



The University of Sydney

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## Academic Board

Meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 1997

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Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 12 February 1997 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, J R Lawrence and R Pesman), the Acting Deputy Chair (Professor A Sefton), the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor D Anderson), Professor C Adam, Associate Professor R Arnold, Ms S Baker, Ms K Beattie, Drs R Bohringer and A E Brew, Professors K K Campbell and R E Collins, Associate Professor L J Copeland, Ms K Curry, Professors R Dunn, K Eltis, L D Field, D R Fraser and G Gill, Associate Professor C B Gillies, Professor J R Glastonbury, Associate Professor J Gordon, Ms C Hyde, Associate Professors P Jones, A F Masters and N E Newbigin, Mr K Oliver, Mr M G Partridge, Dr M Peat, Dr A Reynolds, Professor S M Salsbury, Associate Professor M Sankey, Professors W Schworm, G E Sherington and D Weisbrot, Mr R Wilson, Dr G Wright and Professor J A Young.

Present as observers were: Mrs S Chapman (Secretary to the Academic Board) and Professors R G Hewitt and R Johnstone.

Present by invitation were: Ms L Maral, Dr C O'Brien and Mr D Worth.

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.

### 1/97 Minutes

\*\*\* It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 11 December 1996 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 2/97 Business arising out of the minutes

None.

### 3/97 Report of the Chair

*The following reports had been circulated and tabled:*

*(see agenda and supplementary agenda item A4.)*

#### Part I

1. Reports on Senate matters  
2 December 1996  
3 February 1997

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the reports.

**P** 2. Committee to Consider Awards for Excellence in Teaching

\*\*\* The Chair having spoken to his written report, the Board agreed to note the report.

- P 3. Membership of the Planning Committee**
- \*\*\* The Board agreed to nominate the following persons for appointment to the Planning Committee:  
 Professor Margaret Harris (subject to availability)  
 Professor Gordon MacAulay (subject to availability)  
 Professor Lynette Russell  
 Professor Stephen Salsbury
- Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Professors Harris and MacAulay confirmed their availability.
- P 4. West Review of Higher Education**
- The Chair asked the Board for suggestions about who might be appropriate people who would be willing to assist in compiling any submission on the Review that the University decided to make. The Board's Officers would, of course, assist, but he also sought advice on the names of others whom he could approach.
- \*\*\* It was agreed that it would be valuable for there to be representation from across the University. It was also agreed that the Presidents of the SRC and SUPRA, Professor Cass, Associate Professor Beh (subject to her availability) and Dr McCallum would assist. The Chair said that he would approach the deans of the professional faculties seeking their advice on additional names, and he asked members to give thought to the issue.
- P 5. Titles of Honorary Professor and Emeritus Professor**
- In speaking to his written report, the Chair reported on the absence of any legislation setting out the conditions of award of the title of "Emeritus Professor", explaining that guidelines in use appeared to be based on historical precedent. This provided that professors who retired before they had served for ten years at professorial level would not qualify for the title. It was therefore an anomalous situation where some retiring professors who continued to serve the University after retirement could not be given any formal titular recognition for this service, while retiring academic staff at other levels could.
- In the discussion that followed, members supported the proposal to make formal provision for the award of honorary titles to recognise the contributions of retiring professors who continued to serve the University. It was also observed that there were a variety of anomalies in the conditions for the award of other titles, such as the "Adjunct" titles.
- The Chair said that he believed that the Academic Staffing Committee had the whole issue of academic and honorary titles on its agenda, but that he would check that this was the case.
- \*\*\* The Board agreed:
- to recommend to Senate that the procedure for conferring honorary titles, as adopted in 1994, be formally extended to include retiring professors of this University, to apply retrospectively from October 1994; and
  - to ask its Academic Staffing Committee to review the current conditions for the award of the title of Emeritus Professor and provide a report to the Board.
- P 6. Meeting commencement time and afternoon tea**
- In response to the Chair's invitation for advice from members on their preference for a later meeting commencement time, one member said that it would be preferable for those located at campuses other than the Camperdown one if meetings did commence at 2.15.
- \*\*\* It was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
- P 7. Deadlines for the University's entry in the UAC Guide**
- The Chair said that the UAC Guide was not the only publication to have a bearing upon the timetable for making changes to award programs and courses; there were other prospectuses for both local and overseas students as well as for Year 10 HSC students that impacted on the timetable for faculties to make changes.
- At the Chair's invitation, the Registrar reported in the following terms:

The Publications Unit and the Prospective Students' Unit had the responsibility for collating and preparing the University's information in the UAC Guide. UAC's closing date for the receipt of material for the 1998 Guide was 2 April 1997; fines would be levied for any material forwarded after that date. On 18 December 1996 the Prospective Students' Unit had sent copy to the faculties for updating, requesting that it be returned by 24 February. This February deadline for faculties allowed the Prospective Students' Unit time to collate and update the University's entries in the Guide. It was a timetable that had been in place for some years. Consideration would be given to the possibility of preparing similar information for different publications simultaneously.

In response to a question about whether or not UAC would be handling applications for entry in 1998 by local full-fee undergraduates, the Registrar reported that UAC had said that it was capable of doing so, from a technological and staffing point of view, but that there had been debate at the UAC Board about what that meant. The universities had to decide upon their requirements for this category of applicant, and this had been raised by UAC and at SES.

The Board noted that the University would have to decide whether these applications would be handled by the University itself or by UAC so that the appropriate information would be included in the 1998 Guide.

The Chair observed that the Board and faculties could therefore expect to receive annually advice from the Prospective Students' Unit on the various deadlines for the various publications. The time-lines set out in the pro-forma material for new and amended programs and courses might need to be adjusted to take account of these publication deadlines.

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

## **P 8. New nomenclature relating to academic programs and the academic year**

Associate Professor Masters asked about the status of the paper, observing that it had been presented to the Board for information and that there was advice in it that it was expected that a policy document would be presented to the March meeting of the Board. He wondered what opportunity there would be for faculties to comment. He said that the paper, together with its covering memorandum, had not been received by the Faculty of Science and that the Faculty had only become aware of its existence formally when it appeared in the Board agenda papers. Professor Hewitt added that the Faculty had informally become aware of the paper's existence somewhat earlier and asked that all important papers distributed by central administration be sent both by e-mail as well as by traditional methods; the Chair said that he would take this issue up with the Registrar.

The Chair said that the adoption of the new nomenclature was based on DEETYA terminology and that work on related areas was based on the assumption that the nomenclature changes would be introduced. If faculties perceived serious difficulties in adapting to it, they should send comments to Mr Crook as a matter of urgency. There would be opportunity to discuss the curriculum and credit point issues at the March Board meeting. If the unit code was of serious concern to faculties, they should write immediately to Professor Koder so that he could present the concerns to the Student Information System Steering Committee for consideration.

In the ensuing discussion members raised concerns about various aspects of the unit code. The Chair said that all the points being raised had been thoroughly debated by the SIS Steering Committee. It had been agreed that it would be preferable to have a policy that fixed the credit points (unit value) for units of study (courses) so that a unit of study that was available to students in more than one course (degree program) always retained the same credit points. Under this system, Mathematics 1, for example, would always be worth 6 credit points, irrespective of the faculty in which a student was taking it. While it was highly desirable for all faculties to have curricula where 24 credit points would be the normal value for an annual full-time enrolment, it was recognised that there would have to be exceptions. It was considered preferable to have some small variations in the annual credit points prescribed for the various courses rather than to have different credit points assigned to the same units of study when taken in different faculties. Different faculties had different views on contact hours, and this could not be used as a basis for ascribing credit

points. The new system would also provide the facility for units of study to identify student numbers as a basis for allocation of teaching space, examination arrangements and so on.

Professor Young said he assumed that there was a recognition of the nature of the MB BS program and that there was no expectation that it be packaged into semesterised units. The Chair said that he should put this into writing to Professor Koder.

In response to concerns about the abolition of a Student Identification Number system which identified a student's first year of enrolment, the Chair explained that there were cogent reasons for this and outlined the benefits of the new proposed system; he suggested that any concerns about the proposal be sent to Mr Crook.

The Chair said that the paper was one on administrative procedures and that it was in no way intended to constrain the curriculum in the various faculties. He asked that any serious concerns about the proposals be sent urgently to Professor Koder/Mr Crook.

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

**9. Release of examination results**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**10. Data on the broad categories of performance in assessment for promotion**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**11. Reports on Chairs**

\*\*\* The Board noted the report and agreed to the Chair's suggestion in respect of the submission to the Board of staffing reports.

**12. University Quality Control**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report and to seek advice from the Vice-Chancellor regarding the development of quality improvement plans in the University.

**13. Committee of Chairs**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

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

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**15. From Professorial Board to Academic Board**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**16. Light relief**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**17. Work in progress**

(a) Working Party on the Academic Year

(b) Working Party to examine the present procedures for student appeals against academic decisions

(c) Progress on re-drafting of "green papers" considered by the Board/Forum in 1996

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**18. Question Time**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**P Part II**

At the meeting the Chair reported on the following matters:

**1. The position of University Librarian**

The Chair asked the Acting Vice-Chancellor to report on the position of University Librarian, and Professor Anderson reported in the following terms: The preliminary work had almost been completed, and it was hoped to have the material for the advertisement sent to the national press the following week. The position would be advertised as one on the general staff at the equivalent remuneration level of a deanship.

**2. Senior Management positions**

The Chair said that, on behalf of the Board, he wished to offer congratulations and good wishes to those who had been appointed to the senior management positions.

Membership of faculties by Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Colleges)

Professor Young drew attention to the fact that, at present, faculty constitutions varied in their provision for faculty membership by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Academic Groups) and asked whether this issue could be addressed collectively with regard to the incoming PVCs (Colleges). After a brief discussion of the background to this issue, the Chair said that he believed that it should be a matter for the PVCs to take up with their individual faculties. The Board could ask faculties to consider the issue and to recommend amendments to their constitutions, but he did not believe that the Board could recommend the amendment of the Senate Resolutions relating to faculty constitutions without reference to the faculties.

\*\*\* After some further discussion it was agreed that the Registrar be asked to produce a report on this matter for consideration by Senate at its next meeting.

**3. Appreciation of retiring members**

The Chair said that, on behalf of the Board, he wished to offer thanks and good wishes to Professor Warren Julian, who had stepped down as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, to Professor Murray Wells, who had retired from the position of Director of the Graduate School of Business but would continue to maintain a close association with it, and to Professor John Glastonbury, who would be retiring on 28 February as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professional Faculties Group). The Chair paid tribute to their contributions to the University in general and in particular to the Board, and said that he would write to them on behalf of the Board.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor endorsed the Chair's comments.

\*\*\* The Board noted the Chair's report.

**4/97 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**

**2 December 1996**

**3 February 1997**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**P Part II**

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

**1. West Review of Higher Education**

Professor Anderson reported that Quentin Thompson, a senior member of staff with Coopers and Lybrand, who had acted as an external consultant to the Dearing Review, and who was a Visiting Professor at both the University of London and the University of Southern California, was visiting Australia. At an informal lunch, Mr Thompson had said, in respect

of the many submissions made to the Dearing Review, that those with most impact had been the ones that offered solutions to identified problems. This point was worth noting in respect of the University's submission to the West Review.

## 2. **New Senior Management structure**

Professor Anderson said the Vice-Chancellor was expecting to receive a package of detailed operational advice on the new senior management structure when he returned from leave. He (Professor Anderson) would be conferring with the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Pro-Vice-Chancellors designate about the re-configuration of delegations and duties and the budgetary and other implications. As a consequence of the new appointments, some acting or substantive deans would need to be appointed. All these issues were being addressed, and some details would be set out in a forthcoming edition of the *News*, possibly on 28 February. He had asked Professor Eltis, as Chair of the Administrative Operations Committee, to look at the location and re-location of the appointees. He would meet with the Chair of the Board and the Deputy Chairs to check on the articulation of senior officers with the Board and its committees.

Professor Anderson said that the International Relations Committee, currently a Vice-Chancellorial committee, would become a standing committee of the Board and that VCAC would continue as it had in the past.

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

## 5/97 **Report by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on proctorial matters**

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

## 6/97 **Report of the Academic Forum**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item A12.)*

1. **Forum Focus: Draft Intellectual Property Policy**
2. **Report of the Chair of the Academic Forum**
3. **Report of the Vice-Chancellor**
4. **Report of the Chair of the Academic Board**
5. **The late Emeritus Professor Bruce Mayes**
6. **Question time**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

## 7/97 **Report of the Graduate Studies Committee**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C1.)*

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

#### (1) **Faculty of Economics: Master of Commerce**

\*\*\* The Board agreed, acting behalf of Senate, to amend the Resolutions of the Senate to provide for the introduction of the new subject area of Professional Accounting within the Master of Commerce degree, as recommended.

#### (2) **Faculty of Medicine: Graduate Medical Program - Restriction upon Re-enrolment**

\*\*\* The Board agreed, subject to endorsement by the Undergraduate Studies Committee, to recommend the amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate relating to Restriction upon Re-enrolment in the Faculty of Medicine, as recommended.

#### (3) **Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Master of Performance**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to recommend the amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate to provide for the introduction of the new award program, the Master of Performance, as recommended.

### 2. **English language proficiency requirements**

#### (1) **Faculty of Economics**

#### (2) **Faculty of Law**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to adopt the recommendations for the amendment of the minimum English language requirements in the Faculties of Economics and Law for 1998 admissions onwards.

### **3. Librarian's statement: new or amended award programs and courses**

\*\*\* The Board agreed, subject to support by the Undergraduate Studies Committee:

- to adopt the report; and
- to advise faculties that the University Library should be allowed sufficient time to make assessments of proposals for new and amended award programs and courses and that proposals without the Librarian's statement would not normally be considered.

### **4. Proceedings of the Committee**

- (1) **Administration of graduate candidatures**
  - (a) **PhD Award Sub-Committee**
  - (b) **Deferment of public availability of higher degree theses**
- (2) **Terms of reference and constitution of the new Graduate Studies Committee**  
**PhD Award Sub-Committee**  
**Postgraduate Awards Selection Committee**
- (3) **Levels of award and grading systems used for Master's degrees**
- (4) **Work in progress**
  - (a) **Structure of the initial year of the PhD**
  - (b) **UMI Dissertation Service**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

## **8/97 Report of the Committee for Undergraduate Studies**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item C2.)*

### **Report of the Standing Sub-Committee for Award/Course Approvals**

**Initial proposals for new academic programs/major changes to existing awards/courses for approval in principle**

1. **Faculty of Engineering**  
**Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering**  
**Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering (Telecommunications)**  
**Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Arts**  
**Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Science**  
**all Bachelor of Engineering programs**  
**Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Commerce**  
**Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Mechatronics)**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to approve in principle the proposal to introduce in 1998 the new award programs Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering and Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering (Telecommunications), the new combined Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Science programs, and major changes to all Bachelor of Engineering programs, the Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Commerce and the Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Mechatronics) as recommended, and recommend that Senate approve in principle the proposals for the introduction of the new award programs.

2. **Faculty of Health Science**  
**Bachelor of Applied Science (Leisure and Health)**  
**Bachelor of Health Science (Aboriginal Health and Community Development)**  
**Bachelor of Health Science (Rehabilitation Counselling)**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to approve in principle the proposals for major changes to the Bachelor of Applied Science (Leisure and Health), Bachelor of Health Science (Aboriginal Health and Community Development) and Bachelor of Health Science (Rehabilitation Counselling) programs, as recommended.

3. **Faculty of Science**

**Bachelor of Science (Bioinformatics)**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to endorse in principle the proposal to introduce in 1998 the new award program Bachelor of Science (Bioinformatics) as recommended, and to recommend that Senate approve this proposal in principle.

**4. Sydney Conservatorium of Music****Bachelor of Music Studies****Bachelor of Music (Performance)****Bachelor of Music (Composition)****Bachelor of Music (Musicology)****Bachelor of Music (Music Education)**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to approve in principle the proposal to introduce in 1998 the new award program Bachelor of Music Studies and the proposal for major changes to the Bachelor of Music (Performance), the Bachelor of Music (Composition), the Bachelor of Music (Musicology) and the Bachelor of Music (Music Education) programs, as recommended, and to recommend that Senate approve in principle the proposal for the introduction of the new award program.

**5. Sydney College of the Arts****Bachelor of Visual Arts**

\*\*\* The Board agreed to approve in principle the proposal for major changes to the Bachelor of Visual Arts program, as recommended.

**9/97 Reports of the Academic Groups on Chairs**

*The following reports had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item D1.)*

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the reports.

**10/97 Report of the Promotions Committee for Personal Chairs/Title of Professor**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item D2.)*

\*\*\* The Board agreed to note the report.

**P 11/97 Report of the Committee appointed to consider applications for promotion from Associate Lecturer to Lecturer**

*The following report had been circulated:*

*(see agenda item D3.)*

Associate Professor Masters observed that only six applications had been received for promotion from Associate Lecturer to Lecturer. He wondered if it would be appropriate, in the circumstance where half the applications were from staff in the same faculty, for provision to be made for the two-tiered committee system to be compressed so that two committees were not looking at the same applications.

The Chair said that he would pass that suggestion on to Professor Pesman. As the Academic Staffing Committee was looking at the promotions area, this would be a good time for members to forward any other comments and suggestions about promotions procedures to her.

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