A meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday 7 March 2011 in rooms 1.05/1.06, The Chancellery (G34), Gold Coast campus.

MINUTES

PRESENT:
Chair – Professor Sue Spence
Dr Kevin Ashford-Rowe
Associate Professor Peter Bernus
Professor Gillian Bushell
Professor Nick Buys
Ms Rebecca Curran
Associate Professor Glenn Finger
Professor Lorelle Frazer
Dr Cathy Jenkins
Associate Professor Wendy Loughlin
Professor Keithia Wilson
Invited for Agenda Items 7.0 and 8.0
Dr Duncan Nulty
Ms Cathy McGrath
Ms Karen van Haeringen

APOLOGIES:
Ms Kathy Grgic
Dr Robyn Hollander
Professor Kerri-Lee Krause

Secretary – Ms Lea-Anne Stafford

1.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1.1 The action sheet from the 7/2010 meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee were taken as read and confirmed.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP

The Committee welcomed Professor Sue Spence as the incoming Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The Committee warmly welcomed new student member Ms Rebecca Curran. Ms Curran is enrolled in the Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science at the Gold Coast campus.

A warm welcome was also extended to the following members returning to the Committee for a further term:
- Dr Cathy Jenkins
- Professor Keithia Wilson

SECTION A: RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

3.0 GOVERNANCE OF ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

3.1 The University’s governance arrangements for assessment are central to the issue of setting and monitoring academic standards and these are outlined in the proposed Governance of Assessment and Academic Achievement Standards procedure (2011/0004505).

3.2 Professor Nicholas Buys, Chair of the University Assessment Committee, introduced the Governance of Assessment and Academic Achievement Standards
document, designed to accompany the Assessment Policy, and to outline the committees and the positions within the University responsible for making recommendations and decisions in relation to assessment matters. This document sets down the good practice that is already occurring across the University. Dr Duncan Nulty, GIHE, Ms Karen van Haeringen, Secretariat and Ms Cathy McGrath were in attendance for this item.

3.3 As a point of clarification, members agreed with the suggestion that the following sentence in section 3.0 be revised (change tracked):

“The functions of the School Assessment Board may not be carried out executively by the Chair of the School Assessment Board.”

3.4 In response to a question about the executive role of the Dean (Learning and Teaching) in undertaking what was previously undertaken by Faculty-level Assessment Boards, Ms van Haeringen brought members’ attention to section 4.0 of the document which enables the Dean (Learning and Teaching) to appoint an assessment panel to assist them with a range of student assessment responsibilities.

3.5 Members were advised that the principle (described in section 3.0) of not allowing a School Assessment Board Chair to executively undertake functions delegated to the School Assessment Board is intended to facilitate due process and quality decision making about assessment matters, particularly as Deans (Learning and Teaching) will be acting executively on Group assessment matters. It was determined that Groups, via their Dean (Learning and Teaching) will need to establish any conditions under which this standard principle might not apply.

3.6 The Chair expressed her appreciation to the University Assessment Committee and Assessment Policy working party members for their ongoing efforts towards the implementation of a new University approach to assessment.

Resolution

3.7 The Learning and Teaching Committee, on the recommendation of the 1/2011 University Assessment Committee (21 February) resolved to:

- recommend to the Academic Committee the adoption of the Governance of Assessment and Academic Achievement Standards document, as described in revised document 2011/0002759 that includes the minor revision described in paragraph 3.3 above;
- recommend that Deans (Learning and Teaching) identify the unique circumstances under which School Assessment Board Chairs within their Group can act executively on Assessment Board matters.

4.0 STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSES (SEC) AND TEACHING (SET)

4.1 The Student Evaluation of Courses (SEC) and Teaching (SET) policy describes the University’s approach to course review by its students. This document was last revised in 2010 after the implementation of the online Evaluations@Griffith.

4.2 An Evaluations Advisory Group, comprising systems and academic staff, has been established by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) to serve as a forum regarding system issues being experienced by users.

4.3 The Chair spoke to proposed changes to the SEC and SET policy, as described in document 2011/0002756. These revisions are recommended as a result of discussions at the Evaluations Advisory Group. Further changes will be presented to LTC members at a future meeting on the basis of ongoing Advisory Group consultations.
4.4 Members discussed the recommended change to the timing of data collection from weeks 10-14 to weeks 12-14. The view was expressed that a more concentrated time for students to respond between weeks 12-14 may yield a higher response rate at a more timely point in the semester when the majority of course and teaching requirements have been completed.

4.5 Conversely, it was argued that a shorter evaluation period at this point in the semester may result in a reduced response rate with up to a possible 8 multiple survey requests being sent to students at a time when they are most heavily engaged in assessment. The LTC undergraduate student member commented the opportunity to evaluate a course after all assessment has been completed would be valuable. However, the Chair noted that this issue had been discussed previously by Academic Committee and it had been decided to administer the surveys before the final exams.

4.6 It was agreed to recommend to Academic Committee that the survey timing would take place between weeks 12-14, and that the effect of this shift should be monitored.

4.7 It was recognised that course-level promotion of the evaluation tools is essential so students can see how they contribute to future course improvements through the evaluations process.

4.8 Members supported the policy revision enabling course convenors, in some instances, to request an earlier survey period via their Dean (Learning and Teaching). The Committee also supported the policy revision that encourages greater use of the Course Review and Improvement Report.

4.9 The Committee discussed a number of issues around data access and privacy, particularly in relation to student responses to open-ended questions. It was noted that further recommendations would be presented to Learning and Teaching Committee around these issues at a future meeting.

Resolution

4.10 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend to the Academic Committee the adoption of the revised Student Evaluation of Courses (SEC) and Teaching (SET), as described in 2011/0002756.

SECTION B: ACTION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Nil.

SECTION C: RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS TO OTHER COMMITTEES

5.0 UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT POLICY REVIEW

5.1 In response to recommendations in the 2008 Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Audit Report and Federal Government policy directions aimed at assuring quality of University educational outcomes, the University established the University Assessment Committee in late 2009. Part of the brief of this Committee is to recommend changes to the University's Assessment Policy to ensure it supports high quality assessment practices and reflects contemporary thinking around consensus moderation processes. A draft of the revised Assessment Policy (2011/0002757) was provided with the agenda to contextualise the discussion, and contained a number of changes that reflect these directions including:

a) clear statements on principles and practices underpinning assessment
b) inclusion of statements regarding consensus moderation and its role in enhancing quality of assessment practices

c) removal of processes that are viewed as inconsistent with a quality approach to assessment. These include changes to the availability of deferred assessment, special consideration and supplementary assessment, and removal of the grade of Pass Concedes (PC), in line with practices at many other Universities.

5.2 The University Assessment Committee (UAC) sought advice from LTC members regarding three key proposed changes to the Assessment Policy to enable UAC to continue its work. A discussion paper prepared by Dr Duncan Nulty of the Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE) was provided to members to facilitate discussion.

5.3 Professor Nicholas Buys, UAC Chair, introduced this item. Dr Duncan Nulty, GIHE; Ms Karen van Haeringen – Head of the Secretariat; and Ms Cathy McGrath – Director, Student Administration were welcomed to the meeting to participate in this discussion.

5.4 The first proposal considered by LTC was a recommendation to remove the Pass Concedes (PC grade) from the Griffith grading schema. There was very strong support for this proposal. Members noted some programs do not allow PC grades to meet degree requirements while others allow the maximum number of three PC grades. The view was expressed that the PC grade is the basis for numerous appeals, can be confusing to both students and employers, and is inconsistent with certification in some disciplines such as Health. Members supported the argument that removing the PC grade would improve consistency across all programs and assist the maintenance of assessment standards.

5.5 The second proposed policy amendment was a shift to a grading schema of 1-7 with 3 Fail grade levels. While members gave in-principle approval to this shift, there were divergent opinions and much debate about the inclusion or removal of grade descriptors. It was recommended that a scan of other institutions’ use of grade descriptors be undertaken and some draft descriptors be prepared to facilitate further discussion on this matter.

5.6 In discussing the proposal to offer supplementary assessment for end of semester examinations only, the following arguments were put forward:

- the number of requests for supplementary assessment and deferred examinations has increased significantly in recent years, particularly instances of multiple requests from the same students. It was argued that this has become an equity issue
- supplementary assessment is awarded on a case-by-case basis
- course convenors will continue to be able to exercise discretion in granting extensions for all other non-examination based assessment.
- members were pleased to learn the conditions under which a supplementary may be awarded have been strengthened in the proposed policy changes.

The Chair requested some statistics around the issuing of supplementary examinations be prepared to assist ongoing deliberations.

5.7 A query about the proposed method of addressing student appeals against marks and student appeals against grades in the revised policy. Members will be updated on the approach being proposed for the new policy at the next meeting.

5.8 It was also suggested Academic Committee members might be able to contribute to these assessment policy issues at a future meeting.

Resolution
5.9 The Learning and Teaching Committee, on the recommendation of the 1/2011 University Assessment Committee (21 February) will receive a further submission from the University Assessment Committee’s (UAC) in response to its feedback regarding the proposed changes to the Assessment Policy as described in document 2011/0002757.

a) removal of the Pass Conceded (PC) grade from the assessment grading schema, and that statistics would be produced on the number of PC Grades and Supplementary examinations awarded and some analysis be undertaken about the impact of removing the PC grade on the number of supplementary examinations;

b) a shift to a grading schema of 1-7 including 3 Fail grade levels;

c) ongoing discussion about the inclusion or removal of grade descriptors with a recommendation that further investigation occur on the grade descriptors used across the higher education sector, and that some possible descriptors be drafted for consideration by UAC.

6.0 GRIFFITH GRANTS FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING GUIDELINES; AND GRIFFITH AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING GUIDELINES

6.1 The Educational Excellence Committee (EEC) annually reviews the Griffith Learning and Teaching Grants as part of its standard activities. This year’s review is particularly important in light of the change higher education environment.

6.2 The Chair of EEC introduced an issues paper outlining the following recommendations that aim to enable targeting of learning and teaching priority areas in preparation for a future TEQSA review and strengthen the University’s return on grant investment.

- introduction of a two-tiered scheme comprising a University-level Fellowship and Grant scheme, and a Group-level grant scheme. These two tiers will replace the existing four-tier scheme.
- it was noted the introduction of a new fellowship scheme will enable salary buyout for senior academic staff/teams to undertake strategic projects within the University, subject to approval from their Head of School, Dean (Academic) and Group PVC.

6.3 Members gave ‘in principle’ support for the recommended changes outlined in the paper. The Committee considered two options for the distribution of Group-level grant funds: according to EFTSL, or by an equal allocation to each Group. It was agreed that some indicative figures would be produced to ensure an equitable division of grant monies.

6.4 It was noted that Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching Guidelines revisions will be made in line with those outlined in the issues paper and presented to a future Learning and Teaching Committee meeting on the recommendation of the Educational Excellence Committee.

6.5 The Chair of EEC also introduced a discussion paper regarding several proposed changes to the Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching Guidelines; namely:

- creation of a new priority area under the Excellence in Teaching category of “large classes”
- a change of title for the Program Award to the “Programs and Teams that Enhance Learning Award”
- addition of a ‘widening participation’ area to the Program and Teams that Enhance Learning category
- alignment of the Excellence in Teaching Group award areas with the University’s academic groups and moving away from discipline categories
• addition of a new Vice Chancellor's Award for the strongest recipient of the four Group Excellence in Teaching Awards.

6.6 Members gave in principle support to these policy revisions. The Committee was also informed that the Chair of EEC and Secretariat staff were meeting to discuss some further potential changes to the Griffith Awards and Citations schemes for presentation to EEC, and Deans (Learning and Teaching) prior to documentation being presented to Learning and Teaching Committee.

Resolution

6.7 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to:
   a) give in principle approval to the proposed revisions to the Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching Guidelines and ask the Educational Excellence Committee to rework the Guidelines for presentation to the Learning and Teaching Committee at a future meeting.
   b) ask the Secretary to prepare some figures that enable comparisons between the EFTSL or equal distribution method of grant monies and circulate them to relevant Deans for discussion with their Group executive.

6.8 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to:
   a) give in principle approval to the proposals outlined in the tabled Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching discussion paper and ask the Educational Excellence Committee to rework the Guidelines for presentation to the LTC at a future meeting.

SECTION D: MATTERS NOTED, CONSIDERED OR REMAINING UNDER DISCUSSION

7.0 THE ROLE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

7.1 The role of the Learning and Teaching Committee as documented in its revised constitution comprises recommendations to the Academic Committee on strategic planning, policy, and quality assurance issues in relation to learning, teaching, the student learning experience, and delivery of curricula.

7.2 The Chair introduced the new-look Committee, reformed as an outcome of the 2010 Academic Committee (and its sub-committees) Review, and now chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) as one strategy to place appropriate significance on learning and teaching activities at Griffith. Members noted other changes including streamlining of Committee membership, and revised functions that incorporate responsibilities around learning environments and educational resources such as physical spaces, technological and information. This is a particularly important responsibility given the disestablishment of the Learning Environment Committee and the INS Learning and Teaching Portfolio Board, a board formerly responsible for strategic input into, and approval of, the University's plans for its portfolio of information projects and services that support the University's learning and teaching priorities.

7.3 It was agreed that the Director, INS (Learning and Teaching) would bring pertinent items before the Committee when decisions and advice is required on INS learning and teaching projects, services and learning spaces or when new technology or activities are adopted. Members noted that information may also be sought from the Director, Campus Life on learning space matters.

7.4 The Director, INS (Learning and Teaching) briefly outlined the University's Enterprise Information Capital Plan (EICP) and Enterprise Information Recurrent Plan (EIRP), key plans that document the range of information services projects to which funding has been committed. The next meeting will include a presentation on the status of current learning and teaching projects.
8.0 CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

The Chair reported on the following items:

8.1 Australian Learning and Teaching Council
The Chair, EEC updated members on likely changes resulting from the closure of the ALTC. It was noted that further information will be forthcoming during March.

8.2 2011 ALTC Fellowship applications
Members were pleased to note the following three applications submitted by the University for ALTC Fellowships on 25 February 2011. Successful Fellows will be announced by ALTC in late May 2011.
- Professor Ross Guest
  Disciplinary Leadership for Developing a National Strategy to Embed Threshold Concepts, as a Foundation for Academic Standards, in Undergraduate Economics Education
- Dr Scott Harrison
  Improving academic standards through innovative pedagogies for the Higher Degree Research students in Performing Arts
- Professor Alf Lizzio
  A systems approach to enhancing student learning outcomes and improving teaching quality

8.3 ALTC Success – 2006 - 2010
Members had before them two charts highlighting the University ALTC success from 2006 – 2010. The Chair expressed her appreciation to all staff involved in achieving these outcomes for Griffith, including GIHE and Secretariat staff and individual and team applicants.

8.4 Implementation of the Principles to Promote Excellence in Learning and Teaching Practices at Griffith
Members noted the following website developed by the Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE). It provides a range of strategies and resources to assist staff to implement the 7 Principles to Promote Excellence in Learning and Teaching Practices at Griffith. The Chair emphasised the importance of all staff having viewed these principles. Members were encouraged to bookmark the site and visit it when searching for teaching ideas or undertaking course or program review.

8.5 2010 Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching
The Committee noted the list of the 2010 Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching recipients provided with the agenda.

8.6 Service Learning
The Chair foreshadowed a paper that will be presented to a future LTC meeting about the Service Learning project designed to complement the University’s Work-integrated Learning (WIL) activities. Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that is the practical application of discipline-based theory and knowledge within a community and/or not-for-profit organisational context. Service Learning will allow Griffith to achieve WIL goals in disciplines where it may be difficult for students to be located in paid commercial contexts.

9.0 OTHER BUSINESS
9.1 The Committee debated the use of videoconferencing facilities for future meetings and agreed that Logan campus venues would be booked for all planned videoconferenced meetings, where possible.

10.0 REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE AND OTHER COMMITTEES

10.1 The minutes and/or action sheets of the following Committees were noted:
   a) Educational Excellence Committee - Nil
   b) University Assessment Policy – 8/2010
   c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusive Curriculum Development & Implementation Working Party - Nil
11.0 2011 COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

11.1 The remaining 2011 Meeting Schedule was noted. All meetings are held on Mondays from 10.00am – 12.30pm. The first and last meeting will be face to face and the remaining meetings will be video-conferenced between the Gold Coast, Nathan and Logan campuses.

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<td>4 April</td>
<td>Nathan / Gold Coast / Logan</td>
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Minutes confirmed by:

Professor Sue Spence, Chair 4 April 2011