The University of Western Australia

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FAO GROUP
HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2003 IN THE CHANCELLOR’S ROOM

Present: Mrs J Fetherston (Chair), Mrs Z Blair, Ms E Oliver, Dr C McIlroy, Ms V Coram, Ms R King, Ms F Symonds, Ms F Gouldthorp, Ms J Barrett, Ms M Heibloem, Ms M Bateman, Ms D Rhys-Jones.

Apologies: Ms M Schneider, Ms M Rogers

1. MINUTES – Ref: F5303
   The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. ADMISSION APPLICATION PROCESSING
   A number of members had attended the SIMS session of postgraduate admission processing, at which Jenny Gamble produced a paper proposing that the entry of data be carried out initially by the Admissions Office.

   Discussion was held in order to determine the overall view of FAO’s on this matter which would be transmitted to the SIMS Project Team.

   Note that there is significant overlap with the issue of common submission dates for postgraduate courses. Refer to item 3(iii).

   The Group generally agreed that a process that involved the following was their preferred option:
   - Applicants’ initial enquiry to be directed to the appropriate Faculty
   - Applications to be sent directly to Faculty office for assessment
   - Faculties send details of successful applicant(s) to central administration, including the application, terms of offer and study plans or any other Faculty specific information that is required to be sent out with the Authority to Enrol (ATE).
   - Central administration generate student number, enter data and send out ATE with any documentation required by Faculties

   It was noted that in the above process Faculties would be required to check the nationality of each applicant as part of the approval process.

   The Group agreed that the following situations would not be acceptable:
   - Applications being delayed by workload in a centralised system
   - Students being denied initial/ongoing face-to-face contact with course advisors

   The point was made that Faculties, in particular Faculty Boards, should be consulted before changes of this magnitude are made to procedures that affect all Faculties.
3. **SIMS MATTERS**

Jenny Gamble had sent emails on 10 and 11 November 2003, requesting information related to reporting requirements, whether a WAM or GPA should be used, and common submission dates for various processes and restricted quota units. Discussion was held in order to determine an overall view of FAO’s on these matters.

(i) **Academic transcripts – internal academic records**

The chair reported that Callistra may not be able to reproduce all of the information currently on an Internal Academic Record and that we may be asked to rank all current details in order of importance.

The group could not identify any information on the current internal academic record that was not used and therefore all details were determined to be vital.

(ii) **GPA vs WAM**

The group agreed that a weighted average mark (WAM) is greatly preferred to a grade point average (GPA). WAM are currently used to determine such things as prize and scholarship allocations and ranking of new applications and transfer applications.

(iii) **Common Submission dates for Postgraduate Courses**

FAO’s were asked to think about common deadlines for postgraduate applications because Callista operates on calendars to control functions within the system.

The following points were raised:

- It was noted that Faculties often advertise that “late applications may be accepted” to allow deadlines to be extended for highly desirable applicants
- For Faculties that consider all applications together at one time after the closing date, the closing date needed to be early enough that students did not go elsewhere because they had already received an offer from another University.
- Many Faculties accessed applications as they were received and in the case of project work, students were allowed to commence at any time.

The group agreed the absolute deadline for standard semester courses could be the end of the second week of semester (allows one week to generate offer and complete enrolment), but that advertising this as the only deadline would be problematic. It was agreed to check the advertised closing dates of other Universities for comparison.

There was too much variation in non-standard semester courses to agree upon a common deadline.

Note that there is significant overlap with the issue of admission application processing. Refer to item 2.

(iv) **Restricted Quota Units**

Faculties of Law, Education, Life and Physical Sciences and Economics and Commerce (UWA Business School) have restricted quota units.

Members were reminded to respond to Jenny’s email if necessary.
4. **GROUP STRUCTURE / FUNCTION**
   The Chair advised that the group had now formally been in existence for about 18 months. Considerable interest had been expressed in the activities of the Group since the minutes had been circulated more widely. Daniel Renton had recently asked to be included in the circulation list.

   Members advised they were happy with the current structure and operations of the Group, as it is an excellent forum for discussing issues. Some members distributed the minutes of meetings to key personnel in their Faculties.

   The Chair noted that the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships used to send a representative to the Group meetings, however as their business practices were significantly different from those of most Faculties, their representation in recent years had ceased. The Chair agreed to contact the Acting Manager, to see if there was any interest in attending FAO Group meetings in the future. It was agreed that inclusion of a representative from the PRSO might be useful when SIMS issues were being discussed.

5. **CHRISTMAS FUNCTION**
   There will be no meeting in December. Marion Heibloom has extended an invitation to members for an informal get together on 15 December at 4pm in the Patterson Room, FNAS. Details to be confirmed.

6. **DATES FOR 2004**
   Bookings have been requested for the third Monday of each month in 2004 at 12.30pm in the Chancellor's Room. Confirmation pending.

   The meeting closed at 1.45 pm