



The University of Sydney

Academic Board

Meeting held on Wednesday 10 September 1997

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2.15 pm on Wednesday 10 September 1997 in the Professorial Board Room.

There were present: the Chair (Professor R Pesman) presiding, the Deputy Chairs (Professors J Lawler, J R Lawrence, R McPhedran and A Sefton), the Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor G Brown), Professor C Adam, Associate Professor M Allars, Professor D Anderson, Associate Professor R Arnold, Dr A E Brew, Professors L W Burgess, K K Campbell and B Cass, Mr T Clark, Professor R E Collins, Associate Professor E Cornell, Ms K Curry, Professors R Dunn, K Eltis and L D Field, Associate Professor F Fricke, Professors G Gill, M A Harris and R Hewitt, Ms C Hyde, Associate Professor P Jones, Professor J F Kinnear, Associate Professors A F Masters and N E Newbigin, Mr M G Partridge, Dr P Phibbs, Professors S E Pretty and J Raper, Dr R Ross, Associate Professor M Sankey, Professor G P Steven and Associate Professor G M Stone.

Present as observers were: Dr W Adams (Secretary to the Academic Board), Professors L M Koder and D Napper, Mr J Shipp and Professor J A Young.

Present by invitation were: Ms J Deitch, Mr R Silver, Ms J Tysoe and Mr J Upcroft.

In attendance: Miss E R Ring.

P 94/97 Starring

Members of the Board were invited to star any unstarred item which they wished to have discussed.

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

95/97 Minutes

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 1997**

*** The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 1997 as a correct record.

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

None.

96/97 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.

P 2. **Membership of faculties and academic colleges by pro-vice-chancellors (college)**

The Chair reported that she had starred the item in order to ask that the Board adopt the recommendation subject to advice from the Faculty of Health Sciences following its next meeting that it was in agreement with the recommendation.

*** The Board agreed to report to Senate in the terms recommended, subject to confirmation from the Faculty of Health Sciences, following its next meeting, of its agreement.

3. Postgraduate HECS exemption policy, 1998

*** The Board adopted the policy, as requested.

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4. NSW Government's White Paper on HSC Reform

The Chair reported that Dr Mack's comments were for the information of the Board, but that responses were needed in respect of the proposed HSC unit structure. She was organising a working party to provide advice to the Board on issues such as scaling.

Professor Eltis reported that while the publicity associated with the release of the White Paper indicated that the unit structure issue was cut and dried, the abolition of 3-unit courses was in fact far from finalised and faculties should look closely at the implications for them of the deletion of 3-unit courses. A DTEC study group was to consider this issue in conjunction with the Board of Studies, and the final determination would be made when their findings had been submitted. Work was also being done in schools to look at student choice under the proposed unit structure.

Professor McPhedran said that a symposium on the science syllabus was being held in November at which the universities were being represented.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that at the meeting of the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors' Conference the day before, Dr McMorrow had made the point that the matter was not yet finalised and that the Government was looking for guidance. Professor Blake had said that it was impossible for the NSWV-CC to provide advice as it did not have a coherent view. He personally was supportive of the retention of the 3-unit structure, at least in Mathematics, and would make a personal submission to the Government through Dr McMorrow.

*** The Board noted the report and asked faculties to consider if they wished to argue for a "3 unit" possibility to remain in the reformed HSC in those subjects which currently are assumed knowledge or prescribed as pre-requisites. (Responses should be submitted by 30 September 1997 to the Chair of the Board.)

5. Nominations for membership of the Appointments Board

*** The Board noted the report.

6. 1997 Bookfest

*** 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
Student Appeals Document**

*** The Board noted the report.

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9. Questions on notice

The Chair drew members' attention to the questions from Mr Kyle Oliver that had been tabled in the supplementary agenda. She reported as follows:

I appreciate and am very sympathetic to the concerns of SUPRA in relation to the introduction of fees for local students and to the public image of the University. My support for the admission of local fee-paying undergraduate students is reluctant and occasioned only by the need of the University to raise additional revenue in order to maintain the high quality and diversity of its programmes and the number of quality staff to sustain these programmes. I, like every other member of the University community, have a fundamental commitment to the principles of equity, and my understanding has always been that part of the income from fees will be devoted to the expansion of special entry programmes such as

the Broadway Admissions Scheme and to the enlargement of the pool of merit and equity scholarships.

My replies to the specific questions are as follows.

- (1) The answer is yes.
- (2) As far as I understand the booklet did not come to the Reference group. Nor would I expect it to. However, Professor Lawler, as Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was a member of the Management group that considered the booklet and I was invited to attend the meeting of that group where the booklet was discussed. I also understand that the previous chair of the Board had earlier input into the booklet.
- (3) It is not quite true that there is a complete absence in the booklet to any reference to equity since there is reference to the Broadway scheme. But in any case, my understanding is that the booklet was prepared for, and specifically directed to, prospective students who were interested in the fee-paying option.
- (4) Yes, I can assure the Board that there will be prominent publicity for equity of access programmes in the information submitted to UAC for 1998.
- (5) This question is irrelevant in view of my answer to 4.
- (6) and (7) I have no problem in concurring with the SUPRA statements provided that such concurrence is not construed to imply that I am not committed to merit admission.

During the ensuing discussion, the Chair and Professor Eltis responded to various comments and questions from Ms Curry and Mr Clark in respect of the consultative processes used in the compilation of the various booklets and brochures about admission and fees.

P Part II

Commencement time of meetings

The Chair asked members whether they preferred Board meetings to commence at 2.00 pm or 2.15 pm.

*** The Board agreed that future Board meetings commence at 2.00 pm.

97/97 Statement by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The following reports had been circulated and tabled:

(see agenda and supplementary agenda item A5.)

Part I

1. Report on Senate Matters

*** The Board noted the report.

P Part II

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

1. University Budget

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the Budget strategy for 1998 in the following terms. The Budget was addressing, in a broad sense, the University's *raison d'être* of teaching and research. The resources available were the sum of government grants, fees from overseas students, fees from domestic postgraduate students and fees from domestic undergraduate students. Many of these numbers were estimates, however, or "soft money".

There would be cuts of 3% in Federal operating funds and more than 4% as a result of salary increments. The balances in the General Purpose Operating Funds section of the Budget would fall by \$17 million. The Budget would reduce overall allocations by 3.5% and would put 1% on hold for contingencies for the following year.

The Budget would not provide for slashing but rather for maintaining operations while the University attempted to generate more income for the future. There might be a need to prune some areas for next year, but there had been an attempt to avoid the current convention of downsizing. The breadth and quality of the University's activities were

linked, and cutting out areas of activity would be incompatible with the goals of excellence in teaching and research. There had been an honest attempt to preserve staff numbers and institutional diversity while coping with external governmental impositions.

After extensive consultation a new allocation formula for the operating grant had been developed that placed more emphasis on research. This would provide some easement for the Faculty of Arts which appeared to have suffered systemic under-funding in the past. A small amount of money would be allocated to the development fund, and some of this might be used to support some academic areas which cannot raise funds. Those areas which had structural difficulties with the Budget would also be identified and various measures would be taken to deal with this.

The Budget strategy had been discussed at Finance Committee and approved by Senate. The Budget would not be a balanced one, and transitional arrangements would be used while adjustments were being made.

2. Courses and Careers Day

In the context of the Budget and the financial hardship faced by the University, the Vice-Chancellor said that he felt obliged to express his disgust with the false and malicious propaganda contained in a brochure on fees that had been distributed by the SRC at Courses and Careers Day. He wished, however, to thank all those who had assisted at Courses and Careers Day.

In response to comments and questions from Ms Curry, the Vice-Chancellor said that the *Sydney Morning Herald* had misquoted an alleged proposal for staff cuts and that there had been no such proposal put to Senate. He had outlined the Budget strategy, and income generated from fees could make it possible for more staff to be hired.

*** The Board noted the report.

98/97 Report by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on proctorial matters

*** The Board noted that the Vice-Chancellor tabled a report.

99/97 Report of the Academic Forum

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item A12.)

*** The Board noted the report.

100/97 Report of the Faculty of Agriculture

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item B1.)

Semester Dates 1998

*** The Board approved the semester dates for the Faculty of Agriculture for 1998, as recommended.

101/97 Report of the Undergraduate Studies Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C1.)

1. Credit points

- (1) General comments**
- (2) Definition of Terms and Methods Used**
- (3) Recommendations**

*** The Board adopted the Committee's recommendations.

2. **Proceedings of the Committee**

- (1) **Reference from the Academic Board: Reporting Honours Grades**
- (2) **Draft set of procedures for the consideration of student appeals against academic decisions made in relation to undergraduate or postgraduate course awards**
- (3) **Admission and selection into fee-paying undergraduate courses in 1998**
- (4) **Overseas Qualifications Sub-Committee**
- (5) **Approval mechanisms for new courses and major changes to existing courses**
- (6) **Membership**

*** The Board noted the report.

102/97 Report of the Graduate Studies Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C2.)

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

(1) **Faculty of Architecture**

*** The Board, acting on behalf of Senate, amended the Resolutions of the Senate to effect the introduction of the new stream in Digital Media within the Faculty's existing Master's degree, graduate diploma and graduate certificate.

(2) **Faculty of Arts**

Professor Cass referred to the proposal for the introduction of new award programs in Public History that the Graduate Studies Committee had supported in principle but for which it had required the written support of the two Deans concerned. She said that these assurances could have been supplied to the Committee, and that neither Dean would have advanced the proposal had she not been committed to it. A joint program between two institutions was a significant initiative, and such endeavours were exciting and should be encouraged. There was goodwill on the part of the academics concerned, but administrative processes were needed to support such initiatives, which would grow in number.

Professor Lawrence responded that he and the Graduate Studies Committee shared Professor Cass's enthusiasm and wanted to encourage this type of initiative. The Committee's role was not an administrative one but rather one of quality control. Collaborative proposals of various kinds were indeed growing in number, and the Committee's Guidelines for proposals for new programs asked the proponents to specify the consultations undertaken in formulating the proposals. The working parties appointed by the Committee to consider the proposals had been asking all proponents for written confirmation of support from their collaborators. He expected that this assurance would be able to be provided quickly and easily.

Professor Lawrence said that there was a need to clarify the administrative procedures for inter-institutional programs.

*** The Board:

- acting on behalf of Senate, amended the Resolutions of the Senate to effect the introduction of the new subject areas within the existing award programs; and
- recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new award program, the Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies.

(3) **Faculty of Education**

*** The Board:

- acting on behalf of Senate, amended the Resolutions of the Senate relating to the Master of Education and the Graduate Diploma in Educational Studies; and
- recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new award programs, the Master of Philosophy in Education and the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies.

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(4) Faculty of Science

*** The Board recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new award program, the Master of Science (Microscopy and Microanalysis).

(5) Sydney College of the Arts

*** The Board recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new award programs, the Master of Studio Art and the Master of Multimedia Design.

(6) Board of Studies in Social Work

*** The Board recommended that Senate approve the introduction of the new award programs, the Graduate Diploma in Social Work and the Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice Supervision.

Consultation in the formulation of proposals for new programs

*** The Board noted the report.

2. PhD Examining times

*** The Board noted the report.

3. Proceedings of the Committee**(1) Report of the PhD Award Sub-Committee****(2) Report of the Coursework Sub-Committee****(3) Higher doctorates****(4) Appointment of Working Parties to consider new and amended award programs:
Faculty of Law and Faculty of Medicine****(5) 1998 meeting dates****(6) Work in progress****(a) Deferment of public availability of theses****(b) Working Party on electronic publication of theses****(c) Annual Progress Report Forms****(d) Postgraduate Awards Sub-Committee****(e) Electronic submission of theses**

*** The Board noted the report.

103/97 Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee

There was no report from the Committee this month.

104/97 Report of the Research Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C4.)

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1. Revised Proposal for Use of University Research Grant Scheme Funds (URGS)

Associate Professor Masters referred to the practice of allowing a resubmission in a revised manner of applications that had been culled early in the process, while time constraints prohibited applications culled later to be revised and resubmitted and asked whether the Research Committee was considering this.

Professor Gill said that last year when the ARC Large Grant results had become available, a number who had been very close had been asked to re-submit to the Small Grants scheme. It was noted that no formal provision could be made for Small Grants funds to be allocated to such a practice.

*** The Board noted the report.

2. Performance measures and benchmarking in research**3. Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice****4. Research Committee Membership****5. Distribution of Report of Research Committee****6. Overseas Conference Travel Grants****7. Report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)**

8. **Report from the Director, Business Liaison Office**
9. **Report from the Director, Research Development**
10. **Report from the Director, Research and Scholarships Office**
11. **Report on the Australian Research Council**

*** The Board noted the report.

105/97 Report of the Library and Information Technology Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C5.)

Proceedings of the Committee

1. **Report of the Library Reference Group**
2. **Report of the IT Reference Group**
3. **Mr John Shipp - new University Librarian**
4. **Code of Conduct for use of Internet Based Services**
5. **Academic Board: IT support for its activities**

*** The Board noted the report.

106/97 Report of the Academic Staffing Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C6.)

- A. **First report of the Academic Staffing Committee**
Draft Policy Document - Promotion of Academic Staff to Levels B, C and D

*** The Board noted the report.

- B. **Second report of the Academic Staffing Committee**

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1. **Draft Policy Document - Promotion of Academic Staff to Levels B, C and D**
2. **Draft Policy Document - Criteria for Progression for Academic Levels A, B, C and D**

The Chair of the Board, as Chair of the Academic Staffing Committee, introduced the two sets of draft recommendations which had already been circulated to College Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans, the President of NTEU, Personnel teams and a number of other members of staff who had made submissions to the Committee or served on its working parties. Considerable comment had been received and the draft documents had been amended in the light of that comment.

As indicated at the beginning of the document, the Criteria for Progression document was intended to apply to Increments, Probation, Confirmation of Appointment, and Promotion. In response to an objection which she had received the day before from the President of NTEU, the Chair asked that the Criteria Document be approved for the moment in relation to promotion only.

There was considerable discussion of the powers of the Central Promotions Committees to upset the recommended ranking of applicants by the Faculty Promotions Assessment Committees. Professor Young suggested that if the Central Committee did not wish to promote an applicant recommended by the FPAC, then all those below that ranking should also not be promoted. He also believed that the Central Promotions Committee had an obligation to convince the Dean and other members of the FPAC who were present when proposals for changes in the ranking order were discussed of the validity of that proposal. A motion to refer this section of the document back to the Academic Staffing Committee for reconsideration was put and lost.

Associate Professor Masters asked that the Board recognise that in the new policies and procedures on promotion, the Board, while retaining control over policy, was surrendering control of the process through withdrawing from the appointment of Faculty Promotions Assessment Committees. The Chair of the Board responded that this was the intention of the Academic Staffing Committee in making the recommendations. Professor Masters also questioned the wisdom of the recommendation that all applicants should be ineligible to reapply for promotion in the year following an unsuccessful application. He believed that

this was particularly unfair to applicants at Level A and to those whose applications had been judged sound but premature. The Chair agreed to convey this view to the Academic Staffing Committee and to soften the phrase that exceptions to the rule would only be permitted in exceptional circumstance. The Chair also agreed that the document would be modified to allow members of Promotions Committees to be referees for applicants in special circumstances.

The Chair also brought to the attention of the Board the emphasis in the document on assessment of performance in terms of the opportunities available.

Several other minor amendments were suggested which the Chair agreed to recommend to the Academic Staffing Committee for incorporation into the document.

*** The Board adopted the Policy Documents (Promotion of Academic Staff to Levels B, C and D and Criteria for Progression for Academic Levels A, B, C and D in respect of promotions) subject to the amendments agreed upon in principle during the discussion and commended the Policy Documents, as amended, to the Vice-Chancellor for his approval.

**3. Draft Policy Document - Promotion of Academic Staff to Levels B, C and D
Promotion of Academic Research-Only Staff to Levels B, C and D**

*** The Board noted the report.