MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE HELD IN THE SENATE ROOM ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH MARCH 2015

PRESENT

Dean of Coursework Studies as Chair (Professor Grady Venville)
Deputy Chair of Academic Board (Professor Mark Israel)
Dean of Graduate Research and Postdoctoral Training (Professor Alan Dench)
Academic Secretary (Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy)
Associate Director, Admissions Centre (Dr Anne Mills)
Associate Director (International Admissions), International Centre (Ms Katherine Webster)
Academic Coordinator, Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) (Dr Kathy Sanders)
President of the Guild of Undergraduates (Ms Elizabeth O’Shea)
Nominee of the President of the Postgraduate Students’ Association (Mr Nassif Nazir Kesavath)
Chair of each Faculty and School of Indigenous Studies Teaching and Learning/Education Committee, or nominee of the Dean:
    Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts (Ms Sophie Giles) (Deputy Chair)
    Faculty of Arts (Associate Professor Hélène Jaccomard)
    Faculty of Business (Professor Alison Preston)
    Faculty of Education (Associate Professor Grace Oakley) (Associate Chair)
    Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (Professor Michael Johns)
    Faculty of Law (Ms Penny Carruthers) (for Dr Natalie Skead)
    Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (Professor Sandra Carr)
    Faculty of Science (Professor Brendan Waddell)
    School of Indigenous Studies (Mr Grant Revell)

Executive Officer (Ms Jan Cardy)

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Kath Williams, Academic Policy Services (Deputy Executive Officer)
Mr Maxwell Keeble, Academic Policy Services (Support Executive Officer)
Ms Benita Hube, Academic Policy Services (Support Executive Officer)

APOLOGIES

Faculty of Law (Dr Natalie Skead)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the Curriculum Committee and introduced the executive officer support team to members.

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared a conflict of interest in relation to item 5, New Course Proposals: Master of Studies and Graduate Certificate in Studies and informed members that the Deputy Chair would Chair this item.

1. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

The following items were noted en bloc:

1.1 Meeting Dates in 2015 for the Curriculum Committee – Ref: F68755
1.2 Curriculum Committee Webpage – Ref: F68755
2. BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HONS) SELECTION GROUP – REF: F37849

Members noted that the Academic Council by R89/10 approved the establishment of a selection panel for ranking applicants for admission to the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) degree course under the auspices of the [then] Board of Studies (BPhil).

Members were advised that the panel had been re-established as a Selection Group under the auspices of the newly constituted Curriculum Committee with delegated authority to oversee the selection process and report the outcomes to the Curriculum Committee on an annual basis.

Members noted that to accommodate the establishment of this Selection Group the Curriculum Committee constitution had been amended, a copy of which had been attached to the agenda for members’ consideration. Also attached for members’ approval were the Terms of Reference amended to reflect the new committee structure.

**RESOLVED – 1/15**

that Curriculum Committee endorse the consequential changes to the attached (Attachment A) constitution and refer to the Education Committee for approval;

**RESOLVED – 2/15**

that the Curriculum Committee approve the consequential changes to Terms of Reference for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) Selection Group, as set out in the agenda attachment.

3. MODUS OPERANDI FOR THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – REF: F68755

In accordance with the Committee’s practice, the Chair briefly outlined the role and operation of the Committee and the expectations of its members, which would be guided by the following University policies and practices:

- Constitution of the Curriculum Committee
- Principles for the Operation of Committees
- Rules for the Operation of Committees
- University Committee Members’ Code of Conduct
- The Effective Committee Member

An induction package provided to members offered easy access to information on the protocols for best practice in committees including the above policies and practices as well as course development criteria and links to relevant curriculum policy. Members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the induction information and use this as a resource during their term of appointment.

Members briefly considered and discussed the role of the Curriculum Committee, in particular the approval process for new curriculum and changes to curriculum.

It was further noted that as a standing committee of the Education Committee, the Curriculum Committee was subject to annual review by its members by way of a survey. Members were therefore, also encouraged, during the course of the year, to raise any issues associated with the committee’s activities and processes which might improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

4. UWA EDUCATION PORTFOLIO – PRIORITY PROJECTS 2015 – REF: F70534

Members noted that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) had identified the following top three priority projects for the Education portfolio:

- To lead and inspire the development, delivery and support of a world-class student experience throughout UWA;
- To successfully implement the Education Futures vision and engage in a process of continual improvement of student education; and
- To build a shared culture within the Education portfolio based on communication, collaboration and cooperation.
Members had before them a document outlining strategies in support of these priorities. The Chair invited discussion on the role of the Curriculum Committee in supporting and progressing these priorities.

Members were advised that further information was available from the Education Portfolio website.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- A review of 1000 units (Carpe Diem) had commenced and the flow on from this was still to be determined by the Centre for Education Futures. However, it was noted that there might be an increase in requests for changes to units, and that requests for such changes would be assessed and managed in accordance with the University Policy on Changes to Units; and
- That the delivery of a new student academic orientation experience, piloted by the Faculty of Science, had been well received by students. It was envisaged that this would run for all faculties;

The Chair also foreshadowed current plans for undertaking a review of courses, commencing with Cycle 1, and a review of assessment, and that further details, once finalised, would be made available for members’ information.

5. **NEW COURSE PROPOSALS: MASTER OF STUDIES AND GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN STUDIES – REF: F70534, F70588**

By way of background, members noted that the introduction of new courses in 2012 had resulted in all undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses at UWA being aligned with a consistent structure and policies that were compliant with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). While there was considerable flexibility in the postgraduate course structure, it had been difficult for faculties to develop multidisciplinary courses and for students to select subjects from a broad range of disciplines. The proposed courses therefore, had been developed to enable students with interests in any subject area across the University to work in close consultation with the course advisor to develop a plan of study that was unique to their academic, professional and personal interests and, at the same time, academically robust and rigorous.

As the Chair had earlier declared a conflict of interest with regard to this item, the Deputy Chair led the discussion by way of inviting the Dean of Coursework Studies to introduce the following new Cycle 2 course proposals for offering from 2016:

- Master of Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Studies

It was pointed out that the concept of the proposed Master of Studies was initiated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Community and Engagement) based on his previous experience at the Australian National University where a similar course at that university had been successful with high enrolments, particularly of alumni.

In addition, the University’s Executive had endorsed the concept of the Master of Studies in December 2014.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- The appointment of a course advisor, who would play a pivotal role in advising students on course content and in determining suitable unit offerings in negotiation with faculties, was crucial;
- The proposed courses, which would draw on existing Level 4 and Level 5 units, were AQF compliant;
- Although the courses had been designed as full fee paying, it was noted that discussions were underway in relation to the distribution of course income between the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), which would be responsible for coordinating the course centrally, and faculties delivering the units;
- There was broad discussion about the concepts of ‘breadth units’ and ‘specialisation units’, and it was clarified that the term ‘specialisation’ in these proposals was not used in the same context as specialisations of a master’s course within a generic degree course structure. It
was suggested that the term ‘specialisation’ should therefore, be replaced by the phrase ‘disciplin ary depth’ as commonly used in the Australian Qualifications Framework or by the phrase ‘cross-disciplinary depth’ to reflect its multidisciplinary nature.

- It was pointed out that the proposed course would not be suitable for international student visa holders;
- Although the proposed courses might provide students with the flexibility to pursue studies in a range of disciplines, it was agreed that the term ‘flexibility’ required clarification so that it would not be misleading for students. It was clarified that flexibility fundamentally referred to the freedom that students might have in selecting units comprising the course rather than the mode of study for this proposed course;
- The admission requirement statement should be amended to provide clarity for prospective students; and
- That the Master of Studies by coursework and dissertation might potentially provide the pathway to PhD study.

RESOLVED – 3/15
that the proposal to offer a Master of Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Studies from 2016 be endorsed by the Curriculum Committee and referred to the Education Committee for consideration subject to the following minor amendments:

- that the admission requirement statement be amended to read as follows: ‘To be considered for admission to this course an applicant must have a bachelor’s degree, or an equivalent qualification, as recognised by UWA’;
- that the term ‘Specialisation” be replaced by an appropriate phrase as minuted above and;
- that it be clarified in the proposals that the flexibility of the course related to the choice of units only.

6. NEXT MEETING
Members noted that the next meeting of the Curriculum Committee had been scheduled for Wednesday 8th April, 2pm-4pm.
Curriculum Committee (Constitution)
(Academic Board Resolution 139/14)

This committee operates in accordance with the Principles and Rules for the Operation of Committees. Members must act in accordance with the University Committee Members' Code of Conduct.

Position of the Committee within the University of Western Australia
1. The Curriculum Committee is a standing committee of the Education Committee.

Role
2. The role of the Committee is to—
   (a) consider and make recommendations to the Academic Council on proposals submitted through the appropriate process for the introduction of new curriculum offerings, including articulation agreements and major changes to curriculum;
   (b) advise and make recommendations to the Education Committee on policy and strategic matters relating to the academic structure and framework of coursework courses;
   (c) provide coursework curriculum development advice to faculties, other University bodies or officers as appropriate;
   (d) review, as directed by the Chair of the Education Committee, any aspect of undergraduate and postgraduate coursework.
   (e) formulate and review appropriate schemes, funded from (but not limited to) the Education Committee’s annual budget, to support the University’s education portfolio.

Membership
3.(1) The Committee comprises:
   (a) the Dean of Coursework Studies (as Chair);
   (b) the Deputy or Associate Chair of the Academic Board;
   (c) the Dean of Graduate Research and Postdoctoral Training;
   (d) the chair of each faculty and School of Indigenous Studies teaching and learning/education committee, or nominee of the Dean;
   (e) the Academic Secretary;
   (f) the Associate Director, Admissions Centre
   (g) the Associate Director (International Admissions), International Centre
   (h) the Academic Coordinator for the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours);
   (i) the President of the Guild of Undergraduates or nominee;
   (j) a postgraduate coursework student nominated by the President of the Postgraduate Students’ Association
   (k) up to two co-opted members, if required for balance or specific expertise.
   (2) The Chair may appoint a Deputy Chair and an Associate Chair from among the members to perform essential duties under delegated authority.
   (3) The Chair may invite one or more persons to attend meetings to provide advice on specific areas or agenda items.
   (4) Co-opted members are appointed for two years and may be reappointed for a second term only.

Members' Absence and Nominees
4.(1) In the event that a member is unable to attend a meeting, that member may nominate a person to attend that meeting in their stead.
   (2) Nominations must be in writing and received by the Executive Officer prior to the relevant meeting.

Skills and/or qualifications of members and nominees
5. It is desirable that members and nominees have a leadership role within the education portfolio in their respective functional area, or other leadership role related to teaching and learning, and this important role is to be taken into account when nominees are appointed.

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Quorum
6. The quorum for the Committee is half the current membership plus one.

Decisions
7.(1) Each member has a vote.
    (2) The Chair has an ordinary vote and a casting vote.
    (3) Decisions are made by a majority of the members present and voting.

Frequency of Meetings
8. The Committee normally meets up to six times each year in the months of February to November but may meet more frequently if required.

Delegations
9. (1) Where new curriculum proposals and major changes to existing curriculum comply with approved policy, the Chair, Deputy Chair or Associate Chair have delegated authority to steer such proposals direct to the Academic Council for consideration.
    (2) The Committee delegates to the Chair or to the Executive Officer, as appropriate, the responsibility to consider and approve minor curriculum changes or administrative changes as part of the annual curriculum change process or the fast-track change process.
    (3) The Committee delegates to the Chair the responsibility to consider and determine academic results that are not routine in nature, e.g. the award of joint-honours classifications
    (4) The Committee delegates to the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) Selection Group oversight of the selection process for admission to the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) degree course and to make and action decisions that are within the parameters of established Terms of Reference.

Decision-making and communication maps
Local decision-making map
Local communications map

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