School of Psychology
Teaching & Learning Committee

Minutes of the meeting: 26 October 2010

Present Hayley Hutchison
       Vance Locke
       Shayne Loft
       Andrea Loftus
       Geoff Hammond (Chair)

1 Chair’s report

The Faculty T&L Committee sought Schools’ views on two proposals, the first to standardize practices of applying special consideration and the second to standardize the SPOT surveys. The Committee generally supported both moves to standardize practices and added the following points:

- the matrix designed to codify the award of special consideration marks was incomplete and the categories (‘chronic’, ‘acute’) would be difficult to define;
- although faculties will often have confidential information that cannot be divulged, they should contact the Schools before applying special consideration; in some cases Schools will have provided special consideration by extension of submission deadlines.
- it appeared from the submission that the simplified SPOT survey would apply to units and not teachers; the importance of feedback on individual’s teaching would require that schools implement their own survey of teachers;
- the survey designers should consider getting the view of students.

The Chair agreed to forward these views to the Faculty.

2 Teaching & Learning Operational Priorities Plan

The draft OPP was discussed. A revised version for wider consideration was agreed and is attached to these minutes.

3 Other business

There was no other business.
Operational objective 1: Establish a ‘learning community’ among undergraduates
Implementation strategies

• create and maintain a resource page for students on the School web site
• investigate resources for a student common room
• advertise availability of teaching rooms for private and group study
• Head of School talk in introductory lectures in years 1, 2, and 3

Operational objective 2: Optimize partnership with casual teaching staff
Implementation strategies

• set up in-house teacher training by OSDS (teaching methods) and CATL (resources such as LMS use)
• explicit statement of casual teachers’ rights and responsibilities
• separate payment for classroom work and assignment marking
• ensure all units have regular and frequent tutors meetings
• formalize Senior Tutor position with appropriate compensation with clear responsibility (which should not include managing other tutors)
• establish a School Prize for outstanding and innovative teaching by casual staff
• formalize application process for casual teaching

Operational objective 3: Strengthen the teaching : research nexus
Implementation strategies

• include substantial research-based teaching in each unit
• offer an appropriate level of laboratory teaching in each unit
• competitive summer research internships (funded jointly by School and researcher)
• encourage diversity of 3310 topics and offer the unit in both semesters
• offer volunteer research opportunities to undergraduate students

Operational objective 4: Ensure academic standards in teaching
Implementation strategies

• reward innovative teaching by academic staff
• have a written syllabus for each unit
• ensure adequate curriculum coverage in each major
• engage academics in small-group teaching in units they coordinate
• consider sanctions for unauthorized absence from laboratories and tutorials
• have appropriate limits on student presentations in seminars and tutorials

Operational objective 5: Ensure academic standards in assessment
Implementation strategies

• academics mark a substantial proportion of examination questions on material taught
• use multiple-choice tests where appropriate and with suitable test development
• award marks only for academic work