

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

ACADEMIC STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (ASCC)

Notes of a meeting of the **Academic Staff Consultative Committee** held at 10:00am on Wednesday 5 August 2015 in The Finance Meeting Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Andrew Parfitt, Pro Vice- Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts Professor John Germov, Associate Director, Employee Relations Paul Munro and Senior Employee Relations Officer, Greg Kerr

NTEU – Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan, Dr John Lewer, Jenny Whittard, Lance Dale

APOLOGIES:

University – Director People and Workforce Strategy, Sharon Champness

NTEU – Dr Tom Griffiths, Associate Professor Wayne Reynolds and Dr Jenny Day

Chair – Professor John Germov, University representative

Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann

1. ACADEMIC WORKLOAD

1.1 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (WORKLOAD) GROUP

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported that the workload group met on 29 July 2015 to review the submitted AWAMs noting the status of each. The group undertook to communicate to PVCs by the next meeting on 12 August 2015 with regards to the level of consultation undertaken for the AWAMs.

Action 1.1: University – arrange meeting of Workload Group for 12 August 2015. Draft note to PVCs regarding consultation for AWAMs by 12 August 2015.
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1.2 PILOT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF WORKLOAD PLANNER SOFTWARE

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported that the Staff Workload Planner (SWP) project is complete and the work has now been handed over to users with a systems administrator engaged for SWP until the end of 2015.

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, John Germov indicated that the SWP user group would continue to meet to refine and provide feedback to the vendor.

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

NTEU representatives expressed concern with the apparent level of consultation for some AWAMs. The Associate Director Employee Relations, Paul Munro noted that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Andrew Parfitt had recently held discussions with PVCs regarding the AWAMs. Consultation was an item of these discussions.

2. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following matter was discussed in relation to this standing item:

2.1 PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FRAMEWORK (PEF)

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, John Germov reported that Research Services are in the process of gathering data which will provide an indication of how academic staff are tracking in relation to the research metrics in the PEF. The University will follow up with Research Services and provide a report at the next ASCC meeting in October 2015.

NTEU representatives queried who would have access to the information and how it would be used. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Andrew Parfitt indicated his expectation that the information would be available for PRD discussions.

Action 2.1: University – follow up and distribute report regarding research metrics indicating progress academic staff performance at October 2015 ASCC meeting.

3. OFFICE CONFIGURATION AND RELOCATIONS PROPOSAL FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

The Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services, Alan Tracey and Associate Director, Campus and Asset Planning, Julie Rich attended to discuss the review of the Space Management Policy and Guidelines. Mr Tracey commented that the existing Policy document written in 2000 was not reflective of contemporary work spaces. Mr Tracey advised that the new Policy is to be supported by the Guidelines document now in draft. The intent of these documents is to provide staff with clarity about what to expect of UON work spaces and the principles will also be used by designers for new buildings.

NTEU representatives noted that under the old Policy, Level C lecturers may have had access to individual office spaces but under the new guidelines this level would not have such access. Mr Tracey responded that there is flexibility in the Guidelines. For example, academics at different locations and from different disciplines would have different requirements of work space.

Discussion followed as to whether the new Sydney campus followed the Guidelines. Mr Tracey responded that the Sydney space was developed prior to the draft Guidelines but noted that the principles were adopted.

NTEU representatives commented that the Sydney offices were well lit and looked appealing for students but expressed concerns that academic staff are subject to increased noise and are using headphones to block the noise out. From a student experience point of view access to academic staff was also flagged as an issue that should be considered in future building works.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Andrew Parfitt responded that UON is committed to working with staff to solving issues at the Sydney space with time for reflection. Mr Tracey explained that there will be a staged process of reviews at 3 months and 6 months as well as a 12 month assessment to address issues.

NTEU representatives enquired as to whether the draft documents would be subject to broader consultation and flagged that they would be interested in providing feedback. Pro-Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, John Germov explained that the documents were in early draft and had yet to be considered by the Executive and feedback was welcome.

Action 3: Unions – provide feedback on draft Space Management Policy and Guidelines.

4. ACADEMIC PROMOTION

A copy of the Academic Promotions Procedure that is under review was distributed and formed the basis of discussion for this item. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Andrew Parfitt advised that the proposed changes were largely associated with appeals and noted that there had not been an appeals process in previous versions.

NTEU representatives queried the addition of the words “substantial or significant” with regards to procedure breaches in section 13.3.1 of the draft and flagged concern as to what would fit into these terms. Professor Parfitt indicated that there had been issues with appeals claims that were not a significant breach of procedure in the past and that the addition of these words should send a message that the process will not be tripped up by minor oversights.

Discussion followed as to sections 13.4 and 13.8 of the draft procedure in relation to the role of an appeals committee in determining a breach of procedure but not being able to determine the promotion of a staff member. NTEU representative, Lance Dale noted that this appeared to be inconsistent with the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement as an appeals committee cannot make recommendations. University representative, Greg Kerr referred to clause 8.6 of the Enterprise Agreement and the use of the term “determine” and noted that what follows this determination is not prescribed by the clause.

NTEU representatives requested to provide written feedback on the draft procedure. University representatives will advise committee members of the timing for feedback and finalisation of the procedure.

There was further discussion regarding the provision and timing of feedback to academic staff applying for promotions. Professor Parfitt indicated that the method of delivering feedback may be a subject of future review.

Action 4:	University – advice committee members of timing for feedback and finalisation of Academic Promotions Procedure. Unions - provide feedback on draft Academic Promotions.
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5. ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION – ACADEMIC SPECIFIC

NTEU representative, Lance Dale expressed concern about the need to progress the implementation of the STF provisions of the Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement and noted that requests for a special ASCC meeting regarding STFs had been ignored.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts (FEDUA), John Germov indicated that there had been discussions with HOSs in FEDUA and the relevant HR Business Partner in respect to a process for implementing STF positions in the Faculty.

Mr Dale indicated that he expected a more co-ordinated response from HOSs and further requested that a formal meeting be arranged to discuss protocols and to provide feedback for the establishment of the STF positions.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Andrew Parfitt pointed out that as UON enters the budget cycle the STF positions would be entered in at the appropriate time.

6. EFFICIENCY DIVIDEND

In response to an enquiry regarding the return of the efficiency dividend to Universities and the possible use of these funds Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Andrew Parfitt noted that the intention to recover these funds is still in view of the government through the Higher Education and Research Reform (HERR) bill measures. Professor Parfitt also noted he had previously advised the committee that reduction in student load in 2015 had resulted in the need for expenditure control. The extent of this load reduction exceeds the gain yielded by the efficiency dividend.

7. CONTEMPORANEOUS MARKING

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro advised that no issues had been raised following the provision of the Contemporaneous Marking Guideline to Pro-Vice Chancellors, Heads of School, Faculty Associate Directors and School Executive Officers.

NTEU representative, Lance Dale flagged the possibility that some items had been regraded from one activity to another because of cost.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Andrew Parfitt committed to monitor this and advised that inappropriate behaviour would not be allowed.

10. ACADEMIC REVIEWS

NTEU representatives enquired as to whether there are academic reviews/Faculty restructuring expected. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Andrew Parfitt reported that there is a schedule of academic program reviews completed every 5 to 6 years. It is unlikely that any decisions about Faculty reviews/restructuring would happen before the end of 2015 as efforts are focused on New Futures and being fit for purpose.

Professor Parfitt noted that there is currently an organisational unit review of Wollotuka looking at how best to set up Wolloutuka to drive future strategies in Indigenous education and research.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

NTEU representatives requested that item 3 - OFFICE CONFIGURATION AND RELOCATIONS PROPOSAL FOR ACAEMDIC STAFF remain on the agenda for future meetings.

Meeting closed at approximately 12.00pm
