

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC BOARD  
CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

**Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students**

**MINUTES**

Meeting 7/2010 of the Committee for Admissions Retention and Success for Students (previously Student Admissions, Retention and Success Committee) was held at 2.00pm-4.00pm on Tuesday 20 July 2010, in the David Myers Meeting Room, Level 1, David Myers Building, Bundoora

**Members in Attendance**

Professor John Rosenberg (Chair)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students)
Ms Nellie Green	nominee of Director- Indigenous Education
Ms Glenys Harding	Manager, Internal Reporting & Surveys (MIU)
Ms Bernadette Knewstubb	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic) FLM
Mr C Schneider	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic), FSTE

**Co-opted Members**

Ms Kristine Kellerman	Manager, AEGTO and VTAC Liaison Officer
Ms Liz Stinson	Director – International

**Others in Attendance**

Ms Raelene Reece	Faculty of Education
Ms Robyn Sinclair	Secretariat
Ms Celia Hammond	Language and Academic Skills Unit
Ms Julianne East	Language and Academic Skills Unit
Mr Martin van Run	Director LTIC

**Apologies**

Ms Lyn Hedger	nominee of Director- Academic Services
Professor Tom Angelo	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Planning)
Ms Elizabeth Lavender	nominee of PVC (Regional)
Dr Glyn Thomas	nominee of Associate Dean (Academic) FE
Mr Gary Thomas	nominee of PVC-Equity and Student Services
Ms Janne Gorman	Director, Future Students Centre

**PART A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**ACTION**

**7.1 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members to the seventh meeting of the Student Admissions, Retention and Success (SARS) Committee, now convening under the name Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students; introductions were made and the apologies noted.

**7.2 Chair's Report**

The Chair informed the Committee that he had recently distributed VTAC correspondence to the Faculties outlining changes to the reporting of pre-requisite rules. The result of this amendment will be to allow institutions to provide alternate pre-requisites, contingent upon institutions demonstrating that they will not be disadvantaging applicants. Another component of the change to the current rules is the capacity for institutions to implement changes to pre-requisites a year earlier.

VTAC has also developed a draft paper on the revitalisation of VTAC in light of the foreshadowed removal of the enrolment quotas. The Chair informed the Committee that this consultative paper will

be made available to the meeting once it is publicly available.

## **PART B – MATTERS FOR APPROVAL**

## **ACTION**

### **7.3 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of Student Admissions, Retention and Success Committee held on 18 May 2010 SARS10-23(M) as a true and accurate record.

### **7.4 Matters Arising**

The Committee noted the progress of all matters arising from the previous meeting as documented in the attached paper presented under agenda item 11.

## **PART C – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION**

## **ACTION**

### **7.5 Report on LTUIC Language Benchmarking**

The Committee received papers CARSS10/02 entitled *ELICOS level benchmarking at LTU International College*.

The Chair introduced this item by recounting for the Committee that it had, on behalf of Academic Board, requested some assurances that the standard of the English for Further Studies program offered by LTUIC is commensurate with IELTS (International English Language Testing).

The Director of LTU International College, Mr Martin van Run provided a brief presentation on the level of ELICOS undertaken and highlighted, inter alia the following:

- LTUIC's predecessor, the Language Centre, commenced delivering Direct Entry English classes in the late 1990s and there has been a significant increase in delivery of these types of classes to the current state where they now constitute 70% of all the classes delivered by LTUIC;
- the EFS program is used to establish the required proficiency levels for entry into Foundations Studies, Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses;
- the EFS program presents a more attractive option than IELTS as it provides students with the academic and English skills to better equip them for further studies. The reputation of the EFS programs in the international market accounts for the growth in these courses;
- in 2009, of the 2,711 international commencers in LTU courses, 724 (≈ 27%) had come directly from the LTUIC ELICOS programs, whilst other commencers had articulated from the Diploma level courses offered by the College;
- the LTUIC benchmarks against IELTS at 5.5 for Foundation/Diploma level courses, 6.0 for undergraduate level entry and 6.5 for postgraduate programs. The College has systems in place to ensure comparability between EFS and IELTS including:
  - training of staff in the IELTS regime;
  - ongoing moderation of written continuous assessments using modified criteria from IELTS public version band descriptors;
  - sponsoring IELTS pretesting for 10 EFS students to validate language proficiency scores; and
  - utilising the experience of the 27 LTUIC staff who are currently accredited IELTS examiners.
- there is little research available about the .5 incremental IELTS ratings and success in destination courses. NSW DET has increased the IELTS level for Diploma level courses to 6.0; and

- in late 2010, the College will become La Trobe Melbourne managed by Navitas and it would be prudent to ensure that the current mechanisms for ensuring comparability are adopted by this new entity.

During the general discussion about the recommendations contained in paper CARSS 10/02 the following matters were raised:

- there was agreement that IELTS benchmarking should continue under the sponsorship of the new College with an increased cohort of 20 per semester to undertake the IELTS testing;
- future testing of students should be at the exit points of 4B EFS, 5BEFS and 6BEFS;
- it was important that this process be systemised and reported within a compliance framework; and
- the revised iteration of the *English Language Entry Policy* previously presented to the Committee has addressed the issues of currency of testing and results. The next iteration will confirm that LTU accepts other testing regimes, such as Cambridge and Pearson.

The Chair concluded discussion on this item by thanking Mr Martin van Run for his presentation.

#### **Resolution 7.5**

The Committee resolved that the revised English Language Entry Policy and procedures be redrafted to provide clear guidelines on benchmarking activities to be undertaken by the new College and further address the matter of compliance reporting.

#### **7.6 Review Admissions Policy and Procedures/Admissions Special Entry Access Procedures.**

The Committee received tabled paper CARSS10/03 entitled *Report from Admissions Policy and Procedures Working Group*.

The Director, La Trobe International, Ms Liz Stinson, provided an update on the review of the Admissions Policy and attendant procedures. The Committee was informed about the progress to date and the approach being implemented.

The Committee noted that the paper CARSS10/03 identified the range of policies and procedures under review and highlighted current gaps that required the development of procedures. The Chair invited the Working Group to work in close collaboration with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement), Dr Julie Jackson on the revised iterations of the policy suite.

The Committee noted that all of the revisions will be presented to the November meeting of the Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students.

#### **7.7 Review of Selection Processes of NESB Applicants**

The Committee received paper CARSS10/04 entitled *Review of selection processes of NESB applicants*.

Ms Julianne East, Lecturer, Language and Academic Skills, spoke to current research being conducted on the selection processes of Non English Speaking Background undergraduate students at LTU, in response to data indicating that NESB students were not performing as well as non-NESB (ESL and ESB) students.

The Committee was provided a brief background on the methodology used in identifying the cohort and for interviewing the selection officers. It was acknowledged that there may

be considerable overlap between NESB students and low SES students. The Committee was advised that this cohort may enter the University via a number of ways, SEAS, VTAC ATAR and direct entry. In response to this point, it was noted that it was difficult to identify NESB students coming through VTAC.

The interviews with selection officers to date disclose that the practices across and within Faculties is not always unified. The need for differing selection processes often reflects particular professional requirements of courses, One Faculty has a Selection Manual, whilst another circulates some general guidelines. The pressure on Selections Officers in light of the increased pool and increased applicant expectation was noted. The Committee was advised that LTI was being approached more regularly by Faculties for support with assessing overseas qualifications of NESB applicants. The authors of the report advised that the identification of NESB students at the time was difficult and that it was a distinct advantage to applicants to identify their NESB background. The Committee was advised that the LTU internal application form did not include data fields to identify NESB.

The Committee was advised that Selection Officers had indicated through interview that there was a disconnection between the selection process and the progress of applicants. In response to this point, the Committee noted that with the thousands of applicants this was understandable.

The matter of determining poor language skills was identified as a difficulty for Selection Officers and the cost of IELTS testing deterred referrals for language skills assessments. The Committee was advised that the current *English Language Entry Requirements* policy covered all students in its scope, but compliance across the University was questioned.

The authors of the report advised that the current project should be considered in conjunction with other projects being undertaken to investigate mechanisms to identify at risk students. The First Fail administered by Academic Services often provides early detection. Ms Knewstubb informed the Committee that a DfL Working Group is investigating diagnostic mechanisms for early, prior to census dates, detection of at risk students.

In introducing the recommendations, Ms Julianne East informed the Committee that these were more discursive in nature, rather than deliberative and invited the Committee's feedback. During the general discussion on the recommendations the Committee provided the following comment:

- Recommendation 8.1 - a university wide approach could be attained through incorporation of revisions to the *English Language Entry Requirements* policy. Distinction between NESB and other equity groups would be useful;
- Recommendation 8.2 –the checklist had general favour;
- Recommendation 8.3- the Committee raised concerns about the Selection Officers being able to assess English Language diagnostic tests. It was agreed that this should be conflated with Recommendation 8.4 and that the diagnostic tests be marked by the staff most well equipped to conduct such testing. Online testing would be aimed at self-assessment;
- Recommendation 8.5- this recommendation required the University to produce alternate pathways documentation for the benefit of failed applicants. The Committee agreed that this proposal had merit, but was generally easier to manage at regional campuses where the TAFE institutions and their courses were more contained.
- Recommendation 8.6- the concept of conditional offers needed more consideration. Students cannot be allocated CSP funding to undertake academic and language support subjects unless they are enrolled in a course. Providing a Language and Academic Unit subject under CSP funding would be useful. Notwithstanding, the merit of this model, the DfL model was to embed the language and academic skills in all first year subjects;
- Recommendation 8.7- the Committee endorsed the concept of conducting an

- annual workshop for selection officers;
- Recommendation 8.8- the Committee agreed that the findings of the research report should be disseminated to all Selection Officers for their input;
- Recommendation 8.9- more feedback to selection officers would be valuable;
- Recommendation 8.10- The role of the La Trobe Melbourne College in providing intensive English language support should be further considered. The Committee noted that the fees may be prohibitive for some equity groups and may deter referrals to the College. This was an area that required more consideration.
- Recommendation 8.11 – the Committee agreed that self-diagnosis for potential applicants has merit and should be explored further; and
- Recommendation 8.12 – this was an in-principle recommendation.

In concluding the discussion on this item, the Chair commended the report and invited the authors to disseminate it to Selection Officers. The Admissions Policy and Procedures working group was also invited to take the report recommendations into account when revising the Admissions policy suite.

### **7.8 Reserved meeting in August**

The Committee noted that the Committee's Business Schedule did not include any business for the month of August.

#### **Resolution 7.8**

After due deliberation, the Committee resolved not to convene in August.

### **7.9 Revised Terms of Reference**

The Committee received paper CARSS10/005 entitled *Committee for Admissions, Retention and Success for Students Terms of Reference*.

A query about the capacity of membership of the Director of LTI was raised.

**Action:** Executive Officer to investigate the membership status of the Director of LTI.

### **7.10 Register of Committee Actions/Resolutions**

The Committee received paper CARSS10/21 entitled *CARSS Actions and Recommendations Register* and noted its contents.

### **7.11 Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 21 September 2010, 2.00pm-5.00pm, David Myers Meeting Room, Ground Floor David Myers Building, Bundoora.

#### **Foreshadowed Items**

At the next meeting of the Committee the Report of Retention and Completion will be considered and it was noted that this will include data by equity groupings.