

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SCC)**

Notes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Committee** held at 9.00am on
Wednesday 28 October 2020
In the Committee Room, Chancellery and by Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT:

University – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Mark Hoffman; Chief People and Culture Officer, Martin Sainsbury; Associate Director, Employee Relations and Work Health & Safety, Mark Wylie; Associate Director Human Resource Services, Mark Kelly; HR Business Partners: Dan Cummins; Lesley Phillips and Joanne Mouthier.

NTEU –Terry Summers; Paul Chojenta; David Rambaldi; Emma Joel; Louise Noell; Alistair Rolls; Ros Larkin; Dan Conway; and, Industrial Officer, Sam Ramsay

CPSU – Mark Smith; Industrial Officer, Lisa Nelson and Branch Organiser, Ian Braithwaite.

Chair – Mark Kelly

Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- **FINANCIAL BRIEFING**

Martin Sainsbury, Chief People and Culture Officer noted a briefing had been held last week and acknowledged feedback from Committee members present. Mr. Sainsbury advised he will follow up with members on a more efficient and effective approach to scheduling and delivering financial information to the Committee in future.

- **SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP)**

Mr. Sainsbury advised that some of the 17 staff that had SSP approved for 2020 have confirmed that they will take up SSP in 2021 even if travel continues to be limited. Subject to confirmation of the intentions of a further three staff in the Faculty of Science, the University will review SSP approvals for 2021 and report back to the NTEU in the next few weeks. The SSP faculty committee meetings that had been postponed to November will now look to be rescheduled prior to close-down.

1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Lindsay Hardy, Indigenous Employment Partner, attended the meeting for this item and introduced Mr. Leo Dynevor, newly appointed to the position of Indigenous Strategy Officer in the Office of DVC Global Engagement & Partnerships.

In addition to Mr. Dynevor's new role, Mr. Hardy noted new Indigenous staff appointments in the Office of the PVC FEDUA and in the School of Psychology. A further two positions are under consideration following restructuring in the Library and IT Services.

Mr. Hardy reported that the institutional Indigenous staff headcount of 80 is comprised of:

- Academic Division – 30

- Faculty of Business and Law – 1
- Faculty of Education and Arts – 10
- Faculty of Engineering & Built Environment – 2
- Faculty of Health & Medicine – 19
- Faculty of Science - 2
- Vice-Chancellor's Division – 6
- Resources Division – 8
- Global Engagement & Partnerships Division – 1
- Research & Innovation Division - 1

Update on other initiatives:

- Working group convened to identify further Indigenous positions. Membership includes Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Library, and representation from other units across the University. Academic positions being considered for the School of Architecture and Built Environment.
- Further development of an 'Indigenous Talent' database identifying academic and professional staff appointments across the higher education sector. University of Newcastle positions are attracting strong national candidate interest.
- Preparing to host an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander careers conference on 18 November 2020. Registration from 50 providers so far and looking to schedule as an annual event.
- Development of on-line content to support the roll out of the Cultural Competency Framework. Considering options for on-country experiences for staff including Executive Committee visit to Murrook Cultural Centre in Port Stephens.

Committee members acknowledged and appreciated Mr. Hardy's continued efforts to raise awareness of and position the University as a leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the Hunter region and across the higher education sector.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM

2.1 University representatives reported on the following change processes:

2.1.1 IT SERVICES

Currently in implementation: 9 staff members have been declared detached; 2 have elected redeployment; and 9 staff members have accepted VSPs.

NTEU representatives flagged concerns from some IT staff regarding the staffing process for the change and will seek to discuss the concerns with HR Services, external to this Committee.

2.1.2 UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Currently in implementation: 15 staff members have accepted VSPs; 1 staff member has been declared detached; and 1 staff member has elected redeployment.

2.1.3 SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

Currently in implementation: 4 staff members have accepted VSPs.

2.1.4 RELOCATION OF STAFF TO ANOTHER CAMPUS

Associate Director, Human Resource Services, Mark Kelly reported that Creative Industries staff occupying space at Callaghan and NUSpace/City Campus will be relocated to the new purpose-built facility at Honeysuckle early next year. A Consultation Paper is being drafted and is expected to be released in the next few weeks.

Mr. Kelly also indicated a Consultation Paper is in development for the relocation of Faculty of Health and Medicine staff based at Ourimbah moving to the Central Coast Medical School at Gosford Hospital.

2.1.5 FACULTY RESTRUCTURE AND COURSE OPTIMISATION PROJECT

Chief People and Culture Officer, Martin Sainsbury reported that regular meetings were scheduled with NTEU and CPSU representatives to discuss the University's intention to restructure the Faculties. He also noted that a Discussion Paper will be released this week to provide information on timeframes and consultation mechanisms for staff to provide feedback and comments.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President, Mark Hoffman provided an update on the course optimisation project as follows:

- Following consultation in Schools, feedback on course changes was presented at Faculty Boards
- The Programs and Course Approval Committee (PCAC) provided preliminary endorsement
- Continuing feedback opportunities and engagement with staff and students
- PCAC meeting scheduled for December for final endorsement.

Discussion followed regarding consultation mechanisms including student representation on Faculty Boards and ability for staff to attend meetings and access Faculty Board papers.

NTEU representatives requested access to a collated list of all course changes. Professor Hoffman declined this request.

In response to a query regarding the Academic governance review, Professor Hoffman undertook to consider options for a Committee nominee to meet the panel.

NTEU representatives also sought clarification on access to information and feedback mechanisms for staff outside faculties. NTEU representatives undertook to collate and forward comments they received to Professor Hoffman.

Should staff require further information, Professor Hoffman advised that they should contact their Head of School in this first instance or send questions to the relevant positional email listed in the Course Optimisation Discussion Paper.

2.2 POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Professor Hoffman reported that findings of the Academic Division organisational change post-implementation review had been circulated to Division staff yesterday. Key feedback themes included:

- Issues with the separation of student and program advice in Student Central
- Concerns regarding communication to faculty stakeholders
- Positive comments regarding the flattened structure and removal of silos.

Professor Hoffman advised that there would be further opportunity to discuss the review findings with staff at the Academic Division 'town hall' meeting scheduled in November

Union representatives flagged that casual staff and staff that had changed reporting lines out of Academic Division did not have an opportunity to contribute feedback and suggested that targeted questions could be included in the next Your Voice survey.

Discussion followed regarding an approach for review findings to be discussed with this Committee and staff in areas affected by the change.

Union representatives sought clarification of next steps or resolutions to address key issues flagged in the feedback by affected staff, and for more details about responses to be provided to both SCC and affected staff. It was noted that time was needed to dissect and review responses, given the extensive and detailed responses in free text sections of the survey. This would be considered for discussion at the Academic Division Town Hall and future SCC meetings.

3. STAFF COUNSELLING AND ASSISTANCE

Mark Wylie, Associate Director, Employee Relations and Work, Health & Safety provided an overview of the average EAP usage for the quarter as follows:

- 110 individual visits per month
- 41 family member visits per month
- 47 male visits per month
- 108 female visits per month
- 36 new sessions commenced per month
- New bookings are closed for all clients other than the University
- Sessions are accessible within 48 hours or on the same day for an emergency. For those seeking to see a specific counsellor at a specific time there may be a delay
- Increased hours available for telehealth.

Union representatives noted that access to EAP is limited to six sessions and sought clarification on the process for requesting extensions.

Mr. Wylie advised to contact Sarah Williamson in the Work Health and Safety team to request extended sessions or options for accessing another provider. Additional all-staff communications would provide information about accessing EAP..

Union representatives sought information as to whether EAP usage for the University of Newcastle was higher than other universities.

Mr. Sainsbury agreed to follow up and report on availability of benchmarking data. He also provided the following observations:

- EAP utilisation had spiked at the time of the bushfires last year and continued to be at high usage
- The predominant enquiries are for 'personal' matters with the majority in relation to 'anxiety' or 'depression'
- The second highest factor under the 'personal' category is 'relationship'
- Workplace factors for visits included increase work demands, increase in workplace change and stress. There had also been a reduction in workplace conflict.

Mr. Sainsbury recommended that reporting on EAP usage data be included as a regular agenda item for Committee meetings.

Action 3:	University – follow up on availability of sector EAP benchmarking data and report back to Committee members.
	University – schedule EAP usage report for future Committee meetings.
	University – all staff communications about accessing EAP

4. CAMPUS PLANNING AND PROJECTS

Julie Rich, Acting Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services attended the meeting for this item and provided an update on campus planning and projects, specifically:

- *Decommissioning of Hunter Building Callaghan*

University Council considered a report on the risks associated with the Hunter Building including asbestos, accessibility, thermal comfort, and fire compliance and determined that all activities and people in the building are to be relocated.

The first stage is focused on levels A and B that include high volume teaching areas as well as the Griffith Duncan Theatre. Other areas of the building will be vacated into next year with a target for total relocation by mid-2021.

The PVCs for Education and Arts and, Health and Medicine are the primary conduit for stakeholder engagement, however, there will be further communications regarding relocation of specialised teaching spaces and associated staff. These spaces will continue to operate from the Hunter Building until appropriate solutions for relocation are confirmed. While the University intends to retain these spaces at Callaghan campus some may be moved to City campus.

Huxley Library will remain open until end of 2020. The collection will be assessed for retirement or relocation to Auchmuty. Consulting with the University Librarian to identify study spaces.

Richardson and Bowman buildings are not in scope of the relocation and there is no impact on staff and activities in these buildings.

There is no decision on whether the building will be physically demolished at this time. The focus is decommissioning and relocating staff and activities. The timing of relocations will consider the teaching timetable including exams and marking period.

Union representatives reinforced that timing works outside of key teaching periods is a crucial consideration to minimise disruption to teaching activities for students and staff.

- *Demolition of McMullin Building Callaghan*

The site has been handed over to the contractor who has experience in managing hazardous materials. Air monitoring processes are continuing although the works at this stage are removing non-hazardous materials.

Worksafe have been consulted and when the time comes to move any hazardous materials it will be in accordance with requirements.

In response to questions from Union representatives, Ms Rich and Mr Sainsbury clarified that the impact of the demolition on staff in other building and on events such as graduation had been considered.

NTEU representatives requested that information regarding results of air monitoring for both Hunter and McMullin buildings be provided to affected staff who have been occupying the buildings. .

5. POLICY REVIEW – SPACE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Ms. Rich confirmed that the Space Management Guidelines had been rescinded and the University's current emphasis was on designing inclusive and collaborative workspaces that considered functionality of roles rather than allocation of office spaces based on seniority of staff. Ms Rich. noted that the School of Humanities and Social Science was refurbished in line with this model and staff had reported satisfaction with this new workspace. A new policy for space management will be considered in 2021 in consultation with staff and this Committee.

6. CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT – CASUAL STAFF

NTEU representatives flagged concerns from casual staff that they had not received information or been provided the opportunity to contribute feedback the same as other categories of staff e.g. post-implementation reviews, course optimisation information, work from home survey, and campus food and beverage promotions.

Mr. Sainsbury explained that the exclusion of casual staff was not intentional and referred to the UON Academy for information and resources focused on casual academic staff.

7. OVERTIME – PROFESSIONAL STAFF

NTEU representatives requested a TOIL calculator, like the flex timesheet, be developed for staff to record overtime hours.

Mr. Sainsbury undertook to consider this request and flagged that the University is assessing system upgrades and additions such as a time and attendance module to record work hours.

8. CASUAL PAY RATES – ACADEMIC AND TEACHERS

NTEU representatives requested a separate meeting be scheduled to discuss feedback from staff arising from the payroll review.

Mr. Sainsbury will look to schedule a briefing session to discuss the staff feedback and report on the outcomes of the payroll review project. He noted that the predominant areas identified in the review related to overtime and penalty payments as well as minimum engagement periods for casual staff. No systemic issues were identified. Any underpayments for current staff are expected to be made in the first pay period in November 2020. This will be followed by payments to former staff.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting closed at approx. 11.00am