

**RECORD OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2009 VIA TELECONFERENCE**

Present:

Mr John Cameron (Chair)

Professor Gabrielle McMullen

Mr Chris Sheargold

Dr Tony Stokes

Ms Di Stevens

Mrs Diana Chegwidde

Mr John Sinclair

Professor Marie Emmitt

Ms Glenis Davey

Professor Gail Crossley

Mr David Keegan

Mr Geoff Woodward

Ms Rachael Bahl

Mr Peter Blakey

Apologies

Professor Peta Goldberg

In attendance:

Ms Pauline Croxon

Ms Valerie Corbett (note taker)

1 WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

The meeting commenced at 3.30pm.

2 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, welcomed all members to the ACUSCC meeting, asked that attendees be recorded and apologies be noted.

4 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2009

Mr Cameron called for any comments regarding the notes of the previous meeting. With minor amendments - to correct the spelling of Ms Bahl's name; and to correct a typing error in General Business (sports to spots) - the notes were accepted.

5 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 *Professor McMullen to organise a review of the Academic Workloads Policy in September 2009*
Professor McMullen advised that she will meet with the Deans next week to set up a working party. Terms of Reference for the working party will include: Timelines, Membership and Policy Review. Professor McMullen noted that the working party may include an elected staff member.

5.2 *Chair of the ACUSCC to look into the issues raised by Ms Davey re reports of bullying and harassment*

Mr Cameron advised that the University had a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment; this is evidenced by a number of human resources policies. He added that the Human Resources

Directorate was considering strategies to inform staff of bullying and harassment issues and policies. Planned strategies included:

- a roll out of information sessions in a form to be decided; and
- providing information to staff on pathways to getting assistance.

The ACUSCC was asked to comment on how to get the message out, especially the message of zero tolerance and enhancing it through education.

Ms Davey suggested that the training could include social inclusion. She considered that, in light of the University's Mission Statement, the training would be well received well by staff.

No comments were received on the other action items.

6 STANDING ITEMS (ATTACHMENT 1)

The Reports were received by the Committee.

7 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

7.1 Library Restructure

Mr Sheargold commented that a lot of issues were covered in the Report. The role of the Director has existed for 13 years in its current form. Although there had been incremental changes to the Library structure over this time, the current plan represented a radical restructure. A reasonably large number of staff would be moved from a campus-based to University-based focus. This would involve the centralisation of some areas. Changes in the management structure would give staff more opportunities to interact with the University community in the way it has developed in the last few years. In many ways, Mr Sheargold has been a de facto coordinator of Liaison Librarians who do not fit into any part of the old structure. In the new structure, it is expected that the Liaison Librarians will be able to organise themselves as well as interact with the University.

Mr Sheargold invited comments or questions regarding the restructure.

Ms Bahl commented that:

- There had been a lot of consultation and most people shared Mr Sheargold's assessment.
- The new structure would be better for Liaison Librarians marketing themselves in the University and also interacting with Mr Sheargold.
- Staff had concerns regarding the impact of the restructure on their positions.
- Concerned staff should have the opportunity to be assisted in the placement process.
- There could be an equity issue where some staff were redeployed according to their substantive position when they had been acting in a higher position for a significant period.
- The director of Libraries position should be a full time one even if it was shared by two people.

In addition, Ms Bahl asked:

- Whether equity in services at the University was being delivered by the new structure and whether any analysis of this had been done;
- Whether there would be any budget savings;
- Whether there would be some increase in costs such as for the shipping of books; and

- Whether some staff had been 'left out' of the restructure?

Mr Sheargold responded that:

- It was difficult and too early to be too definitive about who will end up where in the new structure.
- The process is complex because there are a lot of part time staff to be taken into account.
- Some staff have guessed about where they will fit in the new structure on the basis of the organisational chart, but it is likely that there will be resignations before the implementation of the restructure which will give the Library more flexibility.
- Transfers will be based on substantive positions, not acting positions in the first instance, but then efforts will be made to recognise service in acting positions.
- Where there are promotional opportunities, there will be a top down approach to filling positions, with higher positions being filled first.
- He understood staff's concerns; however he was aware that Ms Bahl had circulated an email asking people where they thought they would fit in the structure.

Ms Chegwidden remarked that staff should focus on the principles of the placement process and asked if staff felt there was inequity there.

Ms Bahl commented that:

- She considered that the placement principles were sound.
- Staff were reading the placement policy with the organisational chart in mind, and where they were in the chart.
- Staff understood that there may be some competition for positions.
- People with concerns should have a person to assist them on the placement committee.

Ms Chegwidden commented that having a staff member on the placement committee would take it outside the normal operation of a committee of this type. The placement committee is similar to the selection committee in the recruitment process, and a friend or representative would not be involved in such a committee.

Ms Davey asked if it would be possible to have an elected staff member on the placement committee, and noted that this would assist both the local and the overall processes. Ms Davey added that, although staff had been 'technically' told about the restructure, a further teleconference would assist in allaying their anxiety. Ms Davey commented that she would like to see a local staff member representative at each level, or a staff member representative at the national level.

Mr Sheargold responded that it was not possible to have a local staff representative to comment on national issues.

Ms Croxon asked for clarification from the NTEU as Ms Bahl had raised the issue of a staff member being available *to assist* staff through the placement process, while Ms Davey talked about a staff *representative* on the Placement Committee.

Ms Chegwidden suggested that the Placement Committee could include an observer, such as the Equity and Diversity Officer who attends academic probation and promotion committees as an observer. Professor McMullen commented that she would like to consider this proposal.

Mr Sheargold raised the question of the accountability of such an observer and Ms Chegwidden responded that the observer would be accountable to the Director of Libraries.

Mr Sheargold objected strenuously to the proposal of an observer. While he did not object in principle, he did not accept that an observer should be present on the library placement committee when there is no observer on other placement committees.

Ms Bahl clarified that she did not intimate that the library placement committee needed observing; her view was that individual staff members should be assisted and supported.

Ms Croxon suggested that staff needing support should use the Employee Assistance Program, to which all staff have access. However, Ms Bahl considered that the EAP counsellors would not be qualified to deal with the anxiety caused by particular workplace/placement issues.

Mr Sheargold commented that he understood that people would be anxious in the context of any restructure. He did not accept that there should be special treatment in respect of the library. He noted that two thirds of the library staff would continue in exactly the same positions. Others would transfer to different units but would maintain the same salary levels. He conceded that some staff would transfer to jobs they felt were not ideal. His primary concern was to ensure that staff ended up with a job at the same grade. If positions were left over, promotional opportunities would be available.

Mr Keegan agreed that the process should be the same for all restructures. However, some library staff feel that the library restructure is different in that it appears to be a *fait accompli*, and that staff did not have sufficient opportunity to contribute.

Mr Sheargold responded that the library restructure was a fair process and that the final restructure document was the result of a large number of revisions, mostly based on staff suggestions. As a result, he did not agree with the library structure being treated differently. He objected to the statement that the restructure was a *fait accompli*.

Ms Bahl agreed that the library should not be singled out for special treatment. She simply thought that staff should be supported while going through the restructure.

Ms Davey commented that the University used to have staff representatives on all committees and that the NTEU would be pursuing this in enterprise bargaining. However, she commented that she had no criticism of the process, and was well aware of the responsiveness.

Mr Sheargold stated that he will visit all library staff during the next stage and was happy to consult staff again.

Mr Blakey asked two questions:

1. Will staff placed in challenging roles be supported?

In answer, Mr Sheargold referred to Point 9 of the restructure document which states that staff will be given support. Mr Sheargold stated that strategies would be developed to provide this support. Those staff who were placed in a position that was quite different from their current position would be the most affected, and the support strategies would be tailored to the individual situation.

2. In terms of equity, would staff be considered against the jobs that they were currently doing?

Ms Chegwidden responded that if a staff member had been acting in a position for two or more years, and if their performance had been satisfactory, that staff member could be placed at the level of the acting position.

7.2 Research Services Restructure

Professor Crossley advised that both formal and informal meetings had been held in Sydney and Brisbane. She noted that staff had been very supportive and that no formal comments had been received.

Mr Blakey stated that he had spoken to Research Services staff in Brisbane, and supported what Professor Crossley said. Mr Keegan also supported this statement.

7.3 University Relations Restructure

It was noted that Ms Ruzzene was not available to speak to the committee and that comments/questions would be taken on notice.

No comments or questions on the University Relations restructure were received.

Ms Chegwidden advised that there was no organisational chart with the restructure document that had been circulated and undertook to send the chart to the committee following the meeting.

ACTION: Ms Chegwidden to circulate copies of the University Relations Organisational Chart to the committee.

8 WORKLOADS POLICY

Dr Stokes spoke to the Workloads Policy Terms of Reference.

He suggested that, as a result of the post-Bradley higher education environment facing ACU and the Universities Strategic Plan, the University should:

- Evaluate the time taken to complete the various tasks listed in the workloads document to measure how long it actually takes to do the tasks listed, such as consultation with students and preparing a lecture.
- Examine how the policy will manage the additional requirements of accreditation agencies at state and national levels.
- Consider the impact of changes in other university policies and procedures on the workloads document and how that will be managed.
- Investigate the application of workloads policy across Schools and Faculties for consistency, transparency and equity.
- Develop a formal process for dispute resolution in regards to the workloads policy and consider the most effective role of HR in this process.
- Examine the workloads document for any areas of internal inconsistency.
- Investigate the impact of the research policy on the allocation of research hours in the workloads policy to staff members.
- Assess the consequences of the application of the research policy on the quantity and quality of teaching by staff members and their subsequent implications on industrial and employment relations policies.
- Investigate the likely impact of the workloads policy on staff retention and recruitment.

Dr Stokes also brought the issue of equity in teaching loads to the attention of the committee. He stated that some staff were teaching 60-70% of a full teaching load.

Professor McMullen thanked Dr Stokes for his comments and welcomed comments from staff and the NTEU. Professor McMullen stated that the Workloads Policy would be reviewed and welcomed further input.

Ms Chegwidden agreed with Dr Stokes that it was important to ensure that the Workloads Policy, other policies and the Enterprise Agreement were aligned and enterprise bargaining should be viewed as an enabler to allow us to move forward, not as a restrictor.

Professor McMullen advised that Mr Campbell was working on the workloads software in order to resolve some of the issues that had emerged. She saw the software as providing a means of transparency which would assist the University in achieving equity in workloads. However, in some faculties there appears to have been a misinterpretation of the policy, and as a result, some staff were working too few or too many hours. She regarded the teaching load of 28 hours per week for staff as unacceptable.

Ms Davey raised several issues in relation to the implementation of the workloads policy and related matters as she had been approached by a large number of staff about this matter. Staff support the University's Strategic Plan, however, there were concerns raised about academic management. In some faculties there was little communication on workloads and not enough lead time prior to implementation. Ms Davey also noted some continuing difficulties in using the software. She suggested a more systematic approach, with Head of School training following the policy review, and implementation within agreed timelines. This approach would give staff time to concentrate on their teaching and research.

Ms Davey also commented that some Heads of School appear not to have read the Workloads Policy, or have read it and do not follow it. She added that there was often no planning in terms of sessional staff teaching duties; for example by consultation with Lecturers in Charge. This would impact in both research and teaching.

Professor McMullen responded that, if the University is given advice of specific cases, the Deans will be able to work with the Schools concerned.

Professor Emmitt added that she was aware of some problems and would welcome feedback.

Ms Chegwidden endorsed what Professor McMullen had said. She commented that some schools were excellent in managing workloads and that others let staff and student down. Ms Chegwidden referred to the work of Human Resources in looking at ways to cut back and streamline processes, particularly to ensure that sessional staff were paid on time and she welcomed suggestions for improvements.

Professor McMullen added that Human Resources would be working with her and the Heads of Schools next week to consider strategies to streamline processes.

Ms Davey stressed the importance of timelines, and noted that in the union there was sign off on timelines. She referred to the 'devastating' impact of not getting information to Timetabling on time.

Professor McMullen responded that service level agreements on all processes, including timelines, were being developed in Student Administration and other areas, and noted that this came out of the Strategic Plan.

ACTION: Dr Stokes to email his notes regarding the Workloads Policy Terms of Reference to the note taker

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr Blakey enquired about a recent report on the Faculty of Business. Professor McMullen responded that the Vice Chancellor had commissioned a report by Professor Kiel ,which was now being considered by the University. She added that the position of Dean of the Faculty of Business had been advertised and candidates would be shortlisted soon.

As there was no other general business the meeting closed at 4.50 pm.

10. NEXT MEETING:

The next ACUSCC meeting will take place on 12 November 2009.

11. ACTION ITEMS

Actions	Completed
Ms Chegidden to circulate copies of the University Relations Organisational Chart to the committee	Forwarded on 5 November 2009
Dr Stokes to email his notes regarding the Workloads Policy Terms of Reference to the note taker	Completed 3 September 2009