MINUTES

Minutes of meeting 04/06 of the University Research Committee held on 11 October 2006 at 9:30am in Function Centre 1 & 2, Building 11.

PRESENT:

Professor M Sheil (Chair)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Professor J Chicharo
A/Professor S Dolnicar
Ms E Ens
Mr K Finlayson
Mr R Gordon
Professor D Griffiths
Ms S Hughes
Professor S Kaye
Dr W Khin
Professor A Lawson
Professor S Leitch
Mr D Lind
Dr L Lockyer
Dr A Macris
Ms F McGregor
A/Professor L McNamara
Dr C Patch
Mr C Peden
Dr M Rix
A/Professor S Robinson
Dr T Scrase
Dr P Sharrad
Professor G Spinks
Professor D Steel
Ms T Tindall
Professor G Wallace
Professor R Whelan
Professor M Wilson
Professor C Woodroffe
Professor J Wright

SECRETARY: Lynne Clements

PART A - PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies had been received from Professor L Astheimer, Professor C Cook, Dr T Coyle, Professor P Crookes, Mr P Day, Professor S Dodds, Professor S Dou, Professor K Eagar, Professor J Glynn, Dr M Lerch, Professor J Norrish, Ms K Roser, Professor R Safavi-Naini, Professor J Steele, Professor L Tapsell, Professor M Tsamenyi, Professor A Wells.

Mr P Day was representing Ms T Tindall, Mr R Gordon was representing Professor K Eagar, A/Professor B Grenyer was representing A/Professor S Jones, Ms H Mandl was
representing Ms F McGregor and Dr T Scrase was representing Dr L Lyons, Dr W Khin was representing Dr Y Mu, Professor J Wright was representing Professor B Harper.

A2 Business from the Last Meeting

A2.1 Minutes of previous meeting (21 June 2006)

RESOLVED (07/06)
That the minutes of the University Research Committee meeting held on 21 June 2006 (03/06) be confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

ACTION: Lynne Clements

A2.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

Following the last URC meeting, Dr Lori Lockyer expressed interest in replacing Professor Susan Dodds as the URC representative on the University Education Committee (UEC).

RESOLVED (08/06)
That Dr Lori Lockyer’s nomination as the URC representative on the University Education Committee be accepted.

ACTION: Lynne Clements

A3 Chair’s Business

A3.1 Awards

• Congratulations to Kris French, Faculty of Science who has been awarded significant funding from the Land and Water Australia ($535,000) for research into the protection of native coastal communities and fresh water rivers and lakes from weed invasion.

• For the first time, the University has been listed in the Time Higher Education Supplement Top 200 World University rankings.

A3.2 Appointments

• Mr Craig Patch has accepted the position of MIC for HBS, Science, Arts and Centre for Maritime Policy.

• Ms Mari Dwarte has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant in the Research Student Centre replacing Jessica Lopez who is on secondment to the Centre Transnational Crime Prevention.

• Mrs Lynne Clements is assisting in administration and reception, Research Services Office.

• Interviews for Chairs in the areas of Communications, Economics, and Health Sciences are currently underway.

A3.3 General

• In line with changes at the AVCC in its move forward to Universities Australia, current CEO John Mullarvey will be leaving the AVCC on 31 December 2006.

• The RQF Development Advisory Group (DAG) has established Technical Working Groups which are currently looking at Quality Metrics, Impact, IT
and Modelling. The DAG is due to report to the Minister at the end of the month. A copy of the Impact Working Group’s paper will be circulated.

- Margaret Sheil is a member of the PMSEIC (Prime Ministers Science and Engineering Council) Working Party. Of particular interest to the Committee are ideas/case studies that highlight issues, opportunities and impediments for global science engagement, Margaret is interested in further discussion on this if anyone has ideas or input.

- UOW is leading a bid for the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security with partners in Queensland and NSW.

- The Research Student Conference was a great success – congratulations to Kim.

- The roll out of Module 1 (Publications) of the RIS is proceeding smoothly. The RIS Manager position is currently being advertised.

- ARC grant outcomes for funding commencing in 2007 to be announced today.

**PART B – GENERAL BUSINESS**

**B1 Research and Innovation Division Report**

Noted.

**B2 Research Strengths 2007-09 Recommendations**

All Stage 2 Research Strength applications have now been considered by the Research Review Committee and a list of proposed Research Strengths for 2007-09 was tabled. A total of 15 Research Strengths are recommended for approval.

The Committee was advised that IBS has now been divided into two separate units: Centre for Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacology and the Centre for Medical Bioscience. The rationale for this is that these separate units will now provide a better strategic fit with longer term plans and structures for the proposed Health and Medical Research Institute and new Graduate Medical School.

The Centre of Maritime Policy has expanded into the new Oceans and Transnational Security which includes members of the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention in line with this group’s move to the Innovation Campus.

Additional new Research Strengths include the Centre for Medical Radiation Physics and the Centre for Statistical and Survey Methodology.

**B3 Possible New Funding Initiatives**

In recognition of the University’s expanded research activities and the fact that the Research Strength model may not suit some discipline areas (e.g., Social Sciences and the Arts), a new level of research organisation at the University is proposed, URC Research Networks, with the University’s first Research Network: the Sonic Arts Research Network (SARN) led by Professor Greg Scheimer, Creative Arts recommended for funding.

Guidelines for URC Research Networks (and revisions to the existing URC Strategic Research Initiatives Guidelines) will be developed and presented to the URC for consideration at its next
meeting. Under this Scheme URC funding will be provided to enhance opportunities for bringing researchers together (eg, for UOW-based conferences, workshops, visiting scholars etc). The Chair advised that there were several possible Research Networks already under development: Energy Futures Network (Paul Cooper) and Social Innovation Network (Sara Dolnicar).

RESOLVED 09/06
That the University Research Committee:
1. Approve the recommended URC Research Strengths for the 2007-09 funding triennium.
2. Approve the recommended URC Research Network: Sonic Arts Research Network led by Professor Greg Scheimer.
3. Consider formal guidelines for URC Research Networks and Strategic Research Initiatives at its next meeting.

ACTION: Sharon Hughes

B4 Strategic Planning 2008-2010

The draft Research Strategic Plan for 2008-10 was tabled, with proposed revisions/additions from the 2005-07 plan highlighted in bold. Discussion on the draft Plan included:

- Considering establishment of joint research laboratories with multiple university/industry/international partners.
- Internationalisation of HDR student exchanges, to encourage UOW students to spend time overseas as part of their studies.
- Growing importance of benchmarking and quality, particularly for research students.
- In relation to editing and thesis outcomes:
  ▪ Need to establish pre-entry education level that suits our NESB research students.
  ▪ Criteria and guidelines to be developed for benchmarking theses of HDR students.

Feedback on the draft Plan should be forwarded to Sharon Hughes.

B5 Results of the 2005 Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire

Noted.

B6 Rhizome Magazine (Update)

Emily Ens spoke to the meeting on the new format for the Rhizome Magazine, that is about to move into its second issue. She thanked the URC for their support in funding and tabled the budget report. Positive feedback was received from members and suggestions were made re setting up subscription lists as a way of funding further issues. Interest had been expressed from some industry partners in being on a subscription list.
PART C – MATTERS FOR NOTING

C1  Matters from URC

C1.1 URC Small Grant Allocation for 2007

Noted.

C2  Matters from Thesis Committee

C2.1 Editing of HDR Theses
The Committee discussed the issue of editing of HDR theses referred by the TEC and considered the following options for improving thesis quality:
- Use of professional editors, however there was discussion as to whether this was appropriate or should be left to the student and supervisor.
- Inclusion of professional writing workshops in HDR training modules to emphasise the quality of writing throughout the process.
- Revising the supervisor sign-off form to be more explicit regarding the need to meet required standards.
- Possibility of establishing a working group on WUC and giving feedback to TEC.

RESOLVED (10/06)
That the Chair discuss options for improving thesis quality with Kim Roser.

ACTION: DVC(R), Kim Roser

C2.2 Thesis Committee Minutes

RESOLVED (11/06)
That the URC receive the minutes of the Thesis Committee meetings of 7 June 2006, 12 July 2006 and 9 August 2006.

ACTION: Julie King

PART D – NEXT MEETING AND OTHER BUSINESS

D1  Next meeting – 9.30 am, Wednesday, 6 December 2006, Kemira Rooms, Building 11.
The meeting closed at 10.30am.

ACTION ITEMS:

Action A2  L Clements to file previous URC minutes.
Action B3  S Hughes to advise Research Strength Directors of outcomes and prepare URC Research Network and SRI guidelines for next URC meeting.
Action C2.1 K Roser to discuss with Chair options for improving thesis quality.
Action C2.2 J King to file previous Thesis Committee minutes.

Signed as a true record  ......................................................
Chairperson            ../..../ 06