

Meeting 1/12

30 March 2012

For general publication

Present: Prof Melissa Brown (in the chair up to and including Item 3), Mr Patrick Fortuna (in the chair from Item 3), Mr Akash Boda, Ms Noor Dashti, Miss Paige Erpf, Miss Sophie Hudson, Mr Christopher Read, Assoc Prof Joe Rothnagel, Mr Mark Starkey (minutes), Miss Rose Trappes, Ms Flor Del Milagro Vasquez Sotomayor.

Apology: Miss Nicole Silajew.

Welcome: New members were welcomed to the Committee and continuing members welcomed back.

1. Terms of Reference and Membership:

Members were referred to the terms of reference and mode of operation of the Committee and its membership for 2012, as set out in the agenda papers (and viewable on the School's website). Melissa Brown spoke to the papers and encouraged members to participate actively in meetings. She spoke about the role and size of the School and pointed out that minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee were on the School website and would give new members an idea of the activities to-date of the Committee.

It was noted that 44% of the student members of this year's Committee were international students, compared to around 20% of the School's coursework student population being international, although at the postgraduate coursework level the figure was 85%, and both postgraduate representatives were international students.

Although 46% of the School's coursework student population was male, only three of the nine representatives were male. However, vacancies on the Committee had been filled by competitive application and judged first and foremost on merit.

2. Election of Chairperson and Provision of Secretarial Support:

It had been foreshadowed in the agenda papers, circulated ahead of the meeting, that the Committee's chairperson be elected from the student members. Following a call for nominations in the meeting, three candidates made brief statements, after which a secret ballot of the student members of the Committee was conducted. Patrick Fortuna was elected.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 21 October 2011:

The minutes, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

4. Business arising out of the minutes:

4.1 Careers Information and Academic Advising

At meetings in 2011, members had become aware of a Faculty of Science publication entitled *Careers that Started in Science* which profiled UQ Science graduates who have gone on to start careers in various fields. The publication was aimed primarily at prospective students, but members had felt that current students would also find it valuable. The Faculty Office had advised that it was happy to publicise to current students the availability of the booklet online by producing posters, flyers and screen slides. Advice had been sought from the Faculty of Science 15 March and again 23 March on what action had been taken and a reply was awaited. Mark Starkey undertook to continue to follow up.

At the October 2011 meeting, members had discussed how students choose their majors and elective courses. MMolBiol representative, Flor Vasquez, had noted that there was some latitude in the prerequisites for entry to postgraduate coursework programs, depending on the qualifications an individual held. She had suggested that the web pages which stated the generic entry requirements might have a button marked 'click here to contact an academic advisor' for guidance on a particular individual's admission prospects.

ACTION

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4. Business arising out of the minutes: (cont'd)

4.1 Careers Information and Academic Advising (cont'd)

Mark Starkey reported that he had investigated and had found that the UQ Courses and Programs webpages have a menu item at the top of the page entitled 'how to get help' which goes to a page with a number of other links, including admissions help for domestic and international students. There is an online enquiry form there which provides for applicants to enter information about their previous studies and to ask any question. A reply within one business day is guaranteed.

Chris Read suggested that some web users do not notice sidebar menus and buttons and that a link in the text on the relevant page might be more suitable.

4.2 Student Cohort Experiences

The October 2011 meeting had noted that the School's Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) was considering running a camp for third year BSc students taking SCMB majors, similar to that run annually for new Biotechnology students.

The December 2011 TLC meeting had decided that such a camp should go ahead. TLC Chair, Joe Rothnagel, had undertaken to meet with the Biotechnology Program Director, Prof Ross Barnard, to discuss BSc students attending the same camp venue at the same time as Biotech students (to achieve economies of scale) but participating in a largely separate program.

Joe reported that he had met with Ross Barnard and observed that attendance numbers may have to be limited in order to fit into the accommodation at the Moreton Bay Research Station on Stradbroke Island.

Members discussed suitable timing for the camp, and agreed that first semester Orientation Week would be a good time.

It was agreed that Joe, Ross and Dr Susan Rowland continue to develop a proposal.

Joe

4.3 Postgraduate Student Printing/Copying Quota

At the October 2011 meeting, the MMolBiol representative had said that students appreciated being given a 200 page black-and-white print quota by the School each year, but wondered if it was possible to add a small colour quota or to convert some of the B&W quota to colour. This was because students sometimes needed to include a colour page of a graphic in an assignment submission and had to print that page elsewhere.

Following consultation by the School Manager with the two postgraduate coursework representatives on the Committee and with the directors of the MBiotech and MMolBiol programs, the Head of School had approved that the B&W quota be reduced to 180 pages and a 20 page colour quota (also available to be used as B&W) be introduced. This had been implemented.

4.4 Undergraduate Research Courses

Mark Starkey reported that, just prior to the start of first semester 2012, a poster and a display screen slide had been produced that advertised opportunities for undergraduate students to obtain an undergraduate research experience.

The slides were running on the Chemistry Podium and MBS Building foyer display screens, and there were posters on the Podium and MBS Level 2 noticeboards. Additionally, a web page had been produced, linked from the School's *Current Students* pages and, at present, linked as a feature on the School's home page.

Paige Erpf said that she was living in a college on campus and had seen many notices about various UQ activities, but little to do with Science. She offered to publicise information in the colleges, such as the *Careers that Started in Science* booklet and undergraduate research experience opportunities. Mark Starkey undertook to pass Paige's contact details on to the School's Engagement Officer.

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4.5 CHEM2054

Chris Read noted that the issue of timely feedback to students on practical reports submitted in CHEM2054 had been discussed at the October 2011 meeting. The then course coordinator had reported that he would recommend changes to the incoming 2012 coordinator to improve matters.

Chris, who is enrolled in CHEM2054 this semester, reported that students were not receiving marks for their reports until three weeks following submission, by which time several further reports had been submitted. There was a lack of marking criteria for the reports and students felt that they "were shooting in the dark". He agreed that including marking criteria in the Course Profile and/or practical manual would help.

Joe Rothnagel undertook to take up the matters of marking criteria and speedier marking by tutors with the current course coordinator.

Joe

5. Careers advice sessions for SCMB students:

Members noted that, late in 2011, the School had been approached by the Careers and Graduate Employment office in UQ Student Services about holding careers information sessions for students of particular Faculties and Schools.

Following a meeting of the Chair of the SCMB TLC, the School Manager and the School's Engagement Officer with a member of the Careers team, it had been agreed to schedule a one hour seminar entitled 'How to write a winning resume and cover letter' to which SCMB's third year undergraduate and Honours students would be invited. The seminar would be held on the Friday of Week 7 (20 April). Invitations would be emailed in the coming week.

In second semester, a two-hour seminar on job search strategies would be made available to second year SCMB undergraduates.

Student members of the Committee agreed that the initiatives were useful and undertook to help publicise the seminars to their fellow students.

Patrick Fortuna mentioned that he had attended the UQ Careers Fair held 14 March and had noticed a lack of employers of Science graduates. Mark Starkey responded that the organisers of the Fair had asked the School for suggestions of employers to invite. The School had researched Graduate Destination Survey and other data to identify employers of its graduates in recent years and passed this information to the organisers. Mark suggested that the employers had probably not taken up the invitation to participate.

Student members felt that it would be useful to have information available online on which organisations employed graduates in particular disciplines, particularly if it could be linked from pages they accessed regularly, such as course Blackboard (Bb) pages. Melissa Brown suggested that a single web page could contain the information and be linked from each of the Bb pages the School was responsible for. Mark Starkey undertook to bring the data to the next meeting, for review.

Mark

Arising from the discussion, Joe Rothnagel suggested that Bb communities be established for the BSc majors and BBiotech, in the way they had been set up for the School's postgraduate coursework programs and Honours program. Major convenors could maintain the pages. Mark undertook to investigate and refer the suggestion to the Teaching & Learning Committee, before reporting back to the CSCC.

Mark

6. Finding supervisors for MMolBiol research projects:

Flor Vasquez mentioned that MMolBiol students experience difficulty obtaining a supervisor and project for research courses they are required to complete. She had emailed seven staff members to ask if they would supervise her for a project and had received no response. When she had followed up, some had claimed that their personal assistants had not passed the email on to them.

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6. Finding supervisors for MMolBiol research projects: (cont'd)

Patrick Fortuna suggested that a hierarchy of online information might be made available to assist students. At the top level, this could be a list of areas of interest, which would link to a list of Schools and Institutes for a given area of interest, then to staff and projects for that area of interest in the particular School/Institute.

Akash Boda noted that the booklets produced annually by the School for Biotechnology and for BSc Honours, which listed available projects by staff member as well as organisational units outside the School that offered relevant projects, were useful.

Melissa Brown responded by tabling examples of the booklets and indicating that the School had realised there was a deficiency in the way MMolBiol students were required to seek out projects and supervisors, and was moving to remedy the situation by introducing a list of available projects that students could sign up for.

7. Echo 360 recordings:

A student had raised with a number of representatives a suggestion to improve the *Echo 360* (previously known as *Lectopia*) lecture recording system.

The student had observed that recordings seemed to stop at 10 minutes to the hour, yet lecturers frequently ran late. The student had suggested that recordings run up to the hour, rather than finishing at 10 minutes to the hour.

Mark Starkey had checked with UQ's Information Technology Services on how the system is set up. Lecturers can nominate their lectures for recording at the start of each semester. The system starts recording on the hour and stops at 10 minutes to the hour – this is in accordance with the time lectures are supposed to start and finish per the class timetable and helps to discourage classes running into each other. Also, it gives the machines doing the recording time to process and then start the next recording.

A lecturer can pause or stop recording using the controls in the lecture theatre or can shorten a recording by editing it before it is posted on *Blackboard* (eg, to edit a private conversation with a student at the end of the lecture that was inadvertently captured in the automatic recording).

However a lecturer cannot override the recording stop time and keep recording past the 10 minutes-to-the-hour mark by using the controls in the lecture theatre. A lecturer could phone the *Echo 360* bookings line a few minutes before the recording is due to cease and ask for it to be extended.

Melissa Brown was interested in why some students relied on the recordings rather than attending lectures. Student members said that they were aware that a relatively small number of students had timetable clashes. Additionally at the start of semester, some students relying on public transport found they missed lectures due to transport problems, although this seemed to settle down after the first few weeks. Ultimately, student members felt that it was usually personal choice to not attend lectures and that the ready availability of the recordings contributed to some students developing a reliance on them.

Sophie Hudson said that the best way to deal with missed information in recordings was to either attend the lecture or ask friends. Rose Trappes echoed these sentiments and added that one could also email the lecturer. Most student members felt that the lack of recording of lectures that sometimes ran overtime by a few minutes was a relatively minor problem that did not warrant a change to the recording system.

8. Next meeting:

At least one more meeting would be held this semester, around Week 10 or 11, unless pressing business arose in the meantime. Mark would advise members of the date and venue.

Mark

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