



The University of Sydney

Academic Board

Meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 1996

Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Academic Board held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 13 November 1996 in the Professorial Board Room.

There were present: the Chair (Professor J M Mack) presiding, the Deputy Chairs (Professors D J H Cockayne, J Lawler and J R Lawrence and Associate Professor R Waterhouse), the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor G Brown), Professor D Anderson, Associate Professors R Arnold and R Atherton, Ms S Baker, Associate Professor H C Beh, Professor S I Benrimoj, Dr A E Brew, Professors L W Burgess, K K Campbell and B Cass, Mr N Chan, Professor R E Collins, Associate Professor L J Copeland, Professors L Cram and R Dunn, Associate Professor C J Durrant, Professors K Eltis, L D Field, D R Fraser and G Gill, Associate Professor C B Gillies, Professors J R Glastonbury and M A Harris, Ms C Hyde, Associate Professor P Jones, Professors J F Kinnear and I J Klineberg, Associate Professor A F Masters, Professor R McPhedran, Dr R A Mitchell, Associate Professor N E Newbigin, Mr K Oliver, Dr M Peat, Professors S E Pretty, B D Roufogalis, R L Russell and S M Salsbury, Associate Professors M Sankey and G E Sherington, Professor M C Wells, Mr R Wilson, Dr G Wright and Professor J A Young.

Present as observers were: Mrs S Chapman (Secretary to the Academic Board), Professors R G Hewitt and L M Koder, Ms C M Sexton and Professor R I Tanner.

Present by invitation were: Ms N Downey, Ms L Maral, Dr C O'Brien, Ms B Olde and Associate Professor G Stone.

In attendance: Miss E R Ring.

P This symbol denotes items which were starred for discussion at the meeting. All other items were dealt with as recommended in the agenda.

1/96 Report of the Chair

The following reports had been circulated and tabled:

(see agenda and supplementary agenda item A4.)

Part I

1. Report on Senate Matters

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

2. Honours and distinctions

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

3. Academic Governance Rules relating to the Academic Board

*** The Board agreed to note the Academic Governance Rules.

4. Academic Board membership and 1997 meeting dates

*** The Board agreed:

- to note the membership list;
- to congratulate Professor Gill on his election as Chair of the Academic Forum; and
- to adopt the 1997 meeting dates as proposed.

5. Appointment of members to fill casual vacancies on the Board

*** The Board agreed to appoint Professor Carter to Board membership, as requested.

6. Transfer and Transition of Committee Business

*** The Board agreed to endorse the Chair's request.

7. Authorisation of Working Parties of Board Committees

*** The Board agreed to establish the Committees and Sub-Committees as interim Working Parties of its new Committees, as recommended.

8. Action under delegated authority

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

9. Semesterisation

*** The Board agreed to note the report and to refer to item 10 below.

10. Future directions

*** The Board noted the report.

Note: The Chair is continuing consultations regarding the composition of the Working Party to examine the structure of the Academic Year and will report to the next meeting.

11. Letter from the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

12. New academic appointment procedures

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

13. Question Time

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

P Part II

At the meeting the Chair reported on the following matters:

1. Structure of the agenda for future Board meetings

The Chair said that the agenda for this meeting had been compiled in much the same way as it had for the Board's predecessor. He sought members' views on any changes they would wish made to the way material was presented and on whether they believed it to be beneficial for draft recommendations to be prepared for each item and on whether they would wish him to star those items which he believed needed discussion. If a starring system were used, members would of course be invited at the beginning of the meeting to star any other items that they wished to have discussed.

2. Election of Professor Gill as Chair of the Forum

The Chair said he was pleased to introduce Professor Graeme Gill who had been elected as Chair of the Academic Forum.

At the Chair's invitation, Professor Gill addressed the Board, reporting that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Monday 16 December 1996. The Forum Focus for that meeting would be the draft policy on Intellectual Property. At the first meeting next year, the Forum would be asked to consider proposals for how the Forum would operate and inter-relate with faculties.

3. Working Parties of Board Committees

The Chair referred to item 7 in Part I of his report and said that, under the transitional arrangements, there was need for the continuation of the Standing Sub-committee for Award/Course Approvals. He therefore sought the Board's agreement that this also be established as an interim Working Party of the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

He foreshadowed that he would propose the establishment of another working party in the future to examine processes and procedures underlying student appeals against academic decisions.

4. Agenda Committee

The Chair proposed that an agenda committee be set up to consider not only issues for the Board agenda but also for the Forum and that it comprise the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Board, the Chair of the Forum and a representative of the Registrar.

5. Afternoon tea break during Board meetings

The Chair suggested that an afternoon tea break be held at about 3 pm during Board meetings; the Vice-Chancellor could speak prior to the break, and the break would provide members with the opportunity for informal conversation with the Vice-Chancellor and each other.

6. Appointment of Acting Deputy Chair

The Chair said that while the Academic Governance Rules relating to the new Board provided for the election of Deputy Chairs, they were silent on the matter of the Chair recommending the appointment of an Acting Deputy Chair if this became necessary. He nevertheless wished to ask the Board's agreement for the appointment of an Acting Deputy Chair until the election of Deputy Chairs next year. Associate Professor Waterhouse would be on SSP leave from late this year, and he proposed that Professor Ann Sefton be appointed as Acting Deputy Chair in his place.

7. Report on research matters

At the Chair's invitation, Professor Tanner reported on the following matters:

Special Research Centres

Senator Vanstone had announced the creation of eight Special Research Centres, one of which was to be at the University of Sydney. This Centre would study the Ecological Impacts of Coastal Cities, and Professor Tony Underwood would be its Director. The Centre would receive some \$700,000 per annum for three years initially.

The University would also be a partner with the University of Western Australia in a second centre, the Centre for Offshore Foundations Systems. The Department of Civil Engineering had approximately a 20% share in this Centre.

Large grants and fellowships

The University had done better this year with ARC grants and had had a dramatic increase in the award of collaborative grants. NH&MRC proposals had also seen a 34% increase from last year. The University had been awarded 12 new ARC Fellowships, second only to ANU, and with the next best competitor, the University of Queensland, having gained nine. The University had also received 13 Industry Awards for Students, which was an enormous improvement over last year. The University had received an additional \$12 million research-related income since the beginning of the year.

He wished to congratulate Dr Claire Baxter and the Research Office on these successful outcomes but had to stress that the University could not afford to be complacent about these outcomes and had to strive to improve its research endeavours.

*** The Board noted the Chair's report and agreed to his suggestions and recommendations in respect of:

- the establishment of the Standing Sub-committee for Award/Course Approvals as an interim Working Party of the new Undergraduate Studies Committee;
- the establishment of the Agenda Committee;
- the introduction of afternoon tea breaks during Board meetings; and
- the appointment of Professor Sefton as Acting Deputy Chair.

2/96 Statement by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The following report was tabled:

(see supplementary agenda item A5.)

Part I

1. Report on Senate Matters

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

P

Part II

At the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor reported on the following matters:

1. Discussion papers presented to the Heads of Department Forum on 7 and 8 November 1996

The Vice-Chancellor spoke to the discussion papers and covering statement which had been tabled. (see supplementary agenda item A5.)

The Vice-Chancellor said that the discussion papers had been circulated to heads of department and would be loaded onto the Web. The Heads of Department Forum on 7 and 8 November had been a constructive and realistic enterprise and should be repeated in due course. It was encouraging to note that when real challenges faced the University its staff reacted well.

2. Women's Forum

The Vice-Chancellor reported that a successful Women's Forum had been held the day before, at which constructive proposals and positive ideas had been presented.

During the ensuing discussion of the Vice-Chancellor's report, the Vice-Chancellor was asked about progress in salary negotiations and he responded in the following terms:

He found it difficult to give a positive answer at present. Sydney was one of the three universities in New South Wales that had been targeted for disruptive action by the NTEU, and that was making the negotiating process particularly difficult. The University was endeavouring to conduct enterprise bargaining discussions, but the amount of money which the University might be able to find was really quite small and contingent on revenue-raising measures determined in the Federal Senate. A number of issues relating to this still needed to be clarified. The University was trying to introduce the notion of "milestones" in which salary increases would be paid on the basis of achievements by staff, for example on the basis of receipt of research grants, increases in the numbers of overseas students, and the like. The bans imposed in principle by NTEU members on the processing of examination results, a targeted action that was not being applied to all other universities such as the University of New South Wales, had potential for differential damage to Sydney students, to Sydney's reputation and to its ability to generate income. His personal view was that the salary negotiations should be conducted with a minimum of emotional involvement, and he hoped that progress would be made to an effective common position as soon as possible.

*** The Board noted the report.

3/96 Report of the Academic Forum

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item A12.)

1. Forum focus
2. Report from the Vice-Chancellor
3. Report from the Chair of the Academic Board

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

4/96 Report of the Faculty of Agriculture

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item B1.)

Semester Dates 1997

*** The Board agreed to approve the Semester dates for 1997 as recommended.

5/96 Report of the Faculty of Dentistry

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item B5.)

Semester dates for the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery for 1997

*** The Board agreed to approve the Semester dates for 1997 as recommended.

6/96 Report of the Policy Advisory Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C1.)

1. **Matters that remained to be resolved by the PAC.**
2. **Matters referred by PAC to other bodies and not yet reported on to the Board**

*** The Board agreed:

Item 1: to note the report; and

Item 2: to seek advice from the Vice-Chancellor regarding review of the current University Plan.

7/96 Reports of the Academic Groups on Chairs

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item D1.)

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

P 8/96 Report of the Committee appointed to consider applications for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item D2.)

In response to a request that future Promotions Committee reports to the Board include data showing how the four broad categories of performance had contributed to success in promotion, the Chair agreed to consult with the Chairs of the Central Promotions Committees and the Academic Staffing Committee on this matter and to report back to the Board.

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

9/96 Report of the Committee appointed to consider the Awards for Excellence in Teaching

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item D3.)

*** The Board agreed to note the report and congratulate the recipients.

10/96 Report of the Promotions Committee for Personal Chairs/Title of Professor

The following report was tabled

(see supplementary agenda item D4.)

*** The Board agreed to note the report and to await further advice regarding the titles for Personal Chairs.