one person change clause in the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014 (refer clause 20.3).

Union representatives suggested the implementation of a checking mechanism for the implications when service delivery changes are being considered.

Ms Champness advised that the University is implementing a checking mechanism for Organisational Change processes, particularly the impact when staff move from one area to another. Ms Champness will consider this for one person change processes as well.

General discussion took place about when the need may arise to consult more broadly. Union representatives noted that they are reliant on the information provided by the University and

reiterated that one person change processes must be true one person changes. Their preference is generally for an open and transparent process.

Action 1.6: University – Consider the implementation of a checking mechanism of the potential broader implications where one person change processes are being considered.

2. REVIEWS

Union representatives requested an update on the review of Financial Services and IT Services. Ms Champness reported that there are no further updates; there has been a review of Financial Services and IT Services and it is expected that there will be an Organisational Change process for both of these areas early this year. Ms Champness has not seen any draft Consultation Papers as yet.

3. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FRAMEWORK (PEF) FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

An introduction was made for Ms Kristi Granata, Workforce Strategy and Project Manager.

The following documents were tabled at the meeting:

- Capability Matrix for Professional Staff - Handbook;
- Performance Expectations Framework for Professional Staff (the Framework); and
- PRD for Professional Staff

Ms Granata provided an overview of the documents. The Performance Expectations Framework for Professional Staff (PEF) guides the PRD process and is comprised of three elements; Individual Goals; Leadership Framework; and Capability Matrix.

Ms Champness advised that two of the elements of the PEF for Professional Staff have already been deployed – Individual Goals and the Leadership Framework and these will continue to be embedded during 2015. The third element, the Capability Matrix will be piloted this year but will not be a compulsory part of the Performance Review and Development (PRD) process for 2015. While the focus will be on Individual Goals and the Leadership Framework, the Capability Matrix may still be used by supervisors and staff to guide them through PRD discussions and staff development. The University is planning to link the Capability Matrix and Leadership Framework with other development programs such as, online learning tools.

Ms Champness noted that the PEF for Professional Staff is quite different from Academic Staff, particularly due to the diversity of Professional Staff roles. It was noted that there was an extensive process of consultation in the development phase of the Framework.

Discussion took place regarding the professional capabilities in the Capability Matrix. Ms Champness advised that they have been checked against the HEW Level Descriptors and capability requirements for various roles may differ.

Union representatives asked whether the Capability Matrix would be used during Unsatisfactory Performance processes. Ms Champness explained that it is not the University's intent, as the Capability Matrix has been created for development purposes. However, the University may use

language out of the Capability Matrix in articulating performance expectations, but it would need to be aligned with the position description.

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- position descriptions being too generic and the impact on performance expectations and setting individual goals;
- participation rates of PRD;
- training for supervisors in having PRD conversations with staff;
- joint responsibility of supervisors and staff for PRD and the need to encourage staff to take responsibility for developing a PRD plan prior to having the discussion; and
- positive feedback received on PRD in the Your Voice Survey.

Union representatives suggested that staff be trained on how to use the Capability Matrix to their advantage. Ms Champness agreed with the importance of this but mentioned that the University needs to be careful not to overwhelm staff and that deployment of the Capability Matrix would be a focus for 2016 rather than 2015

Ms Granata advised that the documents will be published on the University's web with a communication piece around what is available and what they will be used for, looking across the board (managers and staff).

There was discussion about whether feedback could be provided on the Capability Matrix documentation. University representatives are happy to review feedback from the unions on the Capability Matrix, including the alignment to the HEW Level Descriptors. If feedback is provided within the next 2 weeks, the University could consider and incorporate any changes as part of the launch. Otherwise, the University will accept ongoing feedback.

CPSU representatives noted that they will probably have more feedback as the documents are used.

Action 3: Unions – provide feedback on the Capability Matrix document, including the alignment to the HEW Level Descriptors (optional). If feedback is provided in the next 2 weeks, it could be considered as part of the launch of the documents. Otherwise, ongoing feedback may be provided.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF A RECOGNISED EXTERNAL JOB EVALUATION METHOD

Ms Champness reported that the University has been using the Mercer job evaluation method for senior staff positions. The University is currently considering how the job evaluation method will be used in parallel with the HEW Level Descriptors.

Union representatives raised the question again whether union representatives could be trained, particularly those people involved in a review process/Inquiry Officer process. Ms Champness advised that the University took that question on notice. The University can see the value of having people involved in the review processes trained, but noted that it costs \$2500 to train each person for a skill set probably not used frequently. The University will consider this further.

Union representatives asked whether a modified version of the training could be provided to union representatives involved in a review process. Ms Champness advised that Mercer would probably not allow this.

Union representatives then suggested that an information session be provided to explain how the evaluation methodology works and how the manual is used in reviewing position descriptions. Ms Champness will consider this further.

Union representatives noted that they had previously asked for a copy of the Mercer Points/Work Value table developed for the University. Ms Champness advised that the University would show this to Committee members who were accredited in Mercer Points/Work Value but not to those who weren't as the Points/Work Value table is meaningless without a strong understanding of the Mercer methodology. Ms Champness agreed for Ms Jann Jeffries, CPSU representative to view the Mercer Points/Work Value table given that she is accredited.

Action 4: University – Consider the unions' request for an information session to be given on the external job evaluation method.
ii. University – Provide the opportunity for Ms Jann Jeffries, CPSU representative to view the Mercer Points/Work Value table to (as Ms Jeffries has been trained in the Mercer job evaluation methodology).

5. ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT (EA) IMPLEMENTATION – PROFESSIONAL SPECIFIC – NEW ITEM

Union representatives wished to flag items in the Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014 that require implementation by the University.

NTEU representatives noted that the items specific to Professional Staff include; the Voluntary Rotation Scheme (clause 18.4 of the Enterprise Agreement) and Indigenous Employment (clause 49.9 of the Enterprise Agreement).

In relation to the establishment of a Voluntary Rotation Scheme, Ms Champness reported that discussions are underway with HR's Workforce Strategy and Transformation team about how the scheme could work. Ms Champness indicated that the University is considering piloting the scheme this year with one HEW Level. Discussion took place regarding the number of complexities involved with establishing the scheme. Union representatives suggested that it may be useful to have a joint working party to consider these complexities and how it might work.

In relation to the establishment of an Indigenous Employment Committee, Ms Champness reported that the University is in the process of establishing the committee and the Terms of Reference has been endorsed by BATSJET.

Union representatives requested an action plan (working document) from the University that lists the actions, the timeline and status of EA implementation items. Ms Champness indicated that the University has developed its own EA Implementation Plan, and may consider providing this to the PSCC.

Action 5: University – consider providing an EA Implementation Plan (as a working document) to the PSCC, outlining actions, timelines and status updates.

6. POSITION DESCRIPTION (PD) REVIEW PROCESS – NEW ITEM

Union representatives asked about the University's process for the review of PD's.

A concern was raised in situations where staff members find out about changes to their PD after it has been changed, without consultation. Ms Champness explained that the design of roles is up to the University and where a role fits within the HEW Level Descriptors there is the ability under the Enterprise Agreement for the University to change a role. This would normally be undertaken in discussion with the staff member to get their engagement with the changes and to ensure role clarity. Ms Champness advised that where the level of tasks has changed, the Classification Review process would be applied.

Union representatives expressed concern about changes that may not be achievable or where an unreasonable workload results.

CPSU representatives indicated that they may raise a specific case separately with Employee Relations.

7. SCHEDULE OF FUTURE PSCC AND CSCC MEETINGS FOR 2015

CPSU representatives requested that PSCC and CSCC meetings for 2015 be changed to Thursdays (in lieu of Tuesdays).

The NTEU and the University agreed (subject to University representatives being available).

Action 7: University – Re-schedule PSCC and CSCC meetings to be held on Thursdays, subject to the availability of University representatives.