GRiffith University

Learning and Teaching Committee

A meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee was held on 7 November at 10.00am in Room N54_2.02, Bray Centre Nathan Campus.

Minutes

Present:
Professor John Dewar (Chair)
Professor Stephanie Short
Professor Bill Shepherd
Professor Lex Brown
Professor Paul Turnbull
Dr Heather Alexander
Mr Dave Edwards
Dr Alf Lizzi
Professor Michelle Barker
Dr Rodney Stewart
Mr Paul Jolly
Professor Lorelle Frazer
Ms Carmen Vassallo
Professor Royce Sadler
Dr Michael Crock
Professor Joy Cumming
Mr John Swinton
Dr Joseph McDowell

Secretary: Christine Grimmer
Karen van Haeringen

Apologies:
Professor Neil Dempster

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the 2/2005 meeting were not circulated prior to the meeting and are to be confirmed at the 4/2005 meeting.

Section A: Recommendations and Reports to Academic Committee and Its Sub-Committees

2.0 Annual Program Monitoring Reports

2.1 The University requires that all undergraduate programs be evaluated on an annual basis with an emphasis on using performance indicators to make strategic adjustment to programs. The process for undertaking an annual program review is detailed in the Guidelines for Annual Undergraduate Program Monitoring (03/0046).
2.2 The committee had before it the 2004 Annual Program Monitoring documents for review:
- Griffith Health Group, Dean’s Annual Program Monitoring Review Report (2005/0037529)
- Griffith Business School, Dean’s Annual Program Monitoring Report

2.3 Professor Stephanie Short was asked to present, on behalf of the Pro Vice Chancellor Health, a summary and comment on the Dean’s Griffith Health Annual Program Monitoring Review Report 2004. Professor Short thanked the Dean of Health, Professor Debra Creedy, for preparing the report and noted that the Health Group was created in 2005 through an amalgamation of the Faculty of Nursing and Health and the Faculty of Health Sciences, the merger of Psychology into the Health Group, and the inclusion of the new Schools of Medicine and Dental and Oral Health, and that the Group as such did not exist as an organisational unit in 2004, the year now being reported. Overall there had been an integrative effect with the identification of common intellectual and historical knowledge informing programs for the accreditation process however, the changes had resulted in an excessive demand on academic and general staff.

2.3.1 In her summary Professor Short commented that the Health Group was anxious to hasten processes prioritised in the Strategic Plan but that 2005 had been a challenging year in terms of offering new programs including the first new dental program in 60 years, and a suite of Oral Health programs.

2.3.2 Professor Short noted that:
- Programs in the Group continue to receive High demand across all programs with resulting Improvements in OP scores.
- The Psychology Programs continue to perform well in terms of admissions and course experience questionnaires
- Current reviews being undertaken in the Group will result in better alignment of programs and courses
- There is central support for common activities
- There have been excessive demands on staff
- There are ongoing difficulties with finding clinical placements
- Throughout 2005 a key issue for the Group has been compliance with a broad range of accreditation requirements in the environment
- Student retention is variable
- Financial restraints
- Increased competition

2.3.3 This Group, because of the vocational outcomes of its programs, continues to have poor enrolment in honours and as a result some consideration is being given to honours pathways being embedded in courses. In particular, Professor Short noted that the 2005 discipline review considered the issue of Honours in Medical Science and is looking at strategies in 2nd and 3rd years for increasing the interest and capacity for research.

2.3.4 Members of the Committee suggested other strategies for improving honours enrolments such as more highly structured majors, greater emphasis on research inquiry based courses, introduction of the intercalated honours model and enhanced mentoring of high achieving students.

2.4 The Chair thanked Professor Short for the summary of Health Group’s report and noted that formulation of summaries of the Annual Program Monitoring Reports provided an opportunity for Groups to evaluate their progress in meeting the priorities of the Strategic Plan and to identify the biggest challenges to meeting University targets.
2.5 Professor Bill Shepherd was asked to present, on behalf of the Pro Vice Chancellor for the Business Group, a summary of the Annual Program Monitoring Report for the Business Group. Professor Shepherd noted that the summary was based on the Group’s response to, and performance against, the priorities of the Academic Plan and demonstrated how the Group sought to embed the University’s signature experiences in its programs.

2.5.1 Professor Shepherd noted that the review processes of programs revealed considerable overlap, which made it difficult to obtain consistent data for 2004/2005.

2.5.2 Following the review, and in keeping with the priorities of the Academic Plan, the Business Group removed a considerable number of small programs and integrated its offerings into 5 generic programs with one consistent structure, including one major and one minor, and provided the opportunity for courses to be both disciplinary and multi-disciplinary in the ‘Griffith’ sense. This new program structure enables greater specialisation in 2nd and 3rd years.

2.5.3 The Business Group’s Teaching and Learning committee will oversee the new structure over the next two to three years and program directors will be responsible for implementation supported by three learning support staff and a number of volunteer academics whose focus is to help students through the first year, to support and therefore improve retention.

2.5.4 Professor Shepherd noted that, while the Griffith Business School has attempted to meet targets in the Academic Plan such as raising the quality of undergraduate students and generic programs as well as reducing courses, a number of flagship programs have been maintained.

2.5.5 Professor Shepherd noted that the Griffith Business School has the largest proportion of international students at the University, more than 1200, and that the School has a range of issues to address with this student cohort such as plagiarism. It was noted that learning support staff in the Griffith Business School have a significant role to play in supporting international students in the University’s degree programs.

2.5.6 In reply to a query about any potential difficulties for second and third year students resulting from the removal of some courses and rationalisation of others, Professor Shepherd noted that while there will be students graduating with aberrant degrees for some time because, legally, all programs have to be offered for the current cohort, steps have been taken to minimise the possibility of 3rd year courses being undertaken before 2nd year courses, and a transition plan is in place.

2.6 The Chair noted that the Learning and Teaching Committee will be asked to consider a paper on Plagiarism/Academic Integrity at a meeting in the near future.

2.7 The Chair thanked Professor Shepherd for his summary and noted that the report shows a sustained attempt by the Business group to match the priorities of the Academic Plan.

Resolution
2.8 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend to Academic Committee the Annual Program Monitoring Reports for the Health Group and the Business Group.

3.0 FINAL REPORT OF THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN THE CURRICULUM – INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STUDIES WORKING PARTY

3.1 The Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee established the Inclusive Practices in the Curriculum – Indigenous Australian Studies Working Party at its 5/2003 meeting to recommend strategies to promote the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as well as engage the wider community in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

3.2 The Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee, at its 1/2005 meeting, considered the Working Party’s preliminary report which contained a number of recommendations under the following: Engaging Communities; Engaging Students; and Engaging Staff. The Committee at that meeting agreed to ask the Working Party to address the following question:

What do we need to do better to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in our Learning and Teaching activities?

3.3 The Learning and Teaching Committee now had before it the Working Party’s Final Report, June 2005, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges at Griffith, (2005/0007564). The Chair of the Working Party, Professor Sharon Bell attended the meeting to speak to the final report.

3.4 Professor Bell noted that both the preliminary and final report make two main recommendations:

1. That Aboriginal knowledges be embedded in existing and new courses and that this is the responsibility of all individuals who are involved in the design and delivery of courses; and

2. That Griffith establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges Centre to develop a strategy for expanding and embedding knowledges including the establishment of a network for the purpose of discussing strategies.

3.5 Professor Bell noted that the Equity Budget has some capacity to match funds for the inclusion of an indigenous staff cohort across the University.

3.6 In discussion, members made the following comments:

- That, because there is no wide understanding of what is meant by indigenous knowledges, further thought and discussion are required to respond in a comprehensive way and for attitudes and understandings to change.

- That the report is welcome and the university should learn from the lessons of the previous failure of the indigenous studies major – in particular that it was insufficiently staffed.

- That appointment of indigenous staff is an effective way of embedding indigenous knowledge.
- That there is support for the model of working via a centre as this has been effective in the Canadian context.
- That a workshop to explore the nature of indigenous knowledges is recommended as it opens a dialogue for discovery.
- That the report required some additional work to flesh out the concept section in Appendix A.

Solution

The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend to the Academic Committee the final report, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges at Griffith* (2005/0007564) with the advice that some additional work be done to flesh out the concept in Appendix A and that the recommendation for establishment of a Centre be made consistent with Academic Centres Policy for forwarding to the Vice Chancellor for approval.

4.0 LEARNING AND TEACHING GRANTS

4.1 Griffith University has established and supports a number of award and grant initiatives to encourage, recognise and reward those who demonstrate excellence and innovation in their teaching and supervision. A “Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching” scheme for 2006 has been designed, primarily to support innovative approaches to learning and teaching consistent with the Griffith Academic Plan 2 and also to identify candidates for the Carrick Institute’s proposed Grants scheme.

4.2 The Learning and Teaching Committee had an initial discussion at the 2/2005 meeting about a draft scheme, Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching (2005/0035269).

4.3 At the 2/2005 meeting, members agreed with the concept of the scheme and requested that additional detail be provided including fuller definitions of each type of grant, an alternative name for the prototype grants, and a clearer explanation of the purpose and scope of individual grants.

4.4 The Learning and Teaching Committee now had before it for consideration the revised Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching (2005/0035274), which included an expanded rationale and definitions, and a revised title for the second tier grants, now called Signature Grants as outlined below:
- Institutional – *Strategic Program Grants* (Four grants at $100,000 each)
- Interdisciplinary/disciplinary – *Signature Grants* (Four grants at $50,000 each)
- Individual – *I Grants* (Eight at $10,000 each)

4.5 The Chair noted that the Institutional Grants category - Strategic Grants – is intended to support the University’s Strategic Plan rather than initiatives of individual enthusiasts and will give priority to proposals linked to work-integrated learning, research-based learning, graduate outcomes, and student retention. The second category of grants is directed primarily to Schools or program convenors and the third category is directed primarily towards individuals. This framework reflects and is intended to feed into the Carrick Grants scheme.

4.6 Members commented that the due date of the Griffith Grants at the end of Orientation week is challenging and that this does not permit a long period of advertising however it was recognised that there is an urgency to commence the process as preparation for meeting the timeframes of the Carrick Grants. The timeframe is also designed to have grants applications ready for selection at the May meeting of the Educational Excellence Committee.
4.7 Members sought clarification that an interim Grant report would be due on 31 October and that this would be a report against milestones. This was confirmed.

4.8 The Chair suggested that the amount for Signature Grants read “up to” $50,000.

Solution

4.5 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend that the revised Griffith Grants for Learning and Teaching (2005/0035274), subject to the inclusion of the amendment requested in item 4.8, be forwarded to the Academic Committee for approval at its November meeting.

5.0 CARRICK AUSTRALIAN AWARDS FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING - FUNDS

5.1 The Learning and Teaching Committee was asked to establish a policy for expenditure of award monies received by successful Griffith winners of the Australian Awards for University Teaching. A draft policy, Carrick Australian Awards for University Teaching Funds (2005/0035279), was put before the Learning and Teaching Committee for its consideration.

5.2 The Committee was advised that staff members in the past have had difficulty in spending funds and there was no percentage of award monies directed back to the University to enhance learning and teaching activities. The policy before the committee recommended that 60% be available for use by the individual for conference and research related expenses, and 40% be directed back to the University for further learning and teaching work.

Solution

5.2 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend that the draft policy, Carrick Australian Awards for University Teaching Funds (2005/0035279), be forwarded to the Academic Committee for approval at its November meeting.

SECTION B: ACTION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

nil

SECTION C: OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS
(TO PERSONS/COMMITTEES OTHER THAN THE PARENT COMMITTEE(S))

nil

SECTION D: MATTERS NOTED, CONSIDERED OR REMAINING UNDER DISCUSSION

6.0 ACADEMIC PLAN – DEFINITIONS OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING AND RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING

6.1 The Griffith Academic Plan sets targets for work-integrated learning and research based learning for Groups in line with the University wide targets in the Strategic Plan. Articulating these University-wide targets for the purposes of implementation requires the development of definitions for these terms. At the 2/2005 meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and
Learning) advised the Committee that progress had been made on the drafting of definitions of Work-integrated Learning (WIL) and Research-based Learning to support priorities and targets in the Academic Plan 2. These targets recommend that 70% of programs will show identifiable components of work-integrated learning and research based learning by 2010.

6.3 The Chair noted that the targets in the Academic Plan 2 are stretch targets and are designed to initiate a necessary and significant shift in performance in these areas. Further, it was noted that for the targets to be workable, staff must have a clear understanding of what represents robust work-integrated learning and research based learning within courses.

6.4 Revised definitions for work-integrated learning (2005/0035278) and research-based learning were now before the Committee for its consideration. Members made the following comments:

- there is some difficulty with aligning aspects of the definition that deal with intentional and accredited/assessable workplace learning and the variety of workplace experiences that currently count as workplace learning.

- It would be dangerous for Griffith to remove activities that don’t fit the definition but which are authentic workplace learning.

- It will be a challenge to explicate the theory/practice connection. The inclusion of statements indicating a clear rationale, e.g. that it enhances students’ employment prospects or builds their vocational identity could be helpful.

- association with the term ‘capstone’ here could be problematic as it usually applies in the ‘Griffith sense’ to integrative courses/experiences that occur on the later years of a program whereas work integrated learning may be included in the initial year/course of a program.

- Members expressed concern about the targets and suggested that requiring 70% of programs to have identifiable research based learning components may be too ambitious. It was suggested that even 50% may be ambitious. There was concern that the terms “component” and “identifiable” may not be clear enough to allow for reliable assessment and monitoring.

6.5 The Chair requested that the Head of Secretariat incorporate members’ comments into the revised definition documents in the form of policy templates for circulation to members for approval via Quickplace.

Solution

6.6 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved that the definitions of work-integrated learning and research-based learning be re-written as policies and circulated via Quickplace for approval by members.

7.0 CARRICK INSTITUTE AWARD SCHEME 2006 – STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

7.1 The Learning and Teaching Committee at its 1/2005 meeting considered drafts of Carrick Australian Awards for University Teaching (2005/0035256).
7.2 The approved guidelines for the CAAUT are now available on the Carrick Institute Website and include a new student feedback questionnaire. The student questionnaire does not include improvements either in the language or scope of the questions and there is some concern that students may have difficulty completing it without some explanatory context. The Learning and Teaching Committee discussed the student feedback questionnaire (2005/0035277) and recommended communicating its shortcomings to the Carrick Institute.

Solution

7.3 The Learning and Teaching Committee resolved to recommend that advice be sent to the Carrick Institute regarding the shortcomings of the student questionnaire via the new awards seminar on November 10th.

8.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

8.1 GRIFFITH AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

8.1.1 Applications for the 2005 Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching (GAET) and the Faculty Learning and Teaching Citations closed on September 25.

8.1.2 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) noted that the 2005 response to the GAET was a considerable improvement on the number of nominations converting to applications in 2004 and, along with the excellent response to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Citations, signalled a pleasing commitment to the recognition and rewarding of good teaching at the University.

8.1.3 Selection sub-panels for the seven categories GAET met in the week of October 10 – 14 to rank applications and recommend winners for awards. Chairpersons reported the decisions of the selection sub-panels to the Educational Excellence Committee for endorsement at its 1/2005 meeting.

8.1.4 The Education Excellence Committee at its 1/2005 meeting approved the recommendations of the selection sub-panels for winners of the 2006 Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching and for twenty-two Faculty Learning and Teaching Citations. The awards were announced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) on World Teachers Day, October 28, in a message to Staff (2005/0035280).

8.2 LEARNING AND TEACHING NEWSLETTER

8.2.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning has initiated a project to establish a Learning and Teaching Newsletter with the working title, Griffith Learning Community. The purpose of the newsletter is to:

- report on national policy developments and offer some analysis of how they will impact on Griffith;
- provide information about major initiatives and events within the University;
- provide space for speculations about future developments;
- identify 'hot' topics in current learning and teaching debates, and
• celebrate the successes and achievements of our staff and students.

8.2.2 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) will utilise the services of FLAS and the Manager Learning and Teaching Strategy to produce between six and eight editions of the newsletter annually. The first edition is scheduled for circulation in December.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee will be held on Thursday 15 December at 10.00am at N54_2.01, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus.

Confirmed: ........................................

(Chair)

Date: ........................................