

**RECORD OF A MEETING OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON  
12 MARCH 2009 VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**Present:**

Mr John Cameron (Chair)	Professor Gabrielle McMullen	Mr Geoff Woodward
Ms Diana Chegwidan	Professor Gail Crossley	Ms Glenis Davey
Dr Tony Stokes	Mr Chris Sheargold	Mr David Keegan
Professor Marie Emmitt	Associate Professor Marea Nicholson	Mr John Sinclair

**In Attendance:**

Ms Sybilla Wells (Note taker)    Mr Rodney Pumpa    Ms Valerie Corbett

**Apologies:**

Mr Jeremy Gauder    Mr Peter May  
Ms Anne Szadura

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The meeting commenced at 3:30pm. The Chair, Mr John Cameron welcomed members of the committee to the meeting, listed the attendances and asked that apologies be noted.

**1.    MATTERS ARISING:**

**1.1    NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair asked if there were any comments regarding the notes of the previous meeting. There were no comments and the notes were accepted by the committee.

**1.2    ACTION ITEMS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no action items from the previous meeting.

**2.    STANDING ITEMS**

The Chair invited any comments from the committee regarding the standing items. There were no comments and the committee received the standing item reports.

**2.1    ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The committee received this report.

**2.2    OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT**

The committee received this report.

**2.3    EQUITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT**

The committee received this report.

### **3. CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL – FACULTY OF EDUCATION WORKFORCE RENEWAL PROGRAM**

Professor Marie Emmitt introduced this item and asked if there were any comments from the committee. Ms Glenis Davey asked how staff are being consulted in this process. Professor Emmitt responded that a road show for staff visiting the St Patrick's, Mount Saint Mary and McAuley campuses was beginning on Monday

Ms Croxon informed the Committee that the Change Management Proposal had been distributed to all staff in the Faculty of Education and feedback requested. The Proposal was also forwarded to both Unions with a request for feedback about the entire Faculty of Education Workforce Renewal Program. When and if any feedback or comments are received, the University will detail the feedback in the standard consultation format used for policies; ie "Feedback Received, The University's Consideration/Response, and the University's Decision (where applicable)". Professor Emmitt stated that no staff feedback had been received as yet – just questions from staff.

Mrs Chegwidden informed the committee that workforce renewal is part of the University's new strategic plan which has already been widely consulted on and that 5 of the 6 strategies are based on current University policies. Only the voluntary early retirement scheme (the VERs) component is new and there could not be any consultation about this until the University received the class ruling approval from the ATO.

Ms Davey responded that feedback would be provided soon and commented that previously the Union would have been more involved in this process as was the case in the Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS) which ran in the mid 1990s. Further, the Union wanted to be part of the discussions about the criteria to be used including the list of which staff are exempt. Mrs Chegwidden responded that in terms of the ATO approving class ruling, a lot of ground has shifted since the 90's and the criteria that can be used now has to be far more prescriptive and objective.

Ms Davey asked why the eligibility starts at 55 years of age? Ms Chegwidden responded that there is an ATO requirement that a staff member must be between 55 – 65 years of age at the time of taking Voluntary Early Retirement. Further, the focus of the Strategy is about workforce renewal as the current profile is dominated by staff who are 55 years of age and over. There are other options available to staff who are younger than 55, such as pre-retirement contracts.

Professor Emmitt advised that the focus is about changing the staffing profile and there will be no loss of positions, rather an increase as the Faculty grows. There will be strategic recruitment taking place with a focus on developing mechanisms for knowledge transfer in advance of staff leaving.

Professor McMullen stated that a key part of the Strategy is to grow researchers and that the University must develop its research focus to keep its status as a University. This will assist the growth of our research profile. Ms Davey said that it was important that there was sufficient lead time to develop researchers, and that this should be enabled through the new Workloads Policy – although there were some difficulties given the problems arising from over enrolments. A related issue is the issue of academic management and the planning needed for staff to become Coordinators and undertake Course Reviews. Professor Emmitt commented that there needs to be more use of general staff to support leadership roles which would also demonstrate that the University values its academic leaders.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions. Professor Emmitt stated that she was happy to receive any feedback regarding the change management process and that this was an important initiative for the Faculty.

**4. COMMUNICATION AND ROLLOUT OF THE NEW ACADEMIC WORKLOADS POLICY.**

Ms Davey stated that many staff are still confused about the starting dates and some of the contents of the new Workloads Policy, (including the move from “contact hours” to “nominal hours”), and that the policy needs to be “unpacked” with staff to build greater understanding and ownership. Ms Davey suggested that the policy is probably a fairer one for staff, and it would be advantageous for the University to run a road show explaining the academic workloads policy.

Professor McMullen responded that this was helpful feedback and that the University will consider these suggestions and perhaps one option would be for HR to organise a few lunchbox sessions where the Policy could be discussed.

**5. REFRESHER/UPDATED TRAINING FOR FACULTY STAFF RE THE TIMETABLING SOFTWARE**

Ms Davey stated that there were roll out issues with the new timetabling software, in particular the issue of double coding which takes hours of time, and that more information and training is needed for faculty staff about how Syllabus Plus works. Ms Davey suggested that the system may need a patch to get rid of the need for double coding before Semester 2. Professor McMullen responded that this was a complex issue and that perhaps a refresher lunchbox session would help.

Professor Crossley asked what happening in relation to the review of timetabling report. Associate Professor Nicholson referred to the 2008 Review of the Timetable and noted that there were to be information sessions held on each campus to support local TLOs and feed into the Semester 2, 2009 cycle.

The chair responded that the Vice-Chancellor has endorsed the review recommendations which will be published soon. The recommendations included implementation issues and extra ILO sessions were recommended. Mr Cameron suggested that Ms Lisa Richards from the Timetabling Unit could run some information sessions and he suggested that Ms Davey contact Lisa regarding the issues of a patch and her query about the number of units - which could reduce double coding.

**6. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RELATED POLICIES**

**6.1 OH&S and Related Policies:**

Mr Pumpa advised that the University has received legal advice regarding updating of its current Rehabilitation Policy, and the Guidelines being considered by the Committee include procedures for the HR Consultants. A flow chart diagram of the procedures will be placed on the HR website (under the OH&S section) which will advise staff of what they need to do if they are injured at work. The

primary aim of the Policy and Guidelines is to get staff back to work. Mrs Chegwidden noted that the University operates in four OH&S and Workers' Compensation jurisdictions and that the legislation is complex. Mr Pumpa said that ACU supports the move towards the harmonisation of workers' compensation legislation, and Appendix 1 of the Guidelines is a summary of the requirements of the different legislation. He noted that the ACT is in the process of introducing new legislation and NSW has also changed its formula for calculating workers' compensation premiums.

Associate Professor Nicholson asked whether the University has a policy that covers non work-related injuries and return to work arrangements. Mrs Chegwidden advised that the University could look at a set of principles but it would not be appropriate to create additional obligations. Associate Professor Nicholson observed that if a staff member is injured and it is not a workers' compensation matter, the School has to pay for any expert advice or additional equipment, and it would be useful if this could be better articulated in Policy without creating a legal obligation, rather than the current case by case approach. Ms Davey said that there was a policy of assisting staff with long term illnesses return to work and that other Universities, eg. Monash, may have such a document.

Mr Pumpa also spoke to the new National Laboratory Safety Guidelines document which is an umbrella document designed to achieve greater consistency regarding laboratory safety between disciplines and campuses. The issue of the lack of a formal risk assessment process had been identified by Queensland Workcover, and the Guidelines incorporate a risk assessment process and are currently being trialled on several campuses. Professor Emmitt noted that Laboratory Managers currently undertake a risk assessment once every 12 months as a minimum, and the University needs to have evidence that these assessments have been done. Professor Crossley suggested that the wording on pages 47 and 49 needs to be expanded as many technicians have English as their second language and the full wording would be more appropriate. Mr Pumpa agreed and the full wording will be incorporated into the document.

The ACUSCC endorsed the Guidelines and Policies and recommended that they go to the Vice-Chancellor for approval as Interim Policies (which will be in effect from the date of approval) and there will be further consultation and refinement of the policies in due course.

## 6.2 Revised Academic Promotions Policies

Professor McMullen spoke to the policies and noted that there were relatively few updates, eg. the move from "Unit Evaluations" to "Teaching Evaluations". Other changes were editorial and the revised policies will be publicised in HR Matters. Professor McMullen advised that the general area of changes are the same but there are still distinctions between the levels. For example under "Contributions to the University" the Level B Policy refers to "limited administrative functions", at Level B to C, it refers to Course Coordination, and from Level C to D, there is reference to Heads of Schools. A further change refers to the creation of the University's Fourth Faculty, (the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy) so the Committee now has an additional 2 members, the new Dean and an elected staff representative from the new Faculty.

There was a general discussion about the revised policies including the similarities and differences between the levels and a stronger incorporation of the MSALs with some minor amendments to the policies agreed. Dr Stokes queried that it was not an expectation that academic staff will have to tick each box in order to be promoted and this was confirmed. Associate Professor Nicholson observed that applications for promotion may be lodged without the staff member seeing the evaluations and therefore the staff member would not be able to comment on any particular issues or comments made by students. Professor McMullen advised that the Committee wants to consider current data and because Teaching Evaluations have only been around for a while, she will move for the Committee to also consider data from Semester 1, 2007 (a total of 5 semesters data). So the Committee will accept Unit Evaluations in 2009 and move to Teaching Evaluations only in 2010.

Incorporating the amendments as discussed, the Policies will be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for approval as Interim Policies, which will be in effect from the date of approval.

**7. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

There was a query regarding the release of a Change Management Proposal for Student Services. Ms Croxon advised that a Proposal is currently in preparation and it would be circulated to staff and the unions as soon as it is available and listed on the agenda for the next meeting of the ACUSCC.

**6. NEXT MEETING:**

The next ACUSCC Meeting will take place on 28 May 2009.

**6. ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Professor McMullen to consider asking HR to organise Lunchbox sessions to explain the Academic Workloads Policy	Tentative dates for Lunchbox sessions have been booked for 18 June and 22 June 2009
Mr Cameron to ask the Academic Registrar about the timeframe to publicise the recommendations from the Review of the Timetable and the scheduling of Information Sessions for TLOs and other faculty staff	The Vice-Chancellor has published the Timetabling Review and is considering further feedback. Information sessions for Timetable Liaison Officers have been conducted by the Manager, Timetabling, Examinations & Results and will continue each semester.'
Ms Davey to ask Ms Richards about a "patch" for Syllabus 2 to reduce the need for double coding prior to Semester 2, 2009	