School of Social Sciences
School Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 4th June 2014 at 3:00pm
Seminar Room G.25

Present:
Professor Alistair Paterson, Head of School (Chair)  Professor Farida Fozdar
Mr Tim Stewart, Manager  Associate Professor Joanna Elfving-Hwang
Professor Loretta Baldassar  Associate Professor Rob Cover
Professor Marie-Eve Ritz  Associate Professor Martin Porr
Professor Jeannette Taylor  Associate Professor Stephen Dobbs
Professor Samina Yasmeen  Ms Jill Woodman (Secretary)
Professor Ben Smith

Apologies:
Professor Jo McDonald

Welcome
The Chair welcomed Associate Professor Rob Cover to his first meeting as Discipline Chair of Communication and Media Studies.

Minutes of Previous Meeting
The minutes of the 30th April 2014 meeting were passed without amendment.

Part A: Items for Communication

Social Sciences Building – Use of Space
A plan for the use of space within the Social Sciences building will be put together over the next 2-3 months. The plan will cover the projected use of the building including teaching spaces, staff offices, increased space for postgraduate students and locating members of a discipline in the same area.

Social Sciences Building - Maintenance
The stairwells are being painted at the moment and work will begin next week on refurbishing the archaeology ‘fishbowl’ space.

Office of Operational Excellent - Functional Review
Stage 1 has been completed and the next step is to select the issues to be dealt with during Stage 2.

Part B: Items for Discussion

1. Student Enrolments 2013-2014
Philippa Freergard had supplied figures to the Head of School giving a breakdown of student enrolments across disciplines in the School. There had been a marked increase in enrolments in language units and some wins and losses in other disciplines. As a general overview, disciplines within the School are holding their own.
2. **Workloads**
This year disciplines were encouraged to take a more transparent approach to calculating workloads and it is expected that the process will be continued for next year. The different ways workloads are calculated are being reviewed with the aim of introducing a uniform system throughout the School.

3. **Cycle 2**
At the moment, the School of Social Sciences is more heavily involved in Cycle 2 degrees than the other schools in the Faculty. Most of the courses, however, do not sit comfortably in any one discipline but across schools, disciplines and faculties.

It was stressed that it was important to let students know that doing a Cycle 2 course is not an easy way to get a Masters degree. It is not a matter of you pay and you get a degree, and recruiting quality students must be the objective. It should be documented in the information about the degree what the minimum requirements for entry into Level 5 courses are and the number of expected contact hours per unit.

The way the course is assessed also needs to be considered, taking into account the number of overseas students who are expected to enrol. Consideration could be given to not having a dissertation requirement. It is possible to be innovative without lowering standards.

There is a momentum within the Faculty to set up working groups to help with the oversight of Masters programs. It was suggested that it would be useful to have a group of three staff for each Masters course to decide on hiring of sessional staff, unit content and unit oversight. It is important that these degrees work well as, if there is a problem, it will affect the reputation of the disciplines involved, the School and the Faculty. The Chair proposed a meeting of all in the School involved in the Masters programs to discuss issues, problems, etc.

4. **Marketing to Level 3 Students**
It is important to make students who are completing their degrees aware of what options for further study are available to them. Staff can provide some direction as to the Masters by Coursework which may be most suitable for them but should also let students know that Honours is another option that is available.

5. **Master in Social Research Methods**
A meeting has been held with School of Humanities’ staff to discuss cross-school involvement in the Master in Social Research Methods by coursework.

6. **HDR**
Professor Ben Smith gave a breakdown of School postgraduate responses to the questionnaire distributed by the Graduate Research School last year. The issues of most concern to students appear to be access to desk space and the level of financial assistance available to them.

7. **Website**
The HDR website is being updated and the Faculty is negotiating to have some input as it is very out of date at the moment.

8. **Back up teaching material**
Staff were reminded to archive or back up teaching material so that it is a resource available for new members of staff or staff teaching the unit for the first time.

9. **Other Business**

* **Mental Health Training**
Professional staff will be undertaking mental health awareness training within the next few months to help them deal with and recognise common mental health conditions and what they can do to assist
and support colleagues and students. If staff have any concerns about students or colleagues they should report it to the Head of School or School Manager.

*Australian Postgraduate Awards/University Postgraduate Awards*

Applications are now open for students with First Class Honours. Only students with First Class results will be considered in this round.

4. **Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is 30\(^{th}\) July 2014 at 2 pm.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm.