

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

TEACHERS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (TCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Teachers Consultative Committee** held at 1:00 PM on Wednesday 10 June 2015 in the Canberra Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University –Paul Munro, Seamus Fagan
NTEU –Sue Hodgson, Lance Dale,

APOLOGIES:

University – Sharon Champness
NTEU - Paul Chojenta

Chair – Sue Hodgson, Union representative

The following agenda items were discussed:

1. REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES – STANDING ITEM

There were no items for discussion.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

There were no items for discussion.

3. REPORT ON TEACHING RATIOS

A report on teaching ratios was distributed to Committee members. There was discussion in relation to this report including the NTEU expressing concern with the accuracy of the figures for some categories and locations. The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro explained that the figures were taken at the previous two census dates and averaged. Mr Munro will consider a review of the data. NTEU representatives also enquired as to whether any teaching staff members would be converted to continuing as a result of this report. Mr Munro responded that the figures do not support any conversions at this time. Discussion was held on the impact of “the third rule” on long term casuals.

Action 3: University - consider review of data on teaching ratios.

4. ELICOS UPPER INTERMEDIATE COORDINATOR

NTEU representatives requested that the University consider appointing the ELICOS Upper Intermediate Coordinator to a 12 month fixed term contract, instead of a casual contract, as had happened with the other three Level Coordinators.

The Director, Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies, Seamus Fagan, indicated that a fixed term contract was currently being considered.

NTEU representatives pointed out that a contract of less than 12 months has implications for Superannuation (17% contribution is available after 1 year). NTEU representatives reminded the University that a similar situation regarding Superannuation had arisen with fixed term contracts for the Sydney campus in the past and wished to avoid similar complications for staff.

(Post-meeting - Associate Professor Fagan confirmed the appointment of the Elicos Upper Intermediate Coordinator for a 12 month fixed-term contract.)

5. WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

NTEU representatives flagged health and safety issues regarding the Language Centre building. The Director, Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies, Seamus Fagan advised that a safety audit had been completed and provided a copy of the report to Committee members. Associate Professor Fagan noted that he will be recommending that all of the task in the report be completed.

Concerns with respect to the health of the Language Centre and staff were discussed. Associate Professor Fagan advised that a report had been tabled at a recent WHS Committee. Staff from the University's Health and Safety team are currently investigating and will report back at the August 2015 WHS Committee meeting. Arrangements are also being made for the Associate Director, Health and Safety, Dr Maggie Goldie to meet and speak with work groups in the building.

NTEU representatives commented that some staff were unaware of the Health and Safety representatives for their area. Associate Professor Fagan responded that in ELFCS the representatives are An-Chi Baxter and Lynette Dennis.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

NTEU representatives raised comments from staff members that casual staff may not have access to the same development opportunities such as attendance at conferences as permanent staff. The Director, Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies, Seamus Fagan explained that the Professional Development Policy is based around equity for all staff. While it would not be possible to fund every staff member attending a conference, all staff have access to development opportunities. NTEU representatives raised the issue of pro-rata funding for part time staff, which can leave them at a financial disadvantage when attending conferences. Associate Professor Fagan explained that this funding model enabled more staff to attend conferences.

NTEU representatives noted Clause 16.3 of the Teachers Agreement regarding a "Training and Development Plan", which will be available to staff, and asked whether this planning had begun. NTEU representatives pointed out that as Performance Review and Development (PRD) did not apply to casual staff it was important that their staff development needs also be addressed.

7. PERSONAL LEAVE

NTEU representatives requested information regarding the requirement to provide medical evidence for Personal Leave absences after 1 day when the Agreement specifies 3 days. The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro explained that the enterprise agreement

provides for situations requiring evidence after 1 day where the staff member has been notified of inappropriate leave usage. University representatives will follow up on this process of notification.

Action 7: University – follow up on process regarding notifying staff member of requirement to provide evidence of personal leave absences after 1 day.

8. CASUAL STAFF AND CAMPUS CLOSURE

NTEU representatives expressed concern that casual teaching staff particularly at Ourimbah had lost a week's pay because of the campus closures during the April storms. The Director, Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies, Seamus Fagan advised that this may have been addressed with some staff at Ourimbah being offered work in week 13 when they ordinarily would not be working. The Associate Director, Employee Relations Paul Munro also reported that academic casual staff had been notified that if they had prepared work or arrived for work during the closure they would be paid at the appropriate rate.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NTEU representatives enquired whether there were any implications for the Language Centre as a result of budget savings across the University. The Director, Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies, Seamus Fagan responded that he had just arrived back at work from time abroad and was not aware of any specific savings required for the Language Centre at this time.

The meeting closed at approximately 2:00 pm