

**RECORD OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2010 VIA TELECONFERENCE**

Present:

Professor Gabrielle McMullen (Chair)
Mr Chris Sheargold
Professor Marie Emmitt
Dr Tony Stokes
Ms Beatrice (BJ) Johnson
Mr John Sinclair
Mr Peter Blakey
Ms Rachael Bahl
Ms Jennie Beck
Ms Diana Chegwiddden

Apologies:

Mr John Cameron
Professor Peta Goldberg
Ms Sandra Miles
Mr David Keegan (replaced by Ms Jennie Beck)

In Attendance:

Ms Pauline Croxon
Ms Valerie Corbett (note taker)

1 WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

The meeting commenced at 3.30pm.

2 & 3 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

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

4 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 November 2009

Prof McMullen called for comments regarding the previous notes. Ms Bahl requested that an amendment be made to 7.1 to include the addition of: " Ms Bahl thanked Professor McMullen and Professor Emmitt for clearing things up", following the sentence commencing: "Ms Bahl noted that ..."

The notes were accepted with the record of amendments to be made.

ACTION: Notes of the previous meeting to be amended.

5 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The actions were completed and all were accepted.

6 STANDING ITEMS (attachment 1)

6.1 General Staff Learning and Development Program

Ms Chegwidgen requested an amendment to the report as follows:

Under 2010 Lunchbox sessions – “Senior Staff Probation for Supervisors” should be replaced with “Probation for Supervisors”

ACTION: Learning and Development report to be amended

6.2 Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

Mr Blakey asked about how the Montie DVD Rom was to be used at the University, ie on-line or not? Ms Chegwidgen replied that Montie was on the University’s website. It was a resource whose use would be voluntary. Ms Chegwidgen advised that:

- the University holds the licence for Montie for a 12 month trial period;
- It will be incorporated into the induction for all staff;
- OHS Committees can use it as well;
- Academic staff can use it for teaching purposes.

The Reports were received by Committee.

7 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

7.1 School of Nursing (NSW) Proposal – Response to ACUSCC feedback

Ms Croxon noted that the feedback document had been given to the Deans and Heads of School and that the final change document had been approved by the Vice-Chancellor. She added that the School of Nursing (NSW) had made the decision in December 2009 that no redundancies would be necessary and all affected staff would be placed. This process had begun.

Mr Sinclair commented that the staffing plan in the last document does not show the position of Deputy Head of School. He asked if there was a revised document. Ms Croxon responded that the final plan approved by the Vice-Chancellor included the position of the Deputy Head of School.

Mr Sinclair also asked about the position of Personal Assistant to the Head of School. Ms Croxon replied that the Personal Assistant position reported to the Head of School but was also shown “with a dotted line” to the Deputy Head of School.

Ms Croxon agreed to provide the most recent document to Mr Sinclair. She commented that she thought it had been circulated to all staff in the School of Nursing.

Mr Sinclair questioned whether the School management in NSW should be the Head of School as she was not there (in NSW) every day. Professor McMullen responded that it was not critical for a Head of School to be present at one campus every day. Ms Croxon noted that there were formal reporting lines and also informal reporting lines whereby there would be a lot of supervision, interaction and delegation to the Deputy Head of School.

Mr Blakey referred to the position being a “transient Head of School”. He commented that there was a lack of stability and that this situation impacted upon staff. He also commented that the feedback from staff had been superficial. Professor McMullen replied that the feedback from staff was taken on board and was discussed with the Dean, the Head of School and the Deputy Head of School, and the document was approved by the Vice-Chancellor. Ms Chegwidden added that the position was not a “transient Head of School” but rather a formal Head of School who works between two campuses. The Head of School was appointed to two roles, in Victoria and NSW. Ms Chegwidden also commented that there are a lot of examples of staffing structures that are not on one site, and that a lot of work had been done to create stability. The issues had been addressed by the University.

Mr Sinclair said that it he would like issues to be addressed promptly, on site, on a day to day basis. Professor McMullen responded that she was located at two campuses, and approximately half of her approvals are dealt with electronically, scanned and sent back on the same day. This is made possible by technology. Professor Crossley added that in Brisbane, the delegate has the authority to sign off on day to day matters such as leave forms.

Mr Sinclair stated that he would like clarification of the Deputy Head of School role including what can be dealt with by a Deputy or Assistant Head of School. Ms Chegwidden replied that it was very important that the delegations for staffing were understood. Professor McMullen advised that if there were management issues, these should be brought to the attention of the Dean.

Ms Johnson remarked on the focus on language, and said that the issues raised by Mr Blakey have not been served well by his use of the term “transient”. The issues were the day to day running of the School. She said that Professor McMullen was right and that the arrangements used in the Library work well. However, if people are not used to this structure there could be anxiety regarding day to day working issues. Mr Blakey added that in the Library there were clearly delineated lines of responsibility and management followed the principle of subsidiarity. His concern was the role delineation of the Head of School position, which is actually two full time positions. Professor McMullen responded that this was not the case: there was one continuing position with two part time assignments as Head of School. She also pointed out that not every decision relies on the Head of School. Ms Chegwidden added that the issues appear to be more about implementation, and it was not likely or appropriate for change management documents to discuss Position Descriptions.

ACTION: HR to provide the final version of the School of Nursing (NSW) change management proposal to Mr Sinclair.

7.2 Property Development

Mr Blakey raised the issue of the altered use of one of the staff rooms at McAuley campus. He considered that such matters should be subject to consultation under the Change Management policy, to allow for matters such as OH&S to be taken into account. Ms Croxon responded that the Enterprise Agreement required consultation on matters that result in significant change and this is a standard industrial relations requirement. Traditionally, property matters such as changes to offices or classrooms have not been regarded as constituting significant change therefore there was no need to refer to the Change Management provisions. Ms Chegwiddden referred to the email from Professor Devereaux dated 19 January 2010 to all staff of the McAuley campus regarding the importance of cross-unit collaboration and communication. Mr Blakey commented that Professor Devereaux's approach should be adopted across all of the University.

Mr Sheargold commented that in Melbourne there had been many challenges regarding the growth of the University. The University had tried to keep people informed, but beyond responding to people's concerns, there was not a lot that could be done. If the University moved to formal change management processes for property matters, nothing would ever get done. Professor McMullen commented that she was aware of the multiple consultations with staff in the Library and said that it was a good model for others to use.

Mr Blakey expressed concern that consultation focussed on the immediate stakeholders rather than the campus as a whole. He noted that there was a changing approach to property management and relationship with the campus Executive. The capacity to inform was not spread as widely as it could be. He referred in particular to the staff common room and expanding operations of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research, and commented that the University could have explained the processes involved and mediated between the parties. Professor McMullen commented on the importance of the role of the campus deans in informing people of change. She added that there was a lot of opportunity to have staff briefings, involving the whole campus community and smaller groups of staff.

8 Human Resources Management and Related Policies

8.1 Report – Review of Implementation of the Workloads Policy

Professor McMullen thanked Professor Emmitt for chairing the Review of the Implementation of the Workloads Policy, and also thanked the others who were involved. She noted that the result of the review was minor changes to the Workloads Policy to respond to implementation issues. Further, a committee is being established to develop guidelines to accompany the policy. There will be a session in the Heads of School workshop to discuss the policy so that Heads of School understand the need for some flexibility in implementation and where they have discretion to be flexible. She encouraged Heads of School to ensure that they provided transparency in assigning workloads, so

that staff would see that they were being treated equitably and were getting “a fair deal”. She added that the software was being updated to resolve the difficulties that had been identified.

Professor Emmitt added that there had been a great range of feedback. She emphasised that it was the implementation, not the policy that was being reviewed. Often issues arose because of a lack of understanding of the policy and the requirement to adapt the policy to different needs depending on the School, the discipline and the campus.

Ms Johnson asked what are the assumptions underlying the policy? Professor McMullen responded that the University had dealt with the underlying principles two years ago and that minor changes and implementation issues were now being considered. Professor McMullen referred Ms Johnson to the introductory statement to the policy, which describes the intent of the policy. She also advised that the definition of “Research Active” is to be considered by the Research Committee at its February meeting.

Ms Johnson commented that it was apparent throughout the sector that job specifications were changing in relation to how academics operate with Information Technology. She said that this had an impact on how people worked as well as the time spent. She asked if this had been taken into account in the policy? Ms Johnson considered that people worked more hours than previously. Professor McMullen responded that no work time had been added in the revisions to the policy and that if people were doing work that involved something extraordinary in relation to computers, this would be taken into account in organising load for special projects. Professor McMullen added that some routine tasks, for example, entering marks, were being moved to other roles.

Professor Emmitt explained that it was about working out what was academic work. As changes in processes affect all of us the focus was about changing ways of working. Ms Johnson agreed that people needed to work differently in response to change. Professor Emmitt commented that it was about the best allocation of resources; and it was a juggling act. Ms Johnson acknowledged the changes to the policy in relation to the load for on-line courses, but added that normal academic work was also affected by new technologies. Professor Emmitt said that, at the coalface, we all had to be aware and work with change. Professor McMullen referred to the role of the Learning and Teaching Centre in supporting staff to use the new technologies.

Professor McMullen asked if there were any other points in relation to the review?

Mr Sinclair said that the underlying philosophy of the policy was an issue, and he referred to the feedback on page 3 of the report. He noted that there had been no change in rewards for PhD supervision and he regarded this as a significant issue.

Mr Sinclair also referred to the work performed by administrative staff. He said that once they had performed the traditional aspects of academic administrative work, but now there was not enough time for them to be involved in on-line units and academic staff were having to enter results. Professor McMullen responded that the intention was that administrative staff should do such data entry work. Ms Johnson commented that entering and checking data was very time-consuming.

Uploading files should be very quick, so why is it taking so long? Professor McMullen said she understood that Student Administration and IT are working to streamline the system processes.

Dr Stokes referred to the previous workload proportions of 1000/500/200, and commented that now community engagement, in the “other” category had increased from 200 to 250 hours. Professor McMullen advised that community engagement was an integral part of teaching and research, not separate from it. She referred to the project on the homeless as an example; it is part of a person’s research, not separate from it. The feedback reported more work being done in terms of service and this was important, but service is different to community engagement. Professor McMullen confirmed that it was not intended to change the policy in this regard.

Professor Crossley commented on the allowance for part time research which had been increased to 3/ 4 of the full time rate. She believed that this was not an incentive for people to complete on time. Further, there was also no definition of part time. Professor Emmitt said that the definition would be placed in the guidelines. Professor Crossley referred to the feedback from the Deans, which considered the policy to be inconsistent with the direction that University should be going in terms of early completion. Professor Emmitt confirmed that this would be dealt with in the guidelines, and added that more work had to be done in this area.

Ms Bahl commented that the report of the Review referred to Attachment 3, which in fact had not been circulated with the Committee papers. Professor McMullen explained that the reports required for the ACUSCCC meeting were the Survey and the Feedback. She also advised that the Workload Policy was available electronically. Ms Bahl said that she had been unable to locate the current version of the Workload Policy electronically. After some discussion, it was agreed that the link to the policy in Ms Chegwiddden’s email had not worked, and Ms Croxon agreed to send the policy to Committee members by email.

Ms Bahl enquired whether staff would have access to information on their feedback on the policy. Ms Croxon advised that the previous feedback had been posted on the ACUSCC web page and this feedback would be loaded on a separate page with the policy. Ms Chegwiddden said that she understood that staff would be interested in seeing the feedback. She suggested a summary report could be made available to staff. Professor Emmitt suggested that a summary be placed in HR Matters, and Ms Croxon agreed to arrange this.

ACTION: Place a summary report in HR Matters
The Working Party Report and the Summary of Feedback to be placed on the Workloads Policy webpage

8.2 Updated Recreation Leave Policy

Ms Chegwiddden explained that new provisions with regard to the management of recreational leave came into effect on 1 January 2010 because of the new [Fair Work] legislation. Under the Enterprise Agreement, staff ceased to accrue leave after reaching 30 days. The Recreation Leave policy has now been updated to allow staff to accrue 40 days’ leave. Then staff can be directed to take up to 10

days' leave. It will be important to monitor leave accruals to avoid "annual leave creep". HR was looking at the readjustment of processes to inform supervisors, and will communicate with staff so that they understand that the University can direct them once they have 40 days leave as at this point it is not a matter of *agreement* to take leave.

8.3 Student Appeals Policy

Professor McMullen reported that the Student Appeals policy had been amended to take into account Dr Stokes' concerns. Dr Stokes commented that he was happy with the policy which was much improved and more workable as a result of the changes.

Ms Bahl commented that an email regarding the HR policies went out on 21 January 2010, but the policies were in effect from 17 December 2009. She said that it was important to communicate in a timely fashion, especially as people were just returning from leave. She suggested in such situations that a note be placed at the front of the accompanying email to advise staff of the date of effect of the policy and apologising for the delay.

ACTION: Advice regarding the commencement date of policies will be provided in cases where policies are released after the commencement date. Ms Chegidden confirmed that this would happen.

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business

10 NEXT MEETING

The next ACUSCC meeting will take place on 25 March 2010.

Action	Responsibility
1. Notes of the previous meeting to be amended	HR
2. Learning & Development report to be amended	HR
3 Summary of the Review Report outcomes to be placed in HR Matters	Ms Croxon
3 The feedback to the Review of the Implementation of the Workloads Policy and the Review Report to be placed on the ACU website	Ms Croxon
4 When policies are circulated after their date of effect, advice will be given in the accompanying email regarding the date of effect.	Ms Croxon