MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

FACULTY OF LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE MEETING – 12 May 2009

Supplementary Agenda

Part III – Items for Discussion and Decision

10. FRAMEWORK FOR PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING AT UWA

A proposal to implement peer review of teaching was discussed at the meeting of the UWA Teaching and Learning Committee held on May 7 2009. The following is an extract from the Agenda of the meeting:

11. FRAMEWORK FOR PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING AT UWA – REF: F12089

By way of background, the issue of peer review and/or observation has been an item before the Teaching and Learning Committee for some considerable time. The item was first discussed in detail in late 2005 when the Committee considered a report from David Coall in CATL, outlining successful and unsuccessful peer review of teaching in other universities.

From 2006 the item has been progressed by CATL with extensive liaison with the faculties culminating in 2008 with the formulation and endorsement of principles to guide the development of peer review.

At its meeting held in May 2008, the Teaching and Learning Committee resolved (R11/08) to endorse recommendations contained within a report from CATL on Peer Review of Teaching; as a consequence agreeing that CATL develop guidelines, framed within the agreed principles, and develop the companion resources and processes for conducting peer reflection of teaching at UWA. Attached for members’ consideration (Attachment H) are the endorsed principles together with proposed “Guidelines for peer review for enhancing teaching and the teaching environment”.

An extract from the minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee’s 1st May 2008 meeting are attached (Attachment I) to provide the context for discussion. Members are specifically referred to earlier concerns raised by the Committee and the understanding that provision of guidelines and resources did not imply mandatory uptake of peer review. In light of the University’s current practice with regard to UWA Policies, it should be noted that if the proposed guidelines are adopted, they will need to be either:

- Adopted as a mandatory requirement and hence be written as University Policy whereby staff will be “required” to undertake some form of peer review; or
- Adopted as voluntary, in which case the guidelines will need to be written as a Statement of Good Practice which would “encourage” some form of peer review.
Members are asked for their views. The agreed principles of peer review (Attachment B) and the extract from the Minutes of the May 2008 meeting (Attachment C) referred to in the Agenda extract are attached.
Peer review of teaching at UWA

The Teaching and Learning Committee endorsed the following principles to guide the development of a peer review process and guidelines at UWA (T & L meeting, May, 2008.)

1. The guidelines are developed with a formative and developmental focus and that peer reflection practices be promoted in a staged and managed implementation across the university which encourages teaching colleagues to provide collegial support in the form of formative feedback on various dimensions of each others' teaching.

2. Early career teachers should be encouraged to focus on classroom practice before choosing other aspects of their teaching to develop.

3. An expectation that teachers will engage in a process of peer reflection be established and that appropriate support in terms of resources and training should be available to them.

4. In the first instance, the focus of the process should be reciprocal, developmental and confidential between chosen peers. Teachers should have the opportunity to choose their own partners or select from a register of teachers within their school with cross-disciplinary partnerships available, depending on the particular circumstances.

5. That the range of dimensions of teaching be expanded from the current focus on classroom practice to include other dimension related to teaching including assessment, teaching materials and resources, support for students, leadership/coordination roles etc.

6. Workload models should acknowledge the time taken to participate in the peer reflection process for the both the person reviewing and the person being reviewed. Consideration should be given as to how the Professional Development Review (PDR) process would acknowledge participation in this process for both the reviewer and reviewee.

7. The various aspects of teaching on which the reflection may be focused should mirror existing measures or priorities such as the UWA Teaching Criteria, ALTC criteria for Excellence in Teaching, the Teaching Quality Indicators, or any faculty specific priorities that may occur. The UWA teaching criteria for teaching would be expected to identify any expectations for summative peer review.

8. A range of resources and support material be developed to assist organizational units and individuals to engage in a peer reflection process. This would include introductory workshops for teachers (reviewer and reviewee) who have not previously engaged in the process and online resources.

These principles have been the result of a long process of considering the most appropriate model of peer review for implementation at UWA. Two excellent papers have been written to inform the process. The report by Dr David Coall (2005) *Peer review f teaching* and by Dr
Allan Coady (2007). Peer review of teaching which were widely circulated throughout the university as part of a consultative process that has contributed to the principles outlined above.

In addition there have been a number of Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) projects that have been funded to develop significant reports and resources on peer review of teaching.

These include:


Jo McKenzie (in progress). Embedding peer review of learning and teaching in e-learning and blended learning environments. University of Technology Sydney


Reference was also made to the resources developed by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in England, and the policies and guidelines on peer review of several Australian, university Kingdom and USA universities to ensure that the guidelines developed for UWA are current and reflect best practice.
Guidelines for peer review for enhancing teaching and the teaching environment

Purpose
The principle purpose of peer review is to encourage reflection and development of practice, skills and understanding of teaching and learning.

UWA values the importance of peer review in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and expects all staff to engage in an ongoing, developmental peer review process of being reviewed and as a reviewer.

To whom do the guidelines apply?
All academic and professional staff involved in teaching are expected to demonstrate engagement in collegial, systematic and developmental peer review of various dimensions of their teaching throughout their career. The focus should be on development and enhancement of their own teaching and the teaching of their colleagues.

All staff will be expected to have engaged in a peer review of one dimension of their teaching annually and acted as a peer reviewer of a colleague annually.

What dimensions of teaching will be reviewed?
All aspects of teaching will be expected to be reviewed over the course of an individual’s career at UWA. Early career teachers are expected to focus on aspects of their classroom practice in the first instance.

Dimensions of teaching practice that should be considered for review by peers include: observation of classroom practices; course and unit content; teaching and learning strategies; learning materials and resources; assessment practices; and management; leadership roles; and evaluation of teaching. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive and some overlap is expected. The dimensions and the aspects under each are indicative rather than exhaustive. Other aspects and dimensions can be identified and reviewed. Not all aspects or even all dimensions will apply to all staff, but over the course of a career at UWA, it is expected that a teacher will have sought to have the aspects of these broad dimensions reviewed by their colleagues. All staff engaged in teaching are expected to undertake peer review of their classroom practices.

1 Observation of classroom practices
Observations of classroom practices may be made through direct observation by the reviewer, or indirect using video or lectopia recordings. A reviewer of this dimension may be any colleague who is at the same stage in his/her career or a more experienced colleague in the discipline.

It is expected that a reviewer would focus only on one or two aspect of classroom teaching at different times. For example:
- Presentation skills (introductory procedures, style)
- Content of teaching (quality and relevance of material, coherence, clarity)
2 Course and unit content
A reviewer of this dimension may be the course coordinator, or a colleague who has expertise in the discipline area. They can provide comment on:
- The currency and relevance of the course or unit content
- Whether it is informed by recent research and developments in the field.
- If it is articulated with the content of companion units and course overall
- That relevant key principles and concepts are introduced and developed.
- That relevant examples, applications and contexts are provided to explain concepts and content
- Coherence, integration and structure of the curriculum (unit, course).

3 Teaching and learning strategies
A reviewer of this dimension may be a colleague who has expertise in the teaching and learning. Eg Faculty CATLyst, winner of a Faculty Teaching Award a staff member from CATL. They can provide comment on the quality of the planned teaching and learning activities for
- Promoting active learning by students
- Demonstrating a relationship between planned activities and planned learning outcomes
- Achieving variety of activities for sustaining the interest of both teachers and students over the duration of the unit or course
- Demonstrating understanding through deliberative selection of different teaching and learning strategies
- Supporting learning and demonstration of learning in assessment activities
- Relationship building and empathy with students

4 Learning materials and resources
Reviewers of this dimension may be colleagues who have expertise in the use of technology in teaching and learning, instructional design, elearning etc. They can provide comment on the quality of the resources and materials that have been developed for a part or whole unit or a course, or for wider use across a school or faculty.
- Appropriate and effective use of technology in classroom contexts eg lectopia, keypad response tools, presentation applications such as PowerPoint, mobile technologies
- Effective resources to support learning eg laboratory manuals, practicum guides, study or assignment guides.
- Innovate and creative development/use of web resources that support learning demonstrating appropriate instructional design, inclusivity and technical aspects
- Effective use of communication tools (blogs, chat, wiki, discussion, facebook, Web 2 technologies etc)

There are a number of resources developed for national use in Australia to support peer review of elearning, on-line and blended learning resources.
5 Assessment practices
A reviewer of this dimension may be the course coordinator, or a colleague who has expertise in the assessment. They can provide comment on the quality of:
- The assessment tasks to develop student learning
- The alignment of the assessment tasks with the unit and course objectives and planned teaching and learning activities
- Variety of assessment types for students to demonstrate a range of learning capacity and in relation to other units in the course
- Provision for formative and summative assessment tasks
- Assessment criteria
- Feedback on assessment tasks and student learning
- Moderation and grading of student work

6 Management of teaching
This dimension relates to the quality of organization and management of a unit or course. A reviewer of this dimension may be the course coordinator, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), School manager and student support officers. They can provide comment on the quality of:
- The organization of the unit, course related to timeliness of preparing unit outlines and unit materials, scheduling and staffing of tutorials, distributing information.
- Usefulness and accessibility of the unit outline
- Availability and preparation of self and others for advising and supporting students, responding to student queries
- Tutor/sessional teacher preparation, training and support
- Management of assessment, marking, moderation, recording and submitting grades
- Consideration, coordination and relationships working with colleagues, professional staff, and students (postgraduate and undergraduate).

7 Leadership roles in teaching and learning
This dimension relates to the leadership roles (formal and informal) that are undertaken as part of teaching and service related to teaching and learning. A reviewer of this dimension may be the course coordinator, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Chair of committees on which you have served, Head of School, supervisor, professional leader. They can provide comment on the quality of:
- Informal leadership roles as unit or course coordinator, student advisor, as a member of the school or university community
- Leadership of teaching and learning initiatives, curriculum development, innovations, implementations in units, course, school, faculty, university.
- Success in applying for university and ALTC grants, membership in others projects.
- Formal leadership roles where you have a designated position or representative role eg Associate Dean, designated representative on committee.
- Contribution to the discipline or field through professional or disciplinary organizations.
- Scholarly contribution through contributions to reports, documents and outcomes of those.
- Mentoring and support of junior professional and academic staff
- Support and mentoring of research and postgraduate students in the discipline, in the school and in teaching and learning (if applicable).
- Contribution to professional development of colleagues.
8 Evaluation of teaching

A reviewer of this dimension may be a colleague who has expertise in evaluation of teaching, colleague who is identified as a reflective practitioner, engages in a process of development, member of CATL, supervisor. They can provide comment on the quality of the:

- Extent of systematic review of teaching practices through personal reflection
- Changes to practice based on evidence of the quality of student learning
- Appropriateness of response to student feedback (informal and formal such as SPOT, SURF etc)
- Openness to feedback and evaluation from students and colleagues
- Quality of responses to areas identified as requiring development
- Evidence of commitment to ongoing professional development
- Evidence of improvements to teaching practices over time
- Vision of and commitment to teaching and learning

9 Scholarly teaching and scholarship on teaching

Scholarly teaching refers to using and appropriately applying current teaching and learning research and practices in teaching and curriculum development.

Scholarship on teaching refers to researching and publishing in the discipline of higher education in teaching and learning from a disciplinary or general perspective.

A reviewer of this dimension may be a colleague who has expertise in the scholarship of teaching, is a scholar of teaching and learning, a member of CATL, recipient of UWA or ALTC Awards, Grants, Fellowships. They can provide comment on the quality of your:

- Knowledge and understanding of the literature and research on teaching in your discipline.
- Extent that this knowledge is evident in the teaching practices adopted
- Contribution to professional development of others
- Contribution to the community through commentary, education, service in your area of expertise or teaching and learning
- Contribution to the discipline through presenting at discipline conferences, forums on your teaching practices or teaching in the discipline
- Contribution through your teaching in other courses or in other universities
- Publications in refereed journals, conferences on teaching and learning
- Involvement in or leadership of university or nationally competitive projects eg UWA or ALTC grants, awards, fellowships
- Research and scholarship of teaching and learning as a contribution to teaching your discipline or more broadly on teaching and learning.

Who will be the reviewers?

All staff are expected to engage in the peer review process as reviewers. The level of experience and expertise required will depend to a large extent on the purpose of the review. However, it is expected that in the majority of situations, peers at the same level of experience and seniority will form peer partnerships or teams where they provide reciprocal feedback to their partner or team. Reciprocal and developmental peer review has been shown to be the most effective approach to enhancing practice and build a positive teaching and learning culture.

Colleagues from within the same organizational unit or same discipline or subject area is the recommended practice as it increases communication between staff teaching in the same course or program, and provides a proximity and shared context in which to provide developmental...
peer review. This helps to build a community of practice around teaching and the discipline and course of study.

Where particular skills or knowledge for particular dimensions of teaching are not available in the dyad or team, then they are expected to identify and approach a suitable person. Advice on identifying suitable peer reviewers might be sought from the Faculty Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), CATL, supervisor, Head of School.

In situations where the staff member is in a senior or leadership position, it may be more appropriate for the peer review dyads or teams to comprise peers in cognate positions in different organizational units.

**Professional development and management of the peer review process**

**Professional development**

Training in peer review for both reviewers and reviewees for the purpose of enhancement of teaching will be provided by CATL. CATL will develop a professional development program and offer it as a workshop program as part of the University program. Faculty-based programs will be available at the request of the faculty. The workshop program will address the development needs of both reviewers and reviewees, with particular emphasis on giving and receiving feedback, and using the peer review experience for development.

Resources and guidelines will be developed and provided on the CATL website.

The Foundations of University Teaching Program and the Postgraduate Internship Program has a peer review component. In this context, peer review is provided by other participants in the program.

**Management, recording and promotion of peer review**

Management of the peer review process will involve each faculty/school identifying a peer review coordinator. The peer review coordinator can assist with planning, logistics and providing guidance and organizing training by CATL when needed. Ideally the coordinator would be a member of staff who is familiar with the unit’s culture, structure and people, be sensitive to the requirements needs and priorities of the individuals and be trusted by them. The focus of this role is facilitation of the process and encouraging people to engage in the process through assisting with identifying possible teams or partners.

The coordinator will keep records of who is involved in a peer partnership or team and record when a review has been undertaken and what dimension was the focus of the review. The membership of the peer partnerships is expected to change over time and for different dimensions. This information will be provided to the coordinator by the peers concerned on an annual basis. The coordinator will not collect any written feedback forms, nor monitor the frequency or substance of peer review being undertaken.

For newly appointed or early career staff, the coordinator may take an active role is identifying a peer who may be slightly more experienced so that they can also provide mentoring and peer support in the first years of appointment.
The coordinator at a faculty or school level will convene an annual faculty/school meeting for a general discussion on the peer review process and learning from their peer review experience. This might be included as a scheduled part of a teaching and learning meeting, school planning, teaching and learning forum, curriculum planning meeting, but where significant numbers of the organisational unit are gathered so that the importance and value of peer review can be discussed and developed.

**Different peer reviewers for different purposes**

It is not expected that peer review pairs or teams will remain constant throughout a staff member's career. These can be expected to form and reform depending on the dimension being reviewed, the purpose for the review, the stage of career and the position of the person.

**Frequency and focus of peer review**

Peer review should be conducted regularly. Timing of the review may vary in order to capture different dimensions or aspects of teaching. All staff will be expected to have engaged in a peer review of one dimension of their teaching annually and acted as a peer reviewer of a colleague annually.

Early career staff (less than 5 years teaching) will be expected to have engaged in peer review of their teaching twice a year for two years. The focus for peer review during this time should be on the different aspect of classroom practice.

Staff will be expected to seek peer review of a range of their teaching practice of the relevant dimensions and aspects within those dimensions that relate to their practice and context over the course of their career.

**Keeping records and the use of those records**

Peer review will take place formally and informally. Informal peer review where feedback is provided casually following a teaching session, might be recorded in a teaching journal or log to inform their reflection and development.

From time to time more formal peer review, using checklists and records of the feedback will be expected to be utilized to provide an opportunity for structured feedback. These documents and records are provided to the person who is reviewed. They are not to be shared or distributed to a wider audience. They should not be circulated beyond the peer dyad or team without the express agreement of the members of the team. These records are to inform the individual’s practice and development plan, and assist in framing follow-up peer review discussions.

Individuals (both reviewers and reviewees) should record when they met and the focus of the review and provide this information to the Faculty Peer Review Coordinator. In addition, in their own records, they should note outcomes and reflections of those meetings. This can subsequently be used to inform their teaching evidence and the development of their teaching portfolio for PDR and promotion purposes.

**Referencing/ linking to relevant documents and policies/ resources**

Eg: Policy on peer review of teaching
Web resources of ALTC project
Guidelines and documents on CATL and Faculty websites
Review
A review of the Peer Review of Teaching guidelines and implementation will be undertaken three years following endorsement of the document, in a process determined by the Teaching and Learning Committee.
9. FRAMEWORK FOR PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING AT UWA – REF: F12089

As outlined in the Agenda, members noted that the issue of peer review and/or observation had been an item before the Teaching and Learning Committee for some considerable time. The item had first been discussed in detail in late 2005 and progressed since that time by way of a lengthy consultative process with the faculties, including input from a number of faculty pilots on peer review/observation/reflection during 2007.

A report was now before the Committee from the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL), recommending the adoption of broad principles for the development of guidelines and companion resources for a UWA peer review process, to be formulated by CATL.

At the Chair’s invitation, the author of the report, Dr Lee Partridge, briefly introduced the item outlining the salient points of the report, focussing on the proposed principles as a basis for the next step of formulating guidelines and resources.

During discussion a member raised concerns that the introduction of a peer framework would impact on the activities of existing staff. In essence, the member felt that, although a worthwhile process, imposing a framework for peer review/observation might adversely affect other areas, including both research and teaching, as staff were already working at maximum levels and there was no margin for an additional load. He stressed that such innovation, although worthy, should be considered within the context of benefits and costs.

A number of members acknowledged these concerns, however there was a general concurrence that the proposal before the Committee was to introduce resources and tools to assist the faculties with the introduction of peer related activities, which could range from a more intense “review” process to the other end of the spectrum of peer reflection.

Additionally, peer involvement should be seen as a component of good teaching and not to pursue the formulation of peer related tools was considered by some members as not a viable option. The University’s promotion and review processes currently required evidence of teaching quality and peer review/observation would, in tandem with student feedback, provide such evidence.

There was brief discussion as to whether the adoption of the proposed principles and formulation of guidelines and resources would indicate that peer review/observation was mandatory. However, members noted that principle 3 referred to “an expectation” that teachers would engage in a process of peer reflection and that this did not imply mandatory uptake. Returning to the issue of costs and benefits, it was noted that some faculties had utilised Learning and Teaching Performance Funds to introduce a process of peer review/observation/reflection. In addition, it was noted that the benefits and drawbacks of peer related activities had been discussed by the Committee in its early consideration of this issue in November 2005, by way of discussion of the report from Dr David Coall from CATL (members were referred to the Agenda of 3 November 2005 – Attachment H at http://committees.Intranet.uwa.edu.au/page/38567).

The Chair referred members to Recommendations 1 and 2 in the report and it was,

RESOLVED – 11

that the Teaching and Learning Committee endorsed the Recommendations contained in the report on Peer Review of Teaching as attached to the Agenda.

The Chair thanked Dr Lee Partridge for the report and recommendations.