

Meeting 3/11

30 August 2011

For general publication

- Present:** Miss Nicole Silajew (in the chair), Mr Akash Boda, Ms Tammie Fair (minutes), Mr Patrick Fortuna, Mr Kevin Hunault, Assoc Prof Joe Rothnagel, Dr Susan Rowland.
- Apologies:** Prof Melissa Brown, Ms Noor Dashti, Ms Jennifer Keller, Mr Mark Starkey, Ms Flor Del Milagro Vasquez Sotomayor.
- Absent:** Mr Adrian English, Miss Ellie Van Der List.
- Welcome:** New members Patrick Fortuna (PG Biotech suite) and Kevin Hunault (BSc 3 – Molecular Biosciences majors) were welcomed.
- Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held 19 May 2011, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed, with the following amendment:
Apologies:
- ‘Assoc Prof Susan Rowland’ should read ‘Dr Susan Rowland’.

ACTION

1. Spread of Assessment:

It was reported that the Discipline Chief Examiners (who approve course profiles prior to their publication) had been reminded 6 July to consider ‘hotspots’ in the spread of assessment apparent from the 2010 analysis. The hotspots were particular weeks in the first year Chemistry major (CHEM1020 + BIOL1020 + BIOL1040 + MICR2000) and the first year Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Microbiology majors (BIOL1020 + BIOL1040 + CHEM1020 + BIOL2202).

Whether the DCE’s had checked if a repeat of last year’s concentrations of assessment due dates were recurring at particular weeks in second semester 2011 was not known. A significant assessment policy change had been handed down by the Faculty of Science when most of the checking of course profiles was being undertaken, which had required a lot of reworking of course profiles to ensure compliance and would have taken priority.

Mark Starkey had written to the Faculty of Science’s Associate Dean (Academic) outlining the work-intensive process involved in doing the assessment spread check and recommending that an enhancement of the University’s Electronic Course Profile system be sought to enable ready extraction of such data.

Tammie Fair tabled a document that outlined the spread of assessment for the first year Chemistry major (CHEM1020 + BIOL1020 + BIOL1040 + MICR2000) and the first year Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Microbiology majors (BIOL1020 + BIOL1040 + CHEM1020 + BIOL2202) in second semester 2011.

Joe Rothnagel noted that assessment was spread out as well as it could be and that even when students were given assessment tasks early in the semester they still often waited until later to start to ensure they had gathered all the information they needed.

Akash Boda commented that when students were given assessment tasks early it was their responsibility to get started and that students were mainly concerned with having a large number of assignments due around Swot Vac.

Susan Rowland advised that staff were mindful of assessment workloads on students and did their best to space it out.

Joe Rothnagel reported that the University Teaching and Learning Committee had started to address assessment systematically and that take home assessment would be minimised in the future. The University wanted to ensure that the work being assessed was completed by the student who submitted it. The Faculty recommended that 40% of assessment was now face-to-face/supervised assessment which could include exams or presentations. A hurdle was recommended for this aspect of assessment. This had been implemented across most SCMB courses for semester 2, 2011.

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1. Spread of Assessment: (continued)

Kevin Hunault advised that in group work for his Nanoscience course students must submit a statement regarding what part of the assessment task they had completed.

Joe advised that most courses in SCMB already met the Faculty requirement and that group presentations would continue, as the ability to interact effectively with others in order to work towards a common outcome was a UQ Graduate Attribute that valued teamwork.

2. Majors Information Session and Academic Advising Demand:

At Meeting 2-11 it had been suggested that the *Careers in Science* booklet, which is targeted at prospective students, be made more widely available to current students. Nicole Silajew had commented that this was a fantastic resource and great for students confused about what they can do with their degree.

Mark Starkey had contacted the Faculty Engagement Manager, Karissa Douglass-Higgins, who had confirmed that the publication is available online at the Faculty website (clear link on front page). It is also available as a link from the prospective and current student pages on the SCMB site.

Karissa had advised that it was a great idea to make a hard copy available to current students, but this had not been budgeted for in 2011. She had said that based on feedback such as that from the CSCC, additional funding could be sought for a 2012 print run for current students.

Alternatively, she had suggested developing posters that advertised the booklet as being available for download online and perhaps even distributing flyers at events such as Honours Information Week. Mark had suggested that slides also be developed to put on various display screens in the Science precinct. The materials were expected to be available by late August.

Joe Rothangel advised that most questions from parents and prospective student at Open Day had been about careers and salaries.

Joe noted that SCMB did not have any metrics on students who entered the workforce. Susan Rowland advised that it is difficult to get ethics approval to track people once they leave the University but the UQ email address for life might be a way to do this in the future.

It was suggested that the *Careers in Science* booklet be put on BlackBoard and a career options folder be developed and put on BlackBoard for students to access for information.

It was suggested that the career day events lack research career options. Students would like to talk about research as a career rather than projects.

Patrick Fortuna commented that in Denmark industry and smaller research units visit the university to provide students with information.

Susan Rowland suggested that if students offered concrete suggestions for what they wanted to see at career day events the School's Engagement Coordinator would liaise with the organisers of these events and request that they target the suggested companies or institutes.

Suggested at Meeting 2-11 was that the technique spoken about by Adrian English, of creating a subscription to online job search engines to be notified of vacancies based on keywords (such as 'laboratory positions'), be advertised to students. The technique had been included in training materials for academic and administrative staff who worked on TSXPO and Open Day and would be promulgated at the Majors Information Event planned for September.

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3. Student Cohort Social Events:

Akash Boda had previously reported that he is on the Science Undergraduate Students Society (SUSS) executive this year. SUSS was running barbecues every couple of weeks and Akash had said that he would investigate the possibility of theming particular barbecues for a given cohort of students, such as Biotechnology. Mark Starkey had offered to assist in publicising barbecues pitched at SCMB students.

Akash reported that a recent Biotechnology barbecue had been cancelled at the last minute due to a medical emergency. Akash would attempt to organise another but may not be able to reschedule it for this semester.

Akash

Susan Rowland asked what the aims and outcomes of the barbecues were. Akash advised that the barbecues were held to promote SUSS and encourage interaction between students. SUSS is the only Science club around UQ and is supported by the Faculty.

Joe Rothnagel asked how much time and effort went into the organisation of these events. Akash advised that the barbecue was borrowed from the Union and two people were needed to staff the barbecue between 10am-3pm. Akash felt that there was not a lot of effort required. The Union have a barbecue schedule each semester.

Joe Rothnagel observed that SCMB has a barbecue and space in the 'secret garden' area adjacent to the Molecular Biosciences Building. Akash asked whether staff could attend barbecues so students could chat to them. Susan Rowland suggested that the barbecues would need to be timetabled with formal invitations sent to staff by SUSS if this was to occur.

Akash advised that SUSS had planned a lecture for Monday 3 October. Andrea Dupree, a Senior Astrophysicist at Harvard Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics (CfA) and member of the Science Working Group for NASA's Kepler Mission would be the guest speaker at the inaugural *An Invitation to Innovation Annual Lecture*.

4. Formal Cohort Experiences:

The School had as one of its Teaching & Learning targets to identify meaningful ways to provide a cohort experience for our BSc students. This could be both disciplined-based (ie, majors) or more broadly based. It could include social events, specialised lectures and workshops, career-based activities or utilisation of PASS and similar peer-mentoring activities. It is also intended that a common room (or rooms) be provided for undergraduates enrolled in SCMB majors.

Susan Rowland asked if students wanted a cohort experience and what students wanted in terms of space to take a break, relax and also collaborate.

Nicole Silajew suggested that the Science Learning Centre in the Priestley Building was already an excellent space and there was always someone there to help if students had questions.

Akash Boda asked what the aims of the new space were to be. Susan Rowland suggested that academics could hold open office sessions and it could be used to facilitate interaction between 3rd year students and higher academia in the University.

Joe Rothnagel asked if 3rd year students would use a space similar to the current postgraduate coursework room where students had access to computers and coffee and tea facilities. Kevin Hunault suggested that 3rd year students would use a space like this as they are serious and here to work.

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4. Formal Cohort Experiences: (continued)

Kevin Hunault and Nicole Silajew commented that students liked the idea of lecturers being present in these spaces. Nicole suggested that students do not receive a lot of feedback on their reports and speaking with lecturers in these situations allows them to get this feedback and to improve.

Joe advised that at the last TLC meeting members had discussed the Podium and ways to enhance it. Joe suggested sofas and coffee and tea making facilities.

Nicole suggested that students liked the structure of the Podium as it is. Kevin advised that tutors often had their lunch there which gave students an opportunity to ask them questions.

Joe asked the members to ask their cohorts if there was anything else the Podium should have e.g. sofas or tea and coffee. SCMB would like feedback from the students on how best to use this space.

Student members

5. Undergraduate Research Courses:

The School's Engagement Coordinator, Ros Boulton, had contacted the Faculty of Science regarding current publicity to students about these courses and if it could be enhanced by them and/or SCMB. The Faculty had advised Ros that they had recently sent a bulk email to all BSc students in 2nd Year advising them of the new courses offered in the BSc, including all research project courses.

They had also included information about the summer research courses on the Faculty's scholarship website: <http://www.science.uq.edu.au/uq-summer-research-scholarship-program> under the heading "Will I receive recognition towards undergraduate degree requirements?".

Nicole Silajew and Akash Boda confirmed the email had been sent.

SCMB planned to produce a LCD screen slide and/or poster for the Podium and 76-2 foyer and place a feature on the SCMB homepage to promote these courses.

Mark

6. Publicising the Student Consultative Committee:

Akash Boda had updated the slides promoting the Committee. Publication of them had been delayed while photographs of new members were obtained. Mark Starkey had circulated the slides to second semester course coordinators in the School 19 August (as soon as photographs of the new members had become available) and arranged for the slides to be included in shows on the School's LCD display screens.

It was suggested that the success of these slides is low and recommended that the course coordinator send them to lecturers and request they be put up at the beginning of each lecture.

Susan Rowland suggested that Akash Boda send the information to Faculty to distribute through their email list.

Akash

7. Class Photographs

A professional photographer had been employed to take group photos of students who had commenced the postgraduate Biotechnology and Molecular Biology programs at the start of second semester. Student names were being inserted to the image file and the photos would be made available to students soon. The images would also be placed on the School's new Facebook page (coming soon).

Group photos of new postgraduate Biotechnology students for both semesters 2009 and 2010 and first semester 2011 were on file, along with group photos of new postgraduate Molecular Biology students for second semester 2009 and both semesters 2010.

All students currently enrolled in the postgraduate coursework programs would be advised of the availability of the above photos when the second semester 2011 photos became available.

Mark

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8. Student Testimonials:

Student members of the Committee were asked to indicate if they were willing to provide the School with a testimonial regarding their studies in School courses and programs, to help inspire prospective students to consider study in these fields.

Those who were interested would be contacted by the School's Engagement Coordinator who would provide a template set of questions to answer.

All members in attendance said they would be happy to be contacted.

Mark

9. Dean's Commendation for High Achievement

Joe advised that the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee had formed a working group to look at Dean's Commendations for students.

The Faculty had asked for feedback on whether it is valuable and should keep going. Also, they want to know how students feel about the recognition and should it include Honours and part-time students.

Akash Boda suggested that it was valuable and students liked it but he was unsure of what it meant and what value it had once one left university. Nicole agreed that students did like to receive the commendation.

Susan Rowland suggested that it should be open to part-time students.

Joe advised that the Faculty required feedback by 14th September.

10. Next meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting be held in later in second semester. Mark would advise members of the date and venue.

Mark

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