Student-centric university policy

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1. Traditional policy development and the Policy Library

2. Mechanisms for consulting with students

3. A case study: Student Charter

4. Communication of policy changes
Traditional policy development

- Minimal student input (if any) in drafting and consultation phases
- Limited student input in approval process

There are student representatives on Academic Programs Committee and Academic Board, the committees which approve some academic and student-related policies/procedures.

Is this enough to ensure our policies and procedures are student-centric?
103 **key** policies and procedures for students!
Old Special Consideration policy/procedure (13 pages)

6.6.1 Students are expected to be available for examination and assessment until the end of the assessment period of a study period. Clashes with other events, absence or lateness due to misreading the timetable, public and private transport issues or similar matters do not normally entitle a student to any further examination or special consideration and are not normally considered grounds for non-attendance. Nevertheless, under the examinations policy, a student who attends late with good reason may be admitted to the examination venue and at the discretion of the examination supervisor may be offered additional time at the end of the examination to enable them to complete the examination on the same terms as other students. No student may be admitted to the venue more than half an hour after the commencement of the session.

Old Academic progress procedure

5.8 Where Faculties/Student Centres have been unable to certify results in a timely way, and it is too late to conduct a compliant process leading to termination of the student’s enrolment prior to the relevant census date in the next teaching period the faculty/student centre will send formal notification to the students requiring them to

• attend a CUPC and make a written submission; or
• make a written submission which is then considered by a CUPC;
With the introduction of the Melbourne Model, it was recognised that students would increasingly be liaising with multiple faculties, and consistent processes and outcomes would be important.

The Policy and Procedures Working Group was established in 2007 with the aim of translating a large number of existing faculty and departmental documents into University-level policies.

Student-centricity was one of the key principles underpinning policy development adopted by the PPWG.
The Policy Simplification Project will result in significantly clarified and simplified policy and procedure content.

The project and development of the Melbourne Policy Framework has provided an opportunity to review policy development, consultation and approval processes.
The Provost (through the DVC (Academic) and Academic Registrar) is responsible for a large number of policies and procedures relating to courses and subjects, studying at the university, and teaching and learning.

The Academic Board is also responsible for a large number of policies and procedures of interest to students.
Melbourne Students and Learning has put in place mechanisms to improve student consultation in the development and review of Provost-owned policies:

• Inclusion of student association presidents and managers on formal advisory groups such as Student Experience Advisory Group.

• Inclusion of coordinator of Student Union Advocacy Service on working groups reviewing particular procedures (e.g. - Special Consideration).

• Regular meetings between Provost, DVC (Academic), Academic Registrar and student association presidents (and between DVC (Academic) and UMSU Education Officers).

• Establishment of niche advisory groups largely comprised of students and student association representatives for key areas (e.g. – Student Charter).

• Establishment of Student Reference Group.
The Student Charter (currently at consultation stage) will establish the foundations of the relationship between students and the University. It will formalise and strengthen the mutual expectation inherent in the partnership between students and the University.

It will ensure students and the University have a clear general statement of their obligations and responsibilities towards each other, in line with the current legislative context.
The Student Charter will replace the *Responsible conduct and expectations of students* statement currently published in the Policy Library.

It will be a more accessible and visible document for students. Students will be specifically required to ‘sign-up’ to the Charter as part of the Enrolment Declaration, which forms their contract with the University.

The Charter will flag and link to other key legislative and policy documents for students. Even if students look at no other statute, policy or procedure, the Student Charter will give them an understanding of the key principles underpinning their relationship with the University.
The working group which developed the initial draft of the Student Charter included:

• President UMSU
• President GSA
• Manager UMSU
• General Manager GSA
• Coordinator - Student Union Advocacy Service
• President MUOSS
• Student representatives on Council

Faculties have been asked to seek feedback on the draft from staff, student clubs and Course Standing Committees (which include student representation).
Consultation and discussion committees for the Student Charter will include:

- Student Experience Advisory Group (several student representatives)

- Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) Forum

- Academic Programs Committee and Research Higher Degrees Committee (both have student representatives)
To facilitate student input into a range of initiatives, including policy review and development, the Student Reference Group has been established.

The Student Reference Group is a standing focus group comprising student leaders and office bearers as well as randomly selected students.
Communicating policy changes

Engaging students in the policy review and development process is one challenge; communicating policy and procedure changes to students is another.

We are working on improvements to how we do this, using tools such as:

• Web information and links to Policy Library

• RightNow FAQs

• Student Portal notices

• Communication via student advisers

• Communication via Student Union advocacy officers
We are moving in the right direction but there is still a long way to go!