

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

On the composition of the APC

History

Professor Koul's introductory document at the first APC included the following sections:

Composition of UWIDEC/APC

1. Chairman, Board for Non-Campus Countries & Distance Education- ex officio Chair [1]
2. Academic, professional and technical personnel of the UWIDEC (i.e. Director, campus co-ordinators, programme co-ordinators, curriculum development specialists, telecommunications manager, finance officer and student support services co-ordinator). [1+2+5+3+1+1+1]
3. Two representatives of staff from non-campus countries, one of whom should be a member of the BNCC/DE. [2]
4. One representative of staff from off-campus centres. [1]
5. One representative of the student body. [1]
6. One faculty member each for the general areas of study offered by UWIDEC. [5]
7. One member each from professional and technical service units (i.e. Libraries, Campus IT Centres. [2]
8. DE Registrar - ex officio Secretary. [1]

In the first instance, the Chair will nominate members (other than the ex-officio ones) for a period of two (2) years. Subsequently, members who are not ex-officio will be nominated or elected by the respective constituencies. The Committee will meet in campus countries by rotation at least twice (February and August) every calendar year and one-half of its membership will constitute the quorum for each of its meetings.

Responsibilities of the UWIDEC/APC

The UWIDEC Academic Programme Committee shall have the following functions. *[The following list incorporates the modifications to the list approved by the BNCC/DE (at its meeting held on May 10, 2002, in Dominica) as advised by the Executive Management Committee in its meeting held on June 17, 2002.]*

1. To provide basic information and expert advice to the BNCC/DE for it to formulate the academic and operational policies that govern DE operations of UWIDEC and the UWI.
2. To provide technical support and advice to the BNCC/DE in considering and approving proposals and plans from departments, faculties, boards and other units of the University for offering DE courses/programmes.
3. To recommend to the Board for Undergraduate Studies (and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research) the appointment

- of course co-ordinators, examiners and tutors on the basis of appropriate consultation.
4. To recommend to relevant faculties and to the Board for Undergraduate Studies (and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research) the approval of student registrations, course exemptions, leave of absence and the consequential action.
 5. To recommend to the Board for Undergraduate Studies (and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research) the approval of examination results of distance students.
 6. To maintain the standards of the distance courses and programmes offered by UWIDEC and other units of the University in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit.
 7. To develop the University's capacity for distance education.

These details go back at least to P14 at the Turks and Caicos meeting, May 2001. The Minutes (#73) of that meeting say:

Discussion at the Board endorsed the general movement to greater autonomy for the DEC with concomitantly less reliance on the faculties, and concentrated on how the continuing need for faculty liaison should best be handled. As a result there was considerable debate as to the appropriate constitution of the proposed Board of Studies, reflecting different perspectives on its intended functions or the relative importance thereof. The Board recognised that there was no intention to by-pass the central quality assurance mechanisms, the Boards of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies and Research, but that the DEC needed to be able to exercise academic initiatives of its own without waiting upon faculties.

There have then been controversies with respect to membership of the APC from the very beginning, but few principles have been enunciated from which the various proposals can be derived.

Issues

Category 1 of Professor Koul's list is unproblematic. But let us remember that it represents a shift, on the advice of the V-C, from the very first suggestion that the Director, DEC, should chair. Given that alteration, it is arguable that the APC's official secretary (category 8) should also be in the PVC's Office rather than the DEC's.

Comments and proposals will be made on the other categories under two major heads:

DEC membership (2, 3, 4, 5)

We have in effect already acknowledged that the exemplary listing of DEC staff in Category 2, and the associated numbers, were in error, through overlooking the Research Officer. The intention was to include the senior academic, administrative and technical staff of the DEC, whatever their designations.

Categories 3 and 4 give us three people working as site co-ordinators, one of whom must also be on the Board. It has been suggested that there should also be a

person representing the non-UWI sites. But all non-UWI sites ought to be clearly under the eye of a UWI staff member, and that person, or his or her supervisor, should be the one to communicate to the APC whatever needs to be said. It is therefore required that two NCC site co-ordinators (one on the Board) be selected, and one off-campus co-ordinator from a campus country.

There is a separate paper (P. 1) on a possible process for finding a student representative (category 5).

Non-DEC membership (6, 7)

As far as the Faculties and other teaching units go, the main issue concerns what the APC is intended to do. If it were a body to bring the DEC and the Faculties together to plan and negotiate projects, then one would welcome extensive participation here. But the APC is not the appropriate place for such interaction. That is rather a continuing task for the Director and other staff in the DEC, working informally. The APC receives and endorses the results of such planning. For that, it requires academic weight, rather than academic breadth. It is proposed then to revert to the terms of the original proposal and invite the Dean or Deans of Faculties actually engaged in DEC work to identify one person per University Faculty to sit on the APC.

With respect to service units (category 7), the original text seems to countenance representatives of campus operations. But now that there is one University authority over the Libraries and the IT operations, it is appropriate, and consistent with the approach taken for academic representation, to regard these two as the APC's *ex officio* members.

Co-option

Given the likely needs of future developments with the DEC, it is proposed also to formally note that the Chair has the power to invite other persons to attend the APC on a temporary basis.

*Office of the Board for NCC/DE
October 22, 2004*