

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

ACADEMIC STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (ASCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Academic Staff Consultative Committee** held at 10:00 am on Wednesday 11 February 2015 in The Canberra Room (CH210), The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Professor John Germov, Paul Munro, Greg Kerr, Tina Crawford (item 9), Kristi Granata (item 9), Alan Tracey (item 10)

NTEU – Dr Tom Griffiths, Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan, Dr John Lewer, Dr Jenny Day, Lance Dale

Professor Bob Betz, School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (item 10)

APOLOGIES:

University - Professor Andrew Parfitt, Sharon Champness

NTEU – Associate Professor Wayne Reynolds

Chair – Dr Tom Griffiths, NTEU representative

Note-taker – Jackie Fox

1. ACADEMIC WORKLOAD

1.1 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (WORKLOAD) GROUP

The following matters were discussed in relation to the Consultative Committee (Workload) group:

i. Representatives:

University representatives – Professor John Germov, Paul Munro (core team), plus other Faculty representatives as necessary.

NTEU representatives – Dr Tom Griffiths, Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan, Associate Professor Wayne Reynolds (core team), plus other Faculty representatives as necessary.

ii. Meeting dates:

Meetings will be scheduled every 2 months in 2015 (alternate months to ASCC meetings), plus other ad hoc meetings as required.

1.2 PILOT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF WORKLOAD PLANNER SOFTWARE

Mr Munro reported that the Staff Workload Planner software is currently being trialled in the Faculty of Health. The University will be in a position to demonstrate the software to the Consultative Committee (Workload) group within 2 weeks.

Mr Munro reported that the trial in the Faculty of Health is working well in relation to the teaching data. There are some issues to work through in terms of the research data. There will be some manual recording required in relation to the service data. This will be discussed in further detail at the demonstration.

Action 1.2: University – arrange a demonstration of the software/model being trialled in the Faculty of Health. Aim for a demonstration to be held within the next 2 weeks.

1.3 PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC WORKLOAD ALLOCATION MODELS (AWAM'S)

Mr Munro reported that the University wrote to Pro Vice-Chancellors regarding the process and timetable for the development of AWAMs. Pro Vice-Chancellors have been asked to publish their workload models by early March 2015. At that point, the University will ascertain whether each Faculty is using an old or a new model.

NTEU representatives noted that a key date is June 2015, which is the deadline for models to be reviewed, consulted and developed (in accordance with the amended indicative timescale agreed to). Mr Munro advised that this was highlighted in the e-mail to PVCs.

Discussion took place regarding the role of the Consultative Committee (Workload) group. Mr Munro advised that, at this point, the University will brief the group on the status of the workload model(s) for each Faculty and provide a realistic timetable. Professor Germov indicated that, ideally, each Faculty will present their model to the Workload group.

NTEU representatives expressed concern that Faculties will progress through the year with a model that does not comply with the Enterprise Agreement. Mr Munro indicated that it is reasonable to have some degree of transition. Where there is non-compliance, matters can be dealt with on a case by case basis.

NTEU representatives asked what the University's response will be if there are major breaches of the Enterprise Agreement. Mr Munro advised that a commitment would need to be made by the area to rectify the breach in order to comply with the Enterprise Agreement.

Action 1.3: i. University – schedule the first Consultative Committee (Workload) meeting in the second week of March 2015.
ii. University – provide a report from the Faculties in the second week of March 2015.
iii. University – send a reminder to PVCs and/or HOS re need to publish workloads by mid-March and to start of the revisions due by June.

2. **ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW AND COSTINGS METHODOLOGY** – discussion postponed to the ASCC meeting of 25/02/2015 when the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will be in attendance.
3. **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES** – discussion postponed to the ASCC meeting of 25/02/2015 when the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will be in attendance.
4. **ACADEMIC PROMOTION** – this item will be discussed in greater detail at the ASCC meeting of 25/02/2015 when the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will be in attendance.

NTEU representatives expressed concern in relation to the change in role of the Equity Officer in the Academic Promotion process. NTEU representatives highlighted the importance of the Equity Officer to exercise a degree of independence from each Faculty in the Academic Promotions process. Mr Kerr advised that he believed the role will operate independently of the Faculties.

5. CONTEMPORANEOUS MARKING

NTEU representatives requested an update on the University's action item (from the ASCC meeting of 2/12/2014) to draft a communication piece to Heads of School and Executive Officers regarding the definition/interpretation of Contemporaneous Marking (this action was agreed to in order to address concerns raised by the NTEU about the application of Contemporaneous Marking).

Mr Munro reported that the advice is currently being drafted. It was agreed that the University will forward a copy of the draft advice to the NTEU for review, prior to it being distributed to Schools. The advice will include examples of Contemporaneous Marking to assist in the explanation.

Action 5: University – draft a communication piece on the definition/interpretation of Contemporaneous Marking to send to Heads of School and Executive Officers. Forward a copy of the draft advice to the NTEU for review, prior to it being distributed to Schools.
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6. ACADEMIC ANNUAL LEAVE

University representatives reported that an all staff e-mail was sent in early-mid January 2015, to remind Academic Staff about the process and deadline for the deferral of academic annual leave.

NTEU representatives noted that their concerns arose as some Schools were not recording annual leave properly and were not aware of the deferral process.

Professor Germov suggested that the HR Business Partners meet with their Heads of School to understand the current practices within the School and brief them on the correct process, if required.

NTEU representatives mentioned that the forms for requesting the deferral of annual leave are confusing, particularly in relation to the timeframe/deadline.

Professor Germov believes there may be an IT program being implemented to improve the deferral and approval process for academic annual leave. Mr Munro will follow up with the Manager, HR Information Systems and report back.

Action 6: i. University – HR Business Partners to meet with their Heads of School to understand the current practices within the School for the deferral of annual leave and brief them on the correct process, if required.
ii. University – follow up with the Manager, HR Information Systems about whether there is/will be an IT program/software implemented to improve the deferral and approval process for academic annual leave.

7. ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION – ACADEMIC SPECIFIC

NTEU representatives flagged the University's implementation items within the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014 that they would like to see progressed. These included:

- Scholarly Teaching Fellows – NTEU representatives noted the timeframe in relation to the University's requirement to advertise a minimum of 10 FTE Scholarly Teaching Fellow positions (refer clause 34.28), which is to occur during the life of the Agreement.
- UoN Academy – NTEU representatives were interested in the policies and changes being implemented to improve the working conditions for Casual Academic Staff.
- Academic Workload – NTEU representatives noted that Academic Workload matters will be addressed by the Consultative Committee (Workload) group.

University representatives indicated that they have an Enterprise Agreement Implementation Plan, which they are happy to provide to the NTEU.

University representatives were not aware of plans or budgets in relation to Scholarly Teaching Fellows. It was agreed that Scholarly Teaching Fellows will be included on the agenda for the 25 February 2015 ASCC meeting.

NTEU representatives raised a concern regarding accommodation assistance granted for staff on a Special Studies Program (SSP). NTEU representatives indicated that there has been a change in policy that indicates that accommodation assistance may be available and is subject to the availability of funds, where previously, accommodation assistance was guaranteed. NTEU representatives believe there are some differences in the application across Faculties.

Professor Germov explained that payment of accommodation assistance depends on the available budget. There is a fixed budget for accommodation assistance across the University. If there are any funds remaining after all expenses are incurred, the Faculties may be able to provide some support.

Mr Munro advised that the University will consider whether a report could be generated showing data on the payment of accommodation assistance in 2014.

NTEU representatives requested periodic reports on the following:

- Personal Leave taken in relation to domestic violence; and
- Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements.

It was noted that ensuring confidentiality was of significant importance in producing any reports regarding Personal Leave taken in relation to domestic violence. The University will give consideration to providing periodic reports.

Action 7:

- i. University – provide a copy of the University’s EA Implementation Plan to the NTEU.
- ii. University – include Scholarly Teaching Fellows on the ASCC agenda (25 February 2015 meeting).
- iii. University – consider generating a report on the payment of accommodation assistance for SSP in 2014.
- iv. University – Consider providing periodic reports on the use of Personal Leave in relation to domestic violence and Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring confidentiality, particularly in relation to domestic violence.

8. USE OF SEARCH FIRMS FOR PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

This item is in relation to the use of international search firms for Professorial appointments. NTEU representatives advised that as far as they were aware, the University does not mandate that international search firms must be used for Professorial appointments. If this is correct, NTEU representatives have requested that all Heads of School be made aware of this, as the cost of using international search firms for Professorial appointments seems to be a disincentive for appointments to be made at that level.

Professor Germov understood that international search firms are required for Pro Vice-Chancellor and Heads of School appointments, but that it is a Faculty’s decision as to whether they wish to use an international search firm for Professorial appointments.

Action 8: University – Follow up to ascertain whether the use of international search firms are compulsory for Professorial appointments. If they are not compulsory, advise Heads of School.

9. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FRAMEWORK (PEF) FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Ms Tina Crawford, Deputy Director, Workforce Strategy and Transformation and Ms Kristi Granata, Workforce Strategy and Project Manager attended for this discussion.

Ms Crawford reported on the support being provided to Pro Vice-Chancellors in regard to the PEF for Academic Staff. Ms Crawford’s team are also working with Research Division to provide additional support to Heads of School regarding the use of the research data.

NTEU representatives highlighted their two main concerns (raised at the ASCC meeting of 2/12/2015), as being:

- the impact of the PEF for Academic Staff goes well beyond the Performance Review and Development process; and
- The PEF is considered as 'one size fits all' without flexibility and does not take into account disciplinary differences.

NTEU representatives highlighted the relationship between workload models and the ability for staff to deliver expectations and they believe the University needs to take a flexible approach particularly until workload models are bedded down.

Professor Germov indicated that he believes providing clarity around expectations to staff is important. NTEU representatives did not disagree however they indicated that appropriate judgements must be made to accommodate differences between disciplines.

Initially Professor Germov suggested that the NTEU could make submissions on behalf of disciplines to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) where this was a particular problem. It was then decided that the University would consider undertaking a review of the research targets/numbers. The University will run a report showing where research targets for 2014 have/have not been met and then review the figures.

It was established that the NTEU's desired outcome from a review, is that the research targets become more customised for different disciplines.

NTEU representatives asked that the University compare the mean across similar schools within the sector and seek feedback from Heads of School and Heads of Discipline about the impact of the PEF on their School/Discipline. Ms Crawford indicated that we need to take a holistic view of why targets may not have been met; it could be that more support needs to be provided to particular areas.

Action 9: University – Undertake a review of the research targets for 2014, focussing on differences across Schools/Disciplines. Share targets with ASCC when report is available.

10. OPEN PLAN OFFICE RELOCATIONS PROPOSALS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Mr Alan Tracey, Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services and Professor Bob Betz, School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (by invitation of the NTEU) attended for this discussion.

The committee noted the paper written by Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan, NTEU representative (dated 30 November 2014) outlining issues regarding open plan offices for Academic Staff.

NTEU representatives requested a briefing on existing proposals for open plan offices for Academic Staff.

Mr Tracey advised the committee of the following:

- The current University space management policy is outdated, and does not reflect current space management best practice. This will be updated and rewritten and include the newly adopted principles early in 2015.
- The New Space project is currently underway in the City and will accommodate the Faculty of Business and Law. The construction contract for the building is currently out to tender. A set of office space principles will be adopted on the NeW Space project which has only academics D and E in individual offices. All others are in purpose designed academic work spaces. The design of the building has now been finalised on this basis and the project is out to tender with construction to commence in April 2015.
- There has been some indicative planning for the potential move of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science staff into the ATC building. However, the move of these staff has not yet been finalised as another academic research group may occupy the space. The significant available office space in the building will be refurbished and reconfigured as academic space in accordance with the model proposed for New Space. This will serve as a prototype for this and other future projects and will enable testing and refinement of the design principles.
- The University takes into account the nature and the needs of each academic discipline and applies a number of principles in the design of work spaces. Associate Professor Ryan's paper includes principles that are consistent with the University's principles in designing work spaces for staff. The key principles that the University would apply include:
 - security to control access to safety;
 - privacy;
 - scheduling consultation with students;
 - confidentiality;
 - storage of written materials and academic resources;
 - natural light;
 - flexibility of usage in allocations for co-location of groups;
 - support of collaboration across disciplines;
 - provision of appropriate technology;
 - environmental controls;
 - access to resources and facilities;
 - private space for senior staff;
 - access to meeting spaces;
 - proximity to research facilities; and
 - access to teaching spaces.

NTEU representatives raised concerns in relation to the following:

- The University is operating contrary to the Space Management Policy, particularly in relation to the lack of consultation for the move to, and design of, open plan offices; and
- That a move to open plan offices for Academic Staff could be considered a change management process, given the change in working practices. The NTEU disagrees with only Academic Level D and E's being in closed offices.

Professor Bob Betz explained the process that occurred within the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from his point of view. He believed there was consultation however decisions were made without any consideration or substantial change following consultation.

Mr Tracey explained the need for the University to manage the total allocation and efficiency of space across the whole organisation, including, office space, teaching space, research space and library space. Mr Tracey further explained the governance structure in place (involving a steering committee for New Space) is responsible for decisions/determinations in regard to space management, and that his capacity extended to making recommendations. Mr Tracey stated that he was not responsible for the consultation relating to New Space, rather this was a matter for the steering committee and the DVC-A.

Mr Tracey suggested that a prototype office will be built and inspected in the ATC building followed by consultation to work through any issues.

NTEU representatives requested that the University give careful consideration to their concerns raised and to ensure proper communication and consultation with staff to avoid problems in the future.

Action 10: University – Consider the issues raised by the NTEU, particularly their request for proper communication and consultation in relation to the move to open plan office spaces for Academic Staff.

11. IMPACT OF SAS CHANGES – additional item

The NTEU flagged concerns in regard to the changes to the Program Officer roles within Student and Academic Services, and the impact on the delivery of services to students and workload of other staff.

The University will seek further information. The committee agreed to include this item on the ASCC agenda for the meeting scheduled on 25 February 2015.

Action 11: University – Seek further information in relation to the changes to the Program Officer roles and impact on the delivery of services and work of other staff. Place this item on the agenda for the ASCC meeting scheduled on 25 February 2015.