

BRIEFING NOTE: UT&LC

- Subject:** 1st Year Teaching Issues
- Purpose:** To submit Faculty of Health Science's review of first year teaching issues for UT&LC consideration.
- Background:** At its 4 May meeting, Academic Senate resolved that FT&LC and FEC review first year teaching issues and the implications for student diversity as a priority for 2007 and report with immediate and strategic recommendations to UT&LC.
- Issues:** Attached
- Recommendations:** Attached
- Prepared By:** Dr Fiona Taylor, FXO, FHS
- Proposal Approved By:** Prof Judi Walker, Assoc Dean (T&L), FHS
- Attachment/s:** FHS Review of First Year Teaching Issues and the Implications of Student Diversity
- Date:** 18 June 2007

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE
REVIEW OF FIRST YEAR TEACHING ISSUES AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF
STUDENT DIVERSITY

ISSUES

1. Lack of support (administrative and academic) for students enrolled in Associate Degrees who may be using these programs as a pathway into health-related courses. These students do not have dedicated on-campus support but rely on advice received from a variety of sources, which may be confusing and inconsistent. For some CALD students the first weeks at university may be quite daunting and culturally challenging. It is also exacerbated by late enrolments in the course.
2. Limited face-to-face teaching or tutorial support for UPP units. Students directed to enrol in UPP tend to either i) not enrol because the units are taught 'on-line', or ii) not complete successfully, as face-to-face teaching is essential for those students who are already "at-risk".
3. The number of students with little or no background in science is increasing. The implication is a lack of understanding of scientific concepts and scientific thinking essential for science based units.
4. Anecdotal evidence suggests a general demise in literacy and numeracy skills of students enrolled in courses and units.
5. TER admission scores are overridden centrally in order to meet quotas in a number of courses. This has had implications with regard to the range of student capabilities and the reputation of these courses.
6. As a result of weaker students being made late offers, they are unable to avail themselves of the Unistart and Enabling programs, which are designed specifically to provide students (particularly Category B & C students) with a range of skills required for studying at university. Some of these students also miss Orientation.
7. Late enrolments have increased the amount of non-class, one-on-one academic support that needs to be provided, so that these students are not disadvantaged and can fully participate in their units. This has included catch up lectures and WebCT Vista sessions but more importantly, compulsory laboratory safety sessions, as students are not permitted into laboratories without undertaking such training.
8. Inadequately prepared students often fail first year and withdraw; Schools are then in turn penalised for being underload.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure that all new students are adequately prepared and have access to foundation/enabling programs.
2. Provide Schools with incentives, reimbursements and/or additional funds to provide, for example, more learning resources, administrative support, and tutorial support for 'at risk' students.
3. Ensure first year units are relevant to students and delivered in such a way as to meet their aspirations and requirements.