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## Academic Board Minutes

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### **Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2 pm on Wednesday 12 November 2008 in the Professorial Board Room**

There were present: the Chair (Professor B Sutton) presiding, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Dr M Spence), the Chairs of the Standing Committees (Professors B Bennett, S Kable and J Trehwella, Associate Professors P McCallum and G Ryan), Professors A Aspromourgos, J Brien, A Boyd, M Crossley, W Julian, C Murphy, B Paltridge, K Trigwell Associate Professors A Bashford, M Boughton, C Collyer, R Ewing, A Fekete, M Halliwell, A Holland, T Masters, N O'Dwyer and A Twomey, Drs T Anthony, D Auld, J Callen, S Cox, K Cramer, S Cumming, L Cutcher, M Fisher, B Jones, J Hanrahan, S Mansfield, K Nelson, S Ronaldson, L Scanlon, M-A Schnabel, T Schofield and J Slapeta, Mr P Ball, Ms M Fairskye, Mr S Greenland, Ms J Henderson, Ms P Kamvounias, Ms N Legge-Wilkinson, Ms J Mooney and Mr N White (for Ms K Laing).

Also present: Secretary of the Academic Board (Dr M Edmond, Acting Registrar).

Present as observers: Mr M Charet and Ms A Griffiths (Secretariat), Ms L Rose (Provost's Office) and Ms R Kumar (SUPRA).

In attendance: Ms M Kemmis (Executive Officer to the Academic Board).

★ **1. Apologies**

The Board noted that apologies had been received from: Professors M Adams, C Armour, D Armstrong, A Brewer, S Clarke, A Coats, E Cowley, D Day, R Jeremy, G Llewellyn, A McBratney, D Nutbeam, C Rhodes, G Triggs (Professor B McDonald attending in her stead), K Walker, J White and P Wolnizer, Associate Professors A Jamalipour, S Newberry and M Walton, Drs G Castillo, F Collyer, R Gibson, C Grupen, N Gurr, D Hibbs, I Odeh and R Stanton, Ms C Blomley, Mr J Conomos, Mr A McLeod, Ms C McNally, Ms R Santos, Mr J Shipp, Ms L-M Syron, Mr N Ware and Mr G Weary.

★ **2. Arrangement of agenda**

★ **2.1 Starring of items**

Members of the Board were invited to star for discussion any unstarred items. The following items were starred: 9.1, 9.2 10.2.1.2, 15.1.3.

**2.2 Adoption of unstarred items**

**Resolution 263/08**

That the Academic Board resolve as recommended with respect to all unstarred items.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolution 264/08**

That the Academic Board adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2008, as a true record.

**4. Business arising from Minutes (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

★ **5. Discussion Topic**

**5.1 Principles for Special Consideration**

The Chair advised members that he was looking for ways to improve the quality of discussion at the Academic Board's meetings. Today's discussion topic was one model that could be used, where papers would be brought forward for discussion rather than presentation. He added that the Board's standing committees often grappled with large and complex issues, and that it would be useful to obtain the Board's feedback on such issues before finalising any policy proposals.

With regard to the principles for Special Consideration, the Chair stressed that this was not a policy document. He added that he was seeking feedback from Board members as to whether or not the Assessment Working Party was heading in the right direction with the drafting of these principles. The Working Party would then use the feedback from the Board to develop policy based on the principles. He suggested working through each principle in the document.

**Principle 1:** Assessment is solely of student achievement of designated learning outcomes.

Associate Professor Fekete expressed concern that this principle effectively made the timeliness of submitting assessments, and thus the granting of extensions to students, a non-issue. He warned that this could create problems. The Chair countered that this principle sought to describe the academic purpose of assessment.

**Principle 2:** The purpose of Special Consideration is to provide a process to students who have experienced a limitation on their ability due to illness or misadventure, that allows them, when they are fully capable, to demonstrate achievement of designated learning outcomes.

Professor Bennett questioned the phrase "fully capable", asking when this would occur if the student had a chronic illness. The Chair advised that this was covered under principle 11.

**Principle 3:** We assume that students making claims for Special Consideration are of good intent and the process is to support them. We assume that any students seeking to gain an unfair advantage at any assessment will not succeed.

Associate Professor Masters suggested that the second sentence should be considered in terms of the implications for how academics deal with Special Consideration claims.

**Principle 4:** We identify the existence of both major and minor claims for Special Consideration. We define minor claims as being related to assessment worth 10% or less of the total value of the unit and it not being the final assessment.

Associate Professor Boughton advised that the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery had discussed this proposed principle in depth, and that the Faculty argued against the use of percentages to determine the division between major and minor claims. The Chair asked whether the Faculty was uncomfortable with recognising minor claims or the use of percentages, and was advised that both issues were of concern. Mr White advised that the SRC supported this principle. He noted that Principle 5 clarified the situations in which a claim would be major rather than minor, and might replace the need for a percentage value.

Members debated the percentage value, with some arguing for a higher value to encourage matters to be dealt with informally, and others arguing that all applications should be dealt with centrally to help identify students having problems. The Chair noted that Principle 12 recommended linking regular requests for Special Consideration to the Board's policy on students at risk. Members also discussed cases involving final examinations and barrier assessments, with Associate Professor Collyer pointing out the Assessment Working Party had agreed that such assessments would be excluded from minor claims.

**Principle 5:** Minor claims requiring Special Consideration:

The claim is established by agreement with the lecturer associated with the assessment. The basis of the request needs to be presented responsibly and with as much independent evidence as possible provided. The claim may be initially negotiated verbally but, to be valid, the agreement of both parties must be recorded, for example, by exchange of emails. The correspondence requesting the consideration must contain the case for consideration.

An important element is that other students are not to be disadvantaged by the approval of this request.

In general the consideration given will be an extension of up to one week. If longer extensions are necessary, the request will be treated as a major claim. If a minor claim is not accepted by the lecturer, the student can submit a major claim.

Professor Fekete suggested that records should be saved centrally, particularly emails and the Chair agreed, adding that emails could be saved to files on the University's records system, TRIM. The Vice-Chancellor raised the issue of a student making minor claims with a range of faculties or academics, and asked how the University could ensure such students received consistent responses to their claims. The Chair advised that Principle 12 would apply in such cases.

Professor Bennett argued against introducing too much paperwork for minor claims, adding that academics could identify cases where a student's request is likely to have an impact across a range of units of study. She supported the concept of an holistic approach. The Chair added that workload and privacy issues would need to be considered.

Members also discussed how the informal manner of dealing with minor claims would be balanced with formal processes and how the University would deal with student perceptions that some students received better treatment (in relation to minor claims) than others. The Chair clarified that this principle acknowledged there were cases that could be dealt with on a one-to-one basis, with a simple record kept of any agreement. Mr Greenland expressed support for this concept, noting that one faculty had introduced mandatory paperwork for all claims, with students complaining the process was unnecessarily formal for simple requests, such as an extra day for submitting an assignment.

**Principle 6:** Major claims requiring Special Consideration:

- 6.1 Adequate supporting written evidence is required.
  - 6.1.1 Not all applications for Special Consideration require a medical certificate. These should be sought only when a definitive identification of a health issue and its impact on the student can be provided by the health professional.<sup>1</sup>
  - 6.1.2 Medical Certificates will be issued in accordance with the guidelines of the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the NSW Medical Practitioners Board.<sup>2</sup>
  - 6.1.3 In the case of an illness or other misadventure which cannot be attested to by a health professional, a Statutory Declaration should be provided by the student.
  - 6.1.4 In other cases, appropriate documentation may suggest itself.
  - 6.1.5 An academic in the Faculty will make a judgement as to whether the evidence provided by the student indicates that the student's ability to complete that assessment was impaired.

The term assessment includes not only the submission of a completed work or the completion of an exam, but the ability to prepare for it immediately beforehand.

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<sup>1</sup> Medical certificates are legal documents. Medical Practitioners who deliberately issue a false, misleading or inaccurate certificate could face disciplinary action under the relevant Medical Practitioners' Act (or its equivalent). Medical practitioners may also expose themselves to civil or criminal legal action. Medical practitioners can assist their patients by displaying a notice to this effect in their waiting rooms. [No 5: *The Responsibilities of Medical Practitioners*, AMA Position Statement: Certificates Certifying Illness – 1998]

<sup>2</sup> Certificates must be dated on the day on which they were written. Under no circumstances can this be breached. There may be medical conditions which enable the medical practitioner to certify that a period of illness occurred prior to the date of examination. Medical practitioners need to give careful consideration to the circumstances before issuing a certificate certifying a period of illness prior to the date of examination, particularly in relation to patients with a minor short illness which is not demonstrable on the day of examination and add supplementary remarks, where appropriate, to explain any discrepancy. [No 9.1 *Date of Certificate*, AMA Position Statement: Certificates Certifying Illness – 1998]

If a medical practitioner cannot demonstrate any clinical evidence of the condition with which the patient claims to have suffered, the practitioner should consider completing a letter of support. [No 9.1 *Date of Certificate*, AMA Position Statement: Certificates Certifying Illness – 1998]

- 6.2 There should be a period in which the completed Special Consideration claim should be submitted. The student may seek to have that period extended and the Faculty will not unreasonably deny that claim for extension so that both parties have a responsibility for managing that extension.
- 6.3 When Special Consideration is granted, in most cases the appropriate action is to allow another attempt at the assessment. The Faculty shall be responsible for setting the date of any subsequent attempt of the assessment. The student may seek to have that date amended and the Faculty will not unreasonably deny that claim for amendment so that both parties have a responsibility for managing that amendment.
- 6.4 For successful claims during semester, there may be circumstances where an extension of time to submit work is appropriate but this extension must not provide an unfair advantage over other students.

The Chair particularly drew members' attention to 6.1.3 adding that this principle acknowledges that a medical certificate may not always be the appropriate documentation. He also highlighted 6.1.4 which adds that other forms of documentation may be appropriate in some cases.

Professor Fekete highlighted the reference to "the faculty" in both Principles 6 and 10 and suggested this be further defined as "the faculty where the relevant unit of study is taught". He agreed that there should be consistency of approach within units of study but questioned whether it was possible or desirable to attempt consistency across all units of study.

With respect to 6.1.3, Professor Masters suggested it be reworded to ensure that statutory declarations were not used in place of more appropriate documentation. Concern was expressed by some members that students could use statutory declarations in preference to seeing a doctor, with the Vice-Chancellor pointing out that a good health professional can identify and assist students with emotional and other problems. Mr Greenland argued in support of the clause, adding that there are a variety of reasons why students can not visit a doctor, and that this was a useful fall-back position. Mr White argued that the principle should be considered in conjunction with Principle 3, and that academics should also be involved in identifying students with ongoing problems. The Chair undertook to take this back to the working party for further work.

Professor Bennett also suggested combined 6.3 and 6.4, with extensions to be the desired outcome wherever possible.

**Principle 7:** For successful claims made prior to, during or immediately after an end-of-semester assessment, typically an examination, a further assessment counts as though it were the first attempt and the original attempt is discarded.

A student may withdraw such a claim up until the release of the results for that assessment. The student may seek

academic advice regarding this but not from any academic associated with the assessment.

Recognising that a claim for Special Consideration does not guarantee that the claim will be accepted, general advice to students able to attempt the assessment is to do so, irrespective of whether a claim is lodged.

Professor Fekete suggested there could be problems with the application of this principle. He advised that the School of Information Technologies had amended its local policy to stop students from submitting Special Consideration claims if they had already sat the relevant examination. The Chair advised that this was not in line with the Board's policy, and also expressed concern that the local policy implied that all claims submitted by students who did not sit the examination would be approved by default. Professor Masters added that this would force academics to make a medical judgement, one they were not necessarily qualified to make. Professor Fekete advised that the policy had been introduced to address the problem of large numbers of students submitting claims following examinations simply because they felt they had not prepared enough for the examination. Dr Auld clarified that this was not the policy of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies in general, only of the School of Information Technology.

With regard to replacement examinations, Dr Cramer brought up the issues faced in the School of Languages and Cultures. Language units of study, in particular, used a system of continuous assessment. The current policy's emphasis on providing replacement test papers was creating workload issues for academics in this School, and she asked if any thought was being given to finding other solutions. The Chair advised that the Assessment Working Party was looking at workload issues and would take this into account.

Members also discussed the provision for students to withdraw a claim. Mr Greenland pointed out that the Working Party had deliberated included "up until the release of the results" to discourage students from waiting to see how they had done at their first attempt before making a decision to withdraw their claim. The Vice-Chancellor expressed concern at the amount of stress making such a decision might place on students.

**Principle 8:** Replacement exams should assess the same skills and knowledge, with appropriate preparation, irrespective of the form of assessment.

Members noted this principle without further comment.

**Principle 9:** If a student, with good reason, is unable to complete a second assessment, there must be some further assessment process, with the limit that the taking of further assessment does not negatively impact on the subsequent semester's instruction and study.

With respect to Principles 8 and 9, we recognise that there may be circumstances where third or subsequent attempts at assessment will not be viable, due to, for example, barrier considerations or the inability of the Faculty to construct a valid form of assessment.

The Chair added that he was not sure how the University could address this issue, with Professor Fekete suggesting that Principle 8, as well as 9, should apply to all assessments, not just examinations.

**Principle 10:** All claims for Special Consideration should be managed in the same manner, so that students are assured of a consistent response to claims across the university.

The Chair noted that Principle 10 had previously been discussed.

**Principle 11:** Students with persistent illness or other problems should be managed through Disability Services, whose judgement will form the basis of an assessment process that provides an assessment effectively on the same basis as for unaffected students. There is no prohibition on a student registered with Disability Services from making a claim for Special Consideration appropriate to the circumstances.

The Chair added that students should be encouraged to register with Disability Services where appropriate, and invited Dr Edmond to speak further on this point. Dr Edmond clarified that Disability Services specifically deals with students who have a disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and recommended the principle be amended to include this information. She stressed that staff and students needed to be clear about the circumstances under which Disability Services will register a student, and that students need to provide adequate documentation to support registration. She further advised that Disability Services consults in depth with academic staff to identify reasonable ways in which course requirements can be amended to take into account students' disabilities, and where core requirements might reasonably be beyond the capacity of any given student with a disability.

The Vice-Chancellor queried how such arrangements worked with progression rules, and at what point would the University have to say that no further special consideration could be provided to a student. Dr Edmond agreed this could be a problem, particularly where students received DNFs (Discontinued – not to count as failure) rather than Fails. She recommended taking a pastoral approach, and acknowledging there are times when it is not helpful to allow students to continue their studies if they have little chance of succeeding.

**Principle 12:** A consistent pattern of claims for special consideration, both minor and major, may be an indicator of a student at academic risk.

The Chair noted that Principle 12 had previously been discussed, but pointed out the useful connection to the Board's policy on students at risk.

Professor Masters asked that, when the principles and draft policy returned to the Academic Board, a statement be provided on the hierarchy of the various rules, regulations and policies related to Special Consideration.

The Chair thanked members for their input and advised that further information on this issue would be submitted to the Board in 2009.

#### **Resolution 265/08**

That the Academic Board note the discussion on principles for Special Consideration.

★ 6. **Report of the Chair**

6.1 **Report on Senate matters**

6.1.1 **Report of the Senate meeting held on 3 November 2008**

The Chair asked members to note the report of the Senate meeting held on 3 November 2008.

**Resolution 266/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on academic matters considered by Senate at its meeting of 3 November 2008.

6.2 **Honours and Distinctions**

The Board noted and congratulated by acclamation the recipients of honours and distinctions, as set out in the agenda.

**Resolution 267/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on the honours and distinctions and congratulate the recipients, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* Chair of the Academic Board to write to recipients congratulating them on their honours and distinctions.

6.3 **General Report**

6.3.1 **Appointment of Acting Chair**

The Chair advised members that he would be on leave for the next week and wanted to formally recognise the Deputy Chair as Acting Chair for the period of this leave. Members voted in favour of the appointment, with Associate Professor McCallum abstaining from the vote.

**Resolution 268/08**

That the Academic Board approve the appointment of Associate Professor Peter McCallum to the position of Acting Chair of the Academic Board for the period 17 November to 7 December, as set out in the report presented.

6.3.2 **Academic Board Forum**

The Chair advised that he would mention this matter under the report of the Research and Research Training Committee.

6.3.3 **Academic Board Membership: Filling of Casual Vacancy**

The Chair asked members to formally approve the appointment of Professor Peters for 2009, and to acknowledge Dr Gurrans' contribution to the Board. Members approved both motions.

**Resolution 269/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the appointment of Professor Alan Peters to fill the casual vacancy among elected academic staff members from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning for the period 1 January to 31 December 2009, and
- (2) acknowledge Dr Gurrans' membership of the Academic Board as set out in the report presented.

★ 7. **Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

7.1 **Report on Senate Matters**

7.1.1 **Report of the Senate meeting held on 4 August 2008**

The Vice-Chancellor asked members to note the report of the Senate meeting of 4 August 2008

**Resolution 270/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on matters considered by Senate at its meeting held on 3 November 2008.

7.2 **General report**

7.2.1 **Foundation Plus**

The Vice-Chancellor advised members that this item referred to “Foundation Plus”, not “SydneyPlus” as listed on the agenda. He reminded members that the University had been researching the possibility of establishing the “Sydney College”, noting that at the core of this proposal had been the issue of the range of non-degree offerings at the University (i.e. the Centre for Continuing Education courses, the Foundation program, the Centre for English Teaching and a variety of continuing professional education courses). He added that there was currently no clear quality control for such courses. A related issue is the level of duplication of effort in servicing and providing such courses, and the College project had, in part, investigated whether there was an advantage to the University in providing a central system for these courses.

The University’s contract with Taylor’s College, which currently offers the Foundation Program, was up for renewal. The contract had been extended a further year to the end of 2009 to allow time to investigate how the Foundation Program fits in with the University’s other offerings. The Vice-Chancellor stressed that these investigations were exploratory at this stage, and while acknowledging that some areas of the University were protective of their current non-degree offerings he stated the need for the University to address this issue as a community. He added that Professor Brewer was currently seeking information on each faculty’s non-award offerings and any faculty-specific issues and concerns. He stressed that any proposal to offer such courses more centrally would not lead to faculties losing the income they currently generated from such courses. The main issues to be addressed are quality control, duplication of services and whether any infrastructure savings could be achieved by centralising, for example, the marketing of such courses and course bookings.

Professor Fekete pointed out that some of the initial discussions on the College Project had raised concerns that staff employed by the proposed College would be teaching-only and on substandard contracts. He sought the Vice-Chancellor’s assurances that any such proposals were no longer under consideration. The Vice-Chancellor assured him that such proposals were not being considered and reiterated that any centralisation of non-award offerings would not be done simply to generate funds for the centre. He acknowledged that most of the staff currently involved in offering such courses were not research active, but he stressed that the main driver for this proposal was a need to ensure the quality of all the University’s courses, whether award or non-award.

**Resolution 271/08**

That the Academic Board note the Vice-Chancellor's report on Foundation Plus, as set out in the report presented.

**7.2.2 SydneyTalent**

The Vice-Chancellor advised members that Senate had approved the full introduction of the SydneyTalent program, following the successful pilot scheme.

**Resolution 272/08**

That the Academic Board note the Vice-Chancellor's report on SydneyTalent, as set out in the report presented.

**7.2.3 Work Slate**

The Vice-Chancellor stated that a revised version of the Work Slate had been developed and would now be distributed for consultation via an all-staff email. The email will include a link to a website outlining the Work Slate, with an invitation to provide feedback on individual projects or the Work Slate as a whole. He had been asked how the Work Slate related to the University's Strategic Plan and he advised that each project had been linked to a section of the plan. All the projects on the Work Slate fit into the current Strategic Plan and should also relate to the 2011-2013 plan.

He added that he was also asked if he had a particular model of the University in mind. He stressed that his model was not expressed in terms of a destination the University should reach, but of the processes it should use to reach its goal of being an excellent research and teaching university. Some strategic decisions were required on the University's future size and shape, but he wanted the University to become better at holding wide-spread conversations amongst the University community on such issues before these decisions were made.

In terms of the revised Work Slate, he stated that each project either was currently underway or was an issue that the University as whole had agreed was important. Some items would provide quick wins, while other issues were more intractable; some projects would be carried out internally while others would require external consultation. He added that a project template was currently being developed for each item on the Work Slate.

**Resolution 273/08**

That the Academic Board note the Vice-Chancellor's report on the development of the Work Slate, as set out in the report presented.

★ **8. Question time**

Professor McCallum noted that, as itemised in the report from Senate, Senate has established an Emissions Reduction Working Group and pointed out that it was important, for environmental reasons, that the University also address the amount of air travel used by staff. The Vice-Chancellor agreed, adding the issue of emissions was an important part of the University's proposed triple bottom line reporting. In terms of how emissions could be reduced, air travel was the second biggest contributor after power. He added that reducing air travel would be difficult, and that there are some cultural issues which needed to be addressed. The other major issue for the University in this area was green power and the issue of whether to use offsets or contribute to research. A working group has been set up to look at these issues and to discuss specific recommendations with

faculties. He acknowledged that at first glance it might appear that the University was simply talking about these issues, but pointed out that simple measures such as educating staff on good practices can have a positive impact on the University's overall emission levels.

Professor Masters advised members that he had been on the committee responsible for Elite Athlete scholarships for a number of years. He expressed concern that these scholarship holders as a group did not achieve as well as the general cohort, and individually did not do as well as would be indicated by their UAls. He noted that the University was not as successful in bringing the best out of these students academically as it was in promoting their sporting achievements and suggested that the Academic Board liaise with Sydney University Sports to look at ways to improve such students' academic performance. He added that any systems or processes resulting from such investigations could potentially assist other groups of under-performing students. The Chair agreed to look into this issue.

Ms Legge-Wilkinson advised that the Academic Board that she had been asked by other students to raise the following matters with the Board:

1. Why do students in the Bachelor of Psychology receive the Bachelor of Science, Major in Psychology (Honours) rather than the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) if they defer their honours study for one year?
2. Why does the Faculty of Health Sciences calculate its marks as an average (where 1st, 2nd and 3rd year are equal) and not as a weighted average (WAM)?
3. Will there be any moves to introduce consistency across the University for group work, such as peer assessments?

The Chair undertook to get a response to question 1 for the next meeting. With regard to question 2, he suggested Ms Legge-Wilkinson speak to Professor Kable after the meeting, and with regard to question 3 he advised that the Assessment Working Party was looking at issues related to group work, but pointed out it was a difficult area and that quite a bit of work remained to be done by the Working Party on this issue.

#### **Resolution 274/08**

That the Academic Board note the questions and responses provided.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager, Faculty of Science to provide a response on the question concerning the Bachelor of Psychology for the Academic Board's next meeting in December.

### **9. Reports of Faculties and Boards**

#### **★ 9.1 Report of the University of Sydney Summer and Winter School**

##### **9.1.1 2008 Winter School**

Mr Greenland asked that the following questions be referred to the Director of the Sydney Summer and Winter School for advice:

- noting that almost 50% of the enrolments are from postgraduate students in the Faculty of Economics and Business, could the School or the Faculty provide advice on the high number of such enrolments;
- could information be provided on how many students enrol in more than one unit of study in the Summer or Winter Schools; and

- in 2008 how many students incurred the \$5000 penalty for withdrawing after the set date, and how much in total was paid to the University from such penalties.

The Chair undertook to seek a response on these matters for the next meeting. Members noted the report.

**Resolution 275/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the 2008 Winter School, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Director, University of Sydney Summer and Winter School, to provide a response to the questions from SUPRA for the Academic Board's next meeting in December.

★ **9.2 Report of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery**

**9.2.1 Semester and Vacation Dates 2009**

Mr Greenland drew to members' attention the fact that some of the assessments for students in the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery would occur during the week of stu-vac. He urged the Faculty to work towards altering this from 2010, and suggested that the teaching structure be altered so that the assessments could be brought forward. He also commended the faculty for their exemplary level of consultation with students, noting they had come up with the "least worst" solution for 2009.

Members approved the semester and vacation dates for 2009 for the Faculty.

**Resolution 276/08**

That the Academic Board approve the semester and vacation dates for the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery for the year 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery to note the Academic Board's approval of the semester and vacation dates 2009 for the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery.

File No. (2001/29)

**9.3 Report of the Faculty of Law**

**9.3.1 Amendment to the Governance of Faculties, Colleges, College Boards, Departments, Schools and Committees**

**Resolution 277/08**

That the Academic Board recommend that Senate approve the amendments to the Senate Resolutions relating to the Governance of Faculties, Colleges, College Boards, Departments, Schools and Committees, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Chair to recommend that Senate approve the amendments to the Senate Resolutions relating to the Governance of Faculties, Colleges, College Boards, Departments, Schools and Committees.

The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Law to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendments to the Senate

Resolutions relating to the Governance of Faculties, Colleges, College Boards, Departments, Schools and Committees.

File No. (036/0006/00170)

## **10. Report of the Undergraduate Studies Committee**

(Professor Scott Kable)

### ★ **10.1 Oral report of the Chair**

Professor Kable reminded members that the Academic Board had approved a new honours policy in early 2007, and the Undergraduate Studies Committee had asked faculties for an update on the introduction of the policy in relation to their courses. He acknowledged that many faculties had worked hard to ensure their degrees comply with the new policy. From 2009 honours in almost all undergraduate degrees would include a minimum of 12 credit points of identifiable research.

He further advised that discussions had been held with the Faculty of Law regarding the transition period related to the policy, noting that as a result of these talks an amendment was proposed to that section of the policy.

#### **Resolution 278/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

### **10.2 Report of the meeting held on 29 October 2008**

#### **10.2.1 Honours**

##### **10.2.1.1 Updates from Faculties**

#### **Resolution 279/08**

That the Academic Board note the Faculty reports on the implementation of the Academic Board policy on Awards with Honours, as set out in the report presented.

### ★ **10.2.1.2 Academic Board Policy on Awards with Honours**

Professor McDonald advised members that she had been asked by her Dean to seek clarification on this issue, adding that the Dean had expressed concern as to how the proposed transitional arrangements would be viewed by external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman. She added that the Faculty would still prefer to introduce honours requirements for 2013, but if instructed by the Board would be prepared to accept 2011 as a compromise. Introduction of new honours requirements in 2011 would mean that the new requirements would apply to all new students from 2009, and would also apply to students in the second year of the combined degrees, giving such students two years to improve their averages if they wished to be eligible for honours.

Professor Kable advised members that the intention of the transitional arrangements in the Honours policy was that any student currently enrolled in the honours component of their degree would finish in the current program, while students not enrolled in the honours component would fall under the new honours requirements. This was based on the understanding that a student enrolled in Year 1 could reasonably expect that

the requirements for honours in Year 4 could alter between their initial admission to the course, and the commencement of the honours component. He pointed out that students in the Bachelor of Laws were currently awarded honours on the basis of their results, i.e. on merit. He added that the Faculty could currently, and did, alter the units of study within the degree, the form of assessment and the way average marks were calculated for currently enrolled students, but were arguing that they couldn't introduce an honours component.

The Vice-Chancellor commented that students could argue they had enrolled in the course on the expectation of being awarded honours under the current resolutions. Professor McDonald also argued that the required changes would mean the Faculty would have to reduce the number of students receiving honours, and students could feel they will be disadvantaged.

The Chair advised that he had spoken with the General Counsel and the Registrar regarding the University's obligations to students with regard to changes to courses. General Counsel had proposed using the principle of fitness for purpose, i.e. does any proposed amendment to a course alter it so that it is no longer fit for the purpose that existed at the time of the student's enrolment. The issue becomes what disadvantage is faced by students following a change to a course, and the Chair stated that he was unclear what disadvantage students would face in this case.

Professor Julian asked if the principle still remained that, where a major change is made to a course, students can elect to proceed under the resolutions in place at the time of their enrolment or choose to transfer to the new resolutions. The Chair advised that the General Counsel's advice was that this was based on a specific transition clause in the *University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended)* but only applied to the introduction of this rule and the resulting creation of faculty resolutions from old-style Senate resolutions. Professor Julian pointed out current faculty resolutions frequently included a transitional clause whenever a major change was made to a course.

The Chair suggested that what was required was a convention that allowed the University to make reasonable changes to courses without continually "grandfathering" course resolutions, and he again proposed using the rule of "fit for purpose". He asked whether the amendment to the policy could be accepted on this basis. A number of members spoke in favour of allowing the Faculty of Law an extra year to introduce the changes. Associate Professor Twomey pointed out that the proposed amendment would require a retrospective amendment to the course resolutions.

Members suggested that the Faculty take steps to ensure that students admitted to the Bachelor of Laws and its combined degrees in 2009 understood that honours would no longer be awarded on merit.

The resolution to approve the amendment was put to the vote, and a majority voted against. Professor Julian suggested that the principle, as understood by most staff at the University, regarding transitional arrangements for major changes to courses should be clarified with the Office of General Counsel.

**Resolution 280/08**

That the Academic Board reject the proposed changes to the Policy on Awards with Honours.

**10.2.2 Proposals for new and amended undergraduate courses**

**10.2.2.1 Faculty of Health Sciences: Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Radiation Technology), Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy) and Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy) Off-shore courses**

**Resolution 281/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Health Sciences to delete the Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Radiation Technology), Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy) and Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy),
- (2) recommend that Senate endorse the Academic Board's approval of the proposal, noting there are no amendments to the Resolutions of Senate related to the course; and
- (3) note that there are no amendments to the Resolutions of the Faculty relating to the course with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Chair to recommend that Senate endorse the Academic Board's approval of the Faculty of Health Sciences' proposal to delete the Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Radiation Technology), Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy) and Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy).

The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Health Sciences to note the Academic Board's approval of the deletion of the Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Radiation Technology), Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy) and Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy).

File No. (003/0040/00001, 003/0040/00002, 003/0040/00003)

### **10.2.3 Reports from Faculties**

#### **10.2.3.1 Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies: Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Medical Science**

##### **Resolution 282/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the changes to the Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Medical Science combined degree,
- (2) note the Resolutions of the Faculty relating to the above course, made pursuant to the University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2000 (as amended); and
- (3) approve the faculty requirements relating to admission, units of study, the pass degree, combined degrees, the honours degree, specially designated streams and award of the degree.

with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendment of the Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Medical Science combined degree and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (003/0018/00019)

#### **10.2.3.2 Faculty of Medicine: Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery**

##### **Resolution 283/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Faculty of Medicine regarding amendments to units of study in the Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery, as set out in the report presented.

#### **10.2.3.3 Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery: Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration)**

##### **Resolution 284/08**

That the Academic Board note the changes to the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery Policies, as set out in the report presented.

### **10.2.4 Proceedings of the Committee**

#### **Resolution 285/08**

That the Academic Board note the proceedings of the Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting held on 29 October 2008, as set out in the report presented.

## **11. Report of the Graduate Studies Committee (Associate Professor Peter McCallum)**

### **★ 11.1 Oral report of the Chair**

Professor McCallum advised members that he had nothing to add to the report of the Committee's October meeting, but did wish to flag some items

from the Committee's previous meeting. He particularly highlighted the proposal from the Faculty of Arts to introduce a Masters in Human Rights in partnership with a number of universities in the Asia-Pacific region, and initially sponsored by the European Union. He pointed out that the University does not have any regulations on jointly badged degrees and that the Committee would look at developing principles. The report on this proposal will be re-circulated to Academic Board members, and he encouraged members to contact either himself or the Chair with any comments.

A second issue from the previous meeting was a discussion on the new master's model, and particularly the incorporation of a capstone, or synthesising, experience in each master's course. He pointed out that the capstone did not necessarily have to be a thesis.

**Resolution 286/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

**11.2 Report of the meeting held on 29 October 2008**

**11.2.1 Proposals for new and amended postgraduate courses**

**11.2.1.1 Faculty of Health Sciences: Master of Health Science (Child and Adolescent Health)**

**Resolution 287/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Faculty of Health Science to delete the Master of Health Science (Child and Adolescent Health) degree;
- (2) recommend that Senate endorse the Academic Board's approval of the proposal, noting there are no consequent amendments to Resolutions of Senate; and
- (3) approve the faculty requirements relating to the course;

with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Chair to recommend that Senate endorse the Academic Board's approval of the Faculty of Health Sciences' proposal to delete the Master of Health Science (Child and Adolescent Health) degree.

The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Health Sciences to note the Academic Board's approval of the deletion of the Master of Health Science (Child and Adolescent Health) degree and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (003/0032/00004-02)

**11.2.2 Reports from Faculties**

**11.2.2.1 Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery**

**(1) Master of Nursing (Graduate Entry)**

**Resolution 288/08**

That the Academic Board approve the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Nursing

(Graduate Entry) in the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Nursing (Graduate Entry) and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (003/0033/00004)

- (2) Master of Cancer Nursing, Master of Clinical Nursing, Master of Emergency Nursing, Master of Health Services Management, Master of Intensive Care Nursing, Master of Mental Health Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Health Services Management, Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Health Services Management and Graduate Certificate in Intensive Care Nursing**

**Resolution 289/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Cancer Nursing, Master of Clinical Nursing, Master of Emergency Nursing, Master of Health Services Management, Master of Intensive Care Nursing, Master of Mental Health Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Health Services Management, Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Health Services Management and Graduate Certificate in Intensive Care Nursing in the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, with effect from 1 January 2009; and
- (2) note the report from the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery regarding changes to units of study, and the list of courses to be rested in 2009 pending review

as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Cancer Nursing, Master of Clinical Nursing, Master of Emergency Nursing, Master of Health Services Management, Master of Intensive Care Nursing, Master of Mental Health

Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Health Services Management, Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Nursing, Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Cancer Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Emergency Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Health Services Management and Graduate Certificate in Intensive Care Nursing and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (003/0020/00028, 2000/2983)

### **(3) Faculty Policies**

#### **Resolution 290/08**

That the Academic Board note the report from the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery regarding amendments to the Faculty policies, as set out in the report presented.

#### **11.2.2.2 Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

- (1) Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Creative Sound), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Pedagogy), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Creative Sound), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Pedagogy), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Creative Sound) and Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Pedagogy)**

#### **Resolution 291/08**

That the Academic Board approve the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions relating to the Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Creative Sound), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Pedagogy), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Creative Sound), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Pedagogy), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Creative Sound) and Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Pedagogy) in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Creative

Sound), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Pedagogy), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Creative Sound), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Pedagogy), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Creative Sound) and Graduate Certificate in Music Studies (Pedagogy) and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (2004/7844, 2004/7845, 2004/7846)

- (2) Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera) and Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance)**

**Resolution 292/08**

That the Academic Board approve the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions relating to the Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera) and Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance) in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music to note the Academic Board's approval of the amendments to the Faculty Resolutions for the Master of Music Studies (Conducting), Master of Music Studies (Opera), Master of Music Studies (Performance), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Accompaniment), Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Opera) and Graduate Diploma in Music Studies (Performance) and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (TBA)

**11.2.4 Proceedings of the Committee**

**Resolution 293/08**

That the Academic Board note the proceedings of the Graduate Studies Committee meeting held on 29 October 2008, as set out in the report presented.

**12. Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee**  
(Associate Professor Greg Ryan)

★ **12.1 Oral report of the Chair**

Associate Professor Ryan advised members that he wished to acknowledge the work of the Learning Centre and the Institute for

Teaching and Learning, adding that both units had submitted their annual reports to the Committee's last meeting.

**Resolution 294/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

**12.2 Report of the meeting held on 22 October 2008**

**12.2.1 Learning Centre 2007 Annual Report**

**Resolution 295/08**

That the Academic Board note the Learning Centre's 2007 Annual Report, as set out in the report presented.

**12.2.2 Proceedings of the Committee**

**Resolution 296/08**

That the Academic Board note the proceedings of the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 22 October 2008, as set out in the report presented.

**13. Report of the Research and Research Training Committee**

(Professor Jill Trehwella)

★ **13.1 Oral report on behalf of the Chair**

The Chair advised that he had chaired this meeting in Professor Trehwella's absence, and had nothing to add to the Committee's report. However he reported that the Academic Board's Forum on 31 October had been well attended, particularly by students. The Forum had been mediated by Dr Karl Kruszelnicki with a variety of presenters from different faculties talking about research in their particular disciplines. He added that he had asked Professor Rick Benitez to develop a consensus definition of research from the Forum for the Board's information.

**Resolution 297/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Research and Research Training Committee.

**13.2 Report of the meeting held on 22 October 2008**

**13.2.1 Proposals for new and amended courses**

**13.2.1.1 Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Master of Applied Science (Music Performance)**

**Resolution 298/08**

That the Academic Board:

- (1) approve the proposal from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music to delete the Master of Applied Science (Music Performance);
- (2) recommend that Senate:
  - (a) endorse the Academic Board's approval of the proposal;
  - (b) approve the amendment of the Resolutions of Senate relating to the Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music; and
  - (c) approve the rescission of Resolutions of Senate relating to the course; and

- (3) note that there are no Faculty Resolutions relating to the course;  
with effect from 1 January 2009, as set out in the report presented.

*Action:* The Chair to recommend that Senate endorse the Academic Board's approval of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's proposal to delete the Master of Applied Science (Music Performance) degree.

The Dean and Faculty Manager of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music to note the Academic Board's approval of the deletion of the Master of Applied Science (Music Performance) degree and submit resolutions via CMS.

File No. (2003/5096)

### **13.2.2 Proceedings of the Committee**

#### **Resolution 299/08**

That the Academic Board note the proceedings of the Research and Research Training Committee meeting held on 22 October 2008, as set out in the report presented.

## **14. Report of the Academic Staffing Committee** (Professor Belinda Bennett)

### **★ 14.1 Oral report of the Chair**

Professor Bennett advised members that she had nothing to add to the Committee's report in the agenda. She drew members' attention to the promotions reports in the supplementary agenda, adding it was very useful to receive the statistical information on applications and promotions.

#### **Resolution 300/08**

That the Academic Board note the report of the Acting Chair of the Academic Staffing Committee.

### **14.2 Report of the meeting held on 13 October 2008**

#### **14.2.1 Proceedings of the Committee**

#### **Resolution 301/08**

That the Academic Board note the proceedings of the Academic Staffing Committee meeting held on 13 October 2008, as set out in the report presented.

## **15. General Business**

### **15.1 Academic Staff Promotions**

#### **15.1.1 Academic Staff Promotions to Level B in 2008**

#### **Resolution 302/08**

That the Academic Board note the report on the promotion of academic staff to Level B in 2007, as set out in the report presented.

### **15.1.2 Academic Staff Promotions to Level C in 2008**

#### **Resolution 303/08**

That the Academic Board note the report on the promotion of academic staff to Level C in 2008, as set out in the report presented.

### ★ **15.1.3 Academic Staff Promotions to Level D in 2008**

Professor McCallum drew members' attention to the fact that the gender balance for promotions to Level B and Level C were roughly 50:50, however the balance for promotions to Level D was significantly skewed towards males.

#### **Resolution 304/08**

That the Academic Board note the report on the promotion of academic staff to Level D in 2008, as set out in the report presented.

### **15.2 Resignation of Co-President of SUPRA**

Mr Greenland advised members that this would be his last meeting as he was resigning from the position of Co-President of SUPRA. He introduced the new Co-President, Ms R Kumar, and thanked members for their assistance over the past year. Members recognised Mr Greenland by acclamation

#### **Resolution 305/08**

That the Academic Board note that Mr Greenland's resignation from the position of Co-President of SUPRA and acknowledge his contributions as a member of the Academic Board.

### **15.3 Statement of Condolence: Professor George Winterton**

Professor Twomey requested that the following statement on the passing of Professor George Winterton be read into the minutes:

Last week the members of the Faculty of Law lost one of their most eminent and valued colleagues, George Winterton, Professor of Constitutional Law. Professor Winterton was internationally renowned for his work in constitutional law – particularly in the fields of the Executive and the Judiciary. He wrote one of the first books ever to explore the nature of the Executive in Australia. His other ground-breaking work was on the subject of an Australian republic. In 1986 he wrote the first major book on the constitutional issues involved in transforming Australia from a monarchy to a republic. His work had a major influence on the republic debate. He was a member of the Republic Advisory Committee in 1993 and the Republic Constitutional Convention in 1998, both of which followed his proposal for the bipartisan parliamentary appointment of the President in a republic. It was this model that was put to a referendum in 1999, but failed. Professor Winterton did not live to see an Australian republic but his work will continue to live and influence the operation of government both now and in the future. He was a great scholar, a devoted teacher and a kind man. He will be greatly missed.

#### **Resolution 306/08**

That the Academic Board note with condolences the recent passing of Professor George Winterton from the Faculty of Law.

The meeting closed at 4:17 p.m.

Signed as a correct record

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*Chair*

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Date