Minutes of meeting 04/07 of the University Research Committee held on 28 November 2007 at 3.00pm in Function Room 1, Building 20.

Present:
Prof L Astheimer (Acting Chair)

Dr A Aquilina  Ms S Hughes  Dr M Rix
Professor S Bouzerdoum  Professor D Iverson  A/Professor S Robinson
Professor J Chicharo  Professor S Jones  A/Professor G Rose
Dr T Coyle  Professor P Keller  Ms K Roser
Professor S Dodds  Dr M Lerch  Professor A Rozenfeld
Professor S Dolnicar  Professor R Lewis  Professor J Steele
Professor S Dou  Dr A Macris  A/Professor W Susilo
Professor B Ferry  Ms H Mandl  Professor L Tapsell
Ms J Green  A/Professor T Marchant  Ms T Tindall
Professor D Griffiths  A/Professor Y Mu  Professor C Woodroffe
A/Professor N Hudson  Professor W Ommundsen

Secretaries:
Susan McGaffin and Cheryl Jecht

PART A  PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A1  Welcome and Apologies
Apologies were received from Professor P Chandler, Professor C Cook, Professor P Crookes, Mr P Day, Mr K Finlayson, Professor J Glynn, Mr M Havryliv, Professor S Leitch, Professor L Lockyer, Professor L McNamara, Professor J Norrish, Professor A Schultz, Dr T Scrase, Professor G Spinks, Professor D Steel, Professor M Tsamenyi, Professor G Wallace, Professor A Wells and Professor R Whelan.

Dr A Aquilina was representing Professor M Walker, Ms J Green was representing Professor K Eagar and A/Professor W Susilo was representing Professor P Ogunbona.

A2  Arrangement of the Agenda
The following items were starred (*) for discussion:

B1  2008 ARC & NHMRC Results
B3  RQF Update
C1  Matters from University Research Standing Committee
A3  Business from the Last Meeting

A3.1  Minutes of the Previous Meeting (3 October 2007)

Resolved (15/07)
That the minutes of the University Research Committee meeting held on 3 October 2007 (03/07) be confirmed as a true record.
Action: Susan McGaffin

A4  Chair’s Business

A4.1  Senior Appointments/Vacancies
- Professor Noel Tate has been appointed as Professor of Surgery.
- An offer has been made to a candidate for the position of Professor of Economics.
- The new DVC(R) interviews were held Saturday 17 November with 6 candidates being interviewed. The successful applicant will be announced in January 2008 and will commence at the university by August 2008.

A4.2  General
- Professor Don Iverson and Professor Lee Astheimer have been working on the plans for the new Institute of Health and Medical Research. The plans involve the Printery being relocated to Unanderra and Phase 1 being built on that site. Phase 2 will involve the removal of Building 32 and it is expected that construction will commence in September/October 2008.
- Construction is progressing well at the Innovation Campus with the Central Services Building underway and more construction planned for next year with the Digital Media, Graduate School of Business and the Global Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention building to be erected.
- Craig Peden (Director, Corporate Relations) is currently in India investigating potential IT companies to invest in the Innovation Campus and reports moderate interest.
PART B GENERAL BUSINESS

B1.1 Fast Track HDR Scholarships
- A total of 450 scholarship applications were received which is 100 more than last year.
- UoW is offering places to 66 candidates: 36 APAs and 30 UPAs for international students.
- International and domestic scholarships were ranked within the same context and offers for international students were offered with fee waivers.
- The committee is looking at residual scholarships (currently 5) and the A/DVC(R) will seek additional scholarship funding from the Vice Chancellor.
- The fast track committee agreed that overall the quality of domestic students was down, with many students opting not to go onto higher degree research. Thus we are accepting more international students than ever before.
- Discussion ensued regarding the apparent collapse of the domestic sector this year and the need for the university to be more strategic about the way scholarships are allocated next year.
- Discussions required with Deans about how many fee waivers can be offered to international students.

B1.2 Endeavour Awards
- A paper was tabled outlining issues regarding Endeavour Awards.
  - The main issue is the lack of requirements for central management of these scholarship/fellowship applications at an institutional level, with individuals submitting their applications directly to the agency and organising arrangements for the exchange with the host institution themselves.
  - Committee members notes that successful Endeavour applicants have appeared without faculty knowledge and it is clear that there is no process of enrolment that is encumbent upon the students.
  - While the university wishes to encourage staff and students to apply for these Awards, their academic unit needs to be informed as well as the Research Services Office and Research Student Centre when they apply.
  - The Committee was advised that Glenn Withers, CEO of Universities Australia is planning to request DEST change the application process so that universities and supervisors are provided with more information.
  - In 2008 DEST also plans to undertake a travelling roadshow on the scheme to all universities.

B2 Research and Innovation Division Report
- A paper was tabled setting out:
  - key dates for submission of ARC Discovery and NHMRC Project grants for funding commencing in 2009.
  - significant changes to the Discovery Funding Rules. It was noted the rules now state that a proposal may not be submitted if it is essentially the same as an eligible proposal submitted in the DP funding round conducted in 2008 and that latter proposal was ranked in Group E in that earlier round.
B3  Research Quality Framework (RQF)

- The federal government intends to make significant changes to the RQF model with a more metric oriented model for assessing research quality. The new model will be debated during 2008 and hence implementation will be delayed.
- The Chair advised that the university is committed to completing the development of the quality component of its RQF evidence portfolios. The information collected during this process is extremely valuable and the portfolios will be given to the new DVC(R) and will also be used to assist in faculty research reviews during March/April 2008.
- A progress report on the implementation of the UOW RQF Project was tabled. The Committee noted the revised internal deadlines for the continued development of the RQF submissions, pending further government announcements.
- Heather Sainsbury, RQF Project Manager thanked everyone for their dedication and contributions to the project.

B4  Draft Research Core Function Plan Review 2007

Resolved (16/07)
That members provide comments on Parts 2 and 3 of the Draft Research Core Function Plan Review to Sharon Hughes by 7 December.
Action: Ms Sharon Hughes

PART C  MATTERS FROM UOW COMMITTEES FOR NOTING

C1  Matters from Thesis Committee

C1.1  Minutes from Thesis Committee Meeting

Resolved (17/07)
That the URC receive minutes of the Thesis Committee Meeting of 19 September and 17 October 2007.
Action: Ms J King

C1.2  Report from Thesis Committee

- Incomplete Examiners Reports

Resolved (18/07)
That the URC note the procedure of not accepting the examiner’s report form as the only response to a thesis examination. Unless a written report is also received the examiner’s report will not be accepted.
Action: A/Professor T Marchant, Ms K Roser
• **Criteria for Special Commendation**

The Committee considered the TEC’s new criteria (reproduced below) designed to help examiners decide if a thesis is worthy of special commendation.

"**COMMENDATION CRITERIA:**

The thesis is outstanding and I recommend it receives special commendation.

I commend this thesis because, in my discipline, it meets all three (3) criteria listed below:

1. a contribution to the field of study that is significant, in the sense of findings that are noteworthy, innovative and original; and;
2. suitable for publication in an esteemed book series or as a coherent series of articles in refereed journals; and;
3. amongst the best presented thesis I have examined in terms of structure, logical argument, and concise expression."

While the Committee approved of the practice, the TEC was requested to elevate the current criteria to ensure that they reflect the highest level of scholarly work in the relevant discipline. The following suggestions were made in discussion:

- **Point 1:** the adjectives “noteworthy, innovative and original” describe what is required for a standard thesis. In order to be suitable for a special commendation, theses must be of significantly higher quality than a standard thesis. Point 1 should be revised to elevate the terminology so that it refers to exceptional high quality scholarly work.

- **Point 2:** delete the words “series” and “coherent” ie “…suitable for publication in an esteemed book or as a series of articles in refereed journals of high repute …;”

- **Point 3:** amend “thesis” to “theses”.

**Resolved (19/07)**

It was resolved that:

- the TEC revise the Criteria for Special Commendations by incorporating the above feedback from the URC.
- the TEC consider mechanisms to formally recognise HDR students who achieve two Special Commendations for their theses (eg record on testamurs)

**Action:** A/Professor T Marchant, Ms K Roser
Cross-disciplinary thesis enrolment and examination

Resolved (19/07)
That Appendix A (First Interview Checklist) of the Code of Practice - Supervision be revised to discuss issues of cross-disciplinary thesis enrolment and examination.
Action: Ms K Roser

PART D NEXT MEETING AND OTHER BUSINESS

D1 Next meeting Wednesday, 11 June, 2008, 9.30am, Building 20 Lecture Theatre 5.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm

ACTION ITEMS:
ACTION A3 S McGaffin to file previous URC Minutes
ACTION B4 S Hughes to collate feedback on Draft Research Core Function Plan Review
ACTION C1.1 J King to file previous Thesis Committee Minutes.
ACTION C1.2 T Marchant & K Roser to action items arising from the Thesis Committee report

Signed as a true record ....................................................
Chairperson …/…/08