

**The University of Melbourne  
School of Behavioural Science**

*Academic Programs Committee – Undergraduate*  
**Thursday 6 April 2006**

**Present:** Richard Bell (Chair), Marianela Delgado, Nick Haslam, Henry Jackson, Jeanette Lawrence, Patricia Murray, David Rawlings

**U1\***        **Apologies**  
Simon Cropper

**U2\***        **Confirmation of record of previous meeting**  
The minutes of the previous meeting on 2 February 2006 were accepted as a record of the proceedings.

**U3\***        **Business arising from last meeting**  
3.1 Word Limit Issues  
Richard Bell reported that he composed a paragraph on word limit for assignments and email it to all academic staff members for comments. No feedback was received. The paragraph was included in all undergraduate manuals.

**U4\***        **Activities from 2006 Operational Plan**  
Some of the activities in the 2005 plan were not carried out as Convenors were nominated after the 2005 operation plan was put together. Besides this the University adopted the Growing Esteem Strategic Plan that changes the whole environment. As a consequence, some of the activities of the 2005 plan have been carried over to the 2006 plan.  
Namely:

- 1) Review other major Gof8 teaching and learning procedures to identify what are the other universities doing differently.
- 2) Conduct research into linking QOT and CEQ ratings with specific facets of undergraduate subjects. Results from QOT previous surveys indicate clearly that the size of classes has impact on the students' experience, but paradoxically they say that Psychology subjects are well-taught. An application requesting \$20, 500 funding was submitted to Professor Peter McPhee to finance the survey. The aim is to use a pilot version of the questionnaire to survey fourth year students in May and survey third year students in the compulsory subject in semester 2.
- 3) To investigate ways of improving feedback to students. Low ratings in the feedback question of the QOT survey indicate that it is a front that needs to be genuinely dealt with, including a training program for tutors, consideration of the condition of the tutors' appointments and feedback process.

Richard commented that the Psychology qualification in Europe in the "Bologna Process" has gone a long way in defining and identifying

competencies that pertain to the profession. Committee members were encouraged to read the articles provided on the Bologna Project in Europe. Other factors that will impact in shaping the undergraduate curriculum are:

- a) The University decision on the number of points that make up a major.
- b) Which course(s) will offer Psychology as a major area of study.
- c) The emphasis placed by the university on giving third year students a 'capstone experience' that can take the form of Research experience or knowledge transfer.

There are other external factors:

- d) The Committee formed by the APS and Registration Board that is floating the idea of adopting the European model of 3+2 for the profession and argument been made that students complete only one thesis at master level.
- e) The Education Department's hint to Universities in adopting 'the Bologna Model'.

Given that the curriculum needs to be reviewed on multiple fronts, it was decided to form three small working groups to cover three areas. The working groups have to report back to the Undergraduate Sub-Committee at the next meeting on Thursday 4 May 2006. Richard Bell to write the terms of reference for each working group, organise the membership of each group and establish clear timelines for each of them.

Prasuna Reddy commented that the APS is currently undergoing a governance review.

**U5\***

**Any other business**

Giving actual marks or grades on assignments.

The Department has the policy of giving grades on assignments but in some subjects the practice has deviated from the policy. This creates problems when the subject is made up by two or more units and students get marks for the assignments of one unit and grades for the rest of the assignments on the same unit. For the sake of consistency, it was agreed that all markers should give a grade and provide as much as feedback as possible. The feedback process is one of the aspects that the working group on improving links with students have to look at.

Regarding assignments, another aspect that needs to be consistent at all levels from first to fourth is the word limit. Students have to state in the cover page the number of words and have to be encouraged to observe the word limit stated in the assignment guidelines. No 10% extra will be accepted. Richard Bell to check with Simon Cropper is this norm has been enforced at first year level, the level when students acquire habits.

The next Undergraduate Sub-Committee meeting will be on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June.