

## **BOARD OF GRADUATE RESEARCH MEETING BGR5**

Extracts of the Minutes of a meeting held at 1.10pm to 4.00pm on Friday 20 October 2006, in the Meeting Room, Office of Research Services, Sandy Bay

**Members:** Professor Carey Denholm, Dean of Graduate Research  
Professor Allan Canty, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)  
Professor Judi Walker, Deputy Chair Academic Senate  
Associate Professor Margaret Barrett  
Dr Kate Crowley, (Deputy Dean), Elected Member  
Dr Mark Hovenden, Elected Member  
Dr Anthony Koutoulis, Elected Senate Member  
Professor Jocelyn McPhie, Elected Senate Member  
Dr Natalie Moltschaniwskyj, Elected Member  
Dr Dianne Nicol, Elected Member  
Dr Elaine Stratford, Elected Member  
Mr Andrew Perry, TUPA Representative

**Secretary:** Ms Sara Franz, Student Centre

**In attendance:** Mr Chris Carstens, Academic Registrar was in attendance for item 4

The meeting commenced at 1.20pm.

### **Apologies and Welcome**

There were no apologies. The Dean welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Dr Crowley for undertaking the role of Dean during his absence. The Dean congratulated Prof Canty on being awarded a LEIF and Discovery grant, Assoc Prof Margaret Barrett on her recent Carrick Award, and Dr Mark Hovenden for being awarded a Discovery grant.

### ***IELTS Scores***

A number of members queried the utility of IELTS and other scores in relation to their validity, reliability and predictability. Different disciplines have different needs and that IELTS entry scores do not equate to exit scores, and rather than using scores to prevent entry, the Board should consider how to develop research pathways to move candidates forward.

The Board noted the report.

### **Academic Registrar's Report**

#### ***Post VSU Arrangements***

Mr Carstens provided an outline of the arrangements being put in place at UTAS following the passing of the Commonwealth Government's Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) legislation. The passing of VSU has resulted in a loss of \$2 million in fee income for the student bodies. The university is establishing a trust fund to

support perpetual funding for student services across four areas: representation, advocacy, orientation and retention. He advised that separate arrangements were in place for licences for the commercial activities. Council will be considering a proposal for funding under a service agreement arrangement. Prof Canty noted that the arrangements had been received well by Council and in his view compared very favourably with other Universities.

Mr Perry advised that TUPA is seeking an explicit contribution to guarantee funding for an honorarium for the TUPA President. Mr Carstens responded that an amount had been included in the “representation” service description to recognise the leadership role and that the funding under this description did not preclude honoraria.

### ***Legislation Reference Group***

In consultation with the Director of Governance and Legal the Registrar is establishing a legislation reference group to undertake a holistic review of the various legislation concerning applicants, students and research candidates. The reference group would include academic, student and Board representation as well as Governance and Legal. The reference group was raised for the information of the Board, but also for the Board to consider an appropriate representative.

The Dean advised that this would be an opportunity to amalgamate Rules 4 and 5.

## **5 Dean’s Report**

### ***Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies meeting 13 and 14 November and Graduate Research Coordinators Day 10 November***

The Dean informed the board of these two significant events and noted that Professor Alan Lawson (UQ) would be attending the Graduate Research Coordinators Day prior to the DDOGS to conduct a session on thesis examination.

### ***Supervising Doctorates Downunder***

The Dean reported that 900 copies had sold to date and a sequel was underway.

### ***Digital Thesis Project***

The Dean noted this item was considered by the Research College Board at its meeting of 2 October 2006. The College supported mandatory submission of theses in digital format. The Dean noted that the authority of access applies to digitally submitted theses in the same way as it does to bound copies, allowing all or part of the thesis to be embargoed.

The Dean read out a proposed rule change from the University Librarian.

The Board endorsed the rule change subject to it being amended to “The electronic copy of the thesis shall be in the form prescribed by the Board.”

### ***Rule 4 and Rule 5***

The Dean noted that rules 4 and 5 were approved by the Senate at its meeting held on 15 September 2006 and were available on the web. He noted that the new rule 5 simplified the supervisory terms. The Dean noted that the implementation of the Rules would be delayed to apply to new candidates commencing after 1 January 2007. Where there is a change in the supervision team during candidature new supervision arrangements would apply. All candidatures currently having a single supervisor will be reviewed.

### ***Current Workshops***

The Dean reported that he was currently conducting a number of workshops including supervisor induction, orientation and threshold concepts and that these had been delivered at Rural Health, the Conservatorium of Music, TAFI and Engineering and as general offerings to current research candidates

### ***BGR Complaints panel***

The Dean noted that he was required to nominate eight members to the Board of Graduate Research Complaints panel.

### ***Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (2005)***

The Dean advised the Board that the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (2005) was available. He noted that the consistent theme across all areas was a low rating in “intellectual environment”. Dr Moltschaniwskyj queried what can be done from a student perspective to improve candidates’ experience of their intellectual environment. Dr Stratford noted the importance of place-making and encouraged all Members to attend the release of the University Masterplan.

The Dean drew attention to his paper “*Promoting intellectual and emotional climate*” and undertook to circulate it to staff and to post it on the web.

### ***Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS)***

The Commercialisation Training Scheme, an initiative of the Commonwealth government to promote training in commercialisation and research management, was outlined. UTAS is developing a Graduate Certificate course that may be offered through the Faculty of Business with some units possibly offered through the Faculty of Law.

### ***Load Activity Report***

The load reports were tabled for information.

### ***Vice-Chancellor (Research) Report***

#### ***Research Funding***

Prof Canty advised that the Research College Board has discussed allocation options for IGS funds and is considering a new scheme where initially \$100,000 of IGS funds would be directed specifically to new staff members using a relatively simple application process. Criteria for assessing applications would be based on the RQF grouping and agreements would be reached for successful staff to have a reduced teaching load in their first year. The scheme would be a mentoring process in

teaching and research and not directed toward staff with existing substantial support. The proposal will go to the next meeting of Senate.

### ***ICT Funding***

Prof Canty informed the Board that the ICT centre is to be managed by the CSIRO at its marine laboratories and that CSIRO was looking to share supervision of graduate research candidates with UTAS. He informed the Board that opportunities under this arrangement are not restricted to computing candidates, but will include other candidates who need innovation in their research data.

### ***Acknowledgement of the Board of Graduate Research***

Prof Canty acknowledged the important work of the Board, as a sub-committee of the Academic Senate, and thanked members for their contribution.

## **Deputy Chair (Academic Senate) Report**

### ***Elections – Academic Senate***

Professor Walker informed the Board that the Chair and Deputy Chair of Academic Senate were elected unopposed. She noted that the nominations for the Dean and Head of School representatives on the Standing Academic Committee had proceeded to election as more than one person had nominated in each case.

### ***Senate Planning Day***

Prof Walker advised the Board that the last Senate meeting had included a planning session. Prof Walker noted that the small group discussions worked well. Prof Walker encouraged members to give feedback and make suggestions as to how it could work better in the future.

## **9Graduate Research Unit Report**

The Dean drew members' attention to the urgent issue of completions, noting that there is slightly over two months before the end of the year and only 93 completions recorded for the year target is 160 completions for 2006. The PVC(R) will write to Heads of School and GRC's about the urgency of this matter.

## **Tasmania Postgraduate Association Report**

Mr Perry advised that TUPA are awaiting a new funding model under the new post VSU arrangements. He advised that the new President of TUPA was Rachel Anderson and that she was elected unopposed.

## **Honours Paper**

Mr Perry spoke to the paper prepared by Jon Sumbly. He noted that the paper reflected a very small sample of candidates' experience; and that the experiences did not reflect the experience of Honours students across all Faculties and all Schools. He did note that there is a common feeling amongst Honours students that they are neither a part of the undergraduate nor the postgraduate student body. The item would be discussed at the Graduate Coordinators Day.

## **Conjoint and Cotutelle Arrangements**

The Dean provided the background to this item, and noted that it had been presented to the Board previously. An amendment to rule 4 to include a new clause 9.2 was approved as follows:

9.2 Where a candidate is admitted under a Conjoint or Cotutelle arrangement, candidature arrangements must comply with the formal, institutional written agreement.

## **Bologna Agreement**

The Dean informed the Board that only 27 of the current international candidates were from countries that were signatories to Bologna and relevant issues are: the implication for masters candidates in relation to conjoint arrangements and mobility difficulties for Australian doctoral candidates undertaking study without the relevant masters degree. The annual report to Academic Senate would include a reference to implications for the Bologna Agreement.

## **Research Active Supervision - strategy for recording supervision and load**

The Dean informed that the Research College Board has requested a paper that defined research active supervision in relation to load and completions. Issues raised were as follows: (1) whether all supervisors would be credited with the completion if they were all involved for the full duration of the candidature, (2) 60% is not a necessarily fair distinction, particularly where a supervisor is engaged for the second half of the candidature leading to preparation and submission of the thesis, (3) small Schools may be disadvantaged as they would be unlikely to have the load to support the taxonomy, (4) need to add a fifth clause to each stage giving the option of a combination of all four activities, (5) supervising candidate(s) who have “satisfactorily completed at least two years (EFT) and met all the requirements of their candidature” does not work for Masters candidates and perhaps should be reworded to indicate doctoral candidature. A revised document will be prepared and sent to Heads of School for comment.

## **Supervisor Roles**

This paper had been rewritten and updated to explain the new arrangements and was endorsed. Members felt that the paper provided clear definitions and was a welcome clarification for the new arrangements. It was confirmed that a supervisor not employed by the University can still be a registered supervisor.

## **Procedures of Graduate Research**

The Dean explained each of the proposed changes to the procedures. He particularly drew attention to the inclusion of clause 22 concerning examination. The Dean informed Members that this clause was a baseline in compliance with national best practice. Members confirmed that informing examiners of the outcome of examination as well as providing for the exchange of reports was desirable and likely to improve the quality of examinations. Dr Hovenden noted the Academic Registrar’s report, which indicated a resource cost associated with implementation, but that the benefits outweighed any cost. The Secretary commented that the information provided by the Academic Registrar was to ensure the Board made an informed

decision and was aware of the implications, including resource implications, associated with its decision.

The Board approved the changes to the formal procedures.

### **Confirmation of Candidature**

The proposal was discussed and endorsed to be sent to HOS for comment. Issues raised included the following: urging early writing is positive however within specific schools (eg. CODES) there was an existing practice of internal review, candidates who did not meet the required standard would have their candidature terminated and their scholarship funding would be returned to the pool for allocation, the increased role of the GRC, that confirmation be applied to candidates “AND” their supervisors.

### **Annual Review**

Dr Stratford raised this item for discussion, particularly in relation to the timing of the review and the clash with the semester two, undergraduate examination period. Some members expressed a preference for annual reviews to coincide with the anniversary of the commencement of candidature, some suggested a different time in the year. A discussion about the on-line vs. manual system included a variety of viewpoints and the participation rate. Members were encouraged to use the Board as a forum to create the type and form of annual review they believed was most appropriate.