

**Extracts of the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Graduate Research held on
18 August 2006 at 2.00pm in the Meeting Room, Office of Research Services,
Sandy Bay**

Present:

Dr Kate Crowley, Acting Dean of Graduate Research, Chair
Prof Andrew Glenn, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Dr Anthony Koutoulis
Dr Diane Nicol

In attendance:

Ms Sara Franz, Secretary

1 Apologies

Prof Carey Denholm
Dr Natalie Moltschaniwskyj
Dr Mark Hovenden
Prof Jocelyn McPhie
Prof Judi Walker
Assoc Prof Margaret Barrett
Dr Elaine Stratford

Absent:

Mr Andrew Perry

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm “in-committee” as it was inquorate due to the large number of apologies and absent member.

As the meeting remained inquorate the discussion and recommendations from the Committee were forwarded to all Members for confirmation.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2006 and Extracts of the meeting held on
30 June 2006**

Members recommended that the minutes be taken as read and confirmed, subject to those present being amended to reflect Dr Diane Nicol being present from 1.30pm.

Supervisor Awards

The Board is interested in recognising excellence in supervision and supports the proposal. Members agreed that the process was streamlined and accountable. The Secretary noted that the timing and resource implications would need to be considered and discussed with the Academic Registrar.

The Board approved the recognition proposal from the Dean.

Changes to Candidature Management Procedure

Members were supportive of Prof Sale's comments and requested that absent members of the Board be asked to provide feedback immediately. The Board approved the CMP amendment as appropriate and the Secretary noted that the CMP needed to be finalised for implementation for the 2006 annual review.

IELTS and admission requirements

The paper was noted. The Secretary suggested that a report be prepared for the Board outlining current international applicant's IELTS prior to the Board making a recommendation to change UTAS' requirements. Dr Koutoulis suggested it would be useful to include information about international candidates who had completed and where their IELTS scores fell.

The Board approved the preparation of a report.

Graduate Certificate Teaching and Learning

The Acting Dean advised that this item satisfactorily concluded a matter that was raised at the meeting of 28 April 2006. The paper was noted incorporating views by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning).

Academic Registrar's Report

Review of student and academic services

The Academic Registrar provided Members with the background and context to the review. He noted that the terms of reference were at the draft stage, having been considered by Planning and Resources Committee for comment and requiring changes as a result of that process. The review was to be a broad portfolio review of student and academic services including the section as well as other areas of the University providing services including Faculties, Schools and International Services. An external, expert panel would be appointed. The Academic Registrar described the factors driving the need for review and described the business process review for GRU within this context as a self assessment.

The Acting Dean noted that members should provide feedback on the terms of reference for the review to the Academic Registrar immediately and no later than 25 August 2006.

Business Process Review (BPR)

The Academic Registrar discussed the business process review (BPR) within the context of the S&AS review as a self assessment review. He noted that the BPR aimed to address the pressing and immediate issues that had arisen over the past 18 months and specifically those issues that had been raised by the Dean of Graduate Research and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Academic Registrar asked the Secretary to elaborate on the detail of the BPR. The Secretary informed members that the BPR was aimed at improving workflows and administrative operations within the unit. She tabled a document outlining examples of the kind of business improvements that were already underway. These included international admission, annual reviews and supervisor registration. The Secretary described a "Schools" based model of service delivery that had been developed. The Board indicated its support for the model.

The Board encouraged feedback from members to be forwarded to the Secretary and encouraged members to also give feedback where they had experienced the GRU's business processes failing.

The Acting Dean noted that it was useful to have examples to which the review could be related. Board members are encouraged to forward business process issues to the Secretary.

Deans Report

Publications during Candidature

The Acting Dean noted that the Deputy Vice Chancellor had noted that Macquarie University requires candidates to publish during candidature. The Acting Dean suggested that this would be a useful issue for consideration at the BGR's annual retreat. Dr Koutoulis advised that some examiners complain that some thesis chapters have already been published. He suggested that it would be useful to provide examiners with information advising them that the University of Tasmania encourages its candidates to publish prior to submitting their thesis for examination. The Board approved inclusion of this issue as an item for its annual retreat.

Graduate Research Week

The Acting Dean advised members that Graduate Research Week is scheduled for 25 – 29 September 2006 and encouraged members to identify appropriate activities that are being held in their Schools to be included in the Program. It is intended that some skills programs, thesis writing and oral presentations, will be re-run to coincide with GR Week. Board members were particularly asked to support the Dean in the running of this week.

Completions

The Acting Dean advised that she had written to Heads of Schools noting prolonged candidatures within their Schools and suggesting ways forward. Eleven Schools had responded so far and provided favourable feedback. She also indicated that she will be working with the Staff Development Officer to develop a "Talking Heads" scenario based session for 2007 for Heads of School. Board members with challenging completion scenarios were asked to forward these to the Dean.

Supervision Load

The Acting Dean advised that she was developing a paper on supervision overload and its connection to completions. There are 617 registered supervisors at the University. At this stage there are three groups of overloaded supervisors, those between 8-12 EFTSU (8 supervisors), those between 7-8 EFTSU (6 supervisors), and those between 6-7 EFTSU (12 supervisors). Key issues include graduation record relative to historical load and the number of prolonged candidates per supervisor. This report for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will be used in supervision decision making and support.

'C' Meetings

The Acting Dean has continued to meet with candidates who received a 'C' rating on their annual review for 2006.

Communications

The Acting Dean advised that she had met several times with the Academic Registrar, Manager Student Centre and the Executive Officer Policy over the past two months. The last meeting included Laura Denholm, Manager of Research Services.

Cotutelle/Conjoint Arrangements

The Acting Dean advised that a framework was under consideration with Governance and Legal and that new policies would be reported to the Board's October meeting.

Elections/Senate representatives/Attendance

Elections will be run later in the year to ensure that newly elected members will have an opportunity to attend the extraordinary meeting of the Board scheduled for 1 December 2006. Academic Senate will have its representatives in place for the first meeting next year. Attendance at Board meetings will be included in the Annual Board report to Academic Senate.

Extraordinary Meeting

The Acting Dean foreshadowed an additional meeting of the Board to be held on 1 December 2006. The purpose the meeting would be to deal with additional business arising between meetings of October 2006 and February 2007 as well as a welcome and orientation meeting for new members. Board members are to indicate their availability to the Secretary.

Load

The Secretary referred members to the load report and identified that load remained around 37 EFTSL below target and that this had not changed since the previous meeting. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) noted that while it was below target, these were ambitious growth targets. It was the opinion of the PVC(R) that distribution, rather than numbers, was the issue.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) Report

Prof Glenn reported that the major news is that the Development Advisory Group, the body responsible for the Research Quality Framework (RQF) had released a paper on guiding principles for the RQF. He advised that the paper contained a number of very sensible recommendations including:

- The team to be assessed is the team under consideration on the day, provided that the researcher commenced by 31 March 2007 then their entire prior six year record will be included. This has resolved the contentious debate about who owned the publications record.
- No longer relying only on latest four publications, but can include prior research.
- Eligibility will be left to the institutions to advise on groupings. Researchers will be deemed to be research active if they are both publishing and supervising. Everyone who is research active must be named, but universities may name but not include those who are research active.
- The focus will be on four digit RFCD codes, but for a minimum group of ten, because of the notion that it is difficult to compare a group of fifty with a group of ten.
- There will be 1500 units of assessment with a subset being referred to an external assessor for individual assessment and validation.

Prof Glenn noted that most changes were sensible, but that some would prove difficult for smaller institutions and for some specific RFCD codes. He noted that there may be some particular difficulties for Chemistry and Engineering in relation to RFCD codes for minimum groups of ten.

Prof Glenn indicated that the underlying agenda is likely to be an audit of research active universities, and that the whole process would be likely to result in a transfer of around 15% of the available funding. A redistribution of funds would be likely to benefit those institutions that are differentiated.

Graduate Research Unit Report

The Board noted the report. Prof Glenn questioned whether the Secretary considered that the allocation of 0.4 fractional appointment was manageable within the context of the EDGE agenda, increasing scholarship numbers and budget and the increasing complexity of Graduate Research. The Secretary commented that she had taken up the position at a difficult time and had considerable change that she intended to implement and that she was managing while at the same time working across a number of other projects. She suggested that it would be better to consider the question in around three months time when some of the efficiencies of the BPR were being felt.

The Board noted the completions and the Acting Dean indicated that numbers seemed on track. She noted that a move to School based reports for monitoring examinations would be useful. The Secretary indicated that she would review what was available and see if a School based monitoring system could be implemented in the short term. Prof Glenn noted that oral defences would resolve outstanding examinations and expedite completions. The Acting Dean advised members that she had attended two vivas at the Conservatorium of Music and commented favourably on the process.

Annual Review

The Acting Dean advised that the paper based system would be used as a stop gap measure for 2006, with the aim of developing a better system for 2007. Members supported the timing including the due date of 30 September 2006, but requested that the documents be circulated for final approval prior to implementation on 28 August 2006.

Change of Nomenclature

The Board endorsed the change in nomenclature from Master of Architecture (March) to Master of Architecture (Research) (March(Res)). The Board resolved to recommend the change to the Academic Senate.

National Code of Responsible Research Practice

The Acting Dean indicated that the Manager of the Office of Research Services had suggested that members should be aware of this information. The Acting Dean also drew to members attention that the code needed to cover clauses involving National Security. The Board noted that a Committee of the Research College Board is working on a compliance code.

Decisions of this meeting

The Acting Dean advised that as the meeting had remained inquorate, the discussion and recommendations made by it should be forwarded to all members for comment. She further noted that should no comment be received from members by 25 August, then the decisions would be adopted as decisions of the Board.

Pro Vic-Chancellor of Research

The Acting Dean noted that this meeting was the last for the retiring Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Andrew Glenn. She commended his efforts in promoting graduate research at the University of Tasmania in the expansion of its scholarship program in particular.