

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

ACADEMIC STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (ASCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Academic Staff Consultative Committee** held at 4.00pm on Thursday 4 May 2017 in the Finance Meeting Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Darrell Evans; Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, Professor John Germov; Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly; and Associate Director Faculty Services, Faculty of Education and Arts, Michael Robertson.

NTEU – Associate Professor Tom Griffiths, Dr Roslyn Larkin and, Lance Dale.

APOLOGIES:

University – Mark Wylie

NTEU – Professor Roger Marwick and, Associate Professor, Suzanne Ryan

Chair —Ros Larkin

Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann

1. ACADEMIC WORKLOAD

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that the updated workload models for the School of Architecture and Built Environment and, the School of Nursing and Midwifery had now been approved for trial implementation by the DVC (Academic) Professor Darrell Evans. Copies of these models had also been forwarded to ASCC Union representatives.

Union representatives flagged that the current enterprise agreement is soon to expire yet some workload models are only now being approved and other models have been rolled over that may not be compliant with the principles in the enterprise agreement. Furthermore, a report on workload allocation trends had not yet been provided to the ASCC.

Mr Kelly responded that issues with the Staff Workload Planner software had constrained reporting on workload allocation as per the enterprise agreement. These issues are being worked through with the vendor and further training for users is scheduled in June to enable standardised reporting across the University. In the meantime, discussions are in progress with Faculties and Schools as to current recording and reporting arrangements. Mr Kelly expected to be able to get an indication of the spread of academic workload from these discussions on which to report.

The Associate Director, Faculty Services, Faculty of Education and Arts (FEDUA) attended for this item to present the Committee with an updated version of the workload model for FEDUA. The model had been revised following consideration of feedback from the ASCC and staff in FEDUA. Mr Robertson invited ASCC members to provide feedback in the first instance prior to the model being circulated to staff. Work was continuing with the Staff Workload Planner vendor to enable the current points based model to be compared to the proposed EFTSL model. Following this comparison period the proposed workload model will be forwarded to the DVC(A) for implementation to trial.

2. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – STANDING ITEM

2.1 Space Management Policy

University representatives reported that there had been no further progress on previous reports from Infrastructure and Facilities Services (IFS) regarding the move of staff in the McMullin building, specifically it had not yet been determined whether the workspaces would be individual offices, neighbourhood seating or a combination of both.

Union representatives flagged that staff had raised concerns regarding 'open-plan' work spaces at a meeting of Academic Senate with the outcome being a post-occupancy review of NeW Space include seating arrangements.

Committee members requested a further update be provided on the relocation of staff in the McMullin building before the next ASCC meeting.

Action 2.1: University – provide update on relocation of staff in McMullin building, in particular work space arrangements before next ASCC meeting.

3. WINTER TERMS

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering relayed information from the PVC (Teaching and Learning), Liz Burd. With consideration to load targets for Semester 1 not being met, faculties and schools have been exploring initiatives such as mid-year admission and compressed winter term courses. Recent summer term offerings have resulted in an increase in enrolments of around 300%. Reasons for this increase, such as students wanting to spread load, were examined but in most cases students were seeking to progress more quickly through their program. Last year 3 faculties offered courses in winter terms and this year the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment will also offer this compressed mode term. Faculties have indicated that the winter term could create up to 100 EFTSL. All courses offered in winter term have been nominated by faculties and are coordinated by the respective schools with Student Central running the promotion campaign and enrolments.

Discussion followed regarding the compressed mode courses with Union representatives flagging that the offerings created value for high performing students who are able to handle the shorter more intense delivery. However, there is concern for setting student up for failure whereby students may enrol in a winter term course after they had failed the same course over a full semester.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Darrel Evans recommended that a meeting be scheduled with Professor Burd to respond to this feedback.

Action 3: University – schedule briefing with DVC (T&L) regarding winter terms.

4. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported planning is in an advanced stage for organisational changes in the School of Architecture and Built Environment and, the School of Humanities and Social Science. Consultation Papers should be expected by the end of May or June.

Union representatives noted staff are anxious to know the extent of change that is proposed and requested that an update of change processes become a standing item for this Committee.

5. SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP)

University representatives reported on the number of approved SSP applications and funding provided as follows:

- 2015 - 55 applications approved; 41 requests for funding paid
- 2016 – 62 applications approved; 40 requests for funding paid

- 2017 – 63 applications approved; 18 requests for funding paid (as at 1 May 2017).

Union representatives sought information on circumstances where approved applications were required to be deferred, and funding for spouse and children travel being denied.

University representatives responded that eligibility for funding under the procedure is generally for 2 months of travel, however, travel of a shorter duration may be approved by the PVC. The PVC determination would take into consideration information from the staff member as to their family and caring arrangements.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, John Germov explained that the release of staff for SSP needed to be scheduled to ensure resourcing is appropriate for School requirements, however, the number of applications approved had increased from 2015 to 2017.

Union representatives sought further information on the number of applications for SSP received from staff for each year.

Action 5. University – provide information on number of SPP applications from staff across 2015 to 2017.

6. TIMETABLE

Union representatives sought an update on the new constraint based timetable process following issues with scheduling academic activities including;

- The form circulated to Schools to record non-availability of staff not providing the opportunity to indicate non-availability between 8 and 9am;
- Restrictive parameters for requesting a timetable change.

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly reported that Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), Liz Burd had responded directly to NTEU representative, Lance Dale about issues with scheduling activities after 6pm and on weekends. Mr Kelly proposed that a meeting be scheduled with Professor Burd for Committee representatives to provide feedback on timetabling issues.

Action 6. University – schedule briefing with DVC (T&L) regarding feedback on timetable process.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

NTEU representative, Lance Dale enquired as to why staff were not able to view unused Personal Leave accrued from past years of service. Without this being visible, Mr Dale stated, staff may not know they have a 'bank' of leave that can be used in circumstances of long-term illness.

The Associate Director, Employee Relations and HR Partnering, Mark Kelly undertook to follow up on this item with the Remuneration and Benefit team.

Action 7: University – follow up on practices for reporting unused Personal leave from previous years of service.

Meeting closed at approximately 5.00pm