MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ANCILLARY STUDENT FEES AND CHARGES
REGULATING COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER 2007

PRESENT
Associate Professor Jane Long (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) - Convener
Mr Peter Curtis (Registrar)
Mr David de Hoog (President, Guild of Undergraduates)
Dr Patrick Finnegan (Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences)
Ms Sue Smurthwaite (Manager, Education Policy Services)

BY INVITATION
Mr Nik Barron (President Elect, Guild of Undergraduates)
Ms Clare Hannell (Guild Education Officer)

APOLOGIES
Ms Jo Lamparski (President, Guild Education Council)
Mr Dominic Rose (President Elect, Guild Education Council

Ms Caroline Mitchell – Executive Officer

1. ANCILLARY STUDENT FEES AND CHARGES – REF: F10172

Members had before them Faculty submissions for ancillary fees, being new fees and charges proposed for 2008, minor amendments to existing fees and charges, and fees levied in 2007.

The Committee considered each Faculty submission in turn, as follows:

A. Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts

A member questioned the legitimacy of the Faculty charging for the field trips to Melbourne and Kendenup listed on the Proforma for new fees. These had been levied in 2007 but had not previously been endorsed by the Committee. It was agreed that in this case the charges were acceptable under the Guidelines for ancillary fees but had been levied illegitimately in that only fees and charges approved by both the Faculty and the central Committee should be levied on students. These fees had not followed this process. It was further agreed that the letter to the Dean in respect of Ancillary Student Fees and Charges for 2008 should reaffirm the principal that all fees and charges must be approved by the Regulating Committee prior to being levied on students.

The Committee discussed the amendment to the method of charging for the Epilog Laser Cutter. The inclusion of a $5 charge for administration was an issue of concern on two counts, firstly that it did not represent the recovery of “actual costs” (as outlined in the guidelines at Policies and Procedures, point 1., section 3, page 11) and secondly that it could be seen as a “general unspecified fee or charge”. It was decided, therefore, that the administration charge was not allowable, and that the Faculty should be reminded that an ‘actual cost’ should not include faculty staff time. It was unclear whether the additional $5 fee if etching were included in the job represented an administrative charge. If this was the case the same strictures outlined above would apply. The Faculty would be asked to clarify this point.

Submission endorsed noting amendment listed above.
B. Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

The Committee discussed the visa charge of $665 included in the travel component of the proposed new fee for units INDO3309 and INDO3310 Indonesian In-Country program. The Faculty had clearly listed the fees which made up the visa charge and the Committee was satisfied that no administrative charges were included, and that the proposed fee to be levied was for visa associated costs and only therefore a component, under the Guidelines, of travel.

Submission endorsed.

C. Business School

The proposed charges of $2500 for mentoring costs to an industry mentor associated with the unit MGMT8639 (taken within the Graduate Certificate in Technology Commercialisation) and unit MGMT8638 entitled “Small Business Excellence” were discussed.

Members expressed concern at the levying of “mentoring costs” as a component of a University’s unit, a fee that was levied on students (as noted in the proforma) by way of a contractual agreement with an industry partner. It was noted that a number of faculties utilised members from industry or their profession for the provision of teaching/tutoring/mentoring and that relaying a cost to students for this type of teaching as an ancillary fee was not acceptable. Members further noted that the experience offered by the industry partner would be beneficial to the students and further noted that these were fee-paying units. It was suggested that a more transparent approach, especially for students, would be for the Faculty to increase the fee levied for the program, which appeared to be both a Graduate Certificate and a component of the MBA, and that it not be incorporated as an ancillary fee. Members were unclear, however, as to why this had not been the initial approach by the Faculty. It was unclear from the documentation what the faculty’s approval had been based on, within the context of the Guidelines.

It was agreed that the Committee seek further information on this matter and that a meeting with the Business School was required (the Regulating Committee to be represented by the Chair and two Committee members). Following this meeting the Chair would circulate to all Committee members a way forward on this issue for discussion/endorsement.

D. Faculty of Education

A member questioned whether the Working with Children Check would span the professional years of students who applied for it in the early years of their Education degree. It was noted that the Faculty had been questioned on this point and that they had confirmed that the Working with Children Check would span students’ professional years.

Submission endorsed.

E. Engineering, Computing and Maths

Submission endorsed.

F. Law

Submission endorsed.

A member advised the Committee that formal proceedings were currently taking place regarding the provision of incorrect materials by the Faculty in examination(s) in 2007. It was noted that this matter had not yet come to the attention of the Regulating Committee.

G. Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences

Submission endorsed.
H. Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

The Committee discussed the proposed increase in refundable bond for 1st year dental students, up from $85 to $400. It was agreed that the increase was allowable under the guidelines. Members were concerned, however, that it could represent an undue burden on students and it was agreed therefore that the letter to the Dean in respect of Ancillary Student Fees and Charges in 2008 should indicate that it would be the Committee’s preference for a lesser amount to be levied on 1st year dental students, if possible.

Submission endorsed.

I. Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Submission endorsed.

A member advised that, during the year, the School of Animal Biology had raised a proposal to levy the insurance excess (approximately $1,000) on students if they had an accident in a faculty vehicle. The School confirmed that use of the faculty’s vehicle was to provide transport to postgraduate students undertaking a component of their PhD. The School was advised that this would be regarded as an ancillary fee and, as such, should be referred to their Faculty Reference Group for Ancillary Fees and the Dean of Faculty for endorsement before submission to the Ancillary Student Fees and Charges Regulating Committee.

This proposed fee had not been listed in their recent submission and it was noted that the matter was still being considered by the Faculty.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

A member advised that there was some concern amongst the student body regarding the issue of internet charges, specifically that some Faculties were not providing a large enough quota and were too reliant on the free access available to students in the library. The Chair advised that a study on this topic was taking place via the auspices of the Information Services Program Committee.

On a general note it appeared that some Faculties were unclear on certain aspects regarding Student Ancillary Fees. The two main areas being (i) what constituted a fee or charge and (ii) what the correct process was for recording fees levied during the year and submitting new fees for approval by the Regulating Committee. It was therefore decided that it would be beneficial for the Chair to hold an information session, sometime in the middle of next year, with the Chairs of the Faculty Reference Groups and the Administrators within the Faculties who were responsible for preparing the yearly submissions.