ENTERPRISE BARGAINING 2016

Colleagues,

Negotiations have commenced for replacement Enterprise Agreements for academic and general staff. Enterprise agreements are collective agreements made at an enterprise level between employers and employees about terms and conditions of employment. The agreements are made by negotiation between the University, staff associations and nominating staff representatives. The University will be keeping all staff informed of the issues being discussed and the progress of negotiations.

Our agreements are made for three or four years and our current academic and general staff agreements have passed their nominal expiry date at the end of September.

A summary of the University’s major proposals is set out in the attached document. In formulating these proposals the University has considered a range of factors both internal and external to the Higher Education sector. However, the driving principles in developing this proposal have been:

- ensuring that our agreements are fit for purpose through to 2020;
- supporting a sustainable future for the University with the required flexibility to meet future demands in a highly competitive and changing environment, and
- be aligned with Griffith University’s strategic imperative to remain distinctive, relevant and competitive.

We are fortunate at Griffith that relationships between staff, unions and management are positive. Communications are open, there are clear regular exchanges of information about the University’s operating environment and a demonstrated willingness to achieve outcomes that are good for staff and the University. Again in this bargaining round, it will be necessary for all parties to work together to ensure good outcomes for all.

The University’s paper outlines the key issues which we want to negotiate. I encourage you to take an interest in the process and to keep updated on developments. Regular briefings will be provided to all staff and a dedicated web site is available to help you follow the consultations and negotiations.

Yours sincerely

Bill Ryan

Director, Office of Human Resource Management
University Proposals for 2016
Enterprise Bargaining

These proposals are an integrated approach by the University to the development of new Enterprise Agreements for Academic and General Staff.
Introduction

Any new Enterprise Agreements must be relevant both for now and into the immediate future. Such agreements need to ensure that they align with Griffith University’s strategic imperative to remain a distinctive, relevant and competitive university and that such agreements remain fit for purpose through to 2020.

The current agreements have retained a similar format for the past 15 years. In developing a format more suited to the current environment, the following have been considered:

- Some provisions were incorporated to provide protections for staff members that were in the past not available otherwise through legislation. In a number of instances, such legislation now exists and as such, the Agreement provisions now just add a further administrative layer to university processes that is no longer required.
- A number of terms were negotiated and written under the previous Workplace Relations Act. Such terms need to be reviewed for relevance and suitability under the current Fair Work Act.
- Modern day people expect workplace agreements to relate to their employment relationship with their employer. Observations and commentaries unrelated to employment conditions need to be removed without negatively impacting on staff employment rights and protections.
- Retain principles and staff rights, while amending provisions that are unnecessarily restrictive and prescriptive.
- Ensure inclusion of provisions for greater flexibility in working arrangements for staff and greater flexibilities in staff accessing benefits and entitlements.
- Simple and “in plain English” terms.

Length of Agreement

To ensure ongoing stability in cost estimates for the near future, the University is seeking Agreements for 3 years from date of certification by the Fair Work Commission.

Forms of Employment and Job Security

The University is committed to providing strategies for appropriate forms of employment to address University work allocations and staff expectations of job security. The University has an excellent record in job security and with a number of minor changes in the Agreements wishes to continue to provide secure future employment opportunities for staff in a competitive market.

Casual employment issues

The University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning, research and service. To achieve this excellence we need an appropriate balance in the various forms of employment.

The University’s position is that casual employment will continue to be appropriate in some circumstances. It enables the University to meet short term load demands and cover short term staff absences. More particularly and of growing importance in academic elements, it allows the University to engage valuable industry skills and experience in teaching programs where these are critical factors in attracting students and providing high quality academic offerings and student outcomes.

The University, over the life of the current Agreements has reduced its reliance on the use of casual staff overall on a year to year basis, and continues to seek to do so.
Types of employment engagements

Scholarly Teaching Fellows

This category of employment was introduced in the last Agreement as all the parties considered it to be a possible transition step for a casual academic to become a continuing staff member. One of the drawbacks of this appointment is the individual is appointed at a set academic level (A6 or B1) where they remain indefinitely appointed unless successful through a promotion process to become part of the normal academic career stream.

In the same Agreement greater flexibility was achieved in academic profile to allow academics to play to their strengths. This greater flexibility in academic profile allowed multiple transition points for casual academics to gain access to continuing positions and be immediately part of the main academic stream.

As a result, Scholarly Teaching Fellows as a category has not been utilised as it was intended. The flexible academic profiles provides a simpler clearer pathway of academic employment. The University proposes to remove Scholarly Teaching Fellows as an underutilised category of employment.

Academic Transition Fellow

This category of fixed term employment was introduced two Agreements ago, again envisaged as a possible transition phase for casual academics into fixed term appointments and ultimately continuing positions. As with the Scholarly Teaching Fellows above, this clause has been superseded through the greater flexibilities afforded to employment opportunities through the academic profiles. As above the University proposes to remove this superfluous category of employment.

Leave

Decrease in enrolments

Griffith University, as with all other Queensland Universities will be facing a reduction in student cohort available for enrolments in 2018 and 2019, which will impact on the student pipeline for the subsequent few years. To enable the University to manage any drop in enrolments, while endeavouring to maximise job security among our staff, the University will be seeking to include shut down provisions and greater ability to direct staff to utilise leave if a decrease in student enrolments eventuates.

Similarly, the University will seek an additional category of fixed term employment (in preference to casual arrangements) where the position requirement may be impacted by a decrease in enrolments due to the impact of the half-cohort in 2018/2019.

Recreation Leave

The University seeks to expand the cash out provisions for excess recreation leave, allowing staff to cash out leave down to a minimum of 20 days.

Parental Leave

The University will repeal the current requirement for fixed term staff to repay parental leave, or foreshorten paid parental leave, if the staff member has insufficient term remaining in their employment to repay their period of absence.

Flexibility

Flexible work practices can deliver benefits to both staff and the University. Currently the flexibility clause in the Agreements is restricted to matters contained elsewhere in the Agreements, so is very limited. The University seeks to use the model flexibility clause as developed by the Fair Work Commission to maximise individual flexibility within a protective framework.
Further, with emerging changes in the expectations of students in the delivery of and access to services, the University seeks to review span of hours work arrangements to ensure ongoing market viability in the sector.

**Employment Provisions**

The University wishes to restrict the Agreements to employment matters only. The University seeks to codify, in the Agreement, industrial matters to protect the rights and entitlements of all parties and to remove detailed processes (such as how to apply for leave) to policy, procedures and guidelines.

It is also proposed that matters that are not industrial matters, or are now superfluous due to changes in legislation, or that create an unnecessary administrative burden on the University will be removed from the Agreements and either deleted or relocated appropriately into policy, procedure and guidelines.

Further the University seeks to remove ambiguity in the Agreements, ensuring they are drafted in plain English and easily accessible and understood by all.

**Salary Increase**

The University is committed to a level of expenditure which is fiscally responsible, sustainable and consistent with University strategic objectives. Salary offers will be based on a detailed analysis of the University’s ongoing income and expenditure, including assumptions around future student loads. Salary levels would remain comparable with similar Australian Universities within this operating envelope.