

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 7 October 2015 in The Canberra Meeting Room, The Chancellery.

PRESENT:

University – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Andrew Parfitt and, Associate Director, Employee Relations Paul Munro.

NTEU – Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan, Dr Jenny Whittard and, Lance Dale.

APOLOGIES:

University – Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Education and Arts, Professor John Germov, Director People and Workforce Strategy, Sharon Champness, Senior Employee Relations Officer, Greg Kerr

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

Chair – Associate Professor, Suzanne Ryan – Union staff representative

Note-taker – Ruth Hartmann

1. ACADEMIC WORKLOAD

1.1 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (WORKLOAD) GROUP

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported that, following the 22 September 2015 extraordinary meeting of the ASCC, AWAM recommendations made by the working group and endorsed by the ASCC were provided to the respective Faculties and Schools for consideration. Mr Munro distributed a document summarising the status of each AWAM noting that 7 were to progress to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Andrew Parfitt for approval, 2 were to come back to the ASCC and 2 remain outstanding.

NTEU representatives questioned whether the recommendations of the working group could be properly implemented in the timeframe proposed. Representatives also questioned the number of AWAMS which were progressing directly to Professor Parfitt as many of the AWAMS were incomplete and/or had not involved any or very limited staff consultation.

Professor Parfitt indicated that his assessment of the AWAMs will consider consultation and whether the AWAM principles of the Enterprise Agreement have been included. If these factors are met the AWAM will be approved for pilot in 2016.

1.2 PILOT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF WORKLOAD PLANNER SOFTWARE

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported that ELFS and Health and Medicine are trialling SWP and further training is being scheduled for FSCIT, FBUS and additional users in FHEAM.

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

See 1.1 above

2. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

2.1 PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FRAMEWORK (PEF)

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro gave an update from the Workforce Strategy group on this item particularly, that there is work in progress looking at the analysis of staff performance against the PEF. However, it has been quite complex in bringing all the information together. Some final information is still to be processed before a paper goes to the Vice-Chancellor for review. Once approved by the Vice-Chancellor, it will go to the Executive Committee. An action for the Executive Committee will be to consider the information that is then provided to ASCC.

NTEU representatives noted that the PEF FAQs on the University website is blank and contains no supporting information. University representatives will follow up on this.

Action 2.1: (i) University – follow up on missing information in PEF FAQs on website;
(ii) University – report on PEF at next meeting.

3. OFFICE CONFIGURATION AND RELOCATIONS PROPOSAL FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro provided information on this item from the Director, Infrastructure and Facilities Services (IFS), Alan Tracey. IFS received a detailed submission from the NTEU on the proposed Space Management Policy and the Space Management and Allocation Guideline and Procedure on 21 September 2015. The advice from the NTEU has provided IFS with some valuable insights and has shown where the proposed documents can be improved and their contents made clearer. Improvements to the explanation of some of the terms in the documents will be made and the consultation processes will be updated. IFS have been asked to take the updated proposals to the Executive Committee in the next few weeks for further discussion and direction. It was noted that there will not be a change to the proposed workspace provisions for academic staff levels A to C.

NTEU representatives expressed opposition to open plan office spaces and suggested that changing the design of office space is effectively a change in work practices that should be dealt with under the managing change process of the Enterprise Agreement. The NTEU requested further discussion or comment regarding whether there are industrial implications from the changes made to the Space Management Policy and, how any implications are best managed.

Discussion followed on factors motivating the change to open plan office space at UON and staff resistance. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Andrew Parfitt explained that the new Space Management Policy sets out principles for work spaces but is not a one-size fits all for all UON building projects. The Policy sets minimum standards that staff should expect of work spaces but there may be different manifestations.

Action 3. University – consider further discussion/comment on whether there are industrial implications from the changes made to the Space Management Policy and, how any implications are best managed.

4. ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION – ACADEMIC SPECIFIC

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported on establishment of Scholarly Teaching Fellow (STF) positions. FEDUA is currently progressing one STF fixed-term position and another organisational unit is expected to process a further 2 positions shortly.

NTEU representative, Lance Dale commented that 3 STF positions fell short of UON's commitment to trialling an initial 10 STF positions and then offering a further 10 during the life of the Enterprise Agreement. Mr Dale also questioned that it was proposed these positions be fixed term.

Discussion followed as to how the positions would be advertised and how the success of the STF trial would be measured. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Andrew Parfitt noted an increasing awareness for STFs across the University and while appetite for the positions is not yet clear, the amount of interest in offering the positions will be the indicator of success. NTEU representatives indicated that as UON enters the budget cycle in 4 to 6 weeks' time progress on the STF positions would be expected. An update on STF positions was requested for the next ASCC meeting.

Action 4: University – provide update on STF positions at next ASCC meeting.

5. ACADEMIC REVIEWS

NTEU representatives requested an update on the reviews for FEDUA and FSCIT particularly the process of consultation with staff. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Andrew Parfitt reported that 2 half day sessions were scheduled with staff by the end of October. The first would look at visions and opportunities for 'creative industries' and the second session would focus on the IT/Computer Science aspects of bringing 'creative industries' together. Professor Parfitt explained that the reviews were about building a discipline not a diminution of capabilities in either 'creative industries' or IT.

NTEU representatives enquired whether staff would have the opportunity to attend and make comment at the half day sessions. Professor Parfitt responded that staff would have the opportunity to comment. However, as structure follows function, a change proposal for this area would not be expected by the end of the year.

6. CASUAL ACADEMICS

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro reported that throughout 2015, work has been undertaken by HR Services to improve and standardise the recruitment practices for casual academic staff at UON. It is expected that the outcome of this work will result in a more quality assured, merit-based and consistent approach to the recruitment, selection and appointment of casual academic staff. This will have positive impacts on both our casual academic staff and our institutional teaching and learning performance.

To support this objective, a Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Casual Academic Staff Guideline has been drafted. The purpose of this guideline is to provide Schools/Units with a best practice guide regarding the management of this process.

The following resources were consulted when drafting this guideline:

- HERDSA Guide for Quality Learning and Teaching with Sessional Staff
- TEQSA requirements
- Centre for Teaching and Learning resources
- Benchmarking of current practices at UON
- Benchmarking of current practices at other Universities

The guideline has been sent to the UON Academy Advisory Group for feedback. The Group includes representatives from Academic Division, Faculty of Business and Law, Faculty of Education and Arts, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Health and Medicine, Vice-Chancellor's Division and, Casual Academic staff.

Feedback has been received and is currently being reviewed. The final version of the guideline will be approved by the Director, People and Workforce Strategy. A roadshow will be undertaken in 2015 with all HOS and SEOs to talk them through the guideline. During 2016 qualitative feedback will be collected from the Schools who implement some/all of the recommended changes in practices. This feedback will result in further review of the guideline at the end of 2016.

The NTEU enquired whether NTEU Committee members could review and provide feedback on the Guidelines document.

Action 6. University – send copy of Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Casual Academic Staff Guideline to NTEU representatives to provide ant feedback by end of week.

7. GENDER EQUITY INITIATIVES

The Associate Director, Employee Relations, Paul Munro provided the Committee with a summary of UON gender equity initiatives, including:

Academic Women in Leadership (AWIL)

- Comprehensive program run throughout the year supporting academic staff with recent 2 day workshop held on 1 and 2 October to conclude this year's program.
- A similar program is expected to be run again next year.
- AWIL Alumni Function arranged for 9 October to facilitate networking and mentoring opportunities with current AWIL members.

Gender Pay Gap

- Mercer Job Evaluation methodology introduced this year to ensure an equitable and consistent approach to job evaluation and mitigate opportunities for unintentional gender bias.
- All new ongoing roles reviewed using Mercer methodology.
- Mercer Evaluation conducted on Senior Staff roles.
- Points system introduced for Senior Staff roles ensuring equitable and consistent approach to salaries and mitigate opportunities for unintentional gender bias in decision making.
- Currently reviewing Market Loadings for staff covered by Enterprise Agreement to determine if gender gaps exist.
- Review undertaken on commencing step levels with process introduced to mitigate inequities (approvals above Step 1 to be approved by Manager, Recruitment & Support Services).

Casual and Fixed Term Employment

- Data has been requested to compare the number of women and men on casual and fixed term employment (by level) to determine if there is a disproportionate number of women in these roles and if so, understand the reasons why.

Gender Pulse Survey

- Undertaken in September 2015 and currently working through analysis to inform future strategies.
- Responses from academic staff regarding equitable allocation of workload and service roles based on gender will be analysed noting that the new workload model should ameliorate previous concerns regarding consistency and accuracy of reporting of workload.

Researcher Advantage Program (RAP)

- HRS (including E&D Manager) currently working with Research & Innovation to align equity strategies with Researcher Advantage Program (currently in development). Women in Research Fellowship has been identified as a key priority area.

NHMRC

- Currently collating response for compliance with NHMRC's direction that UON has policies and procedures to support the progression of women in health and medical research due by end of 2015.

SAGE (Science & Gender Equality) – Athena SWAN Pilot Program

- Successful application by UON for participation in SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN (a first in Australia) based on successful UK accreditation program promoting women in the STEMM (Science, Teaching, Engineering, Maths and Medicine) disciplines.
- Demonstration of UON's continued commitment to gender equity/diversity commencing September 2015.
- Benefits include access to a valuable suite of resources and networks that will support EEO for women at UON.

Policy Update

- "Gender Inclusiveness Membership of University Committees Policy" currently being updated.

Gender Equity Plans

- Gender Equity Plans in place for all Faculties
- Gender Equity Plans supported by Faculty Committees to support implementation.

Employer of Choice for Gender Equity

- UON invited to apply for Employer of Choice again this year.

NTEU representatives notes and endorsed the above initiatives.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

NTEU representatives requested information on psych testing for senior staff appointments.

Discussion on this item was referred to the Combined Staff Consultative Committee meeting on 8 October 2015 to be addressed by the Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Sharon Champness.

NTEU representatives requested discussion on UON's contract with Transfield following the release of the Senate Inquiry report and community feedback.

Discussion on this item was referred to the Combined Staff Consultative Committee meeting on 8 October 2015 to be addressed by the Director, People and Workforce Strategy, Sharon Champness.

Meeting closed at approximately 12.00pm