

University of Melbourne
Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 04/13
Tuesday, 27 August 2013

Present: *J. Anderson, J. Boldero, S. Bowden, M. Chandrakumar, S. Cropper, M. Delgado, J. Forte, A. Frewen, H. Gazelle, S. Hall, N. Haslam (Chair), P. Howe, J. Humberstone, H. Jackson, M. Jackson, K. Johnson, A. Jordan, Y. Kashima, S. Loughnan, D. Little, C. Nicholas, G. Robins, D. Sewell, D. Shank, L. Smillie, P. Smith, J. Trinder and S. Wilson*

Apologies: *N. Allen, S. Bode, C. Bryant, O. Carter, R. Hester, L. Kiropoulos, M. McKague, R. Reeve and M. Yates*

Minutes: *A. Korajkic*

0.0 Starring of additional items

There were no additional items starred for discussion.

A.1 Apologies

Nick Haslam welcomed everyone. Apologies were received and noted as above.

A.2 Minutes

The minutes of the School Committee meeting 03/13 held on 25 June 2013 were confirmed.

A.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

A.6.1 Student Behaviour – update from Student Behaviour Working Group

Jacqueline Anderson informed the committee that the Student Behaviour Working Group produced some guidelines and a general overview on student behaviour which has been placed on the School website. Also, Jacqueline went on to report that a poster which has been derived from the guidelines will be placed around the School. It is hoped that all staff and students will be better supported in this area by knowing expectations for appropriate behaviour. Jacqueline invited the staff to provide feedback.

A.4 Matters from the Chair

There were no matters arising from the Chair.

A.5 Report from the Head

Philip Smith congratulated Dr Litza Kiropoulos on her promotion to Senior Lecturer.

Philip went on to inform the committee about the consultation process to appoint the new Head of School as his term finishes at the end of 2013. It was noted that with us being a graduate school the process is overseen by the Provost rather than the Dean only. Philip has advised the Dean and made a recommendation and the Dean advised the Provost. It is assumed that the Provost is waiting for the new Dean, Professor Stephen Smith, to be in place. The Provost and/or the Dean will consult directly with members of the School about the proposal in which Philip nominated a new Head.

A.5.1 School budget 2014

Philip informed the committee that he had a first look at the proposed Faculty and School budget for 2014. The proposed budget papers see us taking a 5.4% cut which would translate into a 500K cut in our budget allocation in 2014 relative to 2013 (from 9.4 million in 2013 to 8.9 million in 2014). Philip pointed out that we would be the only School to receive a cut while other schools would be growing as much as 9%-10%. The reason is purportedly an overstatement of our earnings load and yield by scenario modelling, which have historically contained many errors, but the exact basis for the cut is unclear. Philip reminded the committee that the contingency-based budget for 2013 was based on some agreed assessment of likely return on teaching activities. Philip and Simon Hall will have a series of meetings with the Faculty Finance Group. Philip advised the committee that the model has not been finalised for the 2014 budget, but we may have less money in future to support strategic initiatives as we have in the last few years. Philip concluded by saying that we will do what we can to attempt to prevent that outcome.

A.5.2 Lecturer B/C position

Philip informed the committee that we have just gone through a selection process for an appointment at level B/C. Philip went on to say that we had a series of outstanding special colloquia and thanked everyone who came along and provided feedback. While not yet in a position to be able to make a formal announcement about outcomes, Philip was pleased to inform the committee that we have approval from the faculty to make two appointments rather than one.

A.5.3 Outcome of Cape Schanck conference

The university Cape Schanck Planning Conference was held on 14-15 August. This is the retreat of the University Senior Executive where they consider how the university is performing in teaching, research, engagement and income. Philip went on to point out that this is the conference that assigns money for major projects. Disappointingly the proposed upgrade of the Redmond Barry Building was not supported. This was not considered a priority for 2014 and is being considered in the context of the long term faculty planning i.e., the Gateway project. Philip informed the committee that the Orygen redevelopment is considered a priority by the conference and is a subject to matching funds from the state government.

A.5.4 School accreditation 2014

Philip informed the committee that he has been in contact with APAC, which has confirmed that we are expected to lodge an application by March 2014 to have our programs re-accredited. The intention to apply has to be lodged by November 2013. The committee noted that we would be accredited under the existing 2010 standards rather than new standards that have been worked through but which we haven't seen yet. Philip reminded the committee that the process involves an enormous workload for the team who puts together the accreditation submission. Requests will come through for all kinds of documents as the accreditation process gears up. Philip invited the staff to respond to these requests as swiftly as possible. It was clarified that our application for accreditation is due in March 2014 and there will be an agreed on timetable with APAC in relation to their site visit.

Philip concluded his report by informing the committee about a review of Biological Sciences which is to be overseen by Emeritus Professor David Siddle, former DVC (Research) at the University of Queensland. The aim of the review is to determine how best to position the disciplines, which are split across the faculty, in terms of their contributions to undergraduate teaching, their training of research higher degree students, their research performance and their community engagement. Philip was not able to inform the committee what the driver for the process is but it is clear that the discussions are underway and the FMDHS is a significant stakeholder. It is flagged that the faculty will be providing its submission.

A.6 Key issues for discussion

There were no key issues for discussion.

A.7 Executive Committee

A.7.1a Minutes of meeting 05/13 held 17 June 2013

Minutes of meeting 05/13 held on 17 June 2013 were confirmed.

A.7.1b Minutes of meeting 06/13 held 15 July 2013

Minutes of meeting 06/13 held on 15 July 2013 were confirmed

A.7.2 Research and Research Training Committee

There was nothing to report.

A.7.3 Academic Programs Committee

A.7.3.1 Review of first semester of the fourth-year program

Jason Forte spoke to prepared slides <http://web.psych.unimelb.edu.au/asmira/LitReviewProgress%20.pdf> listing a number of issues in regards to the review of the new aspects of the fourth year program, pointing out that opportunities to modify them in time for 2014 are limited because the Handbook deadline is long past . It was noted that one of the key things that we are trying to achieve from changing the thesis format is to improve the academic outcomes for students. However, early feedback received from the staff was not as positive as we might have hoped. Some of the big issues that Jason spoke to in more detail were student progress, usefulness of feedback, timing, workload, student well-being and literature review format.

After an ensuing discussion Nick Haslam suggested that while it was good to have this on the table for discussion we should be getting some feedback from the students, and have a big review in November about what we can change in time for 2015, taking into account the whole of the year. The committee noted that the only change that has to be decided this year is the marker assignment process. It was decided that Jason will compile the feedback and take it to the next APC meeting. Nick thanked Jason for the summary.

A.7.3.2 Current Teaching and Learning practices in MSPS

Sarah Wilson reminded the committee of the Empirica report in which they canvassed views of 3rd and 4th year exiting students and came up with a list of recommendations on how to improve students' learning experiences. Sarah referred to a graph in Attachment A.7.3.2 showing what the school staff are already doing in relation to Empirica recommendations, specifically in regards to providing marking guides, quizzes for ongoing feedback, examples of high achieving assessment and addressing expectations of students or providing feedback on their progress. It was noted that a majority of staff are already doing already several of these things and some others are straightforwarde.g., putting examples of good work on the website. It was also noted that it is expected that we will continue to be under pressure to achieve learning and teaching targets.

A.7.3.3 Processes relating to SES scores of Semester 1, 2013

Sarah Wilson informed the committee that we are meeting our targets for undergraduate level SES. She pointed out that when SES scores drop below 3.5 they triggers a faculty reaction requesting a brief response from the subject co-ordinator. The committee noted that the SES scores are now coming to us all online, first to the School Manager, Simon Hall, and the Academic Programs Manager, Erin Calder, who distributes the scores and the comments to each of the relevant subject coordinators. It's up to the subject coordinator to distribute the relevant comments and scores to the team of staff teaching into that subject. The scores only get to be discussed at a global level at APC. Sarah concluded by commending all academic staff for meeting our targets because two years ago we were seriously under targets. Philip Smith emphasised that it was a highly relevant point to make as a very significant positive shift in evaluation of our courses was notable.

Sarah concluded her report by reminding the committee that our CEQ remains problematic and indicated a possibility of the university dropping the targets somewhat.

A.7.4 External Relations Committee

A.7.4.1 Open Day and Great Debate wrap-up

Henry Jackson reported that the Open Day was a great success with a lot of people turning up.

Henry went on to report on the Great Debate, which was another successful event. The proposition was that there is not room for individual creativity in psychological sciences research. The affirmative team consisted of Jenny Boldero, Christina Bryant and Steve Loughnan. The against team consisted of Nick Haslam, Litza Kiroopoulos and Stefan Bode. Over 150 people attended and the winner by popular audience acclaim was the affirmative team led by Jenny Boldero. It was pleasing to see a large number of undergraduate students attending, which is a good way of engaging with the undergraduate cohort as they get to see their lecturers in a different light. The debate was moderated by Mr David Murray-Smith from the Victorian Justice Department who also suggested that we might think about having a trophy which could become some sort of tradition.

A.7.4.2 Proposal for short public lecture series

Katherine Johnson put forward a proposal for a series of four public lectures to be held once a week for a month. The aim is to engage the general public, our students and alumni, and year 12 Psychology students with our research. It was noted that finding the right month would be critical. The lectures would be advertised via the university Public Lecture marketing system, our e-mail lists of alumni and high school students. It was agreed to work out a proposal at the next External Relations committee and to bring it back to the School Committee for a further consideration.

A.7.4.3 Proposal for more subject and PhD prizes

Henry put forward a proposal that was discussed by the External Relations Committee for having more subject and PhD prizes. It was noted that we currently have a number of prizes but not for every subject. It is proposed that they be introduced across all subject as relatively inexpensive forms of recognition. Henry went on to propose that these be established for the PhD students too, in addition to the one run by the central university. It was noted that the proposal would be very similar to the way the school nominates for the central university award and be based on the examiners' reports. It would involve

consideration of the relatively small number of theses in a given year. The school committee provided a general consensus for the External Relations committee to work out the procedure and bring it back to the School Committee for endorsement.

A.7.4.4 Alumni issues (Should we be aiming in the longer-term for funded named scholarships?)

Henry informed the committee that the university campaign is underway and there will be an expectation that we build up our alumni database with a view to attracting donations from alumni at some point. Henry is of the view that we need to think about how we want such incoming monies to be used, e.g., specifically for Psychological Sciences activities or positions? One such longer-term possibility would be the establishment of named scholarships targeted at specific groups of students who might otherwise be excluded by socio-economic or other disadvantages.

A.8 Any Other Business

Simon Hall invited the staff to forward news items for the newsletter before the end of the day. Nick Haslam extended a belated welcome to Dr Daniel Shank, a new postdoctoral fellow working with Yoshi Kashima. With no other business to discuss the meeting closed at 1.45pm.