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**Academic Board**

**Meeting held on Wednesday 10 December 1997**

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Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2 pm on Wednesday 10 December in the Professorial Board Room.

**There were present:** the Chair (Professor R Pesman) presiding, the Deputy Chairs (Professors D J H Cockayne, J Lawler, J R Lawrence, R McPhedran and A Sefton), the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor G Brown), Professor C Adam, Associate Professor R Atherton, Dr A E Brew, Professor B Cass, Mr T Clark, Professor R E Collins, Associate Professors E Cornell and D Dragovich, Professor R Dunn, Mr A Durie, Associate Professor C J Durrant, Professors K Eltis and D R Fraser, Associate Professor F Fricke, Professor G Gill, Associate Professor C B Gillies, Professors M A Harris, R Hewitt, J F Kinnear, and S R Leeder, Dr R A Mitchell, Mr M G Partridge, Dr M Peat, Professors S E Pretty and J Raper, Dr A Reynolds, Professor B D Roufogalis, Associate Professor M Sankey, Professors G P Steven and T Walter, Mr R Wilson and Dr G Wright.

Present as observers were: Professors R Johnstone, L M Koder and D Napper, Mr T Robinson, Mr J Shipp and Professors D Siddle, D Weisbrot and J A Young.

Present by invitation were: Mr C S Davidson, Ms N Downey and Mrs L Rose.

In attendance: Miss E R Ring.

**P 140/97 Starring**

Members of the Board were invited to star any unstarred item which they wished to have discussed. All other items were dealt with as recommended in the agenda.

\*\*\* The Board resolved as recommended with respect to all unstarred items.

**141/97 Minutes**

**1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 1997**

\*\*\* The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12 November 1997 as a correct record.

**2. Business arising out of the minutes**

None.

**142/97 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 noted the report.

**2. Acting Chair**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**3. Delegation of authority**

\*\*\* The Board authorised the Chair/Alternative Chair to act on its behalf, as requested.

**4. 1998 meeting dates of the Academic Board**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**5. Amendment of the By-laws**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**6. Christmas party**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**7. Action under delegated authority and reports from the Academic Groups**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**8. Work in progress**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**9. Questions on notice**

\*\*\* The Board noted that no questions had been received this month.

**10. Membership of the Academic Board**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**P Part II**

At the meeting the Chair reported on the following matters:

**1. Welcome to new members**

The Chair welcomed Professor David Siddle, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Mr Adair Durie, President of the SRC, to their first meeting of the Board.

**2. NSW Government's White Paper on HSC Reform**

The Chair reported that, at the meeting of NSW Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates on November 20 at UTS, the main agenda item had been the HSC White Paper, *Securing Their Future*. The Chair of the Committee had presented a report on the Board of Studies' consultations with University representatives and secondary teachers on the 17 subjects in which there were currently 3-unit curricula in the HSC (excluding languages which were being reviewed separately and English and Science where the decisions had been announced in the White Paper). A wide range of concerns had been expressed at the meeting and there had been general agreement that 3-unit subjects should be retained in at least a limited number of subjects, most clearly Mathematics, but strong cases were also being made for Visual Arts, Music and History. The construction of the university admission index (UAI) had also been discussed, and the possibility of the universities limiting the number of units which would count for the calculation of the mark for university entrance and of weighting and adding bonuses for particular units had also been canvassed. It had been recognised that not only might different universities construct admission criteria in different ways but so too might different faculties in the same university. Since the meeting of the Chairs on November 20 there had been some evidence that the Board of Studies' position on the abandonment of 3-unit curricula, in at least some subjects, may be shifting. The Universities of Sydney and NSW were continuing to make strong representations for the retention of some 3-unit curricula. The Board of Studies was expected to make its recommendations to the Minister in mid-December.

The Chair said that she would like to thank those members of the staff of this University who had participated in the subject consultations. During her leave overseas in January, Professor McPhedran would be coordinating the Academic Board's response to the recommendations.

### 3. **West Review of Higher Education**

The Chair reported that the University was now preparing its response to the West interim report. A special meeting of the Academic Forum to discuss the report and the University's response had been held on November 26. Professor Sefton, Chair of the Board's Teaching and Learning Committee, had highlighted the issues for teaching and learning in the report, Professor David Cockayne, Chair of the Board's Research Committee, those relating to research, and Ms Katrina Currie and Mr Tom Clark had voiced the concerns of the SRC and SUPRA. A draft response to the initial West report, that had taken into account views expressed at the Forum, had now been prepared and was being considered by a working party of the Academic Board. The draft was based on the submission which the University had made to the West Committee in May. The members of the working party are:

Professor Ros Pesman - chair

Professor John Carter

Mr Tom Clark - President of SUPRA

Professor David Cockayne

Mr Adair Durie - President of the SRC

Associate Professor Chris Durrant

Professor Ann Sefton.

The meetings were being attended by Professor Don Napper, Professor David Weisbrot, Mr Charles Davidson and Ms Natalie Downey.

## 143/97 **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 noted the report.

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### **Part II**

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

#### **1. Appointment of Registrar**

The Vice-Chancellor announced with pleasure that Dr Bill Adams had accepted the offer of appointment as Registrar.

#### **2. Achievements in teaching and research**

The Vice-Chancellor reported on a number of achievements in teaching and research that were worth special commendation:

In the teaching area, Professor Ann Sefton and the team working on the Graduate Medical Program had made it into the final round in two separate categories in the Australian Awards for University Teaching; while they didn't get first place in either, it had nevertheless been a great achievement and deserved congratulations.

In the area of research grants, the University had done extremely well in both NH&MRC and ARC grants and had achieved the greatest number/amount of money from new grants in the Industry Collaborative area. This was a great achievement for the researchers and their support staff.

#### **3. Meeting of the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors' Conference**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had attended the morning session of the meeting of the NSWV-CC the day before, and Professor Eltis the afternoon session, but that there were no significant issues to be reported to the Board.

##### **UAC admission procedures**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that there had been discussion of the procedures for considering UAC admission of fee-paying students in the future when either the Sydney or UNSW method could be used, but that no decision had been taken.

In response to a question about whether the Victorian experience had been considered, the Vice-Chancellor said that the Victorian system, which allowed for eight HECS preferences and four fee-paying preferences, threatened to destroy the first round of offers as there would be no basis for calculating how to match offers to the profile. The "Sydney Guarantee" could cause difficulties with second round offers. Consideration would need to be given to trade-offs and to how the system worked here this year, and in Victoria, before any decision was made.

#### **Criminal record checks**

Professor Eltis reported that there had been a discussion about issues emanating from criminal records checks, that had been initiated by the query of how the situation would be addressed where a check revealed a criminal record for a member of staff. Representatives of the Health Department had been present, but no determinations had been made on this issue; there was still work to be done, with discussions continuing to be held with the Department of Health.

Professor Young reported that in the College of Health Sciences when a hospital had requested checks, the hospital's chief executive officer had exercised his discretion to admit the students provisionally. Consultations had been held with the SRC and SUPRA and there had been an agreement that students denied access to hospital following an adverse check would be offered a place in an alternative course.

In response to a question about the situation where a member of staff could not discharge his or her duties because of an adverse records check, the Vice-Chancellor said that this was hypothetical at this stage and that it would be a difficult situation to address in the technical and industrial relations context but he would expect that a way would be found to offer the person alternative employment within the industrial relations framework.

#### **4. Technical & Applied Studies**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that discussions were being held with the State Government and the TAFE sector over the sensitive issue of Technical & Applied Studies. He reported on the background to this issue and on a proposal which might offer a solution. He said that if negotiations were successful, the Board would need to be consulted about the detail of how the TAS issue might be resolved as a large part of the teaching could be located with TAFE.

#### **Measurement of Teaching Quality**

In response to a question about the item in the report on Senate matters referring to Professor Johnstone's report to Senate about measuring teaching quality, Professor Johnstone said that he was addressing the task of developing a set of written criteria to assess quality and performance in teaching. Other universities' experiences in this area, where there would increasingly be financial rewards for quality, were being considered.

#### **144/97 Report of the Academic Forum**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item A12.)*

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

#### **145/97 Draft Intellectual Property Policy**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item A13.)*

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**146/97 Report of the Faculty of Nursing**

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item B13.)

- \*\*\* The Board recommended that Senate amend its Resolutions relating to the constitution of the Faculty of Nursing, as recommended.

**147/97 Report of the Undergraduate Studies Committee**

The following report had been circulated.

(see agenda item C1.)

**Part I****1. Amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate**

**(1) Faculty of Architecture  
Bachelor of Science (Architecture)**

- \*\*\* The Board, acting on behalf of Senate, approved the major changes proposed for the Bachelor of Science (Architecture) program and amended the Resolutions of the Senate, as recommended.

**(2) Faculty of Arts  
Diploma of Arts  
Diploma of Language Studies  
Diploma of Social Sciences**

- \*\*\* The Board, acting on behalf of Senate, approved the amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate, as recommended.

**(3) Orange Agricultural College  
Advanced Diploma of Agribusiness  
Advanced Diploma of Farm Management  
Advanced Diploma of Horse Management  
Advanced Diploma of Horticulture  
Advanced Diploma of Land Management  
Advanced Diploma of Rural Business Administration**

- \*\*\* The Board, acting on behalf of Senate, approved the Resolutions of the Senate, as recommended.

**(4) Faculty of Veterinary Science  
Bachelor of Veterinary Science**

- \*\*\* The Board approved in principle the major changes proposed for the Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree, as recommended.

**P 2. Amendment of the By-laws and Resolutions of the Senate and Resolutions of the Academic Board relating to Admissions**

The Chair reported that an earlier draft of this material had been sent to Deans for comment in April and that this draft had also been referred to them. She had been advised, however, that there had been insufficient time for comment and hence she had recommended that the report and its recommendations lie on the table until the February Board meeting awaiting further comment to Professor Lawler. A number of comments had now been received.

The Chair asked that the Board address the broad policy issues in the report, especially in respect of credit transfer and the recommendation that students admitted to undergraduate courses with credit be required to complete at least half their course requirements at Sydney if they were to be awarded a Sydney qualification. She said that this draft policy set outer perimeters for the amount of credit that could be granted, but that faculties could define their individual policies within the parameters.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised the following matters in respect of granting credit:

- Consideration should be given not just to the percentage of the requirements completed at Sydney, but also to the seniority of the units of study being completed at Sydney.

- The practices varied so greatly across the University that each faculty should be asked for advice about its current practices in respect of each course of study before a final policy was considered.
- There was a need for flexibility in the policy, especially in respect to Honours students who might or might not proceed to complete an Honours Year.
- The policy should be developed with regard to the policies of other universities and also in the context of national implications rather than just the local.
- Consideration should be given to adopting a more flexible approach to facilitate the entry of good overseas students where areas of block credit could be identified and publicised to potential applicants.
- Consideration should be given to how much credit a graduate should be given, versus exemption from units of study, and whether there should be a specific limit on how much work could be counted twice.
- While there was provision for specific and non-specific credit, consideration should also be given to a third type of credit: that of credit in discipline areas.

The Chair noted that faculties needed flexibility but that the issue would need to be determined of whether or not the Board should set a policy defining outer limits. She appreciated the comments and asked that written comments be addressed to Professor Lawler, with a copy to Ms Natalie Downey.

Professor Lawler said that she wished to express her appreciation to Ms Natalie Downey for the work that she had done on the document.

\*\*\* The Board noted the report and let it lie on the table awaiting further comment to the Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Professor Lawler, by 1 February 1998.

### **3. Approval mechanisms for new or amended courses of study**

\*\*\* The Board adopted the approval mechanisms for new or amended courses of study, as recommended.

### **4. Uniform Reporting of Honours Grades**

\*\*\* The Board adopted the Committee's recommendations in respect of the proposed uniform system of reporting honours grades.

### **5. Proceedings of the Committee**

- (1) **Welcome**
- (2) **Draft set of procedures for the consideration of student appeals against academic decisions made in relation to undergraduate or postgraduate course awards**
- (3) **Minor Changes to Resolutions of the Senate relating to Faculties**  
**Faculty of Medicine: 1986 Resolutions of the Senate Relating to the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery**
- (4) **1998 meetings**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

## **P Part II**

Professor Lawler said that there were no further matters at present that she wished to report upon.

## **148/97 Report of the Graduate Studies Committee**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C2.)*

### **Part I**

#### **First report**

#### **1. Amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate**

- (1) **Faculty of Arts**
  - (a) **Master of Letters**
  - (b) **Master of Arts**
  - (c) **Graduate Diploma in Arts**

**(d) Graduate Certificate in Arts**

\*\*\* The Board, acting on behalf of Senate, amended the Resolutions of the Senate to effect the changes in subject areas, as recommended.

**(2) Faculty of Health Sciences****Master of Occupational Therapy**

\*\*\* The Board recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new Master of Occupational Therapy degree and amend its Resolutions, as recommended.

**2. Amendment of Chapters 10 and 11 of the By-laws**

\*\*\* The Board recommended that Senate approve the amendments to the By-Laws and the Resolutions of the Senate, as recommended, and, subject to approval of these amendments, agreed to amend the Resolutions of the Academic Board, as recommended.

**3. Proceedings of the Committee****(1) Report of the PhD Award Sub-Committee****Analysis of examination times****(2) Report of the Coursework Sub-Committee****(a) Guidelines for usage of the terms thesis, treatise, dissertation, essay and long essay as units of study within coursework programs****(b) Proceedings of the Sub-Committee****(3) Delegation of authority to act on behalf of the Committee****(4) Postgraduate Awards Sub-Committee****(5) Work in progress****(a) Co-tutelle with the Université de Paris III****(b) Electronic submission of theses**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

*The following reports had been circulated and tabled:*

*(see agenda and supplementary agenda item C2.)*

**Second report****1. Amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate****Faculty of Education: Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education)**

\*\*\* The Board recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new Graduate Certificate and amend its Resolutions and adopt new Resolutions, as recommended, subject to any necessary drafting amendments.

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**2. Cotutelles with French universities**

Professor Lawrence spoke to the report, explaining the background to the initiative and the benefits to be gained from it.

In response to a question from Professor McPhedran, Professor Lawrence reported that the issue of levels of honours was covered in respect of the award of a Sydney PhD under the cotutelle arrangement; the general issue of awarding PhDs with honours had been considered some years ago during a review of the PhD when it had been decided that this would not be appropriate, but it could be reconsidered by the Graduate Studies Committee. In response to a question from Professor Siddle, Professor Lawrence reported that, under the cotutelle arrangement, one university or the other would act as “parent” and that a nominated department would have the responsibility for the candidature.

\*\*\* ***The Board recommended to Senate that it agree to allow such agreements to be entered into and amend its Resolutions as recommended.***

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**Part II**

At the meeting Professor Lawrence reported that he wished to draw particular attention to two items in the Graduate Studies Committee report:

- The report on the analysis of examination times in the report of the PhD Award Sub-Committee made manifest both the continuing achievements in some faculties in the reduction of examination times but also highlighted some protracted examinations.

- A great deal of work had been completed during the year by the Coursework Sub-Committee which had recently circulated three position papers, seeking comment back from faculties. The position papers are:
  1. Parallel Teaching in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework;
  2. Distance, Alternative and Flexible Modes of Delivery in Postgraduate Coursework Programs; and
  3. Semesterisation and nomenclature issues for postgraduate programs from SIS.

Using its usual consultative process, the Committee hoped early next year to be able to recommend a number of changes in policy and practice which would provide for uniformity across the University in several areas relating to postgraduate matters.

## **149/97 Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C3.)*

### **Part I**

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

1. **Report of the Centre for Teaching and Learning**
2. **Potential research project for the Committee**
3. **Guidelines for flexible teaching and learning**
4. **Assessment policy**
5. **National Council for Open and Distance Education (NCODE)**
6. **The Australian Awards for University Teaching**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

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### **Part II**

At the meeting Professor Sefton said that she wished to draw to the Board's attention the report on the work undertaken by the Centre for Teaching and Learning in response to requests by individuals and groups in departments and faculties.

## **150/97 Report of the Research Committee**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C4.)*

### **Part I**

1. **General Business**
2. **October Report of the Research Committee**
3. **Classification of research-only staff**
4. **Academic Staff in the Funding Model**
5. **Joint NHMRC/AVCC statement and guidelines on research practice**
6. **Overseas Conference and Travel Grants Scheme**
7. **Proposal to combine URGS and ARC Small Grants application processes**
8. **Intellectual Property Policy**
9. **West Report on Higher Education**
10. **Proposed dates for Research Committee meetings in 1998**
11. **Report of the Director, Business Liaison Office**  
**Proposed Forum**  
**Australian Technology Awards**  
**Smith-Kline Beecham Grants**
12. **Report of the Director, Research Development**
13. **Report of the Acting Director, Research and Scholarships Office**  
**ARC and NHMRC results**  
**ARC Small Grants Scheme**  
**NHMRC GrantNet Sessions**  
**Publications Audit**  
**U2000 Postdoctoral Research Fellowships**  
**APA/UPA applications**

**14. Next Meeting**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

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**Part II**

At the meeting Professor Cockayne reported that he was pleased to take the opportunity to comment on the excellent work of the Business Liaison Office and the Research Office in the ARC outcomes and also on the excellent reporting of the successful outcomes in the *University News*.

**151/97 Report of the Library and Information Technology Committee**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C5.)*

**Part I****1. Codes of Conduct for Internet based services.**

\*\*\* The Board endorsed the Codes.

**2. Report of the Library Reference Group**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**3. Report of the Chair of the IT Reference Group**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

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**Part II**

At the meeting Professor McPhedran referred to item 3 of the Committee's report on the introduction of charging for Internet access. He reported that a full policy was yet to be worked out, and that a further discussion paper on the implications of Internet charging would be forwarded to the Board in the near future.

In response to a question from Professor Steven about the possible development of internal caches to avoid charges, Professor McPhedran said that there was differential use of caches but that the issue needed to be considered. Most departments would not yet know how bills were occasioned; they needed to consider the charging regime and to encourage efficient use of the Internet and discourage inefficient use. Professor Johnstone said that the issue of discouraging use of the Internet to the detriment of innovative curriculum development had been addressed by setting aside money for competitive bids for the development of innovative web-based curriculum. There were also steps that could be taken to counteract inefficient usage.

Mr Clark referred to the concern expressed in the report that the issue was being treated as a budgetary issue rather than as a strategic one and said that he would like to see this reversed. Professor McPhedran said that it had been considered that devolution to departmental level was the best way of proceeding. The LITC would be looking at strategic issues as a priority and that it would welcome position papers on the issue. The strategic consequences had not yet been developed fully as the financial effects were still being considered. The Intranet Project would create more sophisticated ways of controlling access etcetera but not the educational outcomes. The issue needed to be monitored as technology was constantly developing.

**152/97 Report of the Academic Staffing Committee****Part I**

There was no report this month.

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**Part II**

At the meeting Professor Pesman reported that the Academic Staffing Committee was consulting broadly over draft documents on a new policy for promotion to Level E and on a new policy for the creation of "distinguished chairs". The documents would be redrafted after consideration of feedback and would be presented to the February Board meeting.

**P 153/97          Membership of Central Promotions Committees**

*The following report was tabled:*

*(see agenda item D1.)*

Professor Hewitt referred to the composition of the Central Promotions Committees for Levels C and D, noting that some staff were sitting on both and that this seemed too onerous a task. The Chair reported that the nominees had been chosen to provide carry-over experience, but that she would address this particular issue.

Professor Young referred to the importance of the Level E Committee members being appointed as early as possible in order to facilitate the establishment of Faculty Promotions Assessment Committees and suggested that the Board specifically authorise the Chair to appoint the members so that members' names could be circulated in advance of the February Board meeting.

The Chair reported that the delay in recommending Level E Committee nominees had been occasioned by the imminence of the new Level E promotions policy, which could provide for a slightly different committee structure. If the new policy documents were adopted by the February Board, a Level E Committee could be appointed provisionally at that time, subject to the adoption of the new policy document by March Senate. It might eventuate that the implementation of a new policy would be delayed a year. The time-factor had been addressed, and applications for Level E promotions would not close until the end of May.

\*\*\* The Board appointed the committee members, as recommended.

**154/97          Report of the Committee appointed to consider applications for promotion from Associate Lecturer to Lecturer**

*The following report was tabled:*

*(see agenda item D2.)*

\*\*\* The Board noted the report.

**155/97          Appointment of Members of the Core Committee to Consider Tenure for Tenurable Staff**

*The following report was tabled:*

*(see agenda item D3.)*

\*\*\* The Board appointed the Committee members, as recommended.