ACADEMIC SENATE

Minutes of a meeting of the Academic Senate held from 9:41 am to 11:29 am on Tuesday 25 June 2019 in the Manly Room, Level 4, 17 Wally's Walk (17WW). Please note that the minutes reflect the order of items in the agenda.

MINUTES

PRESENT

Professor Mariella Herberstein (Chair)
Professor Jacqueline Phillips (Deputy Chair)
Associate Professor Bill Ashraf
Dr Wylie Bradford
Professor Judith Dawes
Professor Cath Dean
Professor Jim Denier
Professor Chris Dixon
Professor S Bruce Dowton
Associate Professor Adam Dunn
Professor Simon Handley

APOLOGIES

Lillian Andolfatto
Professor Stephen Brammer
Professor Sean Brawley
Fiona Burton
Sayantani Chatterjee
Dr Leanne Holt
Professor Lesley Hughes

ABSENT

Dr Frank Carrigan
Alexei Feofiloff
Tristan Kennedy

SECRETARY TO ACADEMIC SENATE

SECRETARIAT

Megan Kemmis

IN ATTENDANCE

Antonia Dykes
Paul Fairweather

1. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

A meeting of the Academic Senate commenced at 9:41 am with the Chair acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land. The Chair invited members to volunteer to give the acknowledgement of country at the next meeting of Academic Senate.

1.2 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members, noting this is an extraordinary meeting to ensure there is clarity and agreement around the functions to be devolved from Academic Senate and the Academic Standards and Quality Committee to the Faculty Boards, particularly highlighting the importance of ensuring these decisions are precisely worded. The Chair also noted the apologies listed above and reminded those present of their role and purpose as members of the Academic Senate.

1.3 Disclosure of conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

1.4 Adoption of unstarred items

Resolution 19/61

Academic Senate resolved that the item not starred for discussion (Item 2.4) be noted and, where appropriate, be adopted as recommended.

2. ACADEMIC SENATE PROJECTS

2.1 Developing a Model for Shared Academic Governance

The Chair noted that a special meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee had been held the previous week to consider the remaining issues related to implementation of shared academic governance. Associate Professor Lavermicocca advised that the matters discussed have been summarised in the agenda papers, and included defining a new course, the point at which course amendments require a new course proposal, identified risks and the mechanisms for addressing these. She advised that the committee is comfortable with the list of decisions recommended to be devolved to Faculty Boards.

Ms Williams guided members through a table of proposed authorisations, based on the elements of Academic Senate’s resolution from 28 November 2017 (Res 17/135). While the wording of this resolution
was updated on 19 February 2019 to align with the terminology in the Curriculum Architecture Policy and Principles (Res 19/04), the intent of Senate’s original resolution had not been clarified in the context of the new curriculum framework until now. This was also set out in the table, together with relevant mapping to the Higher Education Standards Framework (this provides an assurance that Academic Senate is acting appropriately in devolving some decisions to the faculty level). The table outlined the proposed final version of each decision, highlighting any amendments required to either the wording or the delegate. It also provides definitions to ensure clarity of meaning, listed the related legislative instruments and identified any risks, with further information on risk mitigation to be progressively added.

The Chair guided members through the authority that Academic Senate would reserve, noting some (such as authority over academic policy) are uncontroversial, but require amendment to align with the definition of academic matters now included in the Academic Senate Rules. Members were asked to consider the nuances in authority over courses vs. authority over course components, and in particular Senate’s retention of authority to approve and disestablish courses.

This authorisation has been expanded to assist Senate and Faculty Boards to understand the circumstances in which Senate approval will be required. ASQC has supported this approach but recommended that point (f) (“the number of option sets required and the credit point value of each”) be reworded to clarify that Senate approves the number of units that must be taken from an option set, not the total credit points in an option set. The wording of point (g) (“the inclusion or exclusion of specific units as an elective unit within an option set”) was also queried, and Ms Williams confirmed that this will be reworded and that the intention is for Faculty Boards to approve changes to individual units in option sets. The Chair used a specialisation from the Faculty of Science and Engineering as an example to demonstrate which changes to the specialisation would require Senate approval and which would be approved by the Faculty Board.

Members discussed the triggers for changing courses, with the Chair reminding members that changes to 2020 courses should only be made in response to either an annual overview of the course or a full course review. She noted that further advice on review cycles and the proposed dashboard will be provided by Professor Brawley later in the year. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the course review system will need to be well entrenched before the University’s next reaccreditation with TEQSA.

The meeting then focussed on the expanded list of Faculty Board approvals in row 9 of the table, with the Chair pointing out that Faculty Boards, as discipline experts, will have authority to group units into course components such as minors, majors and specialisations, but the placement of these components into a course will be approved by Senate.

Members then went through the remaining authorisations, noting that some items originally intended for devolution to Faculty Board will now remain with Academic Senate due to changes in their risk level, e.g. English language requirements and third-party providers, both issues which have received recent attention from government and the media. Changes to mode of offering, study mode and attendance mode will also stay with Senate given TEQSA’s interest in these issues. Inherent requirements will also stay with Senate for changes to generic requirements, but Faculty Boards will have authority over inherent requirements for specific courses. Faculty Boards will have authority to set pre-requisites and co-requisites, noting that ASQC has recommended this be extended to include “not to count for credit with” (NCCW) units. The authority to approve courses offerings in a given year will be shared by Faculty Boards and Faculty Executives.

Members noted that some Faculty Board authorities will relate to specific decisions at the faculty level in relation to standards set by Academic Senate e.g. work-integrated learning, and recognition of prior learning for admission. The remaining authority to be amended related to saving cases and waiving requirements. These will be devolved to Faculty Boards, but cases where the volume of learning or the minimum amount of study to be completed at the University will be reduced will require Senate approval.

The Chair invited members to send further feedback as soon as possible, adding that a revised version of the table based on ASQC and Senate feedback will be presented at Senate’s next meeting for approval.

**Resolution 19/62**

Academic Senate resolved to note the advice on authorisations and provide feedback for finalisation of these to be presented for approval to the next meeting of Academic Senate.

Jenni Zoue joined the meeting at 10:27 am. Professor Rebecca Mitchell left the meeting at 10:53 am.

### 2.2 Threshold Standards

Associate Professor Lavermicocca presented this item, outlining the discussions held at the previous week’s meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) on each category of change as follows:

- **Course titles:** these would constitute a new course proposal requiring Academic Senate approval;
- **AQF level:** these would constitute a new course proposal requiring Senate approval;
- **Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):** the committee agreed that faculties will need examples outlining the difference between major and minor changes to CLOs, and identifying when these would constitute a new course proposal;
- **Volume of learning/course duration:** these would constitute a new course proposal requiring Senate approval;
- **Third party delivery:** these would constitute a new course proposal requiring Senate approval;
Entry Requirements: ASQC recommends that changes to entry requirements which affect Course Learning Outcomes go to both Senate and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for approval. ASQC also considered thresholds for saving cases, and agreed that a case which requires waiving either the volume of learning or the minimum amount of study to be completed at the University should require Senate approval. Members noted that the threshold standards will be further refined by ASQC before being presented to Senate’s meeting in September for final approval.

Resolution 19/63
Academic Senate resolved to note the proposed criteria and suggested approval level, and provide feedback to ASQC to establish an appropriate guidance document.

2.3 Terms of Reference of Faculty Boards
The Chair reminded members that it is the Vice-Chancellor who approves the terms of reference of Faculty Boards and that any agreed amendments will be referred to him for his approval. Ms Williams advised that there are no proposed changes to the Faculty Rules or Delegations of Authority at this stage, and that the proposed sharing of decision-making will be accomplished through a series of authorisations from Academic Senate to Faculty Boards (in accordance with the Delegations of Authority policy). One issue previously raised by Senate members is the lack of balance between ex officio and elected/appointed members on Faculty Boards. Some interim measures are suggested, including allowing elected Faculty representatives on Academic Senate to become members of the relevant Faculty Board (this will be discussed with the Chairs of Faculty Boards), with other measures to be considered once a post-implementation review of Shared Academic Governance is undertaken. At that point, Senate will also be asked to endorse a range of formal amendments to the Delegations of Authority, the Faculty Rules and the Academic Senate Rules. The proposed changes to the terms of reference of Faculty Boards amend their purpose, functions and composition and allow the Faculty Boards to become an element in how Academic Senate addresses academic governance at the University. A version with track changes will be provided to the Chair of each Faculty Board for feedback.

In response to a question on whether any modelling had been undertaken on the composition of Faculty Boards, Ms Williams advised that this would be done as part of any proposed changes to the Faculty Rules. The Vice-Chancellor added that he is comfortable with the proposed authorisations undergoing a trial period with a post-implementation review.

Resolution 19/64
Academic Senate resolved to note the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for Faculty Boards.

2.4 Terms of Reference of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

Resolution 19/65
Academic Senate resolved to note the proposed review and amendment of the terms of reference of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.5 Project Overview: Terms of Reference for External Review of Academic Senate
The Chair advised members that Ms White, as Secretary to Senate, will be managing the review process, and she asked members to forward any comments on the proposed terms of reference to Ms White. The final version of the terms of reference will be endorsed by the Academic Senate Standing Committee.

Resolution 19/66
Academic Senate resolved to note the report on the draft Terms of Reference for the external review of Academic Senate.

2.6 Chair of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee: Nomination Process
The Chair drew members’ attention to the proposed process for appointing a new Chair of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee. Nominations will be reviewed by the Academic Senate Standing Committee which will make a final recommendation.

Resolution 19/67
Academic Senate resolved to note the process for appointing a new Chair of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

3. OTHER BUSINESS
The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be an ordinary meeting to be held on Tuesday 23 July 2019. Agenda Items are due by Tuesday 9 July 2019. The meeting closed at 11:29 am.