

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

Notes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Committee** held at 9.00am on  
17 February 2021  
In CH 205 and by Zoom Video Conference

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**PRESENT:**

University –Chief People and Culture Officer, Martin Sainsbury; Associate Director, Employee Relations, Mark Wylie; Associate Director Human Resource Services, Mark Kelly; Associate Director Wellbeing Health and Safety, Megan Clark, DVC(A) Professor Mark Hoffman, PVC Academic Excellence Professor Jennifer Milam and Mr Lindsay Hardy, Indigenous Employment.

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

CPSU – Mark Smith; Industrial Officer, Lisa Nelson.

Chair – Mark Wylie

Incompetent Note-taker – Mark Wylie

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**1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT**

Mr Lindsay Hardy reported that against a target of 3.9%, a number of targeted or identified hires had been made between November 2020 and February 2021 including:

- Level B – School of Psychology
- Engagement Officer – Wollotuka (successful conversion of a cadet role)
- Indigenous IT Officer
- Special Collections Officer – Wollotuka
- Level B – College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing
- Reconciliation EO – Wollotuka
- Comms / Engagement role – Wollotuka.

This takes the current percentage of indigenous staff to 2.5% which is a strong outcome given the COVID impact and residual restructuring.

In 2021 a number of other targeted positions in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, plus working groups in the School of Architecture and Built Environment, Engineering, Library, NBS and IFS are planned.

Mr Hardy also confirmed that all Wollotuka cadets have graduated and work is well underway to look at establishing significant career opportunities. In March and April sessions on the Cultural Capability Framework along with a planning event on country for indigenous staff will be held. This follows on from the on-country experience for the HOS and EC groups, that were well received. Mr Hardy also confirmed that the Indigenous Employment Committee has commenced meeting.

**2. WHS UPDATE**

Introduction of Megan Clark, Associate Director, Wellbeing Health & Safety.

Chief People and Culture Officer, Martin Sainsbury reported on WHS statistics, confirming an average EAP usage of 240 sessions per month, including 93 employees and 35 families. The gender breakdown remains predominately female (93 vs 36 male). Major themes including anxiety and depression along with relationships and stress.

'Workplace issues' in the EAP data, included Org Change which overtook concerns about workload which was a common issue in early 2020. Mr Sainsbury also highlighted the work that was being done with Lifeline to further augment the service provided by NewPsych.

The NTEU queried how the Org Change data compared to other change events or other organisations.

Mr Sainsbury noted that there wasn't a lot of comparative data available, however, he reflected that with the amount of upheaval and change driven by COVID and natural disasters over the last 18 months, perhaps it wasn't too surprising. He acknowledged that there is an increase in concerns about change, and it needs to be factored into the University's Enabling Change program going forward.

AIMS events for the last quarter were around 150 of which 46 were hazards, 32 Near Misses, 1 medical treatment and 56 first aid events among others. The top 3 mechanisms of injury were trips and falls on pathways, muscular stress and repetitive strain. Due to some reports of apparent electrical shocks, a major review was undertaken around contractor safety along with an external review of gas infrastructure and operations.

The NTEU provided a suggestion regarding pathways, citing the use of a soft-fall material by a local council with some success. There was further discussion around how ideas could be harvested for improvements, especially as more people return to campus.

### **3. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – STANDING ITEM**

University representatives reported on the following change processes:

#### **3.1 IT SERVICES**

No Update provided.

NTEU commented on the time that this change has taken and the impact on staff given the tendency for IT roles to be advertised more heavily at the start of the year.

#### **3.2 UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

All staff have confirmed their elections.

#### **3.3 SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND LIFE SCIENCES**

All staff have confirmed their elections.

#### **3.4 RELOCATION OF STAFF TO ANOTHER CAMPUS**

Associate Director, Human Resource Services, Mark Kelly reported that the change paper for the move of a small number of Ourimbah staff to the Central Coast Medical School was drafted and the paper detailing the final move of Creative Industries to Honeysuckle was still in progress. The timing of how these changes will be finalised may require coordination with the other school changes on foot at present.

The NTEU enquired as to the potential impact of these changes on Ourimbah and Sydney as there had been some comments from senior staff around the future of these sites.

Mr Sainsbury acknowledged that there was still some planning needed about how change will affect Ourimbah and Sydney, but that there was certainly a heavy University commitment for the Central Coast and its equity commitment to participation in higher education.

Mr Sainsbury also reported on planned improvements to post implementation reviews and change management information available to support staff.

The NTEU expressed concern around the lack of in-depth discussion of post-implementation findings, particularly before staff are subject to another change process.

#### **3.5 FACULTY RESTRUCTURE PROJECT**

### **Course Optimisation**

The DVC(Academic). Mark Hoffman reported that the Course Optimisation project was essentially finished, with timetable changes being made following the appropriate course governance approval being received.

### **Division and School changes.**

Professor Hoffman reported that a number of engagement forums preceding the main Divisional Change Forum were planned in order to brief staff on the upcoming change.

NTEU representatives flagged reports from staff that anxiety was high given the recency of the this change to the last and high work load. Furthermore, that the timing of this change was not ideal given staff availability during Orientation.

Discussion followed on the promotion of meeting recordings and the continued invitation for direct submissions from staff to the DVC(A)'s office. Feedback on these aspects was positive particularly without an extended consultation period.

## **4. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE – PEF REVIEW**

The PVC Academic Excellence, Jennifer Milam, thanked the NTEU for their detailed submission. She confirmed that 850 staff had viewed the potential indicators and that 78 (mainly individual) submissions had been received. Professor Milam confirmed that feedback was being reviewed and consolidated in order to create a draft set of indicators that would be presented to Executive Committee late March before being released to the University and potential further engagement regarding how they will articulate to other processes such as promotions, pathways and SSP.

The NTEU requested further detail on the type of feedback received, which Professor Milam broke into the following categories:

- Research and Innovation – Author position, collaboration with GO8s and capture of NTROs
- Teaching and Learning – Prioritisation of Performance Categories
- Engagement and Impact – More clarity and examples

Of note also was the omission of service in the draft which may be formed into a separate fourth pillar. There were concerns also about reporting, to which Professor Milam explained that a reporting dashboard was under development. Further work around alignment with academic levels and equity, diversity and inclusion were also flagged.

The NTEU questioned the alignment of PEF / Performance Indicators and AWAMs, noting that they do not seem to articulate well.

Mr Sainsbury acknowledged that this was an area that needed further work throughout the year as we seek to either consolidate or otherwise improve the AWAMs in existence. There is further articulation work needed to link with PRD / SSP and Promotions.

Professor Milam explained that, in general, the work being done in the current project was an attempt to evolve from targets to indicators in order to foster better PRD discussions.

The NTEU queried whether the indicators would potentially be used to target staff in organisational change.

Mr Sainsbury confirmed that this was not the case, but that at a College level, relevant performance metrics like teaching scores and research output would be reviewed.

The NTEU expressed concern that this type of ranking was being done at a School level.

## **5. CLASSIFICATION LEVEL – PROFESSIOANL STAFF**

Mr Wylie confirmed that the casual Social Distance Champions (Student roles) were employed at HEW 2 Level.

The NTEU sought information as to whether these staff received safety inductions and were trained in COVID-Safe procedures.

Mr Sainsbury reported that induction and training was provided. Mr Wylie will follow up with Student Recruitment as to whether the students were remunerated for the induction period.

## **6. FINANCIAL BRIEFING**

Mr Sainsbury reported that a separate briefing regarding the year-end financial outcome would be scheduled for late Feb / Early March depending on when the results were released to Council.

## **7. INDUCTION PAYMENT – CASUAL STAFF**

The NTEU commented that application of the 2 hour induction payment appeared to ad-hoc and suggested that increased awareness would support a more consistent approach.

Mr Wylie reported that an IT solution was being worked through, but it appears there is still variability around how this is being implemented.

Union representatives queried the process for staff to claim time when working outside the normal span of hours to support orientation, including examples where staff move between activities on different cost codes that lead to uplifts that may have unintended impacts on business unit budgets.

Mr Sainsbury explained that the uplift to meet the minimum casual engagement is driven by the obligations under the EA and processes established during the payroll remediation project. He noted that further discussions on this would be appropriate in enterprise bargaining.

## **8. ENABLING PROGRAM REVIEW - TEACHERS**

The NTEU queried the proposal to combine the Open Foundation and Newstep Programs, noting that staff teaching those programs, although covered by the same EA, have different conditions of employment.

Mr Sainsbury noted that this issue will likely be considered as part of the Divisional Change.

## **9. POLICY REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **9.1 SPACE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

No further developments were reported from the University on this item.

The NTEU raised the concerns by staff affected by the Hunter Building retirement regarding working from home options if their temporary relocation is inadequate. Discussion on raising concerns with IFS to resolve these issues. The CPCO also flagged that there would be relocation options coming on line as the redevelopment of the John Hunter Health District progressed over time.

### **9.2 PARENTAL LEAVE GUIDELINES**

Mr Sainsbury noted the NTEU position outlined in a recent letter and confirmed that advice was being sought from the University Legal Unit.

## **10. SUPERANNUATION FOR FRACTION STAFF**

Mr Kelly reported that a review of the 2010 and 2014 EAs was in progress to establish the obligations and options available, specifically for staff with contracts of 0.2FTE or less. Any shortfalls would be addressed as part of the review.

Residual questions from the NTEU around how the Deed of Covenant operates in respect of the EA requirements and visibility of its impact were being considered.

## **11. CCTV AND SWIPE CARD ACCESS**

The NTEU queried the use of CCTV and swipe card access to monitor staff attendance and expressed concern about internal cameras being deployed with facial recognition technology to track staff.

Mr Wylie reported that swipe access data requires senior leadership approval.

## **12. STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

The NTEU sought an update on the mandatory attendance policy for students.

University representatives confirmed that the policy will be applied subject to COVID conditions. The DVC(A) has provided clarification on this to first year attendance.

Discussion followed regarding providing updates to professional staff on communications to students so that they were better placed to respond to student questions.

## **13. CAMPUS PLANNING AND PROJECTS**

University to follow up on the repurposing of the Glasshouse as an online gaming lounge.