



The University of Sydney

Academic Board

Meeting held on Wednesday 12 March 1997

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 12 March 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 Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor G Brown), Professor D Anderson, Associate Professors R Arnold and H C Beh, Drs R Bohringer and A E Brew, Professors K K Campbell and B Cass, Associate Professors L J Copeland and E Cornell, Ms K Curry, Professor R Dunn, Associate Professor C J Durrant, Professors K Eltis and G Gill, Associate Professors C B Gillies and J Gordon, Professor M A Harris, Ms C Hyde, Associate Professor P Jones, Professor J F Kinnear, Associate Professor A F Masters, Professor R McPhedran, Dr R A Mitchell, Associate Professor N E Newbiggin, Mr K Oliver, Mr M G Partridge, Dr M Peat, Professor S E Pretty, Emeritus Professor N Quarry, Dr A Reynolds, Professors B D Roufogalis, R L Russell and S M Salsbury, Associate Professor M Sankey, Professor W Schworm, and Associate Professor G M Stone.

Present as observers were: Mrs S Chapman (Secretary to the Academic Board), Professors R Johnstone and L M Koder, Mrs J Campbell, and Professors D Weisbrot and J A Young.

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

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.

12/97 Minutes

*** It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 12 February 1997 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

13/97 Business arising out of the minutes

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item A2.)

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

14/97 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 agreed to note the report.

- P 2. New nomenclature relating to academic programs and the academic year**
 In speaking to this item, the Chair reported that while most of the issues relating to the new nomenclature were administrative ones, there were a couple of underlying academic issues, as set out in his written report.
 *** After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to adopt the Chair's recommendations.
- P 3. Extension of delegation of authority to the Chair**
 The Chair spoke to his written report and also said that there were some areas of staffing work not covered by the new appointments procedures in which the former Standing Committee had acted on behalf of the Board. These areas, such as tenure, probation and promotions, were being addressed by the Academic Staffing Committee, but a mechanism was needed for approving matters in these areas until new policies and procedures were in place. He therefore sought a further delegation of authority from the Board to act on staffing matters under the "old procedures" during this interim period.
 *** The Board agreed to note the report and to extend the delegation of authority to the Chair in respect of approving recommendations for short-term visiting professor appointments, committees to consider academic/clinical/other honorary titles and other staffing matters under the "old procedures" that had been dealt with in the past by the Standing Committee of the former Board, such as the appointment of Faculty Promotions Assessment Committees. It was noted that monthly reports on any FPACs approved by the Chair would be referred to the Board for information.
- P 4. West Review of Higher Education**
 In response to a question, the Chair said that he was still awaiting advice from some of the deans in respect of nominees for the Working Party. He would ask the Vice-Chancellor to speak about the Review in his report.
 *** The Board agreed to note the report.
- P 5. Meeting commencement time and afternoon tea**
 *** It was agreed that future Board meetings commence at 2.15 pm and that there be a 15-minute adjournment for afternoon at 3 pm.
- 6. Election of Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Academic Board**
 *** The Board agreed to note the report regarding the amendment of the Academic Governance Rules relating to the election of the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Board.
- 7. Fees and charges for students**
 *** The Board agreed to note the report.
- 8. Rescission of Resolutions of the Academic Board**
 *** The Board resolved to rescind its resolutions relating to Transfer of Students and Admission after Exclusion, as recommended.
- 9. Committee of Chairs**
 (a) **Scaling of HSC English courses**
 (b) **McGaw Green paper**
 (c) **Intellectual Property**
 (d) **ACTA Report on the Relative Performance of Commencing Undergraduate Students**
 (e) **Nomination of University staff to HSC Examination Committees**
 (f) **Fee-paying Undergraduate Enrolments**
 (g) **The Academic Year**
 *** The Board agreed to note the report.
- 10. Action under delegated authority and reports from the Academic Groups**
 *** The Board agreed to note the report.

- P
11. **Work in progress**
- (a) **Working Party on the Academic Year**
It was reported at the meeting that concerns had been raised elsewhere about the need for consultation between unions and management regarding proposals to introduce a summer session and mid-year intakes, *inter alia*. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anderson, advised that he was yet to be informed of the claimed concerns and would, if necessary, report further on this to the Board.
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.
- (b) **Working Party to examine the present procedures for student appeals against academic decisions**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.
- (c) **Progress on re-drafting of “green papers” considered by the Board/Forum in 1996**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.
12. **Question Time**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.
13. **Amendment of the By-laws: the Student Proctorial Panel**
- *** The Board agreed to adopt the Chair’s recommendations, *viz*:
- to recommend to Senate that the By-laws be amended as an interim measure as recommended;
 - to proceed with the election of the Proctorial Panel in accordance with the proposed By-law amendments, on the basis that those appointments will be ratified when the amendment to Chapter 13 is promulgated; and
 - to rescind the Resolutions of the Academic Board relating to the Election of Student Proctorial Panel as recommended.
14. **1997 TER Statistics**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.

P **Part II**

At the meeting the Chair reported on the following matters:

1. **Welcome to new Senior Management**
- The Chair welcomed Professors Eltis and Kinnear to their first meeting of the Board as the new Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Professors Napper, Weisbrot and Young as the new Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Colleges) and Professor Quarry as Dean of Architecture.
2. **McGaw Review of the HSC**
- The Chair reported that a small number of copies of the McGaw report had been received by the University that morning, and he tabled the following copy of Recommendation 25 which refers to the supply of HSC results to the universities for use in selection of students, subject to certain conditions. *(see Recommendation 25 as tabled)*
- There was a lengthy discussion of this recommendation and of other matters raised in the review report, held in the knowledge that there had been no opportunity for those who had received a copy of the report to study it in any detail.
- Note: The report, entitled “Shaping Their Future: Recommendations for reform of the Higher School Certificate”, is on the Web at <http://www.dtec.nsw.gov.au/HSCRecommend/>
3. **Universal English College**
- Professor Gill referred to the program being conducted by the Universal English College and asked why this academic matter had not been referred to the Board. The Chair said that at the end of last year he had been asked to provide advice on a draft agreement, which he had done, but that he had not seen the final agreement.
- The Vice-Chancellor reported on the background to the matter in the following terms: A private provider had approached the University, proposing the establishment of an

arrangement similar to the one with the Kolej Antarabangsa. The proposal provided for the College to teach the first year of Sydney's Bachelor of Commerce degree to students with English language difficulties; if the students performed at an appropriate level they would be admitted to the Sydney degree, with credit, as full fee paying international students. The Dean of the Faculty of Economics had brought the proposal forward as a request by the Faculty, after consultation with the Heads of Department. The Faculty had regarded this proposed arrangement as similar to the arrangement with the Kolej Antarabangsa, for which the academic principle had been approved. The Chair of the Academic Board had raised some concerns over the proposal, and these concerns had been referred back to the Faculty; the general response had been, however, that the proposal was consistent with the principle that had already been approved. The Dean of Economics had then forwarded the formal agreement which had been technically approved. Subsequently, it had become clear that the consultation process had been less clear to those consulted than to the Dean, and it had been embarrassing when staff teaching the first year of the Sydney program had been asked to provide copies of their lecture notes for use by the College. The basic proposition had not been unreasonable, however, as Sydney did not have the infrastructure to accept large numbers of international students with English language deficiencies, and the quality of prospective students coming through this private provider would be assured. The issue at hand was one of process; the proposal had had to be "fast-tracked" for marketing purposes, but the general academic approvals were in place. It was the consultation process which had broken down.

Professor Salsbury said that the problem had arisen because the opportunity for this venture had become available late in October 1996 for implementation this year. He had consulted with all Heads of Department, and while not all had been wildly enthusiastic about the proposal they had agreed to go along with it. There had been time constraints on the consultative process, and he accepted responsibility for what some saw as inadequacies in that process. While the Faculty had been prudently managed, there was nevertheless the need to earn additional income for next year, and he had not wanted to turn down this opportunity to do so. The College would provide the Faculty with good students, given that a Credit average at the College would be the minimum entry requirement to the Sydney BCom. The academic standard of the program at the College would be the same as that here at Sydney, with marking being as similar as possible. There had been a misunderstanding behind the request to staff to supply their lecture notes; the College had just needed course outlines to ensure course equivalence and that examining was up to the Faculty's standard. More consultation could have taken place, but there had been a need to respond quickly to the opportunity in the way that other universities were able to respond with speed.

The Chair said that it was important that the distinction be made between the role of the Board and faculties in such matters. When he had considered the original proposal he had raised concerns over several issues, such as the labelling of courses with the names used by University and the lack of a separate provision for monitoring the English language competency of the students. In respect of the underlying principle of the University entering into an agreement with a separate provider establishment, he had thought that principle to have been agreed upon in the past and therefore had not thought it necessary to bring this particular proposal to the Board. He had not been aware that the final agreement had been signed until problems became manifest. He believed that procedures needed to be established to deal quickly with these sorts of proposals in the future and said that he had discussed this matter with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development).

During the ensuing discussion, Ms Curry said that the SRC was ideologically opposed to out-sourcing. She raised the issue of the effects of such a proposal on staff in terms of quality control and work conditions and the impact of the influx of students from the College into the second year of the BCom program on current students in respect of standards and infrastructure. She said that she would like to see a copy of the contract with the College.

The Chair said that these were management matters which could be addressed to the Dean. Professor Salsbury said that the scheme was not one whereby the university was "contracting", but rather was accepting students from another institution, as in the case of the Kolej Antarabangsa. There were no disadvantages for local students under this arrangement, but rather benefits from the additional revenue brought in by international

students. Local student enrolments did not generate sufficient funds, and without this additional funding the Faculty would be forced to shed positions. International students enhanced the quality of education, and it was good for students to mix.

In response to subsequent comments by Board members, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Staffing), Professor Anderson, said that the arrangement with the Kolej Antarabangsa was not one of "twinning"; there were two contracts with that institution: one at undergraduate level and one at postgraduate level. There was a distinction between twinning and the provision of service. The arrangement with the Universal English College was one of educational service, and he questioned whether the Board would really wish to see the detail of every contract of educational service.

Members raised issues of how such arrangements impacted upon the enterprise agreement with academic staff and the potential for academic aspects to be swept up with industrial issues and for these to be addressed in arenas where students were not represented rather than at the faculty and Academic Board level.

The Vice-Chancellor re-iterated that the University had to be in a position to act swiftly when an opportunity was offered. The Chair said that the Board and the Forum provided the opportunity for these sorts of issues to be raised, and that while academic matters would be referred to the Board at the appropriate stage of the process, management issues were addressed in other fora.

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

15/97 Statement by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The following reports had been circulated and tabled:

(see agenda and supplementary agenda item A5.)

Part I

P Two items in the report were starred for discussion:

(3) UniPower

In response to a question from Professor Campbell about the future of UniPower and the implications for the Student Information System, the Vice-Chancellor reported in the following terms: The original CASMAC initiative had been developed with two different families: UniOn and UniPower; the University of Sydney had joined the Unipower group of universities. The research administrative application seemed reasonably satisfactory, the financial application was being tested and it appeared that it would be satisfactory, the human resources application would be satisfactory, but the student administration application was seen as a disaster here as at all the universities in the UniPower group. After unsuccessful negotiations, the UniPower Board had decided that it would have to take legal action and claim damages; in the absence of successful legal resolution, a loss of some \$20 million had been quoted, and that might be an accurate amount. Many universities had appointed project teams for the project over many years with results that were adequate but not impressive. Sydney had not made a large infrastructural investment, so it was less committed financially to the project, but each participating university in the UniPower group had to contribute about \$250,000 each year, committed two years in advance, in order to belong to the project. Careful consideration was being given to what could be salvaged from the project, and the UniPower Board was meeting on the following day to discuss this. It was a difficult management issue to address: if another \$5 million were invested in the project, it could work; but it might be better to cut one's losses and abandon the project. The Registrar, who was the University's representative on the UniPower Board, was providing direct feed-back, and the situation was being monitored carefully. There was also speculation over whether the UniOn family could be joined.

The Chair added that Sydney's SIS was not dependent upon the UniPower project and could be developed separately and further when the need for this was determined.

(13) Refurbishment

Professor Campbell expressed concern over some of the recent refurbishments and the re-allocation of some Faculty of Arts teaching space, and sought assurance that the needs of teaching activities would be given proper consideration.

The Vice-Chancellor said that there was a need to plan for the future with regard to increasing student numbers and a changing university profile. He endorsed the view of the importance of appropriate teaching space, and said that the Quadrangle was not only an icon, but also a place that students wanted to have classes, and that the retention of teaching space in it was therefore particularly important. The re-allocation of the teaching space to Arts had been done in consultation with the Dean, and this was as far as the inroads would go, with only upgrading now being undertaken.

During the discussion that ensued, Professor Salisbury said that more use could be made of existing teaching space with an expansion of evening classes. There was a brief discussion of this in the context of the changing nature of teaching modes.

*** The Board noted the report.

P Part II

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

1. West Review of Higher Education

The Vice-Chancellor said that it was planned to prepare a draft University response for Senate prior to the visit to the University by Mr West and some of his Committee on 1 April. He did not believe that the University response should be a negotiated amalgam of the views of all the sections of the University but rather the response as Senate determined. It might be appropriate for separate responses to be made to the Review Committee by different sections of the University which might hold different views and emphases about the issues raised by the Review. The "Group of Eight" would also be making a submission to the Review.

The Vice-Chancellor also reported on recent advice he had received on the progress of the Dearing Report on higher education in the UK.

2. Fees for local undergraduate students

The Vice-Chancellor said that discussions were being held at VCAC on all the issues involved with the prospect of charging up-front fees for undergraduate programs and that various possibilities were being canvassed. Deans had been asked for comment, and a special meeting of the Senior Executive would be held the next day to consider the issue further and to develop a "base" paper. There was a need to consult broadly across the University, and the issue would generate heated debate, with ideological opposition from various sectors. The consultative process would be a difficult one, and many different issues needed to be addressed, such as provision for scholarships. He hoped that those who were ideologically opposed to the proposal would nevertheless make constructive input to the development of possible modes of implementation. The University had very few options for addressing the shortfall in Federal funding and it was being proactive in this proposal; the proposal had the potential to be educationally beneficial and to enhance aspects of the higher education system. It was hoped to have the "base" paper distributed broadly as soon as possible.

*** The Board noted the report.

P 16/97 Report of the Faculty of Medicine

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item B11.)

Amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate: Constitution of the Faculty of Medicine

*** The quorum having been lost, it was agreed to consider this item at the next meeting of the Board.

17/97 Report of the Undergraduate Studies Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C1.)

1. **Membership**
 2. **Amendment of the Resolutions of the Senate**
Faculty of Medicine - Graduate Medical Program: Restriction upon Re-enrolment
 3. **Librarian's statement in proposals for new or amended undergraduate award programs**
 4. **Prioritisation of tasks**
 5. **Credit point values**
 6. **Review of approval mechanisms for new courses and major changes to existing courses**
 7. **Admissions Policies and Procedures**
 8. **Means by which the Undergraduate Studies Committee will assess its performance in 1997 - performance indicators, processes**
 9. **Proposed University Preparation Course: Introduction to Science**
 10. **Joint Working Party of the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee, and possibly the Graduate Studies Committee**
 11. **Member of the Undergraduate Studies Committee to sit on the Teaching and Learning Committee**
 12. **Policy on Student Evaluations of Courses**
 13. **Liberal Studies/Liberal Arts course**
 14. **Annual Reports of Faculty Teaching Committees**
 15. **Quality of Performance in Teaching**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.

18/97 Report of the Graduate Studies Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C2.)

1. **Terms of reference of the new Graduate Studies Committee**
Amendment of the Academic Governance Rules relating to the Academic Board:
Membership of the Graduate Studies Committee
Establishment of Sub-Committees of the new Graduate Studies Committee
 - (1) **PhD Award Sub-Committee**
 - (2) **Postgraduate Awards Selection Sub-Committee**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report and to recommend the amendment of the Academic Governance Rules relating to the Academic Board, as recommended.
2. **Amendment of the Resolutions of the Academic Board: PhD examination process**
*** The Board agreed to note the report and to amend its resolutions relating to the examination process for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, as recommended.
 3. **Proceedings of the Committee**
 - (1) **Administration of graduate candidatures**
 - (a) **PhD Award Sub-Committee**
 - (b) **Higher doctorates**
 - (2) **Report of the Working Party on a Generic Doctoral Program**
 - (3) **Appeals by postgraduate students**
 - (4) **Faculty reports on postgraduate teaching and reviews of postgraduate coursework**
 - (5) **Meeting of Departmental Postgraduate Co-ordinators**
 - (6) **Seminars for Supervisors of Postgraduate Students**
 - (7) **Work in progress**
 - (a) **Levels of award and grading systems used for Master's degrees**
 - (b) **UMI Dissertation Service**
 - (c) **Structure of the initial year of the PhD**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.

19/97 Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C3.)

- 1. Committee to Consider Awards for Excellence in Teaching**
- 2. Priority Areas for 1997**
- 3. Language Issues**
- 4. Policy Review**
- 5. Appointments/Promotions Documents: Teaching**

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

20/97 Report of the Research Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C4.)

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Paper Referred from The University of Sydney Library and Information Technology Committee**
- 3. Presentation by Research Fellows of their Paper Entitled "Research Fellows at The University of Sydney"**
- 4. Report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)**
- 5. Report from the Director, Business Liaison Office.**
- 6. Report of the Director, Research and Scholarships Office**
- 7. Report of the Director, Research Development**
- 8. Review of The University of Sydney Research Grants Scheme**
- 9. Order of Australia to Professor John Booker**

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

21/97 Report of the Library and Information Technology Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C5.)

- 1. Internet Charging and access**
- 2. Electronic Publishing**
- 3. Functioning of LITC and its Reference Groups**
 - (a) Chair of IT Reference Group**
 - (b) Paper on ITC and its Sub-Committees/Nature of Library User Groups**
 - (c) Membership of the Reference Groups**
- 4. Priority topics for action in 1997**
- 5. Open Access Laboratories**
- 6. Farewell to Pro Vice Chancellor Professor R Hewitt**

*** The Board agreed to note the report.

22/97 Report of the Academic Staffing Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C6.)

- 1. General Business**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.

- 2. Projects for 1997**
- *** The Board agreed to note the report.

- 3. Matters referred to Committee - Promotion appeals**
 In response to questions about the Committee's recommendations in respect of FPACs, Professor Pesman said that they were proposed as an interim measure pending the finalisation of a new policy document. A number of appeals which had been received had indicated that there was a need to modify the guidelines and procedures currently in place in order to make the process more transparent. These modifications, however, were only an interim measure.

During discussion, there was general agreement over a minor change that should be made to the guidelines, as set out below.

- *** While there appeared to be general support for the recommendations, the quorum having been lost, it was agreed that the item be held over for consideration at the next meeting of the Board, on the understanding (stated by the Chair) that the recommendations (including the proposed minor change) would be passed and implemented for the 1997 promotions rounds.

Amendment to the recommendations

The composition of FPACs should be amended to provide that the two members from another Faculty have promotion committee experience. The amended section reads:

Although Faculties may set up committees of different sizes and composition, it is considered that they should have a minimum of six members, at least four of whom must be members of the Faculty, and two members with promotion committee experience from another faculty.

4. Matters referred to Committee - Pro-Vice-Chancellor and FPAC's

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

5. Matters referred to Committee - Appointment on Nomination

- *** The Board agreed to approve the recommendation.

6. Matters referred to Committee - external membership of Level E appointment committees

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

7. Policy Document - Support and Progression of Academic Staff

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

23/97 Appointment of members of the Core Committee to Consider Tenure for Tenurable Staff

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item C7.)

- *** The Board agreed to appoint the Core Committee members, as recommended.

24/97 Appointment of members of the Central Promotions Committees

The following reports had been circulated and tabled:

(see agenda and supplementary agenda item C8.)

Personal Chair

Associate Professor/Reader

Senior Lecturer

Lecturer

- *** The Board agreed to appoint the Committee members, as recommended.

25/97 Reports of the Academic Groups on Chairs

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item D1.)

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

26/97 Report of the Tenure Committee

The following report had been circulated:

(see agenda item D2.)

Senior Lecturer

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