We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

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ABSTRACT

With increasing governmental pressure on tertiary institutions to seek feedback from external stakeholders, it is timely to review how effective this interaction is in relation to programme development. This research investigates the stakeholder advisory committee meetings operating at Universal College of Learning (UCOL), Palmerston North/New Zealand, to determine if they are an effective method of engaging with industry stakeholders. Knowledge about the meeting practices of the stakeholder advisory committees is deficient, but despite this, UCOL continues to utilise the meetings as the main method of engagement with industry.

A literature review was completed to consider the issues that are important when managing stakeholder engagement, along with a review of the theoretical approaches to meeting management. In addition, a questionnaire was supplied to staff and industry representatives from a sample of the stakeholder advisory committees, and an interview was then completed by members from a sub-section of these committees.

The research determined that both industry representatives and UCOL representatives on the committees were not satisfied with various aspects of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings. Issues of concern included a lack of clarity around the meeting purpose, poor attendance, confusion over the frequency of meetings, a lack of contact and feedback between meetings, and a lack of opportunity for industry representatives to provide input during the meetings.

Potential solutions to the issues raised include ensuring that a purpose statement is created by each committee and communicated to all members. Ensuring regular contact takes place between meetings to ensure members are reminded of meetings, in both written and verbal form, and to check that contact information remains current, will improve attendance at advisory committee meetings. Opportunities for members to connect with each other outside of meetings also need to be provided to encourage engagement. Overall, the emphasis for the meetings needs to be focused on the industry representatives with all elements designed to meet their needs, so as to enable UCOL to collect the industry feedback required to support programme development.

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1.1   INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder advisory committees have existed at Universal College of Learning (UCOL) for many years and there are several dozen committees currently operating across UCOL's campuses. Their purpose is to provide UCOL with feedback on industry trends that could impact on what UCOL students need to be taught in order to gain employment. To this point, reviews of the committees appear to have focused on changes to UCOL policy rather than on a review of actual meeting practices. This research project has allowed a unique opportunity to collect feedback from staff and industry representatives who are members of the stakeholder advisory committees at UCOL, in order to review the effectiveness of the meetings as a method of gaining feedback from industry.

This chapter introduces the thesis and lays out the problem statement and objectives, significance of the study, aim, scope and assumptions. Background information on stakeholder advisory committees at UCOL is then introduced. The final section outlines the framework for the remaining chapters.

1.2   DEVELOPMENT OF STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES AT UCOL

UCOL is a polytechnic based in Palmerston North, Whanganui and Masterton that has been a provider of education since 1906 (Dougherty, 1999). UCOL delivers programmes from certificate to degree level across a broad range of subject areas including trades, nursing, science, business, tourism and photography. To ensure that the programmes delivered meet the needs of students and their future employers, it is important that UCOL continuously evaluates the programmes offered to students. Failing to do this might result in students graduating who lack the skills needed by

employers and who thus cannot gain employment. This would result in negative publicity for UCOL, potentially the loss of future enrolments, and a risk to the financial viability of the organisation.

UCOL, previously Manawatu Polytechnic, utilises the feedback from stakeholder advisory committees to support programme changes. These committees are made up of UCOL staff and representatives from industry. The industry representatives provide feedback on the changing needs of employers and industry groups within the UCOL catchment (Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2006a). This information is then utilised in developing new programmes or making changes to the curriculum of existing programmes (UCOL, 2006a).

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is responsible for leading the government's relationships with the tertiary education sector (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], n.d.). TEC requires polytechnics to account for their stakeholder relationships by demonstrating that feedback from stakeholders is a continuous process that supports programme development and delivery. UCOL relies on the stakeholder advisory committee meetings as the main method of demonstrating to TEC that engagement with stakeholders occurs regularly. The TEC has established stakeholder guidelines that UCOL must follow (TEC, n.d.). These guidelines require all Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) to identify what a community needs in relation to education and then the ITP must take steps to meet those needs (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], n.d.). Each ITP should focus on the community in which it is based and seeks to engage with the businesses, industries and communities within the region in which it is based. This region is sometimes referred to as the catchment area. This catchment area is partly historically defined based on the location where the ITP was first established, and also based on guidelines agreed between the ITP and TEC. The UCOL catchment area extends from Whanganui through the Manawatu and down through the Wairarapa.

UCOL has operated stakeholder advisory committees in one form or another for a number of years. Records of advisory committee meetings can be traced back to at least 1991 when brief details on annual meetings were recorded in the annual report (Manawatu Polytechnic, 1991). From 1993, membership records for the advisory committees were included in the annual report and, from 2006 membership details were

included on the UCOL website (Manawatu Polytechnic, 1993; Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2006b). The number of committees has increased from 32 in 1993 to 41 in 2007[1], (see Appendix A), in part due to the inclusion of advisory committees representing the Whanganui region and Wairarapa regions (Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2007; Manawatu Polytechnic, 1993). This came about due to the incorporation into UCOL of Wairarapa Community Polytechnic in 2001 and Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic in 2002 (Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2001).

The advisory committees are linked to industry areas relevant to programmes that UCOL offers, such as automotive, joinery or nursing (UCOL, 2007). The UCOL staff nominated to attend the advisory committee meetings are usually the Head of School and several lecturers and a student representative nominated by their fellow students or by staff. The industry representatives are usually identified by academic staff, often the Head of School or Programme Leader, based on their own network of work and personal contacts. Although it depends on the committee, the majority of members have considerable experience in their field, as opposed to being recent graduates. Members are usually approached personally by a staff member or sent a letter of invitation asking if they would be willing to become a member of the committee. The committees are intended to be reflective of the cross-section of the industries relevant to the academic programmes within the school or department they are linked to. However, this may or may not be the case. How reflective a committee is of an industry depends on, among other factors, how wide a network the academic staff can draw from when identifying potential members. The guidelines within the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy for academic staff to use when selecting industry representatives are brief. The policy states that the membership should be "representative of local businesses/industry and/or the community" and in the opinion of the Dean of the faculty they should be "representative of the programme area, or delivery site" (UCOL, 2006a).

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[1] 2007 is the most recent information that was available via the UCOL public website. A website link to the stakeholder list mentioned in the 2008 Annual Report, the most recent Annual Report on the website, is not operational.

Meeting attendance is voluntary with no payment made to members who attend, so numbers attending vary at each meeting. The average group size is 15 with a combination of industry representatives and UCOL staff representatives. The largest committee is engineering with 40 members and the smallest committee is linked with the fashion and beauty programme and is listed as having three members (UCOL, 2007).

The advisory committee meetings are run by a Chairperson who is elected annually (UCOL, 2006a). The UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy does not clarify if the Chairperson should be a UCOL staff member or not but usual practice is someone from outside the programme area is elected as Chairperson (UCOL, 2006a). The format of the meeting, how often meetings are held and how they are managed differs between committees. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy provides a purpose statement and provides brief guidelines on membership; otherwise it only includes six guidelines as to what the committees can provide advice on. These include identifying industry trends, promoting programmes to the community, developing, evaluating and reviewing programme outcomes, advising on existing and potential commercial activities and, being involved in approval and accreditation processes (UCOL, 2006a). These are broad guidelines and clarification is not given as to which is of most importance, and how much time should be spent on each area. A copy of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy is included in Appendix B.

UCOL wants the programmes it delivers to result in graduates who have the skills needed by industry. The stakeholder advisory committee members support UCOL to achieve this through the advice they share at the stakeholder advisory committee meetings.

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

Anecdotal evidence suggests the need for this research due to the frustrations expressed by both UCOL academic staff and industry representatives of the stakeholder advisory committees that the committees are not functioning effectively. The concerns relate primarily to the stakeholder advisory committee meetings, and how they operate. The

meetings are not in all cases an effective means of collecting feedback from the industries and communities within UCOL's catchment area. Feedback from academic staff has indicated that some advisory committees have very low attendance, do not occur on a regular basis and, minimal industry feedback is shared (SS[2], personal communication, April 18, 2008; BJ[3], personal communication, May 13, 2008).

There is a lack of consistency around the purpose of the meetings. The purpose of some meetings appears to be limited to approving assignment or examination results or changes to academic curricula. At other advisory committee meetings members have commented that they feel they have been used to 'rubber stamp' changes to curricula and not allowed much time to agree or disagree with the changes being proposed. Some of the membership on the committees does not represent the industries they are connected with, and frustration has been expressed over meeting times and chairing procedure. All these frustrations indicate that there is a lack of consistency in how the UCOL stakeholder advisory committee meetings are operating and as a result they may not be providing the input needed by UCOL to support ongoing programme development.

UCOL wants to improve and update the Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy that has not been updated since 2006 (BJ[4], personal communication, May 13, 2008). It has been acknowledged by staff that the policy does not provide the detail needed to ensure the committees operate effectively. However due to other priorities no one on staff has had time to dedicate to reviewing the stakeholder advisory committees to enable the policy to be updated.

A review of the literature on stakeholder engagement has also indicated there is limited feedback relating to polytechnic stakeholder engagement.

[2, 3, 4] To avoid revealing the identity of the individuals initials have been used in place of full names.

1.4 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine how well the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings are working as a method of engaging with stakeholders and to recommend improvements to the policies, processes and performance of the committees.

The research will involve the following research questions:

1) How are UCOL stakeholder advisory committee meetings run, compared to theoretical approaches of effective meeting practice?
2) Are UCOL staff members on stakeholder advisory committees satisfied with the current meeting structure and procedures?
3) Are industry representatives on the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees satisfied with the level of engagement they have with UCOL through the meetings?
4) What can UCOL do to improve the functioning of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

UCOL needs to use an effective method of communication with all key stakeholders which can take place in a timely manner, and which generates informed feedback on the changing needs of industry. If the advisory committee meetings are not working effectively to generate this feedback then changes will need to be made to alter the meeting structure, membership or overall organisation.

While for some of the committees the industry representatives may provide a good cross-section of the industries they represent, others with poor attendance or a lower number of industry representatives would not. As indicated earlier, feedback from staff has indicated that low attendance is an issue for some of the UCOL advisory committees, which results in committees not receiving the feedback they need to support curriculum changes. This lack of information could result in academic staff

being uncertain as to whether or not the changes they make to the curriculum of the programmes they deliver truly reflects industry needs.

This research is supported by UCOL management as it will assist UCOL to meet TEC guidelines for regional stakeholder engagement. It will also allow UCOL to modify the existing Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy which is due for review and updating (UCOL, 2006a).

1.6   SCOPE AND ASSUMPTIONS

To keep the study manageable, certain data or sources have been excluded: 1) feedback from industry representatives who are not members of the stakeholder advisory committees; 2) feedback from UCOL staff who are not members of the stakeholder advisory committees; and 3) feedback on issues beyond the meeting structure and procedures, although these may be raised by research participants independently. This study is primarily concerned with the opinions and experiences of industry representatives and UCOL staff who are presently members of the stakeholder advisory committees.

As with any research, assumptions must be clarified; there are four main assumptions relating to this study. The first assumption is that the full picture of the success or otherwise of the UCOL stakeholder advisory committee meetings is lacking as there has not been any research at UCOL that specifically focuses on the meetings as a method of engagement. Therefore, results from this research can provide assistance in developing and enhancing the performance of the meetings. The second assumption is that the current representatives have a basic level of knowledge as to why they are meeting and have attended at least some meetings to be able to provide feedback. The third assumption is that UCOL intends to continue with the stakeholder advisory committees into the foreseeable future and values the committees as a way to connect with industry. The fourth assumption is that the meeting as a method of engagement will still continue in some format in the future.

1.7   THESIS STRUCTURE

There are seven chapters in this thesis. Chapter Two (Literature Review) reflects on the theories of stakeholder engagement. It then provides a theoretical model of best practices concerning the use of meetings as a method of engaging with and gaining feedback from stakeholders. It also outlines what needs to be considered when establishing and running meetings. The methodology is discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four provides the results from the questionnaires and individual interviews conducted with advisory committee members. The answers to the research questions are discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six provides conclusions, limitations and directions for future research and the final chapter, Chapter Seven, provides recommendations for the future development of the stakeholder advisory committees at UCOL.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter One, UCOL utilises stakeholder advisory committees to build links with the community. The current committee structure has remained largely unchanged since it was established which can be traced back to at least 1991 (Manawatu Polytechnic, 1991). During 2008 UCOL made a slight amendment to the options for engagement methods (See Appendix C). This literature review begins with stakeholder definitions and continues with a review of stakeholder management, before looking specifically at stakeholders in the UCOL context and outlining the importance of external stakeholders to UCOL in the wider tertiary education context.   The literature review then focuses on meeting definitions and provides an overview of the benefits and criticisms of meetings.   The review continues with an overview of the purpose of meetings and meeting processes and meeting roles. Meeting membership, including the development of a group, and evaluating meeting performance are then considered.   An overview of the potential use of mediated communication to engage with stakeholders, as alternatives to face to face meetings, concludes the literature review.

The first part of the literature review focuses on formal meetings in a business context as opposed to meetings held for purely social reasons or outside an organisational environment. The term 'group' is used in this literature review in the context of a group of people in a formal business meeting setting and the terms 'members' and 'participants' are used interchangeably.

2.2   STAKEHOLDER DEFINITIONS

A stakeholder is a group or individual who has an interest in, is involved in or is impacted by a decision (Hemmati, 2002). Bowie (in Zakhem, Palmer & Stoll, 2008) identified that researchers on stakeholders often moved between focusing on individuals and focusing on groups. Bowie (in Zakhem et al, 2008, p. 10) argued that stakeholder

theory was about managing groups rather than managing individuals as to focus on individuals would be "too difficult to implement in practice".

Freeman and Reed (in Zakhem et al, 2008) identified a narrow and a wide definition for stakeholders. A narrow or primary definition of stakeholders is a group or individual on whom an organisation is dependent for its continued survival, such as its employees or certain customer segments (Freeman & Reed in Zakhem et al, 2008). A wide definition was similar to the definition provided by Hemmati (2002) with a group or individual that could affect or be affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives (Freeman & Reed in Zakhem et al, 2008). A wide definition may include groups who are considered adversarial but whose input can challenge the organisation to grow (Freeman & Reed in Zakhem et al, 2008; Friedman & Miles, 2006).

2.3   STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

The act of working with stakeholders is described as stakeholder management. Traditionally stakeholder management revolved around contractual or moral obligations where a stakeholder and organisation were battling over limited resources (Sama, Welcomer & Gerde, 2004). A stakeholder may have an interest in a business on legal grounds but many stakeholders have a moral interest in a business (Friedman & Miles, 2006). While a business may feel less inclined to consider stakeholders who have only a moral interest, it is good practice for a business to maintain a good relationship with stakeholders, even if there is no legal implication to do so (Friedman & Miles, 2006).

Who to approach to join stakeholder committees can be clarified by the overall purpose. It may be more suitable to include participants below managerial level, such as entry level staff or newly employed graduates, to gain more knowledge of day to day practice in the workplace (Reith, 1970). Developing participant selection criteria can provide support in determining who should participate. In an outline of selection criteria Fairsay (2009) identify aspects such as having expertise to contribute to the exchange of knowledge, being able to attend and a willingness to contribute as determining factors in selecting participants for campaign events.

By not providing a stakeholder identification and evaluation procedure to guide staff in the selection of members of the advisory committee, there is a risk that the motivation of stakeholders will be low. This could result in low meeting attendance, minimal discussion and poor decision-making (Reith, 1970). Dentchev and Heene (2004) describe the process of stakeholder motivation as being one of continuous trial and error. While the steps remain the same, the stakeholders themselves will continue to change as the issues facing the group change, and as their work and life experiences change. For example, a stakeholder with high motivation in one year may not be an ideal member of a committee the following year if s/he has moved into a new section and her/his job focus has changed.

Once the stakeholders are determined the next step is to identify what the stakeholders will be looking for in return for their investment of time and feedback into a committee (Boyers, 1996). To build collaborative stakeholder relationships an organisation needs to think of the benefits to the stakeholders, not just to themselves. As described by LaBerge and Svendsen (2000, p. 49),

> the building of collaborative relationships requires a very different mindset. Managers in relationship-focused companies are rewarded for identifying opportunities for creating mutual benefit with stakeholders rather than helping the company gain at the expense of others.

Hendry (2004) describes the ways in which stakeholders can exert power on organisations depending on the level of stakeholder resources needed by the organisation and the degree of interdependence between them. If a stakeholder relies on the organisation, then the organisation has the power (Windsor, 2004).

Dentchev and Heene (2004, p. 129) have developed a model of stakeholder motivation that incorporates six phases that can assist with the selection of suitable stakeholders to involve on committees.

1. identify those parties that can be qualified as a 'stakeholder';
2. identify the stakeholder's stake in the firm and as a result the stakeholder's interest(s);

3. evaluate how the stakeholder contributes to the firm's resources and capabilities base;

4. evaluate the willingness of stakeholders to provide (access to) resources and capabilities;

5. evaluate the ability of stakeholders to build 'better' and/or 'cheaper' resources that are set at the disposal of the firm, or to increase the speed with which the firm can gain access to these resources and capabilities;

6. identify and evaluate potential conflicts between the stakes of all stakeholders.

These guidelines are focused on the organisation's needs rather than the needs of a wider community or sector. With the move towards a more inclusive community engagement focus required by TEC, as mentioned in Chapter One, these guidelines are not broad enough as they do not adequately consider issues beyond those that benefit the organisation.

McManus (2005, p. xiii) has identified the following model in Figure 1. This model specifies that stakeholders should be involved in decision-making, thereby enabling them to have more power and control over the direction of the committee and the organisation in general, and therefore they are more likely to feel engaged as a group. This model includes the valuable review aspect as the final point. A review of any process ensures that if something is no longer valid or has been ineffective it can be modified (Levi, 2001). Without a regular review, a committee could end up with stakeholders who are no longer active in their field and whose contribution is not as relevant to the committee to which they belong.

Figure 1 – Stakeholder Management Cycle
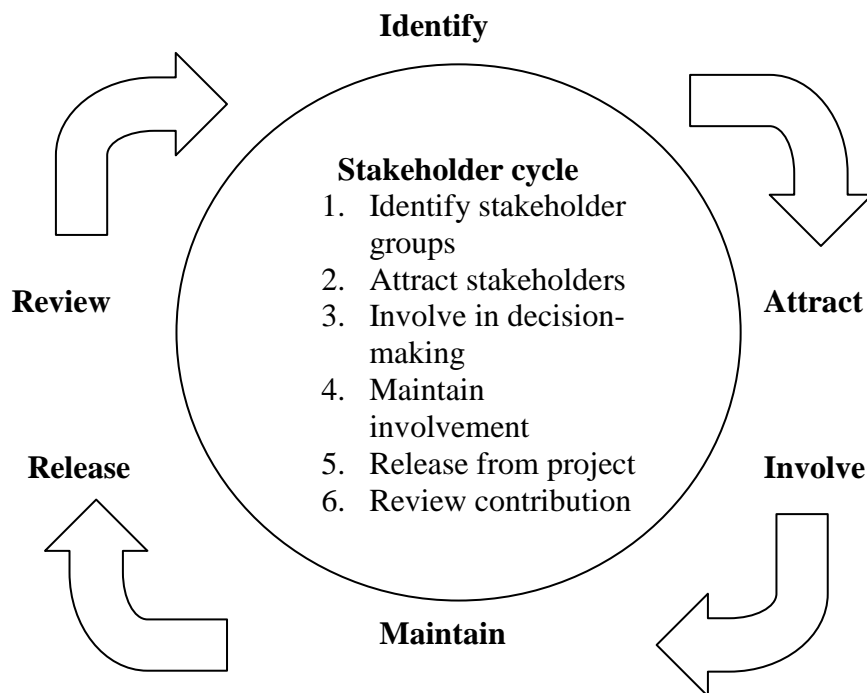
2.3.1 UCOL Context

In the UCOL context, stakeholders are considered to be either internal or external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are staff who teach on a particular programme at UCOL and the students on the programme. External stakeholders are the potential employers of graduating students and people, who work in the industry that is aligned with the particular UCOL programme, e.g. travel consultants on the travel programme.

Prior to 1991, UCOL has had a lower interdependence with external stakeholders as programmes were developed by UCOL and, while there was external stakeholder consultation as part of programme approval, the driver of the process was usually UCOL academic staff, the internal stakeholders. If an external stakeholder wanted a new programme developed or a change made s/he would need to build a case by working with either an internal stakeholder or an external stakeholder on whom UCOL relied, in order to improve her/his chances of success (Hendry, 2004). Due to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) changes, discussed in Chapter One, there is a higher interdependence on the knowledge held by external stakeholders and in the future there should be more room for negotiation between the parties. The stakeholder

advisory committees become more meaningful when there is a definite purpose to the meetings as both internal and external stakeholders need something from each other.

For UCOL, the primary resource needed from external stakeholders is knowledge of the industries or sector which graduates will enter upon completion of their qualifications. UCOL needs to identify which stakeholders are most important to gain their input in order to facilitate the delivery of successful programmes resulting in employable graduates. Stakeholders should not only be willing to participate but also able to provide the organisation with needed resources. In the case of UCOL's advisory committees, this could be access to networks, current industry experience and knowledge of technological advances in a particular field.

2.4 ENGAGING EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

Polytechnics focus on meeting the needs of their external stakeholders through the provision of quality applied education that contributes to local, regional and national development (Paterson, Mitchell, Oettli, White, Kalavite & Harry, 2006). For UCOL the external stakeholders include all members of the general public within the catchment area specified in Chapter One. Included in this group are school students, school leavers, beneficiaries, employees, employers, at home parents, and retirees. Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) value the importance of being linked with their stakeholders and are required to account for this engagement to the TEC (UCOL, 2006a; Paterson et al, 2006). However, a large percentage of these external stakeholder groups has no involvement with their local polytechnic (Paterson et al, 2006). The level of engagement with external stakeholders as reported by Paterson et al in 2006 stands at only 31% which means 69% of external stakeholders have no engagement with their local polytechnic.

Within the wider description of external stakeholders is the group targeted for involvement with the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees, and that is local industry. In this context industry is the employers and manufacturers in areas that link to programmes UCOL delivers. There is a lack of information available on how to

effectively build and maintain relationships between industries and tertiary education providers. Research by Paterson et al in 2006 appears to be the most comprehensive and current research into the current stakeholder engagement practices by ITPs in New Zealand. Polytechnics use stakeholder advisory group meetings as a mechanism for gaining feedback from industry and have reported mixed success with this method (Paterson et al, 2006). Dealing with institutional bureaucracy, long delays in taking any action and confusion over group management are common concerns reported from some who attempt engagement with a polytechnic, regardless of the method of engagement used (Paterson et al, 2006). Paterson et al (2006) have developed a model of engagement that focuses on the need for the ITP and external stakeholder to have common goals and mutual respect. However, how these common goals are to be achieved is not clearly explained. The report identifies a number of areas for future research, including identifying the attributes of successful models of engagement between the tertiary education sector and its stakeholders (Paterson et al, 2006).

2.5   MEETING DEFINITIONS

A meeting is an event where individuals are brought together for a particular purpose, or come together due to a common interest ("Running Meetings," 2006; Streibel, 2003; Stretton, 2006). Meetings can consist of two people or hundreds of people (Mountjoy, 1998). In the business context, a meeting usually consists of people who come together to resolve a problem or make a decision (Heller & Hindle, 1998). Taylor (2005) believes that meetings have a variety of purposes including to report, to obtain assistance, to give information, to create involvement, and to put forward ideas and grievances for discussion. Micale (2004) believes that meetings that focus on making decisions are successful as they encourage active engagement from participants, an essential element in running a successful business. The meeting is "an efficient way to pool individual expertise, experience, knowledge and ideas" (Chase, O'Rourke, Smith, Sutton, Timperley & Wallace, 1998, p. 382).

A meeting can be formal or informal and some meetings are linked to particular activities. In the business setting, Annual General Meetings and Board meetings are

common practice and most businesses will have regular management, departmental or team meetings (Taylor, 2005).

Heller and Hindle (1998, p. 427) describe the best meetings as "bringing together the right people to pool their knowledge for a defined purpose."   Careful planning, including the consideration of how the meeting will be run helps to ensure a meeting is successful (Seibold, 1979).   The responsibility for the success of a meeting is often placed with the person leading the meeting, the Chairperson.   However, there are a range of factors which impact on a meeting's success or failure to achieve its purpose (Taylor, 2005; Seibold, 1979).

2.6   BENEFITS OF MEETINGS

Cambié and Ooi (2009, p.185) state that it is human instinct to want to meet as there is a desire for "face-to-face communication in real time".   An effective meeting with a clearly understood purpose offers many benefits including the ability to ask and answer questions, gain perspective on issues and reach decisions (Streibel, 2003; "Running Meetings", 2006; Lippincott, 1999).   Doyle and Straus (1993, p. 3) believe that we are a "meeting society" and we are all involved in meetings in both our business and personal lives.   Meetings are an important part of most businesses and can be a powerful and productive tool if they are effective (Peel, 1988; Chase et al, 1998; Taylor, 2005). As employees move up through to more senior roles in an organisation the more likely it is that they will be involved in meetings (Chase et al, 1998).   Taylor (2005) believes that meetings can account for 50-60% of a manager's time.

A group of people who meet usually produce better results than individuals working independently, provided other aspects of the meeting are well organised and all members are equally engaged (Pinner & Pinner, 1994).   Chase et al (1998, p. 391) also state that to be effective a meeting needs to have a balance of "structure and managed interaction".   Managers who involve their employees in meetings also often find that the employees are more likely to be committed to the decisions of the meeting due to being able to share their opinions (Pinner & Pinner, 1994).   There is also a certain degree of

status within an organisation that comes to those individuals who have been involved in a decision-making process (Pinner & Pinner, 1994).

A particular benefit of a stakeholder meeting is the opportunity to get ideas out to others who could assist in developing them (Gecker, 2008). Lynn Ridzon, a businesswoman in the United States, as mentioned in the article by Gecker (2008), believes that even though attending meetings can be time consuming, they offer the opportunity to network, learn from others and develop one's reputation. Cambié and Ooi (2009) describe the ability to build relationships with an audience as becoming of greater importance in business than the ability to produce a report.

2.7   CRITICISMS OF MEETINGS

There is evidence provided by many authors that meetings are problematic and difficult to manage, and these will be explored in this section. Meetings are accused of wasting time, providing a means of avoiding responsibility, and acting as a platform for those who love the sound of their own voice or who like to push their own agendas (Peel, 1988). An ineffective meeting is detested by those forced to attend it. From Reith in 1970, Peel in 1988, through to Micale in 2004, authors continue to cite evidence of ineffective meetings and the frustrations felt by those forced to attend them. In the business world jokes abound relating to the ineffectiveness of meetings. Peel (1988, p. 13) shares examples of humour around ineffective meetings including "A meeting, when all is said and done, is an event at which more is said than done" and "You know how the Camel was invented? A committee was asked to draw up a specification for a race-horse."

Authors on meeting procedure comment on the frustrations experienced by people attending ineffective or badly run meetings (Parker & Hoffman, 2006; Grossman & Parkinson, 2002; Streibel, 2003; Micale, 2004). Examples include not achieving any outcomes from the meeting, one or more people dominating the meeting, and excessive or inappropriate use of meeting time (Eller & Eller, 2006). Participants can become negative and antagonistic about new ideas, resulting in those who presented the idea choosing to remain quiet in future (Prince, 1969). The need for clear guidelines on

meeting procedure has been identified as an important determinant of successful engagement (Paterson et al, 2006). Some of the other key elements that contribute to a successful meeting include establishing a quorum, establishing roles within the meeting, using motions to facilitate decision-making, keeping accurate minutes, and providing a clear agenda.

Pinner and Pinner (1994) believe the greatest disadvantage to meetings is when members of the meeting feel they need to conform. This phenomenon, described as 'groupthink', occurs when a group of people is more concerned with maintaining good relations with each other or not being viewed negatively by others in preference to reaching the best decision (Levi, 2007; Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). Levi (2007, p. 156) identifies three causes of groupthink: "structural decision-making flaws, group cohesiveness, and external pressure". Structural decision-making flaws within a meeting environment can occur when the group members accept the decision of the Chairperson without considering other points of view (Levi, 2007). It can also occur when a group is isolated and does not receive input from outside sources (Forsyth, 2006). Group cohesiveness occurs when internal criticism is discouraged; for example, if a manager were to react negatively if a team member raised concerns in a meeting about a particular action being taken (Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). This can result in a member choosing to remain silent if s/he is not confident as to how her/his opinion will be received (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). Morrison and Hewlin (2003) indicate this is particularly apparent with new employees or those whose status is lower than other members of the group.

Members may also choose to remain silent if they are resigned to the current situation or feel their input is not fully considered (Van Dyne, Soon & Botero, 2003). If members of a committee feel they are only rubberstamping decisions at a meeting that have already been made by others, they are likely to feel disengaged with the process and to withdraw from the process, either physically or through a lack of involvement and comment.

External pressure can be experienced by a committee when the members become aware that a decision they must make is anticipated by other parties. The longer it takes a committee to reach a decision, the more of an impact there could be on other elements

of a project, such as increasing budgets and delays to other projects. When exposed to external pressure a group tries to reach a decision quickly which limits the amount of discussion and can lead the group to accepting the first available solution (Levi, 2007).

2.8   MEETING PURPOSE AND PROCESS

A meeting should have a clearly defined purpose, which is summarised in an agenda but may also be presented as a terms of reference (Heller & Hindle, 1998). The lack of a purpose is one of the most common failings of meetings and has been identified by writers for many years (Prince, 1969; Reith, 1970; Seibold, 1979). Having a clear idea as to what is expected from the meeting enables those involved in the meeting to participate more effectively (Mountjoy, 1998). To run an effective meeting, a clear purpose needs to be defined (Reith, 1970). If a meeting does not have a clear purpose it makes it difficult to determine which stakeholders should be participating in the meeting. In the case of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings at UCOL, the purpose is improving programmes being delivered to students through industry engagement.

Despite the need for a clear purpose, in reality, many meetings are held out of routine with little thought given to the need for them or their purpose (Streibel, 2003; "Running Meetings," 2006; Grossman & Parkinson, 2002). Prince (1969, p. 99) explains that "in many cases there is only a vague notion about the objective of a meeting, and quite often objectives are mixed". Each meeting could have a different focus as different issues arise. At one meeting the need to discuss an idea may be of most importance, while on another occasion the need to convey information may be the main purpose of meeting (Lippincott, 1999). In some cases a meeting may not be the best method of engagement if it is simply reporting back on an issue with little discussion required. A written report circulated by email or an audio conference may be more suitable in this situation rather than organising a meeting where attendees merely rubber stamp the results (Reith, 1970; Seibold, 1979).

In addition to a purpose for an individual meeting there needs to be an overall purpose as to why this particular group of people get together (Paterson et al, 2006). Each

member of the group needs to know what this purpose is, and a mission statement or terms of reference outlining the purpose presented to and discussed with members upon joining can help them to understand the reason for meeting (Lippincott, 1999). Paterson et al (2006) also recommend that all meeting participants need to be held accountable for the purpose and committees should be reviewed annually to ensure they are meeting the purposes agreed to by members. The lack of a clear purpose for a meeting makes it difficult to evaluate whether it has been successful (Boyers, 1996).

2.9 MEETING ORGANISATION

An important element in ensuring an effective meeting for all participants is to be well prepared. If the meeting is held face to face the room layout needs to be conducive to ensure all participants can converse easily and see each other. Pease (1987) offers suggestions on the merits of particular seating positions in a meeting, depending on the outcome wanted. A meeting organiser will need to consider this to ensure all those attending have an equal opportunity without being overly influenced by non-verbal cues. Chase et al (1998) recommend seating be placed facing one another and in matching chairs to reinforce the impression of equality amongst the participants. However, Pinner and Pinner (1994) highlight that this is a culturally based behaviour. In some cultures, such as in Samoan culture, the person with the highest status must be shown more respect and an equal seating arrangement may not be appropriate (Pinner & Pinner, 1994).

Heating, lighting and overall comfort are important factors to consider when planning a meeting as the attention of participants will be taken away from the matter being discussed if they are uncomfortable (Chase et al, 1998). These elements still apply with a meeting held using a technologically mediated form of communication as a poor quality image projected in a video conference would be just as frustrating to members as an uncomfortable seat in a face to face meeting (Oliver, Washington, Wittenberg-Lyles, Demiris, 2009).

Timing and the scheduling of a meeting is something that can result in frustration, particularly if a meeting runs longer than expected or is held infrequently. At the outset

of the meeting agreement as to the meeting length needs to be decided and this must be abided by unless the members agree to a deviation (Seibold, 1979). As mentioned by Pinner and Pinner (1994) in relation to seating position, there are cultural differences in relation to the use of time that a meeting organiser needs to consider. To some people and in some cultural contexts, discussing an issue until all reach agreement may take precedence over finishing on time. Consideration also needs to be given to how often a meeting is held. Miller (1991) provides a range of guidelines to assist with answering this question including considering how much time is needed for members to prepare for the meeting and scheduling meetings earlier when participants will be more energised.

Finally, the location of the meeting can impact on whether there is a good turnout to a meeting (Boyers, 1996). It needs to be determined if all members are able to travel to meet face to face and if they cannot using a mediated form of communication, such as video or audio conferencing, may be more suitable to allow a meeting to take place at a time and location convenient to the majority of members.

2.10   MEETING ROLES

Within each formal meeting environment individuals are elected to roles, by other participants in the meeting, to facilitate the management of the meeting. These roles are the Chairperson, Deputy or Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The nomination process can be by written or verbal nomination and may require a seconder for each nomination depending on the rules of the committee (Stretton, 2006). Voting can be conducted by secret ballot or through a show of hands or verbal vote with a majority decision determining who is elected (Stretton, 2006).

The Chairperson runs the meeting ensuring that there is an agenda, that all members are treated fairly and that the meeting purpose is adhered to (Stretton, 2006). S/he sets the tone for the meeting and must remain impartial (Ramo, 2005). Prince (1969, p. 98) states that the Chairperson is the "heart and will" of a meeting. Authors from the 1970s such as Reith (1970) through to commentators of today ("Your Board Won't Follow," 2009) believe that maintaining control over the meeting is the primary responsibility of

the Chairperson, but Prince (1969) indicates that a Chairperson cannot be successful if s/he is not also a skilled listener. S/he should not allow personal comments to be made when an issue is debated and s/he needs to ensure the rules of the committee are applied evenly to all members (Stretton, 2006).

The Chairperson is supported by the Secretary to ensure the meeting follows the agenda and is completed within the allocated meeting time. According to Prince (1969) if the Chairperson successfully follows the agenda and completes the meeting within the allocated time s/he can be considered successful. Other authors such as Pinner and Pinner (1994) consider the duty of the Chairperson is to run a fair meeting and Pinner and Pinner (1994), Chase et al (1998) and Prince (1969) describe the Chairperson as the servant of the meeting, someone who is in place to ensure that the group works together to achieve its purpose. In the absence of the Chairperson a Deputy or Vice Chairperson may act as the Chair of the meeting (Stretton, 2006).

Even a successful Chairperson will have deficiencies which impact on her/his ability to run a successful meeting (Prince, 1969). If the Chairperson is in a position of authority over members beyond the meeting, such as their immediate supervisor, then the meeting outcomes can be influenced by the Chairperson's desires (Prince, 1969). This can happen even if s/he states s/he encourages open sharing of ideas (Prince, 1969). Morrison and Hewlin (2003) describe how the topic of the performance or competence of someone in authority can be one that individuals feel they cannot raise. They will often tolerate inadequate performance rather than speak up and potentially draw negative attention from the person concerned (Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). To overcome this, a practice of rotating the role of Chairperson can assist by allowing a group to replace a Chairperson, after a period of time, with another (Prince, 1969). This offers the added benefit of up-skilling others within the group in the requirements of being an effective Chairperson (Prince, 1969).

A Chairperson needs to do more than just someone who reads off the items on an agenda. S/he needs to use suitable techniques to get maximum input from the members of the group. There are a range of techniques that can be utilised to encourage feedback and a Chairperson needs to become familiar with them. It also requires the ability of a Chairperson to adapt and use alternative techniques if a particular method is not

working.   The use of techniques such as brainstorming to generate a range of ideas or nominal group technique (each member independently lists advantages and disadvantages relating to an idea and then the collective ideas are discussed) can encourage members to participate (Seibold, 1979).

A Chairperson needs to ensure that all members are engaged, that they contribute fully and that there is full discussion on each issue. There needs to be an energised meeting environment which is one that encourages participants to become engaged and actively involved in the meeting procedure (Eller & Eller, 2006). Meetings can become stale over time if change never occurs and members become set in a standard way of engaging (Eller & Eller, 2006). When a change is made to re-energise a meeting it can result in giving members a feeling of control over the meeting outcomes and the ability to deal more positively when negative situations arise (Eller & Eller, 2006).

If a Chairperson works within the organisation, s/he may have an advantage over a Chairperson who works outside the organisation. A Chairperson familiar with the organisation and its staff and procedures may find it easier to learn the techniques to maintain an energised meeting environment (Eller & Eller, 2006). S/he will know what the likes and dislikes are of co-workers and can potentially draw on professional development opportunities that might be offered by their employer to up skill. This organisational knowledge and access to training may not be as readily available to a Chairperson who is external to the organisation.

When the time comes to make decisions the Chairperson should call for a motion. A motion is a suggested course of action or an opinion on an issue. It can be suggested by any member but must be supported by at least one other member before it can be put to a vote (Stretton, 2006). The person proposing the motion is the mover and the person who supports it is the seconder (Stretton, 2006). Most motions begin with the word 'that' and the wording must be very precise and recorded word for word in the minutes (Stretton, 2006). It is also possible to amend a motion provided the amendment is moved, seconded, voted on and passed (Stretton, 2006; Lippincott, 1999). Any motion that is proposed and seconded is passed if a majority of the members vote in agreement with the motion (Stretton, 2006).

The Treasurer maintains the financial records of the committee. The Treasurer may be expected to present a financial report to the meeting that outlines the current state of the group's finances (Mountjoy, 1998). This role is not held within all committees if there are no financial decisions to be made or a group does not have a budget to work with.

All activity at the business meeting is recorded by the Secretary as a set of minutes (Stretton, 2006). There is no standard prescribed format for minutes as the presentation of the minutes depends on the preference of the Secretary. However, it is important that they accurately record all the details of the meeting and wording of all motions and amendments (Stretton, 2006; Micale, 2004). The Secretary also prepares an agenda which is a list of the items to be covered in the meeting and this is usually prepared in conjunction with the Chairperson (Stretton, 2006; Miller, 1991). Agendas usually include standard items which would include the recording of apologies, confirming minutes from the previous meeting, correspondence, a Treasurer's report, key items of business to be discussed and general business towards the end of the meeting (Stretton, 2006). Some committees send the agenda along with a notice of meeting to allow members to reflect on the topics of discussion before the meeting (Stretton, 2006). The notice of meeting includes the date and time of the meeting, its purpose, who should attend, where it will take place, and can extend an invitation to submit items for the agenda (Chase et al, 1998). In other committees, the Chairperson will seek agenda items at the start of the meeting (Stretton, 2006). An agenda on its own is not enough to ensure a meeting is successful if the overall purpose of the meeting is not clear to participants (Prince, 1969).

An important last step for the Secretary is ensuring the minutes and action points are circulated to members, both those who attended and those who submitted apologies. Distributing the minutes ensures that all members are aware of their responsibilities and are ready to contribute at the next meeting (Chase et al, 1998).

2.11   MEETING MEMBERSHIP

Meetings are often comprised of individuals from a variety of organisations, and many attendees may not see each other between meetings. Each member will bring to the

meeting unique experiences and backgrounds and will be familiar with different working environments. The challenges of having a diverse membership can include lower performance and a lack of cohesion as members believe each other to be different (Forsyth, 2006). A lack of rapport amongst members limits the amount of feedback received on issues if members are uncertain how feedback will be perceived. A diverse membership can however be more successful than a homogenous membership as it allows a group to draw on varied experiences to come up with creative solutions to problems (Forsyth, 2006). For example, a meeting may be more effective if it was attended by a combination of senior staff and employees from a lower level of the organisation who could report on day-to-day practices as opposed to strategic plans (Reith, 1970). However, a diverse group is most likely to succeed if the members are highly skilled, their skills do not overlap and they can identify common values (Forsyth, 2006; Cambié & Ooi, 2009). It also takes considerable time and requires members to make an effort to understand each other's values (Cambié & Ooi, 2009)

The experience of membership and the feeling of belonging can be a strong motivator for some to choose to belong to a stakeholder committee (Cambié & Ooi, 2009). Other members may belong because they feel an obligation to belong or because they were required to as part of their position or role (Ramo, 2005). This usually results in a lower level of contribution, particularly if they are also unfamiliar with the workplace practices that other members are familiar with. Members need to be selected based on their enthusiasm and abilities rather than just because they are representative of a certain group of people (Stretton, 2006).

One of the challenges of committees that are made up of external and diverse members is that meeting attendance can fluctuate, resulting in delayed decisions, unproductive use of time while waiting for members to arrive, and poor outcomes (Martinez & Wong, 2009). In their study of support group meetings Martinez and Wong (2009) tried various methods to encourage participation, including sending written reminders, contacting by telephone and offering incentives to attend such as food or vouchers. They found that the telephone prompts, in addition to written meeting notices, resulted in a doubling of attendance but when they were not repeated the attendance dropped off after a few meetings (Martinez & Wong, 2009). Seibold (1979) suggests delegating tasks amongst members to encourage involvement. Asking members to report back at

the following meeting with an update adds a responsibility and commitment to their role as a member of the committee.

Encouraging members to interact outside of meetings can encourage them to contribute more fully during meetings as they become more familiar with each other ("Making it work," 2007). Holding a social event on a regular basis outside of the meetings could help the members to get to know one another in a more informal setting.

There are different motivations behind why people choose to become a member of a group or committee. Participation may be a work requirement, particularly if the individual works at a managerial level. Individuals may be asked to join due to personal relationships with other members. The members of a group will have both altruistic and self-interest reasons for belonging (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). The altruistic motivations might include a desire to help others, to give back or a sense of civic duty (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). External members, those from outside the organisation, may choose to belong voluntarily, for little if any payment as they value being able to share their experience. However, without some personal benefit such as learning new skills or social interaction, volunteers can be difficult to find and retain (Brown, 1982). McCurley and Lynch (1996, p. 2) state that "knowing why people do what they do is a necessity in helping them fulfil those motivations".

2.11.1 Meeting Size

Few sources have indicated the ideal number of participants for a meeting. Prince (1969) advocates seven participants as the ideal number for a productive meeting and Harris (1993) indicates five to ten people is optimum. With five to ten people there should be enough input from participants to be able to offer diverse solutions to issues that arise (Harris, 1993). An important guideline for all meetings is ensuring that there is always a quorum in place. This is the minimum number of attendees as prescribed when the meeting was first established. The quorum needs to be large enough to ensure the meeting outcomes are not being determined by a small number of people but small enough to ensure everyone has a chance to have a reasonable input (Pinner & Pinner, 1994). If a quorum is not reached the meeting should be adjourned (Stretton, 2006).

Identifying the most productive and valuable participants in a meeting is necessary as those who are more engaged with the process are more likely to attend. If attendance is not maintained a quorum will not be reached which prevents decisions from being made (Mountjoy, 1998). Identifying who to select involves considering a range of factors. These include identifying who is supportive of and can help the committee achieve the overall objective, and who has the power to make and implement decisions (Lippincott, 1999). It may also be necessary to consider including key members of a community who are considered influential and who could create barriers for the committee if they were not involved (Lippincott, 1999).

Stretton (2006) believes that a committee does not have to have a large number of members. A few enthusiastic members can produce better results and therefore be more effective than a large number who do not contribute. Meetings can be successful and achieve results with a smaller membership as long as the same members attend regularly, as this ensures they are fluent with the matters being discussed (Reith, 1970). The membership numbers for the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committees vary considerably and the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy does not provide guidance on committee numbers (UCOL, 2006a).

Slaughter (2010) suggests that if the meeting size is small it may be appropriate to dispense some of the more formal meeting requirements such as seconding motions which have been mentioned as a requirement by Stretton (2006) and Lippincott (1999). This could be an option if a formal meeting environment has resulted in a lack of discussion amongst participants (Slaughter, 2010).

2.11.2 Group Development

A meeting needs to have a defined purpose and a group of participants who meet on a regular basis but this is not enough to ensure a meeting is successful. The group of people who meet and work together need to grow and develop over time. A variety of researchers have developed theories on group development, including Tuckman (in Tyson, 1998) and Moreland and Levine (2001), who described the five stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. While the model implies that group development is sequential and naturally progresses through

each stage, many groups stagnate at a particular stage and may never progress to the stage of performing where production is deemed to be optimal (Tyson, 1998).

Woodcock (in Tyson, 1998, p. 10) proposed a four stage model of group development with key indicators of group development, a summary of which is outlined below in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Key Indicators of Group Development

STAGE 1 Poor listening
Low involvement in planning
Feelings not dealt with
Unclear objectives
Established line prevails

STAGE 2 Experimentation
Risky issues debated
Personal feelings raised
More listening
Wider opinions considered

STAGE 3 Experimentation   Methodical working
Risky issues debated   Agreed procedures
Personal feelings raised   PLUS   Established ground-rules
More listening
Wider opinions considered

STAGE 4 Experimentation   Methodical working   High flexibility.
Risky issues debated   Agreed procedures   Appropriate leadership.
Personal feelings raised   PLUS   Established ground-rules   PLUS   Maximum use of
More listening   energy and ability.
Wider opinions considered   Needs of all met.
                        Development a priority

The description of Stage 1 as an "undeveloped team where people have come together to complete a task but have devoted little or no time to consider how they should or do operate" could be a description of a poorly performing stakeholder advisory committee (Woodcock, in Tyson, 1998, p. 10). If participants in a stakeholder advisory committee met infrequently, did not fully understand the purpose behind the meeting and did not regularly attend, they would easily fit within the Stage 1 description. Progressing any group through the stages of this model requires a willingness amongst all parties to embrace the change. As the above model illustrates, the further a group progresses the more risk is involved and the more participants have to actively participate in a variety of tasks (Woodcock, in Tyson, 1998). They will however be rewarded with a richer experience and arguably a better return for their contribution of time and feedback.

2.12   MEETING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Determining if a meeting has been effective involves reviewing two aspects: consider what happened and how did it happen (Doyle & Straus, 1993). The first aspect is looking at the results of the meeting and asking questions such as;

> Did you get the results you wanted? What did you get done, what problems did you solve, what decisions did the group make? Were the solutions or decisions innovative? (Doyle & Straus, 1993, p. 7).

The second aspect is considering how the meeting went. This involves asking questions and considering aspects such as the level of enjoyment people had at attending the meeting, did those attending work well together and did everyone have a chance to participate (Doyle & Straus, 1993)?

An important element in determining the success of a meeting is ensuring that feedback is incorporated. Boyers (1996, p. 71) believes, in her discussion on the issue of the performance of product improvement meetings, that,

> feedback should not only be sought but also used in a continuous loop of product improvement, with one event's evaluation data factoring into the planning and content of the next event.

As already highlighted by McManus (2005), including a review stage is an essential element in the stakeholder management cycle. Peel (1988) also advocates gaining

feedback after a meeting using a checklist of questions. The example below in Figure 3, has been summarised from Peel (1988, p. 197-199).

Figure 3 – Action Checklist for Post Meeting Evaluation

1) THE REASONS FOR THE MEETING
   - Was there a valid reason for the meeting and were the objectives clear?
   - Did other participants share the stated objectives?

2) ORGANISATION AND SECRETARIAL ROLE
   - Was everyone given due and proper notice?
   - Were agenda and other papers properly prepared and available when needed?
   - Was the accommodation suitable?
   - Were the minutes of the previous meeting well presented?
   - Was required equipment available?

3) ATTENDANCE
   - Was everyone invited who needed to be there?
   - Were people there who did not need to be?
   - Were participants punctual, and did they stay as long as they were needed

4) CHAIRING
   - Was good order kept throughout?
   - Was time spent well, relative to the importance of the items?
   - Were all who could contribute brought into the discussion?
   - Were any members allowed to dominate?
   - Were appropriate procedures observed throughout?

5) PRESENTATIONS
   - Were lengthy or complex reports submitted sufficiently far in advance for proper study?
   - Were questions answered fully?

6) PARTICIPATION
   - Did participants listen and understand the contributions of others?
   - Did all present contribute fully?

7) OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS
   - Did the meeting attain its objectives?

Once a meeting has been reviewed, any issues that have been identified need to be actioned to ensure ongoing improvements can be made (Peel, 1988). By considering the outcomes of the previous meeting participants will see progress over time and will feel more engaged as they can see the decisions of the meeting are making a positive impact.

2.13 USE OF MULTI-MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The use of social media has grown dramatically in recent years. A review of the timeline of key milestones by Brown (2009) highlights the rapid and recent developments. The World Wide Web has only been in use by the public since 1991, MySpace was developed in 2003 and YouTube was only created in 2005 (Brown, 2009). It is no wonder that some businesses have not yet fully adjusted to these technologies to determine if they can benefit from the opportunities they provide for interaction with their customers or clients. However, to not at least consider them as a mechanism for communicating with stakeholders is to risk the loss of useful feedback and information that can improve the performance of a business. The statistics on how many people are engaging with each other via technology are staggering. Facebook claimed 100 million users by mid-2008, two out of three Internet users regularly visit a social networking site, and reported visitors to social networking sites worldwide have been reported at 530 million (Postman, 2009).

The decision for businesses on whether or not to utilise new forms of communication media is dependent upon the characteristics of the stakeholders they wish to engage with (Cambié & Ooi, 2009). Engaging student representatives via a blog may be of relevance to millennial era students but industry representatives who are 'baby boomers' may not value the tool as highly (Cambié & Ooi, 2009). However, assumptions should not be made purely based on the age of participants. Cambié and Ooi (2009, p. 120) also provide examples of baby boomers who are embracing social media, described as "silver surfers" and the majority of managers, many of whom are in this age group, need to use technology in order to operate in the business world. A blog may help to measure what is going on with stakeholders but if an organisation does not

monitor blogs it cannot be certain as to whether its product or service is attracting negative or positive feedback (Scott, 2007).

Any form of mediated communication omits one or more of the senses (Smeltzer, Leonard & Hynes, 2002). For example, a videoconference omits tactile cues from the participants; whilst an audio conference omits tactile and visual cues (Smeltzer et al, 2002). Whichever method is used it is imperative that the communication can take place without delay, particularly when it is used in a meeting environment when decisions may need to be made (Theaker, 2001). When deciding which method of communication to use it must be determined if the benefits the technology provides outweigh any potential loss of cues that normally enhance a message.

Another key factor when considering which form of communication to use is the level of support available for the technology for all the stakeholders involved (Hornik & Cagle, 2005). Tertiary institutions are encouraged to embrace new technology due to the increasing technological requirements of the industries which tertiary graduates will enter upon completing their studies (Reimer in Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2005). Tertiary institutions may utilise various methods of technology to engage with students but for some businesses few of these technologies may be available.

Combining existing and other forms of communication could be an option to engage a variety of stakeholders who may not be able to always meet face to face. Postman (2009, p. viii) calls this a "mashup" where a combination of features are combined to create an improved user experience. While Postman (2009) is describing the combination of various social media options, combining the traditional face to face meetings with one or more social media techniques would offer a range of advantages. For example, the computer company Dell utilises a website to obtain ideas from customers (Postman, 2009). Brown (2009) also describes the use of a business webpage by the *Guardian* newspaper to elicit comments from the public that are printed in the newspaper which has been effective. The *Manawatu Standard* newspaper has allowed the public another method to provide feedback on stories beyond the traditional letter to the editor. They allow the public to text comments to the editor that are printed in the newspaper under the heading of, at the time of writing, *TXT The Editor*. These techniques could be used to obtain ideas on programme delivery and content from

external stakeholders throughout the year rather than waiting for an annual or bi-annual meeting.

Utilising alternative forms of communication can potentially have a negative impact on an organisation as it results in the organisation not being able to control what information is released, when it is released and who releases it (Postman, 2009). Postman's (2009) example of Dell using the website to gain feedback is in contrast with the example provided by Brown (2009) where Dell was negatively impacted by customers posting blogs criticising their products and services. Dell has had to spend $150 million on customer service since the blog postings began (Brown, 2009).

Reimer (in Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2005, p. 57) suggests the use of the acronym "ACTIONS" to determine which technology to use to communicate. The T in the acronym relates more specifically to teaching but the learning element and the other items could apply equally well to a business or business/tertiary setting:

> **A**ccess and flexibility: How accessible is a particular technology?
>
> **C**osts: How do costs differ between technologies?
>
> **T**eaching and learning: What kinds of learning are needed?
>
> **I**nteractivity and user friendliness: How easy is the technology to use?
>
> **O**rganisational issues: What are the organizational requirements and barriers to be removed?
>
> **N**ovelty: How new is this new technology? How reliable is it?
>
> **S**peed: How quickly can materials (information) be changed?

Businesses can choose to participate in new media or not. Brown (2009, p. 18) advises that "if a business does not engage in conversations with their customers then the conversations will not go away". Customers will continue to share their opinions anyway. Ziegenfuss (in Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2005) suggests starting small when considering the use of technology. A meeting could be trialed using the new technology before committing to changing all meetings to use the technology to ensure that any potential problems can be identified. Ziegenfuss (in Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2005) also recommends that technology be first used to address areas that are currently causing problems. For example, if an issue for a committee involves the lack of attendance due to members living far away, the inclusion of video conferencing could

be a good solution to allow meetings to take place remotely. The only requirement would be ensuring the technology was readily available to all parties and that all parties had the necessary knowledge to work with the technology.

2.13.1 Video Conferencing

Video conferencing is one method of engagement being used by organisations to virtually meet with colleagues at remote sites. It involves a video screen at two or more locations with a connection via a telephone line or internet connection (Oliver et al, 2009). One of the main advantages of video conferencing is that it allows people to meet and discuss issues without having to travel (Oliver et al, 2009). Responses can be immediate or almost immediate, allowing for some limitations with video conferencing such as screen size limiting how many people can be seen (Oliver et al, 2009). The other advantage is being able to see the body language or non-verbal communication of individuals, which facilitates understanding. Non-verbal communication contributes to around 55% of the meaning of a message (Pease, 1987). The non-verbal cues are used for negotiating attitudes while the verbal message is used primarily for conveying information (Pease, 1987). Non-verbal communication adds meaning to messages and enhances verbal messages and is a method of communication in its own right without the need for a verbal message (Smeltzer et al, 2002). However, until recently video conferencing technology has been expensive and if the video screen size is limited, as it can be with desktop computer video conferencing, then there may be little additional benefit from seeing the verbal cues of participants (Oliver et al, 2009).

If video conferencing is used, it may require initial training for participants, particularly if the screen size limits the ability to see everyone taking part in the meeting. If the screen size is limited it requires participants to take turns when speaking (Taylor, 2005). This allows the members seated out of frame to move forward when it is their turn to speak.

2.13.2 Audio Conferencing

An audio conference, sometimes called a conference call, involves the use of the telephone to connect with multiple participants who can converse together in a phone conversation. The participants dial a code number at the set meeting time which connects them. It is an easier technology to use in some ways as telephones have been used for many years. There are several key disadvantages with this method of communication. The use of the telephone prevents the participants from seeing visual cues which can make some participants uncomfortable (Smeltzer et al, 2002). A participant is reliant on the words in the message and the tone of voice to aid understanding. Another problem is the issue of turn-taking, which results in participants talking over the top of one another as there are no visual cues to clarify who wishes to speak next.

2.13.3 Email

Email is a widely used business tool that offers a range of benefits including the ability to be widely distributed, to be used either formally or informally and to be asynchronous[5] which allows the receiving party to respond at a time suitable to themselves (Levi, 2001). These benefits however, do come with problems. Levi (2001, p. 276) describes a range of "netiquette" requirements that govern how people can communicate using email. Rules such as avoiding the use of capitals, which in an email are considered to be the equivalent of shouting, need to be learned and equally understood by all participants. Emotions are very difficult to communicate in a written form so the use of emoticons[6] has been developed to add some expression and meaning to email messages to compensate for the lack of visual and verbal cues. Morrison and Hewlin (2003, p. 1453) state that "employees decide whether to raise issues with management by 'reading the context' for clues". Without the cues available in face to face communication it is harder for participants to determine if their feedback would be received favourably.

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[5] Asynchronous – where the sender and receiver are not directly interacting (Levi, 2001, p. 276).

[6] Emoticon – a textual expression representing a facial expression ("Emoticon", n.d.).

2.13.4 Online Discussion

Online discussions allow participants more time to consider their response and they allow a written record of the discussion which can be reviewed at a later date (Hornik & Cagle, 2005). A webcast or webinar (web seminar) can offer the advantages of the online discussion while enabling the participants to view each other and other visual cues. Mclay (in Mclay & Irwin, 2008) provides a list of 20 pointers to effective webcasts and these are all pre-meeting guidelines. Of these 20 points, over half relate to managing the technology and making adjustments in set up that would not be required with a face to face meeting. However, for individuals separated by distance, this type of engagement would offer some of the advantages of face to face communication without the cost of travel to one location.

The appeal of social media, as a mechanism for online discussion, is its ability to connect directly and immediately with a wider audience (Cambié & Ooi, 2009). Social media such as Facebook may not appear to have a place in the business environment; however, Cambié and Ooi (2009) argue that these can offer opportunities for relationship building. Social media can be desirable in the following situations (Cambié & Ooi, 2009, p. 113):

- if you enjoy discussing your views and ideas;
- if you know who your clients are and want to engage with them;
- if you are curious about what people are talking about this is relevant to your industry;
- if you are committed to improving your services or products and want user feedback;
- if you value networking and take care to develop business and personal relationships.

2.13.5 Face to Face Communication

With all the technology available, is there still a place for traditional face to face communication where individuals meet in the same place and communicate verbally? There are a number of advantages to utilising face to face communication for meetings.

They allow the participants to receive multiple forms of communication with verbal communication, non-verbal communication (for example, gestures made by participants or eye contact) and written communication (for example, the agenda). As mentioned previously the non-verbal communication adds meaning to a message (Smeltzer et al, 2002). Face to face communication also enables participants to network and potentially engage on both a formal and informal basis, thereby enhancing their rapport (Forsyth, 2006). Face to face communication is a familiar format and most texts on meetings focus on a face to face meeting as opposed to any other methods of meeting so there is a lot of available information to guide meeting organisers and participants (Pinner & Pinner, 1994; Chase et al, 1998; Mountjoy, 1998; Taylor, 2005).

2.14   SUMMARY

While there are many criticisms of meetings, a group of people who work together will usually produce better results than individuals working independently (Pinner & Pinner, 1994). Conducting a successful meeting means, however, far more than having an agenda, setting up a room and waiting for people to arrive and contribute. A successful meeting requires a clear purpose that is communicated to all participants, delegated roles with participants who understand what is required, and a combination of participants who bring unique aspects to the table.

A meeting may use varied technologies to link remote participants or bring people together in one room to engage. A meeting is not a stable environment and it requires constant shifting and adapting to ensure that it continues to achieve its purpose. Which method of communication to use depends on the stakeholders involved, their access to and their knowledge of the available technologies.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research approach used for this project was a mixed methods approach involving the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach is used when diverse types of data are needed to understand the research problem (Creswell, 2003). By using triangulation, where more than one method is used to understand the issues, the goal of achieving convergence of meaning can be shown (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

The first phase of the research involved the dissemination of a questionnaire, followed by open-ended interviews to gather qualitative data from participants of the stakeholder advisory committees (Creswell, 2003). The inclusion of qualitative data is needed as in this situation the advisory committee members have not been researched previously to determine the effectiveness of the committees they belong to. The inclusion of the questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data supports the process by allowing the use of "statistical procedures for evaluating differences and relationships" (Keyton, 2006, p. 54). As the variables affecting the committees are not known, an exploratory approach was needed to collect data (Creswell, 2003).

3.2 PRODUCTION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

A literature review was conducted to identify the characteristics of effective meetings and meeting procedure. Literature available on the engagement of ITPs with their stakeholders was reviewed and contrasted with the methods utilised by other organisations or agencies to engage with their stakeholders.

The questionnaire, shown in Appendix D, was developed through initially reviewing the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy (Appendix B) to identify the issues that committees might be involved with. Section A of the questionnaire focused on introductory information and was intended to help identify the characteristics of

members of the advisory committees. The literature review highlighted the procedures common to most meetings which assisted in the development of Section B of the questionnaire. The questions at the beginning of the questionnaire were deliberately straightforward and easy to answer by the respondents. Placing questions at the beginning that required a lot of thought or that were too technical could have resulted in respondents being put off completing the questionnaire (Denscombe, 1999). For this reason, the questions requiring more comment were also placed at the end of the questionnaire.

The interview question schedule, shown in Appendix E, followed a similar line of questioning to the questionnaire but covered the topics in more detail. It began with a question that was easy to answer to allow the respondent to quickly respond and to interpret the interview as being non-threatening (Denscombe, 1999).

3.3   SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

As an employee of the organisation at the commencement of the research, the researcher was able to utilise existing contacts and organisational knowledge to source information on the stakeholder advisory committees. Written information on the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees was accessed via the UCOL library, including historical details on advisory committees from annual reports. Access to advisory committee meeting minutes was not available. The advisory committees to be included in the research were randomly selected using a randomising function in Excel. All committees were entered into Excel and 13 were randomly selected. The Programme Leaders and Heads of School of the 13 committees were contacted to inform them of the research and to seek access to the contact details of members from the selected committees. Approval for access to staff and information was also granted by the Deputy Chief Executive at UCOL. Despite this approval, the researcher was not able to personally access contact details of committee members for one of the committees. The Head of School for this committee instead organised for contact with committee members to be directed through a programme administrator. All members of the randomly selected advisory committees were invited to participate in the research.

3.4   METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaires and individual interviews with committee members were the methods of data collection used. The advantage of using a postal questionnaire is that it produced results relatively quickly. The disadvantage of a postal questionnaire is the response rate is usually lower than using methods such as focus groups where everyone is brought together at the same time (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). A focus group encourages interaction between participants but it can also be dominated by individuals in the group, known as groupthink, which does not occur with an individual questionnaire (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Denscombe, 1998). The interview also enabled the researcher to incorporate any themes that emerged from the questionnaire within the interview questions, although major changes to the interview questions were not required.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The first phase of the research was a questionnaire (see Appendix D). The questionnaire began to take shape after attending a seminar by Gendall (2008) on questionnaire design. The questionnaire includes factual questions that concentrate on the past experiences of the meetings attended by advisory committee members (Gendall, 2008). The questionnaire used some ordinal data with a five point Likert scale (Denscombe, 1998).

The questionnaire was piloted with members of several advisory committees before it was distributed, to ensure wording was clearly understood by recipients. Five advisory committee members were approached to pilot the questionnaire. The sample of members was a non-probability sample drawn from advisory committee members accessible to the researcher. While a non-probability sample can weaken a sample, it allowed the questionnaire to be evaluated by committee members who have considerable experience with UCOL's advisory committees (Keyton, 2006). The pilot group did not report any concerns around the content of the questionnaire or the phrasing of the questions.

The questionnaire was then sent by post to all members of the randomly selected stakeholder advisory committees. The advisory committees that were originally randomly selected were:

Computer Graphic Design

Furniture

Veterinary Nursing

Automotive and Motor Body Trades

Travel and Tourism

Joinery

Fashion and Beauty

National Certificate in Mental Health

Information Systems

Complementary Health

Chef Training

School of Photography, Art and Design

Science

The advisory committees have differing numbers of members. Based on the 2007 membership list of the above committees (see Appendix A) the total sample size is 142. The questionnaires were distributed by mail as soon as ethical approval was received. Address details were obtained from the secretaries of the selected advisory committees. The questionnaires were sent out within the same two day period and a 10 day time frame was suggested to recipients for return of the questionnaire. A reminder letter was sent out to all questionnaire recipients two weeks after the questionnaires were distributed. This was helpful in obtaining additional questionnaires which arrived within a couple of days of the reminder letter. However, the majority of completed questionnaires arrived back within a week to ten days of being posted to recipients.

It had been expected that the timeframe for distribution of the questionnaire, sending a reminder letter and receipt of the questionnaires would be six weeks. However, the timeframe extended well beyond the anticipated six weeks. After the committees had been randomly selected two aspects came to light. One was the fact that on some of the membership lists the member contact details were not current and it took time to locate the correct contact information. The second issue was it became clear that all the

committees were not operating as expected. The Chef Training Advisory Committee, based in Wairarapa, was originally selected but it was subsequently found this had been disestablished even though the Wairarapa programme was still operating and only a Palmerston North based committee was now operating. The researcher was then advised by staff on the Computer Graphic Design programme that the Computer Graphic Design Advisory Committee was also not operating even though it was listed as having a committee on the UCOL website (Universal College of Learning, 2007). The Chef Training Advisory Committee was replaced with the Palmerston North Hospitality/Catering Advisory Committee.

The same randomising function in Excel was again used and the additional committees were selected:

> Early Childhood
>
> Business

Members of these committees were subsequently sent questionnaires to complete and a total of 43 questionnaires were received.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were used as the next stage of data collection and the interview questions are presented in Appendix E. Keyton (2006, p. 270) describes interviews as a "powerful method for understanding how people order and assess their world." For this research topical interviewing was used whereby the interview focused on the stakeholder advisory committee meeting process (Glesne, 2006). The advantage of using interviews as a data collection method was that it provided the opportunity to probe more deeply on issues of concern to the interviewees. At times some of the interviewees strayed into topics not relevant to the research, and this sidetracking is a potential weakness of using interviews (Keyton, 2006). However, the interview method allowed the researcher to use follow-up questions to clarify points made by the interviewee which was not possible when using the questionnaire.

The interview incorporated questions following the critical incident technique developed by Flanagan in 1954 (as cited in Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). This technique asks individuals to identify memorable experiences that may be both positive and

negative that have occurred within a specific context (Frey et al, 2000). This is a narrative method of collecting information whereby the sharing of an experience assists the researcher to understand the themes around the communication (Frey et al, 2000). In this research the interviewees were asked to identify positive and negative experiences of attending advisory committee meetings. The questions covered most of the topics from the questionnaire but were asking for more in-depth information. There was no modification to the interview questions however, one question did require clarification for some interviewees:

29) How would you like to engage with UCOL in the future?

This question was asking interviewees to specify how they wanted to communicate with UCOL in the future, for example, using face to face communication. The methods of communication the interviewees could choose from were those listed in the draft UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Policy (Appendix C).

Individual interviews were conducted with participants from two of the 13 previously selected advisory committees. The randomising function in Excel was again used to select two committees. The two committees were:

Joinery

Fashion and Beauty

When the researcher approached staff on the Joinery programme to seek the contact names of members she was advised that Joinery Advisory Committee meetings had not been taking place at UCOL. The staff were meeting with representatives of the Joinery industry in an industry committee outside of UCOL. Due to the lack of UCOL advisory committee meetings for the Joinery Advisory Committee another was randomly selected. The committee selected was:

Automotive

The interviews commenced as soon as the questionnaires had been received. It was originally anticipated that interviews would be completed within two months but due to problems contacting the interviewees it took over three months.

Each interview was intended to last 30 minutes. All interviewees were met at their place of work on a day and at a time of their choice. The shortest interview was completed in 10 minutes and was with a UCOL staff member who had limited experience of being part of an advisory committee. The longest interview lasted for an hour and a half with an industry representative but did deviate throughout to topics of interest to the interviewee but not all of relevance to the research in question. Some interviews were taped, with some interviewees preferring that taping did not occur. All interviewees received a transcript of their interview to ensure they had been quoted accurately. Apart from one example where an interviewee was concerned s/he would be identified and asked for changes to her/his comments, no other changes were requested to the transcripts.

Once the interviews had commenced it became clear that the number of respondents would not provide sufficient data. A request to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee to select additional committees to increase the number of interviews was approved on 3 September 2009. This enabled the researcher to randomly select, using Excel, additional committees to ensure a wider range of responses from interviewees. The committees selected were:

> School of Photography, Art and Design
>
> Information Systems

With the inclusion of the additional committees a total of 23 interviews were completed.

3.5   LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The randomly selected committee members differed in their level of engagement and degree of interest in sharing feedback and as a result delays occurred due to the need to reschedule times with interviewees who had agreed to an interview time and then had requested a change. Some interviewees initially agreed to be interviewed but would not commit to a meeting time so could not be included. Due to the variety of advisory committees that exist, it is likely that some features outlined in the findings will not be applicable to all committees. The random selection has resulted in a varied cross-section being approached which does provide a variety of opinions.

3.6   ANALYSIS OF DATA

A constant-comparative method or grounded theory approach was used to analyse the data. The relationships between the data gathered and categories were considered through multiple reviews of the data to identify all potential categories (Keyton, 2006; Frey et al 2000; Creswell, 2003).   In this research the term categories is used to describe the subject areas under which data was collected.

The first step was a thorough reading of the data collected (Frey et al, 2000). The data was then coded using an open coding system which is described by Keyton (2006, p. 295) as an "initial review of the data without any preconceived ideas over the categories or their relationship to each other". Following this stage the categories were linked together which is described by Keyton (2006, p. 295) as "axial coding". Once all possible codes were identified the relationships between the categories were evaluated for similarities and differences.   All coding was completed by the researcher.

The questionnaires were entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. The data entered into SPSS was summarised as a frequency distribution table. A frequency distribution table "gives the values of a variable and the number of times each value occurs among the cases in the data set" (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2008, p. 55). This method offered the advantage of producing an output in one list (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2008). The only challenge with this method was that capturing the data took longer than anticipated due to the additional comments added by respondents. The comments, based on the personal experiences of the respondents, required additional headings to be produced in the data view of SPSS. As some of the comments were lengthy it also required extra time to alter the columns in to enable all the data to be captured.

3.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The UCOL Research Committee requires all employees conducting research to adhere to the following procedure (Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2008):

1) Discuss research with research discussant[7].
2) Determine if a UCOL application for research approval form is to be completed. This is only required if the project is not part of higher study through an external organisation.

As this project was being conducted as part of a study through Massey University, a UCOL research approval form was not required. The research discussant[8] advised that the research proposal, once approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, was to be submitted to the Research Committee for their records (MM[9], personal communication, April 10, 2008).

The Massey University Human Ethics Approval process involved reading the Code of Ethical Conduct and discussing ethical issues with the research supervisor. A screening questionnaire is then completed to determine the process that needs to be followed for the project. The overall intention is to protect the well-being of the research participants and maximise benefits while minimising harm which Keyton (2006, p. 77) describes as "beneficence".

3.7.1   Informed Consent

The research was explained to participants via an information sheet attached to the questionnaire that was sent out (see Appendix F). The information sheet clarified that participation was voluntary and the participants could decline to answer any questions. The purpose of the research was explained and contact details for the researcher and

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[7]   The research discussant is a person determined by UCOL who is given authority to critique research proposals.

[8, 9]   To maintain confidentiality the individual has been identified by initials or title.

academic supervisors provided so participants could seek further clarification. The two phases of the research were explained and the method of selection clarified. Specific consent to tape the interviews was sought and in some cases interviewees declined to be audio taped. A participant consent form (see Appendix G), and a form seeking authority for release of transcripts (see Appendix H) were obtained from those who agreed to be interviewed.

Participants were notified on the information sheet that completion of the questionnaire and participation in the interview implies consent has been given.

3.7.2   Confidentiality, anonymity and access

Participants were informed that all information gathered would be treated confidentially and their identity would not be revealed. The participants were also informed that information gathered would only be accessed by the researcher and academic supervisors.

3.7.3   Treatment and use of data

The information sheet stated that information gathered would only be used for the purposes required by the research. The storage and destruction of information following completion of the project was also explained. Original questionnaires and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet for up to five years following completion of the research and will then be destroyed. Consent forms will be kept in a separate locked cabinet and also destroyed after five years.

3.7.4   Conflict of role

The researcher was a staff member of UCOL and a member of one of the advisory committees at the commencement of the project. The advantage of this connection was that the researcher was able to easily access information and already had an awareness, gained through informal discussions, of some of the issues around stakeholder committees (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). However, participants could have felt they could not respond as freely or could have felt obliged to have to complete the

questionnaire and participate in the interview. This is because they were working with the researcher and they may have believed that not participating could have jeopardised the working relationship with the researcher. This conflict of role between team members and the researcher was managed by ensuring all questionnaire and interview respondent details were not identified in the final report. All participants were advised via the information sheet that participation was voluntary and they did not have to participate or complete all questions in the questionnaire or during the interview.

As the advisory committee that the researcher belongs to was selected as one of the advisory committees to research, the researcher stepped down from the committee for the duration of the research project. The project was submitted for approval to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 08/69. Approval was received on 27 April 2009.

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data from stakeholder advisory committee member questionnaires and interviews. Any names or details stated in the questionnaires or during the interviews that could result in identification of a workplace, committee or individual have been replaced by letters (A, B, C, etc). In the interview responses section the first letter represents the advisory committee. F stands for the Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee, A stands for the Automotive Advisory Committee, I stands for the Information Systems Advisory Committee, P stands for the School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory Committee and T stands for the Theatre School Advisory Committee. The next letter represents whether the interviewee is from industry or UCOL, with I representing industry and U representing UCOL staff. The final number represents the individual interviewee number within the advisory committee. Therefore, FI1 = Interviewee one who is an industry representative of the Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee and AU1 = Interviewee one who is a UCOL staff member of the Automotive Advisory Committee.

4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

There were 43 questionnaires returned from across 14 advisory committees. The highest response rate was from the School of Photography, Art and Design with 8 participants responding out of 16, followed by the respondents from the National Certificate in Mental Health with 7 respondents out of a potential 12. The lowest response rates were from the Joinery[10] and Furniture groups with no responses received from 7 Joinery Advisory Committee members and no responses received from 11 Furniture Advisory Committee members. One response was received from the Science

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[10] At the questionnaire stage the researcher was not aware the Joinery Advisory Committee was not meeting. This only came to light at the interview stage.

Advisory Committee which has 17 members. One response was received from the Early Childhood Advisory Committee which has 15 members and one response was received from the Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee. Three members are listed under the Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee list in Appendix A; however the list only names the members who are external to UCOL and all committees include UCOL staff and therefore the list is incomplete.

Two questionnaires were returned unanswered but with comments attached. One did not name the advisory committee s/he was connected to but commented;

> *"I'm afraid I am a member of the advisory group but have been unable to attend the meetings for quite some time (years in fact), usually due to work commitments out–of–town coinciding with the meetings. With this in mind I really should have withdrawn from the group a long time ago, but I keep hoping I'll be able to make one of the meetings. Having looked through the questions of your questionnaire, I really am unable to comment or provide useful feedback on the majority of the questions. My apologies!"*

The other questionnaire was returned by a member of the Hospitality committee but s/he was unable to complete the questionnaire stating:

> *"Sorry to waste your time, but I do not feel I have sufficient contact to justify filling in the questionnaire. A and B from C[11] only manage to get to one meeting a year. Perhaps you can select someone else."*

Another questionnaire was returned complete but with a comment stating:

> *"I didn't realise I was on [the committee]."*

As mentioned above, no responses were received from the Furniture or Joinery Advisory Committees. After the research had commenced it was identified that the Furniture Advisory Committee, while being listed on the UCOL website, was not in fact

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[11] To maintain confidentiality the individuals have been identified by a letter rather than by initials or names.

operational. The Joinery Advisory Committee was also not operating within UCOL as a UCOL advisory committee, but staff were engaging with industry as part of an industry group.

One questionnaire was received from a member of the Theatre School Advisory Committee. This committee was not selected specifically but it is a sub-group of the School of Photography, Art and Design. Due to a requirement of the Head of School that the members of the School of Photography, Art and Design not be approached directly by the researcher, all contact with members had to be directed through the Administrator. This resulted in members of the School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory committee being approached for both the questionnaire and interview portions of the research but the Theatre School Advisory Committee being specifically approached for the interview portion only. A member of the Theatre School Advisory Committee who was about to be interviewed specifically asked for a questionnaire to share her/his comments, as s/he had not been included by the administrator with the original groups of recipients of questionnaires.

4.2.1 Summary of Results for Questionnaire: Section A

Industry representatives made up 48% (21/43) of respondents and 32% (14/43) of respondents were UCOL academic staff. One respondent was a UCOL student, two were UCOL general staff members (non teaching staff), and of the remaining five respondents, one was a former student, two were from other tertiary institutions and another was from industry but chose to specify the agency s/he worked for rather than describe her/himself as an industry representative.

There were 74% (32/43) of respondents who indicated they had been members of their committee for over three years and 48% (21/43) indicated they had been members for more than five years. With the majority of members involved in the committee for long periods of time there appears to be have been few opportunities for new people to join and share fresh ideas.

Forty eight percent (21/43) of respondents reported that their advisory committee has six to ten members. Only three respondents indicated they had more than 15 members

on their committee. Six respondents indicated that the number of members attending varied at each meeting.

When asked if information had been received on the purpose of the advisory committee, 79% (34/43) indicated that they had received this in either verbal or written form. Four respondents added additional comments with one stating:

> *"Info[rmation] is available but I don't think I have ever read it!"*

A notice of meeting had been received at least once by 95% (41/43) of respondents and 88% (38/43) of respondents had received an agenda and minutes on at least one occasion. Additional documentation was stated as having been received by eight respondents, who all mentioned receiving various reports or course specific material, but the content was not specified. One respondent stated that s/he had received a notice of meeting, agenda and minutes but s/he had not received them recently.

When asked about the usefulness of the minutes they received, 65% (28/43) of respondents indicated they felt they were either useful or very useful. A similar number, 67% (29/43) indicated they found the agenda they received useful or very useful. When questioned further about the timing of the delivery of the agenda, only 9% (4/43) of respondents said they received their agenda at the meeting, with 79% (34/43) receiving the agenda before the meeting. However, one respondent stated that s/he received the agenda only a day before the meeting but did not clarify if this occurred on only one occasion or prior to every meeting. One respondent stated that s/he felt the agenda helped to retain the focus of the meeting. While this may be true, 74% (32/43) of respondents stated that items are sometimes shared in the meeting that are not on the agenda, with 20% (9/43) of respondents stating that this happened at every meeting.

4.2.2 Summary of Results for Questionnaire: Section B

The majority of respondents said they have a Chairperson for their committee, with 88% (38/43) of respondents selecting this option. Four respondents seemed uncertain as to whether or not there was a Chairperson on their committee, indicating they may not

have attended for some time and one respondent stated his/her committee did not have a Chairperson. There was a reasonably even split between the Chairperson being reported as a UCOL staff member as opposed to an industry Chairperson, with 44% (19/43) of respondents stating that the Chairperson was from UCOL and 46% (20/43) stating that the Chairperson was from industry. Over half of the respondents, 51% (22/43), stated that the Chairperson on their committee had been in the role for more than two years. When asked if a vote had ever taken place to elect a new Chairperson while they had been a member, 44% (19/43) of respondents stated it had not.

Questions about the frequency of meetings produced a number of comments from respondents, with 74% (32/43) stating that either one or two meetings were held during the year. A number of respondents seemed uncertain about exactly how many meetings took place, with eight providing additional feedback on this question. Most of the comments indicated that the number of meetings held varied. One respondent commented that there had been numerous meetings when the programme was first being set up as UCOL sought advice on programme development, but the number had now declined. Two respondents stated that there had been a lot of change;

> *"[The number of meetings] varies – last year [there were] 0 [meetings], this year one, previous [years there were] three."*
> *"Two for the last two years, four originally."*

Respondents were then asked how many meetings they personally attend each year and 74% (32/43) indicated that one or two meetings were attended each year. When asked if they had a choice how many meetings they would like to attend each year, 37% (16/43) indicated two per year with 23% (10/43) indicating one meeting and 20% (9/43) indicating three meetings per year.

The majority of respondents, 67% (29/43), stated that the number of meetings held each year had not changed during their period of service on the advisory committee but those who indicated the number of meetings had changed provided a number of comments, including:

> *"Initially to set up [the] programme meetings were numerous, long and intense.*

> *As the [D[12]] programme has evolved meetings have become more focus[ed] and*
> *less lengthy. Now [the meetings are] more of a support/advisory/guidance*
> *role."*
>
> *"[We are] sometimes unable to convene with industry members [who live] out*
> *of town."*

The meeting length was usually one to two hours with 65% (28/43) of respondents selecting this option. One respondent shared that the meetings lasted three hours. S/he did not clarify if this was the meeting length every time or only on occasion. Most respondents stated that the meetings finished on time, with 86% (37/43) selecting this option.

Over half of the respondents stated they were always able to provide input to the discussion at the meetings, but only 7% (3/43) stated they had a lot of influence over the decisions being made by the committee. In contrast, 20% (9/43) of respondents stated they had no influence or little influence over decision-making by the committee.

The next two questions focused on the current and draft terms of reference (ToR) for the committees. The questions inquired into what committee members thought were the activities they were currently completing on the committee and then asked them what they thought they should be doing. The options the respondents could choose from for the ToR activities they were currently completing came from the current UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy (Appendix B). The options the respondents could choose from for the ToR activities they thought they should be doing came from the Draft UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy (Appendix C). Figures 4 and 5 below show the percentage of respondents who agreed that terms of reference activities were currently undertaken by their committee and the percentage of respondents who agreed with the draft terms of reference activities.

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[12] To maintain confidentiality the programme has been identified by a letter.

Figure 4 – Percentage of respondents who agreed that terms of reference activities were currently undertaken by their committee
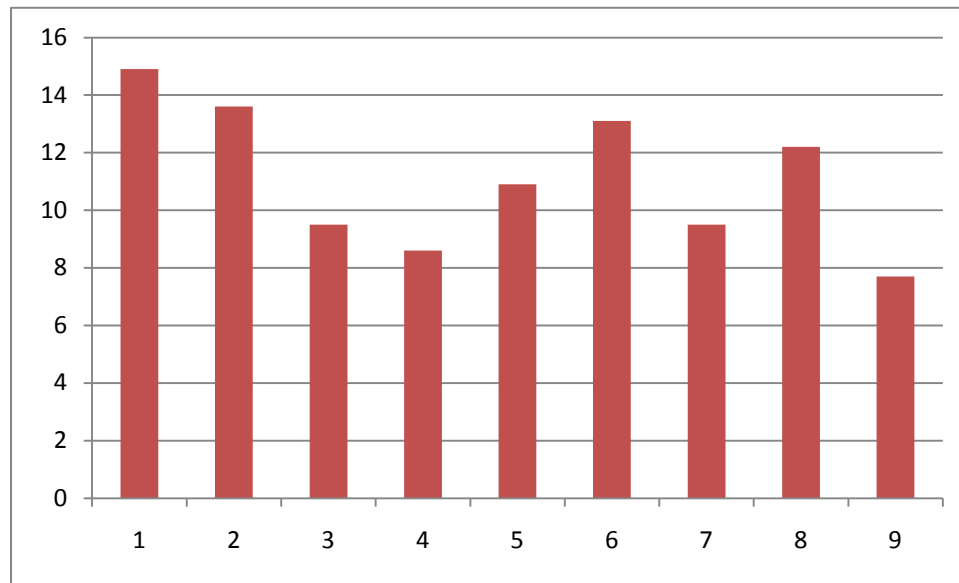
- Thus 14.9% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on new industry and market trends which may have implications for current and new programmes.
- Thus 13.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Identify trends within the community which may give rise to new learning needs.
- Thus 9.5% of respondents agreed with the statement - Promote the programme/s to the community.
- Thus 8.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Promote the programme achievements to the community.
- Thus 10.9% agreed with the statement - Advise on approval and accreditation processes.
- Thus 13.1% agreed with the statement - Advise on the development of programme outcomes.
- Thus 9.5% agreed with the statement - Advise on the evaluation of programme outcomes.
- Thus 12.2% agreed with the statement - Advise on the review of programme outcomes.
- Thus 7.7% agreed with the statement - Advise on existing and potential related commercial activities.

Figure 5 – Percentage of respondents who agreed that draft terms of reference activities should be undertaken by stakeholder committees
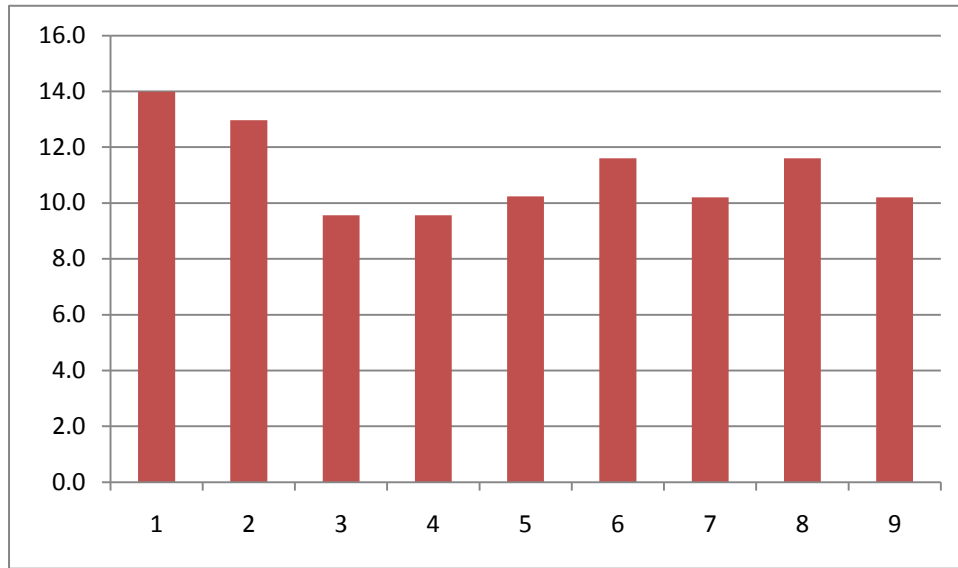
- Thus 14.0% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on new industry and market trends (national and international) which may have implications for current and proposed programmes.

- Thus 13.0% of respondents agreed with the statement - Identify trends within the region which may give rise to new learning needs.

- Thus 9.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Promote the programme/s to the community.

- Thus 9.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Promote the programme/s achievements to the community.

- Thus 10.2% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on approval and accreditation processes.

- Thus 11.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on the development of programme outcomes.

- Thus 10.2% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on the evaluation of programme outcomes.

- Thus 11.6% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on the review of programme outcomes.

- Thus 10.2% of respondents agreed with the statement - Advise on existing (and potential) related commercial activities.

There are minor variations in wording between the current and draft terms of reference. Respondents stated that they currently provided advice on new industry and market trends and they were willing to continue to provide this advice even though the draft terms of reference specified advising on national and international trends. Respondents were also willing to support in the identification of regional trends and were supportive of currently providing information on community trends. Promoting the programme and its achievements to the community received a lower percentage of agreement as a current activity and as something members wished to be involved with in the future. Advising on existing and potential related commercial activities received the lowest percentage of agreement as a current activity but members were more positive about this as a potential activity.

Respondents stated they were involved in a range of other activities that were not listed in the current policy, including;

> *"Meeting with key stakeholders from other areas e.g. external moderation...on an as-required basis."*
> *"Advise on new programmes being looked at."*

Two respondents also stated ideas on what they felt could be included, such as:

> *"Inviting external members to act as guest speakers and taking students to visit their work environments."*

It was interesting to note that when asked what they felt they should be involved in, as opposed to what they were currently involved in, the majority were agreeable to being involved in all activities proposed in the draft terms of reference. However a clear majority believed advising on industry trends was of primary importance.

The next question asked which method of engagement or method for communicating and sharing ideas with other members on the committee was preferred by respondents. Providing advice via a face to face meeting was the most popular option with 90% (39/43) of respondents selecting this option. One respondent stated that meeting face to face was essential as it ensured continuity and a general level of support for the subject

was retained. Only 23% (10/43) wanted contact by telephone, 60% (26/43) preferred email and only 16% (7/43) wanted an online discussion forum.

4.2.3 Overall Feedback

A range of comments were provided regarding how the meetings could be improved. Three respondents of the 19 who provided feedback were happy with the meetings staying as they were and did not feel a change was required. Of the remaining 16 respondents the issues raised varied from comments on industry representation or the lack of it, through to concerns over the regularity of meetings, meeting organisation and whether the meetings were achieving anything.

4.2.3.1 Industry Representation

Most of the comments on industry representation focused on its importance to the committees and the need to bring in new members. The comments stated that there was a need for more feedback from industries but it was often difficult to get industry representatives to come to meetings.

> *"The imp[ortant] role is to gain feedback on industry trends and advice on skills/tools/applications that students need to be equipped with."*
> *"Having community/industry representatives retains the dynamic focus of a course to cater specifically for the needs of 'graduating' students."*

One respondent offered a suggestion of providing a monthly newsletter to industry to assist in maintaining contact between meetings. Another respondent stated that changing the meeting content to provide more of a strategic overview, rather than simply presenting programme evaluations and moderation reports, would assist in gaining more industry members at the meetings.

4.2.3.2 Regularity of Meetings

Several respondents commented on a lack of consistency in meeting times. Several respondents wanted meetings to happen more often and stated that when meetings were

held they were not always scheduled at opportune times. Two respondents stated issues had arisen when the committees they belonged to had combined. One stated that the focus changed once the committees were combined and s/he no longer found it relevant to her/his industry. The other respondent stated that s/he had heard nothing from her/his committee since it had combined and s/he could not remember the last time they were notified of a meeting date. One respondent also stated that problems within industry had prevented a meeting from taking place and had resulted in problems for UCOL staff who needed to report on meetings that took place and were unable to. As this respondent refers to an audit it is assumed that this is a UCOL staff member providing this information.

> *"[There] was a problem one year when industry tensions made it inappropriate to hold a meeting. [We] got hauled over [the] coals at audit as policy required [an] annual meeting."*

Not maintaining consistency around meeting dates can result in participants forgetting about the need to be available for the meetings and not attending when they are scheduled. A meeting needs to be scheduled on a regular timeframe giving consideration to the availability of participants and the time they might need to prepare for the meeting discussion (Miller, 1991).

4.2.3.3 Meeting Improvements

Several respondents offered ideas on how the meetings could be improved. These ranged from providing questions before the meeting to allow industry representatives more opportunity to respond, to simply sending the agenda out well in advance. One respondent wanted time within the meeting when the tutor was not present. S/he did not elaborate why s/he felt this was necessary. A final comment from a respondent shared an idea on the timing of the meetings and then provided ideas on how the relationship between industry and UCOL could be enhanced.

> *"A face to face meeting once a year is good, however, more than this would be problematic in getting everyone together. Email consultation and involvement*

in programmes, [involvement such as being a] guest speaker, [bringing students to our business on] field trips, etc are more beneficial as an ongoing relationship."

Meeting participants need to be consulted on a regular basis to determine what feedback they have on the meetings. The feedback they share needs to be not only listened to but auctioned to ensure that they continue to feel engaged and satisfied with the meetings (Peel, 1988).

4.2.3.4 Meeting Outcomes

Most of the comments related to the overall outcome of the advisory committee meetings. Some solutions for improving the meeting outcomes were as simple as ensuring that the meetings actually happened and ensuring that the meeting produced specific action related outcomes. Ensuring that the meeting had an industry rather than a solely UCOL focus was also commented on. One respondent commented that if a meeting had a solely UCOL focus it would not encourage feedback to come from industry. In her/his opinion gaining feedback from industry was the main purpose of the advisory committee meetings. Three respondents provided negative comments indicating they had not had good experiences on their respective committees. One respondent expressed concerns over meeting attendees coming along simply to voice their opinions without considering what the overall purpose of the meeting was. Two respondents offered the same reference to a concern over their role being one of 'rubberstamping' a decision that had already been made, rather than genuinely offering constructive feedback.

> *"[I] have wondered sometimes why I am there at meetings as it really is a briefing of what's happened. Not too much in looking at [the] future. Sometimes I feel it's simply rubberstamping."*
>
> *"I often feel that policies were already in place and we were just used to 'rubber stamp' them. [There is] never any feedback on results of discussion at [the] meeting. I've almost forgotten that I'm on the committee!!"*

Some comments were positive, with one respondent stating her/his meeting was well run and the committee would meet outside of regular meeting dates if an important topic arose. Another respondent stated that s/he gave her/his full support to the advisory committee meeting process and provided feedback as to why s/he valued the process.

> *"The process ensure[s] students are studying topics that are relevant to industry."*

The comments about rubberstamping indicate that some of the advisory committee meetings may be held out of habit without enough consideration of the reason for meeting. If all that is required of participants is to give final approval to a decision then a method other than a meeting may be more effective and less frustrating for participants (Miller, 1991).

4.2.4 Common Themes

The main aspect that stands out from the findings is the lack of change in both the membership and the Chairperson's role. A number of respondents raised concerns over the need to increase the level of industry attendance at the meetings. The majority of members of committees have belonged for over three years and those in the Chairperson role have been in place for over two years on average. Most respondents indicated they have received some information on the purpose of the committee and supporting meeting material such as agenda and minutes, and the majority of respondents also preferred to retain face to face meetings as the method of engagement. The majority of respondents also felt that they had limited influence over the outcome of any decisions.

Two comments seemed to sum up the overall issue and the potential missed opportunity for UCOL.

> *"I think the advisory committee could be used more than what they have been in the past."*
>
> *"[I] have wondered sometimes why I am there at meetings as it really is a briefing of what's happened. Not too much in looking at [the] future."*

Greater benefits can potentially be gained from improving the stakeholder advisory committees as if the meetings are poorly run, industry representatives and staff can become disengaged.

4.3 INTERVIEW RESPONSES

As stated in section 3.4.2, two advisory committees were initially selected using the randomising function in Excel:

> Fashion and Beauty and
>
> Automotive

Due to a dramatically lower than anticipated response rate, permission was sought from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee to randomly select an additional two committees to increase the number of potential interviews. When permission was given on 3 September 2009 two additional committees were selected:

> Information Systems and
>
> School of Photography, Art and Design

The overall number of interviews completed was 23 out of 43 potential interviewees. The count of 43 does not take into account the total number of members of the School of Photography, Art and Design, only those who responded to the interview request. It was not possible for the researcher to determine the total number of members on this advisory committee. The Head of School would not grant permission to the researcher to access the names on the committee list, so the interview request was sent by the Faculty Administrator on behalf of the researcher. The researcher requested that all members of the committee be invited to participate in the interview but cannot be certain that all members received the request.

4.3.1 Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee Interviews

Of the ten[13] members of the Fashion and Beauty (FAB) Advisory Committee, four interviews were completed. All but one academic staff member declined the request to

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[13] Although only three members were listed in the FAB Advisory Committee in Appendix A when the researcher received an updated list from administrative staff there were 10 members listed on this committee

be interviewed. Two stated workload as the reason and one stated s/he had never been in the committee and did not know why s/he was listed as a member. Two senior staff members were interviewed. Neither had attended meetings in the past 12 months. Of the three industry representatives on the committee, one agreed to be interviewed. One could not be contacted despite a number of attempts. The other had changed industries some time ago, asked to be removed from the list and declined the request to be interviewed. Through the one industry representative interview and one staff interview, it emerged that some staff on the committee were also practitioners in the field.

All interviewees were able to clarify the purpose of the advisory committee meetings and mentioned similar points around the need for programme currency and industry relevance:

> *"To find out about changes in industry." (FU2)*
> *"To see if they are putting the right things into the course."(FI1)*
> *"To give feedback on where we should go with the programme."(FU3)*

However, all interviewees stated that they had not specifically received any information in written form that clarified the purpose of the meetings. One had received a verbal clarification from a staff member, two others had never attended and the fourth interviewee responded that s/he had received nothing.

One interviewee, who was a UCOL staff member, provided detailed information on the overall purposes of the advisory committees but this was based on her/his general knowledge of these committees. S/he had not attended a FAB Advisory Committee meeting so could only comment on what s/he expected was taking place or needed to take place. S/he did share an insight that indicated s/he felt the FAB Advisory Committee may not be necessary. S/he was the only interviewee in this group to share this feedback.

> *"The FAB committee is a small group of programmes yet has its own advisory committee…there is a point in the programme life when feedback is not as valuable for individual programmes. But having general feedback across areas may be useful."(FU1)*

There were contradictory comments from the interviewees who attended as opposed to the interviewees who did not attend the meetings. The two staff members who had never attended the meetings stated that basic pre-meeting procedure such as the receipt of agendas and notice of discussion items was taking place. However the staff and industry person who did attend disagreed and stated they had not always received agendas or notice of discussion items.

The industry representative stated that attending the meetings helped to clarify for her/him what the programme was about. S/he had presumed the programme was easier than it actually was.

> *"I presumed it was not such a serious course, just a fill in step. But from attending the meeting I thought it [the course] was more worthwhile."(FI1)*

One interviewee shared a detailed response on her/his concern over managing industry expectations in the advisory meetings and her/his concern that some of the industry requirements were beyond what s/he felt should be provided by UCOL.

> *"I try to manage industry expectations. I encourage them to provide details on their industry needs but temper it against the reality of the education system. Attitudes to work are not our role so when I encounter it [industry wanting UCOL to teach attitude to work skills] I push back strongly. It is not our role to tell everyone to look the same…our domain is to provide education."(FU1)*

When asked to provide an example of the meetings at their best there was little that could be shared by the four interviewees. As mentioned, two had never attended and the industry representative shared that s/he had only been to one meeting. One staff interviewee shared a frustration over a lack of or late attendance at meetings and that there had been few meetings held, with a response indicating the last meeting was at the beginning of the previous year.

> *"Because the last time we only had three staff and no one else came"*.
> When was this meeting held when no one turned up? *"At the start of last year."(FU3)*

When the two UCOL staff were asked why they had never attended advisory committee meetings, in one case it was due to the only meeting that had been scheduled occurring on a date the individual was away. This reinforces the earlier comment that few meetings for this advisory committee had taken place. The other interviewee stated that s/he did not attend due to time constraints.

> *"I feel guilty that I have never attended a [committee] meeting and I'd feel awkward if I went now. I don't know if they expect me to be there." (FU1)*

There was differing opinion from those who did attend the meetings as to whether or not any minutes were taken, which suggests that if minutes were taken they were not circulated. While a staff member interviewee stated that taking minutes was standard to all committees, in practice this may not be happening.

The greatest detail in the comments came at the end of the interviews when interviewees were asked for ideas on how meetings could be improved and how they would like future engagement to take place. All four interviewees were willing to remain as members of the committee. However, opinion on how meetings should take place differed. All the UCOL interviewees felt the use of email or meeting asynchronously would be easiest.

> *"Formal meetings are difficult at best. People give up their time and some people never attend." (FU1)*

The sole industry representative wanted to retain the face to face meeting and was willing to attend more than one a year.

> *"I'd prefer the [face to face] meeting as the time frame is known and it's easier than having to do something more regularly. Twice a year wouldn't be a problem."(FI1)*

While one of the UCOL staff members wanted email, they later contradicted themselves by stating they felt face to face meetings were still needed.

> *"Email connection would be good... I honestly think stakeholder meetings would not work if they were not in the room together. I have heard people doing phone or internet links and it doesn't work as well."(FU3)*

The need for having a clear purpose for the meetings was highlighted and a level of dissatisfaction with the meetings was expressed by one interviewee.

> *"Advisory committee meetings are the worse job. The thought of going to these meetings is a bit negative but in reality they are ok." (FU2)*

Two of the interviewees commented on the importance of having a reason for meeting and that a meeting should not take place unless those who attend can contribute.

> *"If you have a formal meeting it needs to be in areas where you can provide meaningful input for them and us."(FU1)*
> *"To actually call [industry representatives and ask them to attend the meetings] only when there is something to discuss."(FU2)*

Finally, one respondent raised doubts about why there was even a need for a FAB Advisory Committee.

The main aspect that stood out from the Fashion and Beauty Advisory Committee interviews was the infrequency of meetings and the lack of specific feedback about this group due to the lack of meetings or attendance at them. While all those interviewed showed some level of commitment to continuing membership of the committee, their responses showed uncertainty about how the committee should proceed with regards to how it should meet, and, in one interviewee's response, as to whether this committee needed to exist at all.

4.3.2 Automotive Advisory Committee Interviews

The Automotive Advisory Committee comprised 16 members as stated on the list displayed on the UCOL website (Universal College of Learning, 2007). Of these, six were industry representatives. Once interviews commenced it became clear that one staff member was not an active participant and it was requested by management that s/he not be approached for an interview. Another staff member who was known by the researcher to be a member of the committee was missing from the list, and several industry representatives were named during interviews that did not appear on the list at all. Two staff members on the list were new and had never attended a meeting so could not contribute any information. Another staff member declined to be interviewed and another was on extended leave and could not be contacted.

Of the industry representatives, one declined to be interviewed, one had retired and could not be contacted, messages were left with two others who could not personally be contacted and they did not respond. The two remaining industry representatives were interviewed. During one of the interviews with staff an additional industry representative was identified who did not appear on the membership list. S/he was then interviewed and s/he had been attending most of the meetings.

The reasons for agreeing to become a member of this committee varied amongst UCOL staff. Some respondents attended because they believed it was a role requirement and others attended as they would receive a free lunch. Some staff did see benefits in the engagement between UCOL and industry and identified this as the reason they attended the meetings.

> *"To be proactive. I'd do anything to move things forward." (AU5)*
> *"I've been in the industry and I think more industry representatives are needed." (AU6)*

The industry representatives chose to belong as they could see benefits of maintaining contact with UCOL.

> *"To keep in touch with what UCOL are offering". (AI1)*

> *"It's a way of keeping our company involved with UCOL and keeping up with things. Giving them our assistance." (AI2)*
>
> *"I thought it's good to have input outside of UCOL." (AI3)*

Five of the nine Automotive Advisory Committee members interviewed believed the purpose of the meeting was to share what UCOL are doing, rather than to hear from industry what their needs are. One of these five indicated that the food provided at the meeting was the purpose.

> *"To inform industry on what we are doing and to get feedback on what their needs are." (AU2)*
>
> *"To discuss what we are doing and to get course related feedback from industry." (AU4)*
>
> *"Go along and see what industry has to say." (AU1)*

One industry representative considered the meeting to be an opportunity for staff to share issues they are having with students.

> *"It gives them a chance to vent their issues to industry so we know what is happening in the tertiary sector, particularly how kids are coming through. It gives us an understanding of students coming through." (AI2)*

Most of the interviewees were happy with the purpose of the meetings and were not seeking any changes, although one staff member expressed a concern that the meeting was tokenism, as improvements to methods of delivery or topics were suggested, by both UCOL staff and external stakeholders, but no action was ever taken.

Only two people interviewed had received any information from UCOL on the purpose of the meetings.

> *"I haven't been given anything." (AU3)*
>
> *"I believe there is a document somewhere." (AU4)*
>
> *"Wasn't given much." (AU5)*
>
> *"None." (AU6)*

One interviewee confused the purpose with the agenda which s/he stated was received and through her/his response it was clear that the information received was all received verbally. This was reinforced by another interviewee.

"No information received. All verbal, explained about funding, what their needs were." (AI2)

When asked what information they would like to receive responses were varied.

"Probably an agenda with what is going to be discussed." (AI1)

"A more specific agenda from industry representatives on what they want, their requirements. We know what we [UCOL] want but we need to know what they want." (AU6)

"Structure, purpose, why have them..." (AU2)

"It's quite hard at times. All the stuff you get. … A small fact sheet with bullet points would be ok."(AI2)

"Nothing else." (AI3)

Five out of the nine people interviewed indicated that they did receive an agenda before the meeting but only one stated that s/he did receive sufficient notice of discussion items to prepare for the meeting. One of the industry representatives highlighted the problem with only receiving a phone call to notify them of an upcoming meeting.

"You get a ring a week before to say it's happening and these things will be talked about. It depends when you take the call as to how much you take in. You could be in the car." (AI2)

All interviewees agreed that the agenda was followed throughout the meeting and that they were given opportunities to provide input during the meetings. However the three industry representatives did not think they were given the opportunity to provide items for the agenda.

When asked what they learned about UCOL and its programmes, the industry representatives could each share examples. These included UCOL's operating procedures, unit standards and information on students who were qualifying. Each of

the industry interviewees provided examples of what they share about their own industry needs at the meetings.

> *"I just tell them what our needs are in different areas and what people are looking for. They want to know what is happening at the coalface." (AI2)*

At this point in the interview some of the staff interviewed began to express some dissatisfaction. These comments were not limited to concerns over the industry engagement, and it appeared that the interview was allowing them to share some wider frustrations.

> *"I was talking to a guy last night. He is an employer and he has someone working for him who is doing the course. He said the stuff being taught is the same stuff that was taught 30 years ago. He has a gut feeling that training is not changing along with changes in industry." (AU5)*

Most people interviewed considered the Automotive Advisory Committee meetings to be informal. One staff member thought this was a good thing while another felt changes could be made.

> *"Probably the meetings are comfortable but a bit low key. They could be more serious." (AU5)*
>
> *"It's a good thing. It keeps the reps at ease." (AU6)*
>
> However the same interviewee later said…
>
> *"Sometimes it's less formal and so is the conversation so it ends up going off on a tangent." (AU6)*

When asked to provide an example of the meeting at its worst, responses were varied with no clear pattern emerging.

> *"The problem now is attendance. You ring them and they say "Yes, yes" and then they can't come." (AU4)*
>
> *"Most of the conversations revert back to money spent. We say "we think you should do this", and they say they have no money." (AI3)*

"You have to be careful it doesn't become an event for people with an axe to grind." (AU2)

The number of people attending the meetings on a regular basis produced varying responses ranging from 6 or 8 through to 12 people. The problems mentioned by one interviewee in an earlier question with attendance came up again in a later response when asked how many attend on a regular basis.

"One external representative attended the last meeting and only two came to the meeting before that. All staff attend. At the last meeting we just talked amongst ourselves and ate lunch." (AU4)
"Not as many as I'd like." (AU6)

When asked how often they themselves attend, staff responded that they attended every meeting but so did the industry representatives, although they differed in how often they thought meetings took place. This indicates that they may not know the required number of meetings that take place each year.

"I've attended two meetings." (AI1)
"I try to get there every quarter." (AI2)
"Just about every time, four times a year. I've missed one in the last three years." (AI3)

All but one interviewee were satisfied with the Chairperson, with one person commenting as follows.

"If he didn't do it no one else would." (AU3)

Everyone interviewed was prepared to remain on as a member of the committee but they differed in their thoughts on how to improve the meetings, although a theme of needing a wider cross-section of industry at the meetings was mentioned more than once.

"Ideally have a greater cross-section of industries, rather than the same people who always turn up." (AU2)

"Make them shorter." (AU3)

"[Get] better attendance from industry. We've tried bribery and looking at the meeting times. We hold them in the lunch hour to keep them to a time limit. Even groups that hold them in the evenings don't get good attendance." (AU4)

"That hinges on what UCOL wants out of industry. I don't think us as outsiders can improve the meetings. It depends on what they [UCOL] want out of it." (AI2)

When asked how they prefer to engage with UCOL, five out of the nine interviewees were happy to retain face to face meetings as the main method of communication.

"I think a meeting is more personal." (AI3)

Several staff suggested the option to go out and meet with industry in their environment. The staff who suggested this did not specify if this activity would be as a replacement for the advisory committee meetings or in addition to the meetings.

"We could go out and door knock. We would get feedback if we did this but the issue is time and who would do it." (AU4)

"We also get out and visit industry regularly. It's good to see what is going on and to see where we can place students." (AU1)

4.3.3 School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory Committee Interviews

As mentioned previously, the researcher was not able to directly contact members of the School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory Committee. All interview requests were sent by an administrator. Seven members responded to agree to be interviewed. Two of the seven responded by email indicating agreement to be interviewed but despite several attempts to contact them they did not commit to an interview time. Of the remaining five, four were from the Theatre School, which is a sub-group within the wider School of Photography, Art and Design. Only one industry representative agreed to be interviewed from the Photography Committee.

4.3.3.1 Photography Advisory Committee Interview Responses

The industry representative was positive about her/his experience being part of the committee. S/he had been involved in providing research to assist the development of the programme when it was first established. S/he had also received benefits from her/his involvement with the committee through being able to add to her/his workforce.

> *"UCOL supports us extremely well by supplying fantastic [graduates]... All our [employees] are from [the programme]" (PI1)*

The individual was happy with the level of information received and the opportunities to provide feedback and indicated information was shared at the meetings via written and verbal feedback.

> *"When each committee member presents a report and gets feedback, that's critical. If part of the meeting was just "here's a report" you could just email that. It's the feedback around the report that is the most important part." (PI1)*

The sharing of student work during the meetings was identified as a particular benefit and this resulted in a later response from the interviewee that indicated that the sharing of projects could be reciprocal.

> *"Something I thought was extremely good was a student presentation for a movie project the guys were working on. From where I was sitting these guys were doing some awesome work." (PI1)*
> *"I think it would be great for external stakeholders to present work we think is great in our industry that students could look at and for teachers to take on board." (PI1)*

The representative felt the cross-section of industries attending the meetings was good and stated at least 12 people attended each meeting. The interviewee indicated her/his preference to continue to attend meetings as opposed to other methods of communication.

"...feedback by email [is possible but] is a whole lot less effective. To go away from face to face [meetings], I would be less interested in." (PI1)

4.3.3.2 Theatre School Advisory Committee Interview Responses

All of the industry representatives of the Theatre School committee indicated they had been members for several years and all were practitioners in the industry.

Two interviewees felt the purpose of the meetings was providing a summary of the results or activity within the programme in the previous term. One interviewee gave the impression that in the past the meetings had not been as effective. In a later response s/he stated that s/he felt if the meetings were to continue they needed to change.

"I think really it was an information meeting where we could comment on and use our influence and resources to advance what they were doing.... We rubber stamped." (TI1)

The purpose of the meeting did not appear to have been clarified to any of the participants. They spoke of receiving an agenda but did not indicate that they had received any background information about the overall purpose of the advisory committee meetings. One interviewee stated that when s/he first became part of the committee it was for another purpose entirely.

"When they were first setting up I was asked to be on the audition panel. Someone from UCOL phoned me....There was not a lot of time between the phone call to the auditions." (TI2)

A clarification of the purpose was also mentioned. When the same interviewee was asked what information s/he would like to receive, a six or 12 month report and information on policy issues was mentioned.

Agendas were provided to participants and all were happy with the amount of notice of discussion items and their opportunity to discuss items during the meeting.

Two interviewees shared strong opinions on their desire to support the Theatre School and their wish to have more work or performance opportunities for the students and more support for the programme in general.

> *"I've always been concerned at the lack of profile of the Theatre School and if I can help [with raising the profile]." (TI1)*
>
> *"I like to give young people opportunities. When I have the [event] there is a linkage there. The last three years we have provided opportunities for students...." (TI2)*

All the interviewees consider the meeting to be shorter and more informal than other meetings they attend. This was considered to be a positive thing by one interviewee who commented that the stakeholder committee meetings had been too formal when the meetings first began. The meetings were described as now being less formal and the interviewees expressed satisfaction with this change.

> *"It's pleasant and non threatening." (TI1)*
>
> *"They're fairly informal and very much a consensus." (TI2)*
>
> *"They seem quite efficient.... They seem to meet the timeframe." (TI3)*

When asked to share positive and negative experiences of the meetings the impression given was that the meetings were now working well and the group was achieving things. However, examples were shared that indicated at times the informality resulted in issues arising that were outside the agenda or items not being prepared on time.

> *"All meetings are effective because they are informative and the affection we have for the Theatre School and the desire to remain part of it." (TI1)*
>
> *"Generally since E[14] has been there it's been more inclusive.... "[In the past] we were sitting around a board table and it was all terribly formal. Things have evolved yet as much is achieved [from the meetings] if not more." (TI2)*
>
> *"There's always a report not quite completed, especially the student rep reports." (TI1)*

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[14] To maintain confidentiality the individual has been identified by a letter rather than by initials or name.

"There was one [meeting] that got hijacked.... All full of complaints, half of which had already been dealt with and half we were hearing for the first time. …the meeting went on for ages..." How would you prevent this happening again? *"Stick to the agenda more tightly."(TU1)*

All interviewees could name a cross-section of people or theatre related industries that were represented in the group and all indicated there was a regular attendance from a similar number of people. One also shared that even when s/he could not attend s/he was still being kept informed.

"I still kept getting information [by email] even when I couldn't attend. F[15] *sent an email to hook into something I am involved in." (TI2)*

Feedback was shared on the effectiveness of the Chairperson. All interviewees indicated that they respected the Chairperson as an individual and most felt the style used by the Chairperson was suitable for the informal style of meeting. Some room for improvement was indicated but no specific details were shared on how the Chairperson could improve.

The Secretary was mentioned by the interviewees which confirms this role does exist on this particular committee, and two of the interviewees spoke positively about what the Secretary contributed to the meetings through completing administrative activities.

When asked at the end of the interview how improvements could be made, and if they would be willing to remain as members, a lot of feedback was shared, with one interviewee in particular showing an obvious passion for the programme and students.

"From my perspective the meeting would be improved if the committee had a stronger role and involvement. … We have affection for the programme but it's just rubberstamping." (TI1)

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[15] To maintain confidentiality the individual has been identified by a letter rather than by initials or name.

"The thing the meeting could do with more of is input from students." (TI3)

"I would like to have the agenda go out to the committee earlier...." (TU1)

"I am thrilled to see young people wanting to be involved in performing arts.

Since G[16] has been there a number of students have gone on to higher training and working professionally.... When UCOL set up the performing arts course there were 17 others in the country. I said you need to have a point of difference. It has established itself in the market." (TI2)

When asked if they would like any changes to the method of engagement, audio conferencing was mentioned by one interviewee, but only for decisions with email for ratification. All interviewees wanted to retain face to face communication for different reasons.

"I enjoy the face to face." (TI1)

"Face to face is always valuable when you need new ideas." (TI2)

"Using some form of technology is better than nothing but face to face has advantages. I've been in skyped meetings. If two speak at once the system can't cope. It's very difficult to intervene as Chair." (TI3)

"It's nice to have lunch with adults instead of teenagers – helps to keep me sane." (TU1)

One interviewee summed up the overall feelings of most of the interviewees concerning the meetings with the following statement at the end of her/his interview.

"I find it's a valuable contact to maintain and enjoy it because it's short, sharp and well run so you don't feel you have to sit for two hours. (TI3)

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16 To maintain confidentiality the individual has been identified by a letter rather than by initials or name.

4.3.4 Information Systems Advisory Committee Interviews

Three staff on the Information Systems Advisory Committee were interviewed as well as two industry representatives. One staff member declined to be interviewed and another did not respond to the request. Two industry representatives initially agreed to be interviewed but would not commit to a time. Another industry representative could not be contacted.

The industry representatives could not remember who originally approached them to join the committee as in all cases the members had belonged to the Information Systems Advisory Committee for some time. All interviewees indicated their reason for agreeing to become a member of the committee was due to interest or a desire to add value to the programme.

> *"I'm interested in what they are turning out as I might want to employ them."*
> *(IU3)*
> *"At the time it was largely to return value to UCOL." (II2)*
> *"At that stage we were involved with student projects so I had a vested interest in getting more involved in the community." (II1)*

Feedback was described by most as the purpose of the meetings. The focus appeared to be more on giving UCOL feedback on the relevance of the programme to industry, but one interviewee indicated it was largely for compliance reasons.

> *"Largely to meet NZQA[17] compliance and signage requirements." (IU3)*

One staff member reinforced an earlier comment from a member of another committee by sharing the following comment that also indicated meetings were held for compliance reasons.

> *"My concern [is] that there is a tendency for advisory meetings to rubber stamp due to compliance...." (IU3)*

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[17] NZQA is an abbreviation for New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

All interviewees were happy for the purpose of the advisory committee meetings to remain as it was, with one indicating a desire to spend more time considering long term issues.

One industry interviewee thought s/he had received something from UCOL on the purpose of the meetings but all others either could not recall or said that they had not. The two industry interviewees were not as concerned as staff members about receiving clarification on the purpose; however, the staff members did want more information on the purpose or other requirements.

> *"Guidelines as to the minimum number of external people required. What is the quorum?" (IU1)*
> *"What the purpose of the meeting should be. Is it to report on progress, to get feedback, or both?" (IU2)*

There was agreement amongst all the interviewees that an agenda was supplied and followed throughout the meeting and that there was sufficient notice prior to the meeting of discussion items. While the two industry representatives were either not sure or said they were not given opportunities to provide agenda items, they did not express dissatisfaction at this.

> *"There hasn't been a specific invitation but it's not a concern." (II1)*
> *"Don't know if I have a formal opportunity but I believe I would have the opportunity if I wanted to." (II2)*

Everyone was satisfied with the opportunity to provide input during the meeting and with the management of the meeting by the Chairperson. The meeting has a minute taker performing the secretary role.

The industry representatives expressed that they learn a lot about UCOL and the development and progress of the degree programme and student progress. Two-way communication was taking place as the industry members were being questioned about their needs during the meeting and staff were also benefiting personally from this engagement.

> *"We were doing some research on soft skills and we asked the industry reps to fill in questionnaires which they did." (IU1)*
>
> *"You get to ask questions and offer industry trends. You have a jolly good chat." (IU3)*

Industry interviewees are not given tasks to do before or after the meeting and one staff member expressed that industry representatives did not tend to want to be given work to do.

When comparing the advisory committee meeting with other business meetings, all those interviewed from the Information Systems Advisory Committee were positive about the advisory committee meetings. Meetings were described by members of the committee as having good discussion. One staff member expressed dissatisfaction with having to attend any meetings but found the Information Systems Advisory Committee meeting to be satisfactory when compared to other internal UCOL meetings. The advisory committee meeting was described as being efficiently run but possibly with an atmosphere that indicated less enthusiasm than other committees.

> *"...it is not as animated as the H[18] committee used to be. Some advisory groups feel a greater sense of ownership. The IT group is more of a spectator, not governing. [They are] happy to share but [they don't] take ownership." (IU3)*

Good attendance and input from industry were considered to be the two aspects by the UCOL staff that indicated the Information Systems Advisory Committee meetings were operating at their best. Interviewees did not provide any negative examples relating to this particular advisory committee. UCOL staff did share examples of poor meeting performance but these were in relation to another committee, not Information Systems.

The cross-section of industry representatives who attend the Information Systems Advisory Committee meeting was generally considered to be good by interviewees. When asked if there was a good mix on the committee, one industry interviewee commented one way but was contradicted by the other industry interviewee.

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[18] To maintain confidentiality the advisory committee name has been replaced with a letter.

> *"The actual people who attend are at a more senior level and there may be benefit to get someone more at the coalface." (II1)*
>
> *"It could benefit from more higher level managers." (II2)*

All interviewees were able to specify the number of industry people who generally attended each meeting. The number was quite low with an average of three to five attendees.

The industry interviewees provided the most feedback when asked how the advisory committee meetings could be improved.

> *"Having a wider range of industry people attend and maybe at different levels." (II1)*
>
> *"The only thing I could say is when you come out [of the meeting] you don't know how or if the ideas you've put forward will be implemented or considered. Do our contributions translate to value?" (II2)*

All interviewees were willing to remain as members of this committee and all wanted to retain face to face interaction. Alternatives for methods of engagement were suggested but it was felt that face to face interaction was an important element provided there was good attendance.

> *"It's always disappointing if only two external people attend..." (IU1)*
>
> *"I guess email is a good way. If something comes up during the year we could use email to contact them. The meetings are a good way for industry people to interact." (IU2)*
>
> *"I think to get value out of the meetings you need to have good conversations. Web type meetings work best when you have a presenter so there ends up being infrequent participation. Where we get value is face to face." (IU3)*
>
> *"I prefer face to face. Location doesn't matter." (II1)*
>
> *"The problem with email is there is no compunction to respond. Web is impersonal. I think face to face you have more commitment." (II2)*

4.4 COMMON THEMES

Most interviewees indicated they were not given any activities to do before or after a meeting, such as preparing reports or collecting information to share at the meetings. Those who provided more information indicated they would be receptive to doing something, although they did not clarify how much work they were willing to do and in what form it would take.

The informality of the meetings was commented on across the committees. Most indicated they enjoyed this.

> *"In general it was fairly informal which is why I liked it" (FI1)*

Few indicated they had received information on the purpose of the meetings from UCOL. When the interviewees were able to articulate the purpose of the meetings it was only in general terms. The purpose was described as being beneficial to UCOL rather than being beneficial to the industry stakeholders.

Committees varied in whether they were following formal business meeting procedure with the production of an agenda and minutes. Overall, those interviewed felt that the face to face meeting was a preferred method of engagement. Some suggested alternatives but the need to meet was highlighted as being of value. Where there was dissatisfaction expressed about the meetings it usually came from UCOL staff rather than industry.

The results presented in this chapter will now be analysed and discussed in Chapter Five with conclusions and recommendations in Chapters Six and Seven.

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion below explores and analyses the findings outlined in Chapter Four and the literature review in Chapter Two. It shows how this information may be drawn upon to answer the research questions.

5.2 MEETING MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

One of the most significant issues that came out of the research was the problem of poor meeting attendance. The advisory committee meetings were not well attended and this was a comment received from a number of UCOL staff. A group of people on an advisory committee who meet infrequently will be unclear about the objectives, have a low level of involvement in planning and defer to the status quo rather than coming up with different solutions (Woodcock in Tyson, 1998). The further problem with a lack of attendance, as outlined by Mountjoy (1998), is the risk that a meeting quorum will not be achieved. Without a quorum decisions would be made by a few people that may not reflect the opinions of the majority within the committee (Pinner & Pinner, 1994). One staff member on the Information Systems Advisory Committee was unclear about what the quorum should even be commenting, *"[we need] guidelines as to the minimum number of external people required. What is the quorum?" (III).* Identifying the most productive and valuable participants to be involved in a committee is necessary as those who are more engaged with the process are more likely to attend meetings. If attendance is not maintained a quorum will not be reached which prevents decisions from being made (Mountjoy, 1998).

Advisory committee meetings at UCOL have at times proceeded without a quorum having been reached. A respondent from the FAB Advisory Committee stated during the interview phase that *"the last time [we had an advisory meeting] we only had three staff and no one else came" (FU3).* When asked about the number of members who attend the meetings of the Automotive Advisory Committee one respondent stated that

at the last meeting no external representatives attended but the meeting went ahead anyway. S/he commented that *"...we just talked amongst ourselves and ate lunch" (AU4)*. It was not clear if programme decisions were being made at the poorly attended meetings. If they were then the advisory committees were not taking into account any industry feedback before making decisions that could result in perhaps far-reaching programme changes.

Some of the industry advisory committee members were also aware of their lack of attendance and were apologetic about it. *"I'm afraid I am a member of the advisory group but have been unable to attend the meeting for quite some time..., usually due to work commitments".* If work commitments are the most common reason for lack of attendance then UCOL needs to go back to industry and offer alternatives. Continuing with the status quo and simply complaining about attendance will not change anything. Active steps must be taken and some ideas on what could be done will be outlined in Chapter Seven.

In other committees external representatives were not attending as they were not even aware they were members. *"I didn't realise I was on [the committee]"*, stated one respondent. This indicates that the industry members on some committees are not receiving regular or timely communication from UCOL. This was reinforced by the issues the researcher experienced when trying to distribute questionnaires during the data collection phase. The contact details provided to the researcher by UCOL staff were in some cases out of date. Members were listed who had changed jobs or businesses they worked for had closed down. This indicates that for some committees the updating of the membership lists does not happen very often. In the case of the FAB Advisory Committee an external member specifically asked to be removed from the membership list as s/he was no longer working in the industry (relevant to the FAB Advisory Committee) and s/he wanted no further contact. The secretaries on some of the UCOL advisory committees are not keeping in touch with members on a regular basis to check their contact details or to check if there had been a change in their status, such as place of work or position. Not having current information made contacting members to invite them to participate difficult and meant that some members, who may have wished to participate, did not get the opportunity to do so. This communication issue further means that industry stakeholders are not being contacted on a regular basis

by UCOL and reminded of the meetings and their role on the advisory committees. Without this regular communication it would be easy for stakeholders to forget or to decide other matters are of more importance, resulting in non attendance at meetings.

UCOL needs to think of the benefits of membership of the advisory committees from the perspective of the industry stakeholders. As highlighted by LaBerge et al (2000, p.49) "managers in relationship-focused companies are rewarded for identifying opportunities for creating mutual benefit with stakeholders…" Paterson et al (2006) reinforce this by reminding that polytechnics focus on meeting the needs of their external stakeholders by providing quality applied education that contributes to local, regional and national development. By not successfully engaging with industry stakeholders UCOL is failing to meet its obligation to TEC to communicate with all stakeholders to identify community needs for education (TEC, n.d.). A lack of contact means industry stakeholders are unlikely to perceive much benefit from being involved in the advisory committees which would impact on their level of attendance.

The benefits of belonging to an advisory committee may be intangible with some members having personal reasons for wanting to belong. One member of the Information Systems Advisory Committee wanted to belong as s/he was already receiving a benefit from UCOL, *"At that stage we were involved with student projects so I had a vested interest" (II1)*. A member of the School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory Committee commented that, *"UCOL supports us extremely well by supplying fantastic [graduates]... All our [employees] are from [the programme]" (PI1)*. UCOL staff can capitalise on the positive opinion of UCOL graduates amongst industry by approaching employers who have recruited UCOL graduates and encouraging them to give back to UCOL by participating in an advisory committee.

UCOL staff and industry stakeholders offered a range of solutions that would increase engagement with industry representatives or that would encourage them to attend meetings more often. A questionnaire respondent suggested the use of email consultation in addition to an annual meeting. The same respondent also suggested building an ongoing relationship with industry representatives by inviting them to be guest speakers on the programme so they are visiting the campus for more than just a meeting. This is needed as members of a diverse group often have a lack of rapport and

find it difficult to interact with each other which impacts on the ability to have a detailed discussion on topics during meetings as members can choose to remain quiet (Forsyth, 2006). An article in *Directorship* also identified that encouraging members to interact outside of meetings encourages them to want to participate more during meetings ("Making it work," 2007). Holding a social event on a regular basis outside of the meetings could help the members to get to know one another in a more informal setting. Cambié and Ooi (2009) believe that once members experience the belonging that comes from membership of a group, it is a strong motivator for continued membership.

Seibold (1979) suggests delegating tasks amongst members to encourage involvement. The industry respondent on the School of Photography, Art and Design Advisory Committee shared that members were required to present a report at meetings and staff on the Information Systems Advisory Committee involved industry representatives in research; *"we were doing some research on soft skills and we asked the industry reps to fill in questionnaires which they did." (IU1)*. McManus (2005) advocates for stakeholders to be involved in decision-making. Involving industry representatives in decision-making assists in maintaining their ongoing involvement through the knowledge that they can exert some power through their input (McManus, 2005). One member of the Theatre School Advisory Committee reinforced this when s/he said, *"from my perspective the meeting would be improved if the committee had a stronger role and involvement" (TI1)*.

Holding meetings when there is a definite reason for the meeting is another way to facilitate attendance. One respondent on the FAB Advisory Committee suggested, *"[only call industry representatives and ask them to attend the meetings] when there is something to discuss." (FU2)*. Eller and Eller (2006) share the example of not achieving any outcomes from a meeting as being one of the criticisms of meetings. If rubberstamping of decisions already made is all that is required from meeting participants, then the circulation of a written report may be more appropriate than calling members to attend a face to face meeting (Reith, 1970; Seibold, 1979).

Another option to improve attendance would be to meet with stakeholders in their own environment. Several UCOL staff from the Automotive Advisory Committee suggested that UCOL staff could go out to meet with industry in their own environment rather

than requiring them to come to UCOL, with one commenting, *"we could go out and door knock. We would get feedback if we did this" (AU4).* However, the respondent also indicated that going out to industry also raised the challenge of finding time to do this while juggling teaching and other academic requirements. Some respondents seemed at a loss as to how to change the issue of poor industry attendance. One staff member from the Automotive Advisory Committee commented, *"we've tried bribery and looking at the meeting times. We hold them in the lunch hour to keep them to a time limit. Even groups that hold them in the evening don't get good attendance." (AU4).* Part of the problem could be a lack of notice to industry representatives or the method used to notify of meetings, as shared by an industry representative on the Automotive Advisory Committee. S/he commented, *"you get a ring a week before to say it's happening and these things will be talked about [at the meeting]. It depends when you take the call as to how much you take in." (AI2).* A written notice of meeting following the phone call would help to reinforce the meeting request. Martinez and Wong (2009) used a two-fold approach with both a written reminder and verbal reminder and experienced an increase in attendance for the support groups they were running.

There were examples that showed even senior staff were at times not attending. This can set an example to other staff that the meetings are not a priority. While one of the staff expressed concern over her/his lack of attendance s/he did not indicate any desire to change commenting, *"I feel guilty that I have never attended and I'd feel awkward if I went now" (FU1).*

There was no indication from the responses received that any formalised method of stakeholder identification, such as the Dentchev and Heene (2004) model, was being used to assist in determining who should be invited to belong to the advisory committees. Many respondents could not remember who first asked them to join or how it came about or believed that they were only attending as it was a requirement of the role they had at UCOL. As commented by one respondent from the Theatre School Advisory Committee, at times the reason why someone becomes part of the committee is due to other factors entirely. As this respondent stated, *"[I became part of the Theatre School Advisory Committee as] when they were first setting up I was asked to be on the audition panel."* Failing to identify which stakeholders should belong to

advisory committee meetings with clear reasoning as to why they are needed is resulting in members attending who may not be as engaged, who are not as likely to contribute and, as has been found, who just do not attend.

5.3   METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

The preferred method of engagement was a face to face meeting, with 90% of respondents selecting this method of communication.   This indicates that there is agreement amongst members of the committees that the face to face meeting is acceptable and should not therefore be a barrier to attendance (Boyers, 1996).   Email was also popular with 60% of respondents selecting this as the method of communication they would prefer to use to provide advice for their committee.   A multiple communication method may be useful, particularly for those committees with members who find it difficult to meet.   Using both email and face to face meetings would allow those who prefer email and have difficulty attending meetings to still engage while retaining the face to face method that other members prefer.   A member of the Theatre School Advisory Committee commented that the use of email allowed her/him to keep informed between meetings if s/he was not able to attend, *"I still kept getting information [by email] even when I couldn't attend." (TI2).*

There can be problems with using a method of communication that is not face to face. These issues include not being able to read the context of the message "for clues" to aid understanding and the issue that methods other than face to face communication do not fully utilise all of the senses (Morrison et al, 2006, p. 1453; Smeltzer et al, 2002).   One of the respondents from the Information Systems Advisory Committee highlighted one of the weaknesses of using email when s/he commented, *"The problem with email is there is no compunction to respond. I think face to face you have more commitment." (II2).*   In a meeting environment where decisions must be made it is important that communication takes place without delay.   Using a mediated form of communication may, in this situation, be a suitable alternative to face to face communication especially when a committee has difficulty in bringing people together to meet face to face (Theaker, 2001).   As commented on by one respondent, *"using some form of technology is better than nothing" (TI3).*

There were few comments received about the potential usefulness of other methods of engagement such as video conferencing, audio conferencing or online discussion. The lowest response rate to the potential methods of communication was to the use of an online discussion forum, with only 16% of respondents selecting this option as their preferred method of providing advice to advisory committees. This may be simply due to a lack of familiarity with this method as a means of communicating or it may be due to problems experienced with the technology. If there is no support for industry stakeholders to help them use the technology to engage with other members of an advisory committee, they are unlikely to be positive towards it (Hornik & Cagle, 2005). However, there may still be a place for some form of online communication particularly to help develop relationships with other committee members in-between face to face meetings, provided the topic of discussion is relevant to the participants (Cambié & Ooi, 2009)

5.4   MEETING PURPOSE

Heller et al (1998, p.427) describe an effective meeting as being one that enables the "bringing together [of] the right people to pool their knowledge for a defined purpose." An effective meeting also needs to hold its members accountable for the meeting purpose (Paterson et al, 2006). In the early stages of the data analysis it appeared that the meeting purpose was known by the majority of members, with 79% (34/43) indicating they had received details on the purpose of the advisory committees in either verbal or written form. However, one comment was made that indicated that even if information on the purpose was received it may not have been understood or considered: *"Info[rmation] is available but I don't think I have ever read it!"*. As the research progressed to the interview phase it became clear that this was not an isolated opinion as a number of members, both UCOL staff and industry representatives, were not clear on the purpose of the committees. The lack of a clear purpose has been identified by various writers as being a reason why meetings fail, as it prevents those involved in the meeting from participating effectively (Prince, 1969; Reith, 1970; Seibold, 1979; Mountjoy, 1998).

Some respondents could provide a brief response on what they thought the purpose of the meeting was such as, *"to give feedback on where we should go with the programme" (FU3),* but other committee members, such as those on the Theatre School Advisory Committee, were not certain what the purpose was. On the Automotive Advisory Committee five of the nine respondents indicated the purpose was to share what UCOL were doing rather than to hear from industry. All interviewees on the Information Systems Advisory Committee indicated they were happy for the purpose to remain as it was but at the same time a staff member shared two comments illustrating her/his concern that the purpose for the meeting was for compliance reasons rather than to gain industry feedback. *"My concern [is] that there is a tendency for advisory meetings to rubber stamp due to compliance... [The purpose of the meetings is] largely to meet NZQA compliance and signage requirements" (IU3).*

There were examples provided from both industry and UCOL staff that in some cases the meeting purpose is to enable UCOL staff to offload issues of concern that may not be relevant to the meetings. An industry representative on the Automotive Advisory Committee commented, *"It gives them a chance to vent their issues to industry" (AI2)* and another commented, *"Most of the conversations revert back to money spent. We say "we think you should do this", and they say they have no money" (AI3).* Peel (1988) mentions the desire of meeting attendees wanting to push their own agendas as one of the criticisms of meetings leading to meetings going off-topic, decisions not being made and attendees becoming frustrated.

5.5   MEETING ROLES

Of the four main roles present in formal business meetings there were examples of two to be found in the advisory committee meetings. The roles of the Chairperson and Secretary appeared to be within all advisory committees. There was no indication a Treasurer or Deputy Chairperson was a role on the committees. No comments were received in relation to either of these roles.

5.5.1   The Role of Chairperson

The meeting role of Chairperson was considered by the majority of respondents to be held by someone within their advisory committee. Eighty eight percent (38/43) of questionnaire respondents said they had a Chairperson. The majority of interview respondents considered the Chairperson on their committee to be effective, although the Theatre School Advisory Committee respondents commented that the Chairperson had an informal style and some room for improvement was needed. While there was a reasonably even split between the Chairperson being a UCOL staff member as opposed to an industry representative, it was clear that the role of Chairperson did not change on a regular basis with 44% (19/43) of respondents reporting that a vote to elect a Chairperson had not occurred in the time they had been members. This may not be a concern if members have only belonged to a committee for a short period of time but the research showed that 74% (32/43) of members had belonged to a committee for over three years and nearly half, 48% (21/43) had belonged for more than five years.

When a Chairperson has been in place for a long time problems can arise if the Chairperson is not effective in running the meeting and in encouraging everyone to participate. A Theatre School Advisory Committee respondent shared what occurred when the Chairperson was not in full control of the meeting and not following meeting procedure by adhering to the agenda with the comment, *"there was one [meeting] that got hijacked... the meeting went on for ages..." (TU1).* A UCOL staff member on the Information Systems Advisory Committee shared an experience s/he had on another committee that was not effective, *"the Chairperson monopolised the discussion" (IU2).* As identified by Prince (1969), a Chairperson can influence the outcomes of a meeting, particularly if they are in a position of authority such as being a Programme Leader or influential industry representative. As Morrison et al (2003) highlight, it can be difficult for members to resolve the issue of an ineffective Chairperson if the person is in authority. Prince (1969) advocates regularly rotating the role of Chairperson to overcome problems of an individual Chairperson dominating the outcome of a meeting or lacking the skills to run the meeting effectively.

5.5.2   The Role of Secretary

The secretaries of most of the advisory committees researched are meeting the requirements of the role of Secretary as outlined by Stretton (2006). This includes the production of a notice of meeting, agenda and accurate record of the meeting in the form of minutes (Stretton, 2006). Notices of meetings, agendas and minutes were being received by the majority of meeting attendees with 95% (41/43) of respondents indicating receipt of a notice of meeting at least once and 88% (38/43) indicating the receipt of an agenda and minutes at least once. While this is positive, 74% (32/43) of respondents also commented that items were shared in the meetings that were not on the agenda. Stretton (2006) says that agenda items can be determined by the Chairperson at the start of a meeting rather than being sent out in advance. However, comments from at least one respondent indicated the desire to know what was to be discussed in advance of the meeting with the comment, "*I would like to have the agenda go out to the committee earlier…*". *(TU1).* A secretary is a valuable ally to the Chairperson. S/he can guide the chairperson in meeting protocol and encourage the Chairperson to consider agenda items well in advance of a meeting, thereby eliminating the problems of a lack of time to prepare for discussion that is currently occurring.

5.6   MEETING ORGANISATION

Chase et al (1998) described a number of requirements that impact on the success of a meeting such as heating, lighting and seating arrangements but there were no specific comments relating to any of these aspects from respondents. There was comment on the duration of the meeting with 65% of respondents (28/43) stating that the meeting duration was one to two hours and 86% (37/43) of respondents stating that the meetings finished on time. Seibold (1979) recommends that the meeting length be determined at the start of a meeting and adhered to and the evidence from the respondents indicates this recommendation is being met.

Some committees, such as the School of Photography, Art and Design and the Theatre School Advisory Committees were now organised to achieve different results from when they were first established. When these committees began operating, the focus

was on getting industry feedback to help establish the programme. Once the programme was well established the focus changed and the meetings became more of a mechanism to share what was now happening. Members had less engagement as a result. Their input was heavily needed when the programme was being developed but once underway UCOL took over and did not appear to need their input or to seek it out beyond the meetings, many of which occurred only once a year.

There were comments made by some respondents about a lack of consistency as to how often meetings would take place. While the questionnaire produced a number of comments from respondents, with 74% (32/43) stating that either one or two meetings were held during the year, a number of respondents seemed uncertain about exactly how many meetings took place. In the questionnaire phase several comments were received indicating confusion over the number of meetings that took place each year including one respondent who stated, *"[the number of meetings] varies – last year [there were] 0 [meetings], this year one, previous [years there were] three [meetings]."* Eight respondents provided additional feedback on the question of meeting frequency. One staff member shared that the last meeting of the FAB Advisory Committee had been held *"at the start of last year." (FU3).* The interview with this staff member took place mid-year indicating a meeting had not been held for 18 months. This is concerning because, as mentioned in Chapter One, the stakeholder advisory committee meetings are the method used by UCOL to account for their stakeholder relationships to TEC. The research has indicated a pattern of meetings not being scheduled and this could mean that UCOL is not providing accurate information on the feedback from industry stakeholders in the catchment area. An impression could be built indicating the programmes were developed in line with what industry wants but if the relevant advisory committee is not meeting regularly then this impression would be false.

It is clear that in some cases meetings are being put off for lengthy periods of time to the point where they are no longer memorable to stakeholders. As a result when a meeting does take place members would need to be reminded of what had previously been discussed and discussion would potentially need to start again on these items to ensure everyone was updated. A potential waste of time for all involved.

Both industry representatives and staff commented on a lack of formality for some of the meetings. There was no mention of motions or seconding or other terms you would expect to hear about in a formal business meeting (Stretton, 2006). On the Automotive Advisory Committee a staff member thought the informality of the advisory committee meetings was a benefit: *"it keeps the reps at ease" (AU6)* and a member of the Theatre School Advisory Committee shared that s/he preferred the fact that the advisory committee meetings had become less formal: *"[In the past] we were sitting around a board table and it was all terribly formal. Things have evolved yet as much is achieved [from the meetings] if not more" (TI2).* When a committee meeting was described as being more formal the comments indicated this was not necessarily a positive thing and it indicated a lack of involvement with the outcome.

The power relationship regarding who has control of the meeting organisation appears to sit with UCOL. UCOL sets the meeting location and time and determines the frequency of meetings. Industry feedback is one of the requirements UCOL must meet in order to gain external programme approvals. Industry representatives have only had more power within the advisory committee meetings when UCOL has sought their opinions during the programme development stage (Hendry, 2004).

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy does not provide much assistance to UCOL staff to guide them in organising and running the meetings as it focuses on overall policy rather than clarifying actual procedures. A copy of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy is included in Appendix B. A document that provides details on meeting organisation guidelines would be beneficial for UCOL staff.

5.7   MEETING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Doyle and Straus (1993) and Boyers (1996) discuss the importance of feedback as part of meeting evaluation. Peel (1988) suggests feedback sessions should be held after important meetings considering everything from the meeting purpose, roles, attendance and chairing through to the participation and overall effectiveness. There was no evidence of any sort of feedback mechanism being in place for the UCOL advisory committee meetings as it was not reported on by any of the respondents. As part of the

questionnaire respondents were asked to provide feedback and 19 of the 43 respondents did provide comments on everything from the regularity of meetings and the level of industry attendance through to the outcomes of the advisory committee meetings. Therefore, it seems that there is a desire amongst advisory committee members to provide feedback when an offer is extended. One questionnaire respondent stated, *"[there is] never any feedback on results of discussion at [the] meeting."* This indicates that any actions that take place in-between meetings are not being communicated to members through the minutes or via any other method.

Respondents commented on the concern that there was limited opportunity for discussion during the meetings as the decisions appeared to have been made before the meeting, with one questionnaire respondent commenting, *"[I] have wondered sometimes why I am there at meetings as it really is a briefing of what's happened. Sometimes I feel it's simply rubberstamping"*. Over half of the respondents stated they were always able to provide input to the discussion at the meetings but only 7% (3/43) stated they had a lot of influence over the decisions being made by the committee. In contrast, 20% (9/43) of respondents stated they had no influence or little influence over decision-making by the committee. When they did try to provide feedback at times the feedback was not fully explored with one UCOL staff member admitting, *"I try to manage industry expectations. I encourage them to provide details on their industry needs but temper it against the reality of the education system" (FU1)*. From this comment the impression is gained that not only is feedback not sought but on occasion industry representatives are actively discouraged from sharing their thoughts and ideas. Members can choose to remain silent if they feel their input has not been or will not be fully considered (Van Dyne et al, 2003). UCOL may not always like what it hears from industry but to refuse to hear comments will eventually result in industry declining to share altogether.

5.8   SUMMARY

It appeared that a number of the committees were not as effective as they needed to be particularly regarding the meeting purpose, level of discussion and feedback accepted from external stakeholders. Industry and UCOL respondents were unclear about the

purpose of the meetings, which indicates that many of the committees have not progressed beyond Stage 1 of the Woodcock (in Tyson, 1998) model of group development. Advisory committee meetings are in many cases still at the initial forming stage and despite many being in operation for some time they are unlikely to progress without changes being made. To progress to a point where a committee is achieving the best possible outcome will require all members of committees to fully participate in a variety of activities (Woodcock in Tyson, 1998). The comments from industry stakeholders about rubberstamping decisions illustrates that industry stakeholders are not fully participating as their feedback is not genuinely being sought and acted upon. The lack of a clear purpose also prevents UCOL from identifying who should be attending meetings as the skills and knowledge of stakeholders should directly connect with the overall purpose. If a stakeholder cannot contribute to the meeting they should not be attending. Until some of the more fundamental aspects of meeting organisation are resolved, such as the identification of a clear purpose and identifying which stakeholders should be involved, it is unlikely the committees will become more effective.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSIONS

6.1 THESIS SUMMARY

Research to this point indicates that while there is a body of literature that identifies the importance of engaging with stakeholders, there is limited detail on how this should occur. There is only one recent study that has been identified that considers the particular communication needs of ITPs and their communities (Paterson et al, 2006).

The UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee policy does not clarify in detail how the stakeholder advisory committees should be run. There are several areas where committees have shown they do not know or are not fully considering issues such as who should belong, how many members a committee should have, when meetings should take place, how often roles should be held by individuals, and other basic meeting requirements such as preparing and distributing agendas and minutes. The policy provides activities that a committee could be involved with but does not specify if all must take place or if some are optional. Some form of procedure document needs to support the policy to assist staff in organising and running the meetings.

This study has considered the aspects that contribute to effective meeting practices and has related them to the actual practices of the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings. Each research question is answered below and recommendations are outlined in Chapter Seven to support UCOL in enhancing stakeholder relationships through effective meeting practices.

Limitations of this study are also stated below along with suggestions for further research into the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committees.

6.2   UCOL MEETINGS COMPARED TO MEETING THEORY

The first research question asked:

How are UCOL stakeholder advisory committee meetings run compared to theoretical approaches of effective meeting practice?

The research showed that the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees are not being run according to all of the theoretical approaches of effective meeting practice. The meetings are being operated in a way that best suits UCOL rather than in a way that best suits the industry stakeholders. Meeting places, meeting times and agenda items reflect what UCOL wants, not what industry wants. Evidence from the research has shown that industry stakeholders do not feel they have much influence over decisions and are frustrated at times over the perceived rubberstamping of decisions that have already been made.   There was feedback from at least one respondent that industry representatives may not want to have to contribute more than they do now as it could be perceived as too much work. However, the feedback gathered from the majority of interviews and questionnaires highlights that industry stakeholders want the opportunity to contribute and they are not currently receiving this opportunity as much as they would like to.

Basic elements of meeting procedure are not being followed across all of the committees. Actions such as preparing an agenda and distributing it before the meeting are not always taking place.   Minutes are not being sent consistently and actions following the meeting are not being communicated as comments from industry stakeholders have indicated industry members of meetings are not aware of the outcome of their feedback during the meetings. There is no apparent rotation of the Chairperson role and some committees experience problems with the Chairperson not leading the committee effectively. Meetings have taken place without a quorum being reached and membership details are not being kept up to date.

6.3 UCOL STAFF SATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT MEETING STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

The second research question asked:

Are UCOL staff members on stakeholder advisory committees satisfied with the current meeting structure and procedures?

The research showed that UCOL staff are not satisfied with the current meeting structure and procedures and do not seem to be getting much benefit out of being involved with the advisory committees the way they are currently operating. The staff members were unclear about the purpose of the meetings and some seemed to believe they were there just to make up numbers or present results. Staff did not know how many members should be on a committee and evidence showed that there was no consistency in the timing of meetings.

UCOL staff need to be involved with the stakeholder advisory committees so they can hear what industry has to say. Some UCOL staff did realise this but were dissatisfied by the lack of attendance to meetings by industry representatives on some of the committees. Steps had been taken by some committees, such as the Automotive Advisory Committee, to try to resolve the issue of poor attendance but there was evidence that some simple solutions, such as providing a written as well as verbal notice of meetings and ensuring contact details were kept up to date, could assist in resolving the issue of poor attendance.

For the stakeholder advisory committee meetings to be truly effective there need to be significant changes made. A meeting with a group of UCOL staff and industry representatives should ideally produce better results than UCOL staff making decisions on their own however, the meeting must be well organised with all members able to make an equal contribution (Pinner & Pinner, 1994).

It stood out when two senior staff who were linked to the FAB committee admitted they did not attend. While they could provide reasons for this, their lack of attendance does send a message to staff that attendance is something one does when one can rather than

being a requirement or something that is important. Any changes made to the running of the stakeholder advisory committees need to be actively led by senior management. Senior management must reinforce the importance of effective engagement with industry through the meetings.

Attending the meetings does offer the additional benefit to UCOL of helping them to promote a programme to industry. In one case an industry member of the FAB committee admitted that attending the meetings helped her/him to gain a better understanding of the programme. S/he had thought the programme was delivered to a more basic level and through attending the advisory committee meetings s/he learned this was not correct. Although this would not be the primary benefit of the meetings to UCOL, it is an important secondary benefit, whereby through industry attendance at the advisory committee meetings the UCOL programmes are being promoted to industry.

6.4   INDUSTRY SATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT MEETING STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

The third research question asked:

Are industry representatives on the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees satisfied with the level of engagement they have with UCOL through the meetings?

The research showed that the majority of industry representatives are satisfied with their involvement to the extent that they are willing to continue to be involved with the stakeholder advisory committees. However, a number commented on a frustration over a lack of engagement. Industry representatives want the feedback they share to be listened to and acted upon. They want to feel that their contribution is valued and they are not attending a meeting where a decision has already been made. On some committees, such as the Theatre School Advisory Committee, there is a strong desire to see the programme succeed and some industry stakeholders commented positively on the graduates coming out of the programmes.

6.5 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FUNCTIONING OF STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The fourth research question asked:

What can UCOL do to improve the functioning of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings?

The research showed that meeting with external stakeholders face to face to gather information on industry changes did appear to be a suitable method of engagement for UCOL. However, there needs to be ongoing evaluation of how the advisory committee meetings are being organised and run and more guidance provided to UCOL staff on these aspects. Consideration needs to be given to the location and other physical aspects of the meeting. At present the timing of meetings appears to be convenient to UCOL and consideration needs to be given to what best suits industry stakeholders. Consideration also needs to be given to whether a meeting away from UCOL, as is currently occurring with the Joinery Stakeholder Advisory Committee, would produce better results than meeting at UCOL. These types of issues need to be considered when planning a meeting. UCOL staff need training in meeting procedure as it cannot be taken for granted that they are familiar with this. The industry stakeholder must be of primary focus and consideration at all times.

The meeting membership needs more planning with consideration given to how long members have belonged and what contribution they bring to the committee. Regular communication needs to take place to ensure that contact details for members are kept current and they are made aware of what has happened to any feedback they have shared. It would also be important to regularly review the membership as from time to time it may be necessary to seek new members to replace those who have left or are not attending. The current practice amongst UCOL staff of drawing on personal contacts, as outlined in Chapter One, could result in a limited range of viewpoints being shared within the committees and a method of selection that draws from a wider pool of industry representatives is needed. Chapter Seven will explore these recommendations in greater depth.

6.6   LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of this study was the fact that the randomly selected sample of advisory committees, and the members within them, may not have been representative of the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committees as a whole. There were also problems in gaining agreement from members in some of the committees who did not wish to participate. These issues were partially offset by seeking permission from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, as mentioned in Chapter Three, to select additional committees to increase the number of interviews completed and to improve the robustness of the data collected.

6.7   DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research forms the beginning of what should be an ongoing cycle of research into the UCOL stakeholder advisory committees. People change and so do committees. With membership changing over time it is important to continue to review the committees to ensure they are meeting their overall purpose of gaining industry feedback to support programme development.

One area that was not considered by this research project was if there were different requirements of particular cultural groups within UCOL. UCOL does not currently specify if there should be Māori representation on all committees, but there are groups that meet regularly that are made up of Māori staff that are intended to consider the needs of Māori students. There was also a committee, which may not currently be operational, that brought together members of the Pacific Island communities to consider the needs of their communities in relation to study options at UCOL. If this committee is still in existence, future research could focus on the needs of this committee and the success or otherwise of this committee in achieving its purpose.

Once any recommendations from this research are implemented it would be beneficial to conduct a follow-up survey with advisory committee members to determine how effective the changes have been.

CHAPTER SEVEN – RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEETING PURPOSE

The primary purpose for the committee meetings is to seek feedback from industry on their requirements of current and future employees but the research has shown that the purpose of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings is unclear to both industry and UCOL representatives. To ensure that the primary purpose is adhered to the following recommendations are made:

- A clear purpose statement is to be developed by each committee. The purpose statement should be written to give primary consideration to gaining feedback from industry representatives concerning the skills and experience that they believe graduates will need to succeed once they enter the relevant industry. See Appendix I for an example.

- The purpose statement should be distributed by the secretary of the committee to all members, both industry and UCOL representatives as soon as it is approved and distributed to new members upon joining.

7.2   RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEETING FREQUENCY

The research showed that most meetings were taking place once or twice a year but a pattern had emerged that meetings were becoming less frequent and industry representatives were often unaware how often meetings were to take place.   To ensure consistency with meeting frequency the following recommendation is made:

- An initial meeting is to be set up by UCOL. At this meeting the issue of how often the committee meets is to be determined by a majority vote.

7.3   RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP

Forsyth (2006) advocates for a diverse membership as it allows for more creative problem-solving but the research has shown that members are currently identified based on UCOL staff contacts. To facilitate the development of a more diverse membership the following recommendation is made:

- Advertise within the industry for members of the stakeholder advisory committees. This will ideally increase the number of potential members and can also assist in overcoming issues of non attendance from industry representatives due to using self-selection (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). Members will have nominated themselves to be involved by responding to the advertisement.   There may be people in the industry who are keen to participate in the groups but have not been made aware of the opportunity. Advertising within the industry relevant to the stakeholder advisory committee will enable UCOL to draw from a wider pool of representatives.

While the literature did not identify the specific number of members needed for a meeting the research highlighted that at a number of meetings there were few if any industry representatives in attendance. Meetings went ahead as a quorum had not been identified for the committees. To ensure that at each stakeholder advisory committee meeting there are industry representatives in attendance and a meeting does not proceed without them the following recommendations are made:

- A quorum is to be set for each committee.
  - o The quorum must comprise at least 1/3 industry representation. If this is not achieved a meeting should be rescheduled. For example, in a meeting of nine, at least three representatives would be from industry.
  - o If a quorum is not achieved then the committee needs to be reviewed by the Head of School in conjunction with the Dean to determine if changes need to be made. The change might be, for example, advertising for additional industry representatives as recommended above.

- A notice of meeting is to be sent at least two weeks prior to a meeting with a follow-up call made to confirm attendance.
  - The secretary is to complete this activity.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEETING ROLES

The majority of stakeholder advisory committees have a Chairperson but the research has shown that on some committees the Chairperson has been in place for some time and may not be performing well. The literature did not specify how long a Chairperson should be in place. To overcome the issues of an ineffective Chairperson and a Chairperson remaining in the role too long the following recommendations are made:

- There should be an annual vote to determine who the Chairperson will be to ensure there is rotation of the Chairperson (Prince, 1969). If a committee only meets annually then the committee may vote to defer the voting of a Chairperson to bi-annually.

- To also ensure ongoing rotation of the Chairperson role a Chairperson, if continually re-elected, can remain in this role for a maximum of three years and then must step down. S/he can return in her/his role as Chairperson if voted on again provided there has been a gap of at least a year since s/he held this role.

- Where there is difficulty in obtaining a Chairperson from within the committee a Chairperson from within UCOL can be identified by the Dean of Faculty provided s/he does not hold the role for more than 12 months. The research showed for the Automotive Advisory Committee that the role of Chairperson is not always valued and therefore may not be sought by industry representatives requiring a UCOL Chairperson to take on the role.

- The Chairperson is to be provided with a set of guidelines to support her/him in running the meeting (see Appendix J)

- Where there is a disagreement or concern over the effectiveness of a Chairperson a motion to vote for a new Chairperson can be put by any member of the committee.

The majority of stakeholder advisory committees have a Secretary but the research has shown that the Secretaries are not fulfilling all the duties of a Secretary as recommended by Stretton (2006). To ensure that each stakeholder advisory committee is provided with effective secretarial support the following recommendations are made:

- Each stakeholder advisory committee should have a Secretary if it does not already have one. The Secretary is to be appointed by UCOL and will usually be a faculty administrator. The literature did not specify if there was an advantage or disadvantage to having a secretary from within the organisation as opposed to a secretary from industry. However, comments from committee members who had UCOL secretaries, as reported by the Theatre School Advisory Committee, commented positively about the work completed by the Secretary.

- In the research some respondents were unclear about who the Secretary was so once appointed, s/he is to be clearly identified to all members and will act as the contact person between UCOL and industry between meetings.

- The Secretary must prompt the Chairperson for agenda items to allow the agenda to be distributed at least one week prior to the meeting. The research highlighted that for some committees there was no advance notice of agenda items to allow committee members to prepare.

- The research identified that committee members were not receiving communication between meetings so minutes must be completed for every committee meeting and distributed within one month of the meeting to all members by the Secretary.

- To assist with resolving the issue of non-attendance and because of the issues of incorrect contact information identified during the research the Secretary is to audit the contact details at least annually. This will ensure correct information is held for all representatives including job title, company name and all contact details.

7.5   RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MEETING ORGANISATION

Prince (1969) highlighted that even a successful Chairperson will have some deficiencies. To support the Chairperson the following recommendation is made:

- A document is to be supplied to the Chairperson that outlines the basic principles of meeting organisation. A sample guideline is shown in Appendix K.

The research also showed that the industry representatives were not offered the opportunity to share items for the agenda. Industry representatives were frustrated with being presented with items in the meeting for which decisions appeared to have already been made. As identified by Eller and Eller (2006) a meeting that does not achieve any outcomes is often criticised by participants. To resolve this issue the following recommendation is made:

- All members must be advised via a notice of meeting that agenda items can be submitted to the Secretary.

The research also identified that industry representatives were frustrated with meetings where decisions appeared to have already been made and minimal input from them was required. To resolve this issue the following recommendation is made:

- Any tabling of results or items that do not require discussion is to be sent to members in advance of the meeting so any discussion about them is brief and to ensure the majority of the meeting is available to discuss other topics that require more detailed feedback.

7.6   RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Face to face meetings are preferred by the majority of respondents so they should remain as the primary method of engagement. As the research has identified issues around attendance each Head of School needs to make time to

consult with the advisory committee membership in more detail to identify the specific reasons why the poor attendance is occurring. To resolve the issues around attendance the following recommendations are made:

- If the feedback identifies that a majority of members will have difficulty in attending a face to face meeting then alternatives are to be offered that could include:
    - o An email sent to members to gather their feedback and to update them on changes and/or
    - o A circulated written report seeking feedback and/or
    - o A site visit to all members annually, by the Head of School, to gather feedback.
- The Secretary is to send a monthly email update to all members with updates on action items and/or updates on the programme and seeking any changes in contact information. This email contact meets the needs of those respondents who have indicated a preference for email contact as the method of engagement and encourages ongoing communication between UCOL and industry in between face to face meetings.
- To show support for the stakeholder advisory committees to both industry and staff the senior managers/deans should host a social event for each committee at least annually.
    - o At this event a showcase of student work could be included to promote the programme, as this has been identified as a secondary benefit of involving industry in the advisory committees.
    - o This event allows members more opportunity to engage informally and can assist in overcoming issues that can result from a diverse membership that meets infrequently (Forsyth, 2006).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – UCOL STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

2007 UCOL stakeholder advisory committees

UCOL is committed to providing graduates who can be immediately effective in the workplace. Stakeholder Advisory Committees form a vital link between the institution and the workplace. The College values its Stakeholder Advisory Committees and is proud to acknowledge the work they put into assuring the quality and relevance of our programmes.
This work is done on a voluntary basis and is part of their commitment to our students and to us. They ensure we offer programmes that enable our students to succeed and achieve their learning and vocational goals. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members assist us to assess the employment market and community needs, to develop programmes that meet those needs effectively, and to evaluate and moderate the quality of delivery of our programmes. We appreciate members continued involvement, often over years, in the work of these committees.

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN ADULT TEACHING ADVISORY COMMITTEE[19]

ART & DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

AUTOMOTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

AUTOMOTIVE & MOTOR BODY TRADES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE (MEDICAL IMAGING TECHNOLOGY) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BACHELOR OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

BUSINESS STUDIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BUSINESS STUDIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WHANGANUI

CATERING & HOSPITALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WHANGANUI

CARPENTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHEF TRAINING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COMPUTER GRAPHIC DESIGN JOINT COMMITTEE – (UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO)

COMPUTING & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

ELECTROTECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ENGINEERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FASHION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WHANGANUI

FASHION & BEAUTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FURNITURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HAIRDRESSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WHANGANUI

HAIRDRESSING & BEAUTY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - WAIRARAPA

HOSPITALITY/CATERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HUMAN PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INFORMATION SYSTEMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JOINERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN MENTAL HEALTH - WHANGANUI

MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY GROUP - WAIRARAPA

NURSING (PALMERSTON NORTH) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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[19] To maintain confidentiality the stakeholder advisory committee member names have been removed.

NURSING (TAIRAWHITI) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NURSING (WAIRARAPA) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NURSING (WHANGANUI) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PERFORMING ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

QUAY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY, ART & DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPORT & FITNESS -WHANGANUI

SUPPORT OF THE OLDER PERSON ADVISORY GROUP - WAIRARAPA

TRAVEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VETERINARY NURSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPENDIX B – UCOL STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY

Purpose

Stakeholder Advisory Committees are an important part of UCOL's links with industry and its communities for the purpose of enhancing the development and delivery of its qualifications.

This policy provides the framework for the establishment and maintenance of Stakeholder Advisory Committees.

Scope

This policy relates to all programmes leading to the award of a qualification.

Responsibility

Faculty Boards of Studies are responsible for establishing and maintaining Stakeholder Advisory Committees.

Policy Statements

1. Each Faculty shall establish Stakeholder Advisory Committees to provide advice to assist in maintaining the currency of programmes and qualifications in terms of meeting either industry or community needs. Stakeholder Advisory Committees may be convened to provide advice regarding a qualification, a group of qualifications or a delivery site.

2. <u>Membership</u>
   Each Stakeholder Advisory Committee may have as its members, but need not be limited to:
   a) Dean of Faculty or nominee
   b) Representatives of local businesses/industry and/or the community;
   c) Representatives of relevant professional groups;
   d) Lecturing staff members of UCOL;
   e) Student representative(s);
   f) Representative(s) of the Mäori Community.

   The majority of the membership should be from outside UCOL and be, in the opinion of the Dean, representative of the programme area, or delivery site. The Chairperson will be elected annually.

<u>Terms of Reference</u>

Each Stakeholder Advisory Committee shall provide advice (e.g. during a meeting or by email consultation) to the programme team to assist/advise UCOL:

a) in keeping up-to-date with new industry and market trends which may have implications for current and new programmes;

b) in identifying trends within the community which may give rise to new learning needs;

c) with marketing and public relations by promoting programmes and achievements to the community;

d) in approval and accreditation processes when applicable;

e) in the development, evaluation and review of programme outcomes;

f) on existing and potential related commercial activities.

Records of all meetings or consultative processes with Stakeholder Advisory Committees will be kept and each Committee will report at least annually to the Faculty Board of Studies.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee feedback will be included in Annual Programme Evaluation Reports.

APPENDIX C – DRAFT UCOL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

Engagement with stakeholders strengthens UCOL's links with industry and its communities and enhances the development and delivery of its qualifications.

This policy provides the framework for ensuring regular engagement with stakeholders.

Scope

This policy relates to all programmes leading to the award of a qualification.

Responsibility

Faculty Boards of Studies are responsible for ensuring and maintaining engagement with stakeholders.

Policy Statements

1   Each faculty shall establish stakeholder engagement groups to provide advice and to assist in maintaining the currency of programmes in terms of meeting either industry or community needs.

2   Engagement with stakeholders shall be initiated to provide advice regarding a qualification, a group of qualifications or a delivery site.

3   Stakeholder engagement groups may cover individual programmes or groups of programmes.

4   Each group of stakeholders may have as its members, but need not be limited to:

    a   Dean of Faculty (or nominee),
    b   Representatives of local businesses/industries and/or the community,
    c   Representatives of relevant professional groups,
    d   Lecturing staff members of UCOL,
    e   Student representative(s),
    f   Representative(s) of the Māori community.

    It is desirable that the majority of the membership should be from outside UCOL

5   Members of a stakeholder engagement group may provide advice in a number of ways (eg, during a face-to-face meeting, by email consultation, via the telephone or through an online discussion forum). This advice may relate to:

   a   keeping up-to-date with new industry and market trends (national and international) which may have implications for current and proposed programmes,
   b   identifying trends within the region which may give rise to new learning needs,
   c   marketing and public relations by promoting programmes and achievements to the community,
   d   the approval and accreditation processes when applicable,
   e   the development, evaluation and review of programme outcomes,
   f   existing (and potential) related commercial activities.

6   Records of all engagements (formal or informal) with stakeholders, either with individual members or all members of the group, should be kept and the discussions and outcomes reported at least annually to the Faculty Board of Studies.

7   Feedback from engagements with stakeholders shall be included in the Annual Programme Evaluation Report.

APPENDIX D – QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

SECTION A: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

1) Which UCOL stakeholder advisory committee do you belong to?

☐ Furniture
☐ Joinery
☐ Information Systems
☐ Complementary Health
☐ Hospitality/Catering

☐ National Certificate in Mental Health
☐ Early Childhood

☐ Veterinary Nursing
☐ Travel and Tourism Industry
☐ Fashion and Beauty
☐ Automotive and Motor Body Trades
☐ School of Photography, Art and Design
☐ Science
☐ Business

2) What category of member are you, from the options listed below?

☐ UCOL academic staff member
☐ Industry or community representative
☐ Other – please specify _____

☐ UCOL student
☐ UCOL general staff member

3) How long have you been a member?

☐ Under 12 months
☐ 2 years to 3 years
☐ More than 5 years

☐ 12 months to 2 years
☐ 3 years to 5 years

4) How many members are there in the UCOL stakeholder advisory committee you belong to?

☐ Under 5 members
☐ 10-15 members
☐ Varies at each meeting

☐ 6-10 members
☐ Over 15 members

5) Have you ever received information, in oral or written form, that explained the purpose of the advisory committee?

☐ Yes
☐ No

6) Have you ever received any of the following types of information relating to the stakeholder advisory committee you belong to?
Tick any that apply.

☐ Notice of meetings ☐ Agenda
☐ Minutes ☐ Other – *please specify*
_____

7) If you have received minutes from the meeting, how useful do you find them as a record of the meeting and of any action points that need to take place?
Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion -

1	2	3	4	5
Not useful useful				very

8) If you receive an agenda for the meetings, when do you receive it?

☐ Before the meeting ☐ At the meeting

9) If you have received an agenda, how useful do you find it?
Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion -

1	2	3	4	5
Not useful useful				very

10) How often are items discussed that are not on the agenda?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

SECTION B: MEETING PROCEDURE

11) Does your advisory committee have a Chairperson?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

12) Is your Chairperson an Internal (UCOL) person or an External representative?

☐   Internal   ☐   External

13) How long has your Chairperson held the role?

☐   Less than one year   ☐   1-2 years
☐   More than 2 year   ☐   Other – please specify
                                              _____

14) Has a vote been held to elect a Chairperson in the time you have been a member?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

15) How many meetings are held during the year?
   Please circle the number below.

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

16) How many meetings do you personally attend each year?
   Please circle the number below.

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

17) How often would you want to attend meetings?
   Please circle the number below.

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

18) Have the number of meetings held each year changed since you first attended?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

19) If Yes, how have the meetings changed?

_____

20) What is the length of the meetings?

☐   Half an hour   ☐   One hour
☐   One to two hours   ☐   Other – *please specify*_____

21) Do meetings finish early, late or on time on most occasions?

☐   Early   ☐   Late   ☐   On time

22) How would you describe the level of input you are able to have during discussions that take place in the meetings?
Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion.

1   2   3   4   5
No input

                                                      Always able to
                                                      provide input

23) How would you describe the level of influence you have over the decisions made by the stakeholder advisory committee?
Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion.

1   2   3   4   5
No influence   A lot of influence

24) In the **<u>current</u>** UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy the following are listed as the terms of reference for the committees. Please tick any that apply to your committee.

☐   Advise on new industry and market trends which may have implications for current and new programmes
☐   Identify trends within the community which may give rise to new learning needs
☐   Promote the programme/s to the community
☐   Promote the programme achievements to the community
☐   Advise on approval and accreditation processes
☐   Advise on the development of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on the evaluation of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on the review of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on existing and potential related commercial activities

25) If you are involved in other activities that are not listed above please provide details below.

_____
_____

26) In the **<u>draft</u>** UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy the following are listed as the terms of reference for the committees. Please tick those that you agree should be part of the terms of reference.

☐   Advise on new industry and market trends (national and international) which may have implications for current and proposed programmes
☐   Identify trends within the region which may give rise to new learning needs
☐   Promote the programme/s to the community
☐   Promote the programme/s achievements to the community
☐   Advise on approval and accreditation processes
☐   Advise on the development of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on the evaluation of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on the review of programme outcomes
☐   Advise on existing (and potential) related commercial activities

27) If you believe other activities should be part of the terms of reference for the committees, which are not listed above. Please provide details below.

_____
_____

28) In the **<u>draft</u>** UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee Policy the following methods of providing advice are suggested. Please tick your preferred method(s).

☐   Provide advice at a face to face meeting
☐   Provide advice over the telephone
☐   Provide advice via email consultation
☐   Provide advice via an online discussion forum
☐   Other – *please describe* _____

29) How would you improve the meetings you attend?

_____
_____
_____
_____

30) Any other comments?

_____
_____

Thank you for your feedback

APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<u>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</u>

We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1) Who approached you to join the committee?
2) Why did you agree to become a member?
3) What would you describe as the main purpose of the meetings?

MEETING PROCEDURE

4) Is the agenda followed throughout the meeting?
5) Are you given an opportunity to provide items for the agenda?
6) Are you given opportunities during the meeting to provide input?
7) Are you given any tasks to complete after a meeting?
8) How do the stakeholder advisory committee meetings compare to other meetings you have attended?
9) If there are differences, what are the major differences, in your opinion?
10) Can you give an example of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings at their best?
11) Can you give an example of the stakeholder advisory committee meetings at their worst?

MEETING MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE AND ROLES

12) How many members attend on a regular basis?
13) How often do you attend?
14) If you are not regularly attending, why is this?
15) How well do you feel the Chairperson runs the meeting?
16) Does the committee have any other formal roles (Secretary, Treasurer)?

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

17) How would you like to improve the meetings?
18) Are you willing to remain as a member of the stakeholder advisory committee?
19) How would you like to engage with UCOL in the future?
20) Any other feedback?

We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

INFORMATION SHEET

INTRODUCTION
This research project is being undertaken by Danette Whitehouse, Team Leader – External Relations at UCOL (Universal College of Learning). It is being completed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Management at Massey University. The Supervisors for the project are Dr Franco Vaccarino and Dr Elizabeth Gray at Massey University.

The research aims to determine how well the UCOL Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings are working and to recommend improvements to their performance.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT
Selection Criteria
Excel has been used to randomly select 12 stakeholder advisory groups from the 40 actively operating at UCOL. All members of the 12 groups will be approached to participate in a questionnaire. In the second phase of the research the same programme will be used to select two groups from the original 12. All members of these two groups will be approached to participate in individual interviews.

PROJECT PROCEDURES
Access to Data
The questionnaires and interview transcripts gathered from participants will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. All questionnaires, transcripts and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet for up to five (5) years following completion of the project and will then be destroyed.

A copy of the final report will be available through the UCOL library in Palmerston North and another copy will be kept at the Massey University Library in Palmerston North.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
UCOL public records of stakeholder advisory group members will be accessed to obtain names of members of each group involved in the research so questionnaires can be sent out and individual members approached for interviews. However, no names will be included from interview transcripts or questionnaires in the final report.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT
It is expected that the questionnaire will take no more than 10 minutes to complete and the interview will take approximately 30 minutes. A postage paid envelope will be

provided for return of the questionnaire. If you are approached for an interview this can take place in a location and at a time convenient to you.

It would be appreciated if the questionnaire could be returned within 10 days of receipt.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS
You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Completion and return of the questionnaire implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.
- Decline to answer any particular question during the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;
- ask for audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

PROJECT CONTACTS
If you have any questions about the project you can contact the researcher and/or supervisors as follows;

Researcher:
Danette Whitehouse 06 9527122
Supervisors:
Dr Franco Vaccarino 06 356 9099, Extension 2381
Dr Elizabeth Gray 06 356 9099, Extension 7277

COMMITTEE APPROVAL STATEMENT
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application _/_. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8771, email humanethicssoutha@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX G – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____   **Date: _____**

Full Name – printed_____

APPENDIX H – AUTHORITY FOR RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

We Can't Hear You:
Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement through Effective Meeting Practices

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

This form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview/s conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, Danette Whitehouse in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Full Name – printed_____

APPENDIX I – PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR UCOL STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The purpose of the [name of committee] stakeholder advisory committee is to seek ongoing feedback from industry representatives on their needs of current and future employees and industry trends to ensure that UCOL produces graduates with skills employers need today and in the future.

The focus of the meeting is for industry to share with UCOL rather than for UCOL to share with industry. The needs of industry are paramount and the meeting procedure will be set in place in consultation with industry members.

Each committee will have representatives from industry and UCOL staff, including academic and non-academic staff. A committee may also include a representative from an academic programme outside of UCOL if required within the programme curricula.

Meetings will take place at least twice a year. Initially, meetings will take place face to face at UCOL. The advisory committee members can then decide on the location for future meetings and whether they will be face to face or using another method of engagement such as video or audio conferencing.

APPENDIX J – CHAIRPERSON GUIDELINES

The Chairperson is to develop the Agenda in consultation with the Secretary

- o The Agenda is to be prepared and ready for distribution at least one week prior to the meeting date.
- o The Secretary will provide an agenda with generic headings and will complete any administrative activities including updating the agenda, completing minutes, sending notices of meeting and distributing all documentation.
- o If the Chairperson is not a UCOL staff member s/he may discuss agenda items with the Head of School if additional assistance is required.

If a quorum is not achieved the meeting is not to take place and the meeting is to be rescheduled.

- o If a meeting is rescheduled more than twice the issue of non attendance is to be referred to the relevant Dean at UCOL via the Head of School.

All participants to be given an equal opportunity to speak and are to be encouraged by the Chairperson to participate.

A Chairperson must disclose any conflicts of interest to the meeting and may step aside for the duration of a meeting if a conflict exists.

There will be a vote on the role of Chairperson bi-annually unless a committee meets several times a year in which case the committee can choose to vote on an annual basis.

If a Chairperson is unable to fulfill their role for any reason a vote can take place to select a new Chairperson.

APPENDIX K – GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MEETING

<u>Step 1 – Consider the purpose for this meeting</u>

You know the overall purpose for the advisory committee meetings but you need to determine the purpose of this particular meeting so you can clarify it, via the agenda, to the participants. If there is no purpose then consider cancelling the meeting, although this should not happen often and if it does then the overall advisory committee purpose needs to be re-considered.

Questions to ask:
What did we discuss last time?
Were there any items we were going to carry forward to this meeting?
Is there an urgent matter that needs to be decided?

<u>Step 2 – Consider the location</u>

You may have a set meeting room but even so check that it has been booked for your meeting and set up correctly for your meeting.
Is your meeting room comfortable for participants? If not, consider alternative rooms on campus or the potential for an offsite meeting.

Questions to ask:
Does the venue have the equipment needed to support the meeting (whiteboard, data projectors etc)?
Can all participants easily converse with each other in the room or at the location?

<u>Step 3 – Remember the paperwork and the reminders</u>

Ensure you send a notice of meeting out at least two weeks before a meeting and follow it up with a phone call.
An agenda should also be produced and distributed to all members at least a week before the meeting along with any paperwork that members need to comment on.
Ensure any items carried over from the last meeting are included on the agenda and check that the minutes of the last meeting have been distributed.

Step 4 – Follow the agenda

Use the agenda as a guide to the meeting procedure but keep the following also in mind:

- Make sure all participants have the chance to and are encouraged to speak. Do not let individuals dominate the meeting.
- Keep to the agenda. If items come up that are off topic bring the discussion to a close quickly by either asking that the item be discussed under General Business or that it can be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Asking for any General Business items at the start of the meeting can sometimes assist as it allows people to bring up items that are not already on the agenda while waiting until later in the meeting to discuss them.

Step 5 – Review

After the meeting engage informally with participants and ask some general questions as to how the meeting went. Also, review the meeting with the Secretary and/or Head of School.

Twice a year send out a feedback form to members of the committee asking for their feedback on the meetings. Ensure that this feedback is summarised and shared with members and any actions that arise from the feedback are notified to members.