ACADEMIC SENATE

Confirmed minutes of meeting 11/01 of the Academic Senate of the University of Western Sydney held on Friday 25 February 2011 at 9:30am in the Boardroom, Building AD, at Werrington North.

Present:
Associate Professor Paul Wormell (Chair)  Associate Professor Berice Anning
Dr Trevor Bailey  Professor Bobby Banerjee
Professor Stuart Campbell  Professor Branko Celler
Dr Maggie Clarke  Dr Carmel Coady
Dr Bronwyn Cole  Associate Professor Kevin Daly
Dr Sara Denize  Dr Betty Gill
Dr Stephen Janes  Professor Gregory Kolt
Professor John Lodewijks  Dr David Low
Professor Wayne McKenna  Mr Jason Pratap
Dr Penny Rossiter  Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl
Professor Geoff Scott  Ms Thea Seabrook
Professor Gary Smith  Dr Meg Smith
Professor Deborah Sweeney  Mr Sean Toohey
Mr Brett Wheldon  Professor Ian Wilson
Professor Yang Xiang

In Attendance:
Mr Martin Derby (Secretary)  Mr Jonathan Burrow
Ms Deirdre Lee  Mr James Fitzgibbon

Apologies:
Associate Professor Robyn Bushell  Professor Andrew Cheetham
Ms Liz Curach  Dr Peter Dallow
Associate Professor Craig Ellis  Ms Laurel Jackson
Dr Lauretta Luck  Ms Margaret Malak
Ms Robyn Moroney  Dr David Mutton
Associate Professor Janette Perz  Professor Jan Reid
Associate Professor Phil Ross  Ms Jeni Ryde
Professor Simeon Simoff  Professor Lynette Sheridan Burns
Professor Brian Uy  Associate Professor Steve Wilson

Absent:
Professor Michael Atherton  Dr David Burchell
Mr David Clarke  Professor John Ingleson
Mr David Lenton  Dr Swapan Saha
1.1 INTRODUCTION, WELCOMES, FAREWELLS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair of Academic Senate, Associate Professor Paul Wormell, chaired the meeting and welcomed those present, and introduced new members attending their first Senate meeting, as follows:

- Professor Gary Smith, appointed College of Arts Executive Dean from 22 November 2010; and
- Dr Sara Denize, recently appointed as Acting Associate Dean (Academic) in the College of Business.

The Chair congratulated Dr Carmel Coady on her appointment as Director of the Mathematics Education and Support Hub (MESH) on a half time basis.

The Chair noted, with regret, that Professor Andrew Francis, one of the two elected academic staff members from the College of Health and Science, had resigned from the Academic Senate, following his award of an Australian Research Council Fellowship from 31 December 2010. Associate Professor Francis had made an important contribution to the work of the Senate, and chaired the Education Committee’s Mathematics Expert Advisory Group.

The Chair, on behalf of the Senate, thanked Mr Jeff Warnock, recently retired from the position of Assistant Registrar (Academic Secretariat), for his long standing support for the work of the Academic Senate and its committees, acknowledging his experience and expertise. He wished him a happy and active retirement, and introduced the newly appointed Assistant Registrar (Academic Secretariat), Mr James Fitzgibbon, who had brought to the role extensive operational experience from his previous appointment in the School of Biomedical and Health Sciences.

Apologies as listed were noted.

1.2 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No members reported any conflict of interest in relation to agenda items.

1.3 STARRING OF ITEMS

It was agreed to star item 3.1 Report of the Chair of Academic Senate, as well as the items already starred, as follows:

- 3.3 Quality Management – AUQA Cycle 2 Audit
- 3.4 Academic Senate Work Plan 2010-2011
- 3.5 Examinations Policy - Quality and Standards
- 3.6 Academic Senate Standing Committees Policy
- 3.8 Excellence in Research Australia Presentation
- 4.1 Senate Executive Committee
- 4.2 Research Committee
- 4.3 Research Studies Committee
- 4.4 Education Committee
- 4.5 Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee
It was resolved (AS11:01/01):

*that the documents for all unstarred agenda items be noted and, except where alternative action is noted as appropriate, all recommendations contained in those items be endorsed.*

1.4 ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was agreed to delay item 3.3 Quality Management – AUQA Cycle 2 Audit to permit late-arriving members to be present.

It was noted that the report for item 5.1 Academic Staff Promotions Process was not yet available, and that the item should be removed from the agenda.

1.5 OTHER BUSINESS

**Academic Staff Promotions Policies, and Professional Development Program (PDP) for Academic Staff Policy**

It was suggested that the operation of the various Academic Staff Promotions Policies, and the *Professional Development Program (PDP) for Academic Staff Policy*, created difficulties because the timing of announcements of approved promotions and PDP leave was often delayed, making it difficult for staff to plan commitments – teaching, research, conference attendance etc.

The Chair agreed to refer the matter to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), and to report back at the next Senate meeting.

**2010 Annual Report of the Senate Academic Standards and Integrity Committee**

The Chair said that the 2010 Annual Report of the Senate Academic Standards and Integrity Committee had been circulated to Senate members in December, but omitted from the agenda. He tabled the Committee’s annual report, and said that the Committee had an important role in arbitrating on student appeals against college-level determinations. The fact that so few such appeals were received indicated that processes in schools and colleges were working well.

He thanked Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl, Deputy Chair of Senate, and other colleagues, for their work in processing the current appeals from students excluded for unsatisfactory academic progress.

1.6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Academic Senate meeting held on 29 October 2010 will be confirmed as a correct record at the next Senate meeting on 29 April 2011.
2 BUSINESS ARISING

2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 MINUTE 3.5 - PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE SCHOLARSHIP POLICY - AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS – INHERENT REQUIREMENTS

Without discussion, it was noted that arrangements were being made for the amended Research Higher Degree Scholarship Policy - Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents to be published on the Policy DDS.

2.2 MINUTE 3.6 – ASSOCIATE DEGREES

Without discussion, it was noted that the new Associate Degree Policy, and Associate Degree Course Advisory Committee Policy, had been published on the Policy DDS.

2.3 MINUTE 3.7 – COURSE TRANSFER POLICY

Without discussion, it was noted that the Course Transfer Policy had been published on the Policy DDS, and 

It was resolved (AS11:01/02):

to note the information provided on the issues raised in Academic Senate’s discussion of the Course Transfer Policy at the 29 October 2010 meeting.

2.4 MINUTE 3.10 - ADVANCED STANDING AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY, POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK POLICY – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CATER FOR POSTGRADUATE ACCOUNTING COURSES

Without discussion, it was noted that the amended Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, and the Postgraduate Coursework Policy, have been published on the Policy DDS.

2.5 MINUTE 3.11 - PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY – DELEGATIONS

Without discussion, it was noted that the amended Special Consideration Policy has been published on the Policy DDS.

2.6 MINUTE 3.12 - COLLEGE EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY

Without discussion, it was noted that the amended College External Advisory Committee Policy had been published on the Policy DDS.
3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 CHAIR’S REPORT

Senate had before it a written report from the Chair, covering activities undertaken on behalf of the Senate since 29 October 2010.

It was noted that the Federal Government had determined that funding for some of the work undertaken by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) would be restored, though it was not clear which current ALTC programs would continue.

The Chair reported on the value of meetings – several of which were covered in his report – with the Canadian Quality Network of Universities, established through contacts established many years ago by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality).

3.2 EXTENSION OF TERMS OF OFFICE OF ELECTED SENATE MEMBERS – AUQA AUDIT

Without discussion, it was noted that the Board of Trustees had approved the extension of the terms of office for Senate members, and elected members of Senate committees, to 31 May 2011, with elections to be arranged to fill the elected positions for new two-year terms beginning on 1 June 2011.

3.3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT - AUQA CYCLE 2

Senate had before it a paper “Action Plans for Implementing Priorities for Improvement in the AUQA Cycle 2 Portfolio, February to May 2011”, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality) tabled a paper “Academic Senate AUQA update”.

He reported that the University’s portfolio for the AUQA cycle 2 audit had been sent to the auditors.

The auditors were now requesting additional information, and identifying preliminary commendations, recommendations and affirmations, which they would test before and during the actual audit arranged for 9-12 May.

The tabled paper contained a list of questions that Senate members might expect to be asked, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality) asked Senate members to read the University’s portfolio, with the questions in mind, and the criteria the auditors would employ, namely, (as stated in the tabled paper):

1. Consistency and equivalence in practice not just on paper
2. Evidence-based approaches
3. Willingness to address agreed areas for improvement (see ACR action plans)
4. Use of successful practice – benchmarking for improvement

In response to a comment, in relation to the question …
“10. How does the new position of Associate Head of School (Learning and Teaching) relate to the School Academic Committees and assuring quality and standards at the local level?”

It was agreed that the agreed Associate Head of School (Learning and Teaching) position description would be circulated, and placed on the AUQA web-page.

The Chair asked Senate members to think of questions that he, or they, might be asked in the AUQA audit, and to send them to him.

3.4 ACADEMIC SENATE WORK PLAN 2010-2011

Senate had before it the Academic Senate Work Plan 2009-2011. The Chair reported that very few comments had been received when the plan had been circulated to College Education, Assessment and Progression Committees, and School Academic Committees.

Although a new Senate would be constituted from 1 June 2011, it was likely that many Senate members would continue to serve, and it was desirable that the plan was updated, with priorities identified, to allow a smooth transition to the new Senate. The Chair invited comments on the plan.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Clause (19) of the Examinations Policy currently under consideration (item 3.5 on the agenda), and the Assessment Policy: Criteria and Standards-based Assessment implied that the University undertook benchmarking with other institutions. However, there were no guidelines to indicate how this was to be done, and, in some circumstances, benchmarking might be a sensitive issue where data was being shared. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality) said that where staff, or discipline areas, or academic units, were considering benchmarking, it would be appropriate for him to be involved, and to obtain approval at Deputy Vice-Chancellor level, from the proposed partner institution. Benchmarking should involve similar universities to UWS (multi-campus, high proportion of first-in-family students, etc) and some fruitful work had been done with partners like Griffith University, and La Trobe University.
- The recent review of Learning Guides – which covered assessment in units – had not explicitly addressed whether unit assessment was compliant with the Assessment Policy: Criteria and Standards-based Assessment. It was suggested that a formal process involving School Academic Committees (SACs), and College Education, Assessment and Progression Committees (EAPCs), might be developed, noting that schools and colleges already had arrangements in place for approving unit results. In relation to the respective roles of SACs and EAPCs, it was suggested that there was a need for a review of the SAC terms of reference, and formal induction of SAC chairs, as, although the SACs discharged their functions in relation to results processing, their involvement in other academic quality assurance processes was patchy. The Chair reported that further training was being undertaken, with input from the Associate Deans (Academic), to ensure alignment with College-level processes.
• In relation to item 5.6 in the Workplan - “Development of improved monitoring and advising processes for “at risk” students” - it was suggested that this was a significant problem not just for first-year students, but also for students in later years who were struggling to pass units, often because they required academic literacy support. What was needed, often, was one-on-one tutoring. Support for first year students had improved, but it was imperative that support continued into the following years, if the University was to expand the intake of students, and successfully retain them. Providing appropriate support was very difficult in very large programs, with high student populations. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality) reported that Griffith University had also identified support for students beyond first year as a significant issue. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) said that the Education Committee’s Expert Advisory Groups were helping to develop long term strategies to address the future needs of students, at all levels, and coverage of what the University was doing was included in the AUQA portfolio. The Chair reported that the current review of the Progression and Unsatisfactory Progress Policy was looking at ways in which the University might offer better proactive support to students at risk.
• It was suggested that the University should be consistent in its terminology, and expressions like “compliance” and “compliant” were somewhat rigid and inflexible; terms like “quality check lists” perhaps implied a greater measure of flexibility and creativity, and might be used in exemplars issued for academic staff to use when developing learning guides.

The Chair asked Senate members to send him any further issues and points that might be relevant to the Senate Workplan.

POLICY MATTERS

3.5 EXAMINATIONS – QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Senate had before it a report from the Education Committee - “Examinations – Quality and Standards”, containing proposals for amendments to the Examinations Policy.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) reported that there had been a number of meetings, and considerable discussion about the philosophy, quality and standards for examinations, and the report contained a series of recommendations.

In relation to the recommendations for:
• the development of a quality assurance process for oral examinations;
• an internal benchmarking exercise for examinations; and
• a proposal that final examination papers should be uploaded onto the Library website …

…work was continuing.

The proposed Policy amendments covered recommendations relating to a:
• “…peer review process for moderation of exam questions and model answers (before the exam is submitted), and for moderation of the marking system …”; and the
• “…accountabilities of the roles of Unit Coordinator, Head of Program, and Associate Head of School, in relation to validity of examinations.”

It was suggested that the coverage of the report was welcome, as there was a need to institute better processes to ensure the quality of examinations, and a peer review system was critical. The University needed to move to more formal processes for the preparation of examinations, using tools like check lists, and peer review, possibly by external academic staff.

In discussion of the proposed Policy amendments, it was agreed that:

• clause (19) be changed to reflect the role of the School Academic Committee, so that the first sentence read:
  “Schools must have appropriate processes in place, endorsed by the School Academic Committee, to assure the academic quality of the examination papers.”
• Clause (20) c. referring to the Associate Head of School (Learning and Teaching) was too specific, and reference should be to the “Associate Head of School (Learning and Teaching) or equivalent.”
• An additional clause (28) e. should be included, referring to the Records Management Policy, to cover the storage and retention of examination scripts.

With the amendments as discussed ...

It was resolved (AS11:01/03):

to approve the proposed amendments to the Examinations Policy relating to quality assurance mechanisms, with effect from the date of publication of the Policy.

3.6 ACADEMIC SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES POLICY

Senate had before it a proposal for amendments to the Academic Senate Standing Committees Policy, relating to the membership of School Academic Committees (SACs) and College Education, Assessment and Progression Committees.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) said that the changes provided for the School Academic Committees to have Deputy Chairs, and for Heads of School to be members of the SAC, if they had nominated another individual as the Chair. The changes also took account of the University Executive’s decision that each School should have an Associate Head of School (Learning and Teaching).

It was resolved (AS11:01/04):

to approve the proposed amendments to the Academic Senate Standing Committees Policy, effective from the date of publication of the revised Policy.
3.7 AWARDS OF THE UNIVERSITY MEDAL

Without discussion …

**It was resolved (AS11:01/05):**

_to note the awards of the University Medal, approved by the Chair of Academic Senate, on behalf of the Senate._

**PRESENTATION**

3.8 EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AUSTRALIA PRESENTATION

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) reported on the outcomes of the recent Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) exercise.

He said that the results for each field of research were available on the Australian Research Council (ARC) website, and for UWS, on the University’s webpage at:

http://www.uws.edu.au/research/ors/era

The results might be interpreted in different ways, but UWS could be regarded as having done well. For example, UWS had achieved two “5”s (outstanding performance well above world standard), a “4” (performance above world standard) in Civil Engineering (where only two universities obtained a “5”), and many “3”s (average performance at world standard), in fields of research where many other universities had performed below this level.

Some small but important research areas had not been assessed, because they had not reached the publication threshold, for example Complementary Medicine.

The funding implications of the ERA were not yet clear, but would be announced in coming months. It was likely that funds would be allocated to high achieving areas, and would influence the allocation of scholarships.

It was apparent that ERA outcomes could be influenced by various strategies – for example, by the timing of new appointments, classifying some staff as teaching-only, and having the University named on publications by its adjunct staff. This had implications for the University which was recruiting a number of academic staff as part of its growth plans, and might consider incentives to increase research output.

It was suggested that there was a danger of losing sight of the University’s core business by altering behaviours to comply with the ERA methodology.

4 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES

4.1 SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Senate had before it the reports of the Senate Executive Committee electronic meetings held between 9 and 16 November, 13 and 20 December
2010, and 28 January and 3 February, 2011, and the 2010 Senate Executive Committee’s annual report.

Speaking to the Annual Report, the Chair of Senate reported that the Senate Executive Committee had considered urgent proposals for new and amended courses, articulation arrangements, new University scholarships and prizes, and minor policy changes, which could not wait for full Senate meetings.

It was resolved (AS11:01/05):

to note the report of the Senate Executive Committee e-meetings conducted between 9 and 16 November, and 13 and 20 December, 2010, and 28 January and 3 February, 2011.

to note the 2010 annual report of the Senate Executive Committee.

4.2 RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Senate had before it the minutes of Research Committee meetings held on 12 October and 30 November 2010, and 2 February 2011, and the Research Committee’s 2010 annual report.

Speaking to the annual report, the College of Health and Science Director of Research said that in 2010, the Committee focussed on strategic initiatives, including improving research culture by promoting Honours study, and monitoring the activities of research centres and groups.

It was resolved (AS11:01/06):

to note the minutes of the Research Committee meetings held on 12 October and 30 November 2010, and 2 February 2010.

to note the 2010 annual report of the Research Committee.

4.3 RESEARCH STUDIES COMMITTEE

Senate had before it the minutes of Research Studies Committee meetings held on 2 November and 7 December, 2010, and 1 February 2011, and the Research Studies Committee’s 2010 annual report.

Speaking to the annual report, the Acting Chair of the Research Studies Committee noted the growth in numbers of research higher degree students, the high quality of applicants for scholarships, a range of policy changes, and the three-minute thesis competition as highlights of 2010.

The Chair of Senate commended the work of the Research Studies Committee in sustaining and enhancing standards of research training.

It was resolved (AS11:01/07):

to note the minutes of the Research Studies Committee meetings held on 2 November and 7 December 2010, and 1 February 2011.

to note the 2010 annual report of the Research Studies Committee.
4.4 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Senate had before it the report of Education Committee meetings held face-to-face on 8 November and 13 December, 2010, and 7 February 2011, an e-meeting held between 20 and 22 December 2010, and the Education Committee’s 2010 annual report.

Speaking to the annual report, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) highlighted the Committee’s work on the assessment of attendance / engagement, and on “inherent requirements”, as priorities for 2011.

The Chair of Senate commended the work of the Education Committee in monitoring and improving academic standards.

It was resolved (AS11:01/08):

to note the reports of the face-to-face Education Committee meetings held on 8 November and 13 December, 2010, and 7 February 2011, and the e-meeting convened between 20 and 22 December 2010.

to note the 2010 annual report of the Education Committee.

4.5 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND COURSES APPROVALS COMMITTEE

Senate had before it the report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee (APCAC) meeting on 16 February 2011, and the APCAC’s 2010 annual report.

The recommendations contained in the report of the 1 December APCAC meeting had been approved by the Senate Executive Committee, on behalf of Academic Senate, at its e-meeting held between 13 and 20 December 2010, and reported at item 4.1.

In speaking to the Committee’s 2010 annual report, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) highlighted the Committee’s recent consideration of the new Science courses, and developments in the Engineering discipline.

It was resolved (AS11:01/9):

  to note the 2010 annual report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee, and the report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee meeting held on 16 February 2011, and ratify the recommendations contained therein, as follows.

(APCAC11: 01/07)

  to approve the major course variation to 1640 Master of Arts Translation and Interpreting Studies, consisting of the addition of two pool units, 101827 Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling and Captioning and 101826 Conference Interpreting, to both the Research Stream and the Off Shore Practical Stream, and removal of 100923 Conference Interpreting, to commence in Spring 2011. TRIM reference: D10/570439
(APCAC11: 01/08)

to approve the major course variation to 1602 Graduate Certificate in Interpreting and Translation consisting of the addition of two alternate pool units 101827 Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling and Captioning and 101826 Conference Interpreting and removal of alternate pool unit 100923 Conference Interpreting, to commence in Spring 2011. TRIM reference: D10/570397

(APCAC11: 01/09)

to approve the major course variation to 2689 Master of Professional Accounting, consisting of change to admission criteria to commence in Spring 2011. TRIM reference: D11/5199

(APCAC11: 01/10)

to approve the major course variation to 2691 Master of Accountancy, consisting of change to admission criteria to commence in Spring 2011. TRIM reference: D11/5200.

(APCAC11: 01/11)

to approve the major course variation to 2746 Master of Professional Accounting (Advanced), consisting of change to admission criteria to commence in Spring 2011. TRIM reference: D11/5196.

(APCAC11: 01/12)

to approve the course 2752 Bachelor of Communication/Bachelor of Laws, which replaces 2723 Bachelor of Communication Studies/Bachelor of Laws, consisting of changes to course name, handbook summary and to the course structure of the Bachelor of Communication component to commence in Autumn 2012. TRIM reference: D11/5552.

(APCAC11: 01/13)

to approve the unit set variation to KT2024 Financial Mathematics Key Program - within 2739 Bachelor of Business and Commerce - consisting of changes to the course structure including moving 200057 Investment Management from Year 2 to Year 3, addition of 300580 Programming Fundamentals, transfer of 200488 Corporate Financial Management from Autumn to Spring and addition of a new unit 300795 Computational Finance to commence in Autumn 2012 TRIM reference: D10/608555.

(APCAC11: 01/14)

to approve the major course variation to 3506 Bachelor of Computer Science and 3634 Bachelor of Computer Science (Advanced), consisting of change to structure to commence in Autumn 2012. TRIM reference: D10/622456

(APCAC11: 01/15)

to approve the minor unit variation to 700026 Physics (UWSC) consisting of changes to contact person, addition of equivalent unit 900036 Physics (UWSC), changes to learning outcomes
and unit content and re-alignment of learning outcomes with
assessment items, to commence in Term 1 2011. TRIM
reference: D10/631826.

(APCAC11: 01/16)
to approve the minor unit variation to 900036 Physics (UWSC)
consisting of changes to contact person, addition of equivalent
unit 700026 Physics (UWSC), changes to learning outcomes
and unit content and re-alignment of learning outcomes with
assessment items, to commence in Term 1 2011. TRIM
reference: D10/630413.

(APCAC11: 01/18)
to approve the unit variation to 900009 Programming Design
(UWSC) consisting of changes to learning outcomes and
alignment with assessment items, to commence in Term 1

4.6 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees most recent meeting was held on 23 February 2011
2010.

The next meeting is scheduled for 13 April 2011. Summaries of Board of
Trustees meetings, and minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, are available

5 FOR INFORMATION

5.1 ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS PROCESS REPORT

It was noted that the report for this item had not been provided before the
meeting by the Office of Human Resources, and the item was removed from
the agenda.

6 NEXT MEETING

The next Academic Senate meeting was arranged for Friday 29 April 2011

Senate meeting dates for the remainder of 2011 are as follows:

- Friday 29 April 2011
- Friday 24 June 2011
- Friday 19 August 2011
- Friday 28 October 2011
- Friday 9 December 2011 (provisional meeting - to be held if
  necessary)

All the meetings start at 9.30 AM, and would be held in the Board Room,
Building AD, at Werrington North