

## AGENDA ITEM 13 Report of the Research Committee

### 13.2 Report of the Research Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 13 July 2005 at 2.00pm in the Western Tower Room

The Committee met on Wednesday, 13 July 2005 when there were present: The Chair (Professor J Carter) presiding, Professors M Behnia, D Burke, M Crossley, T Hirst, P Jones, M Murray, C Pollock, S Simpson, Associate Professors A Masters and P McCallum, Dr J Mackey, Mr M Bennett, and Mr W Dawson.

#### 13.2.1 Receipt of Report

The Committee **recommends** that the Academic Board receive and note the following report of the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 July 2005.

#### 13.2.2 Research Active Academic Staff Definition

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The Chair reported that section 2b of the current definition of Research Active Academic Staff (approved by the Committee in August 2004) is unclear as to whether HDR supervision includes primary and associate supervisors. The Committee agreed that the definition be amended to specify that primary supervision is the necessary criterion (see changes marked in attached version). In extraordinary circumstances, a case can be made to the DVC(R&I) by an associate supervisor for inclusion. In the discussion that followed it was agreed that the Committee needs to revisit the definition given the impending research quality framework exercise.

#### **Recommendation**

*That the Academic Board note and endorse the amended definition of Research Active Academic Staff, as set out in the report presented.*

#### 13.2.3 Proceedings of the Academic Staffing Committee

##### (1) **URC Membership**

The Chair welcomed Dr Joel Mackay to the Committee replacing Dr Leon Poladian as the Research Fellows representative. The Chair recognized and thanked Dr Poladian for his valuable contribution to the committee since 2000. The Chair reported that Professor David Cook from the Faculty of Medicine has agreed to join the committee as an appointed member representing the College of Health Sciences.

##### (2) **Correspondence**

Professor Burke requested that research title holders (i.e. Hospital scientists or scientists in associated research units not paid by the University but holding University titles) be eligible to apply for internal University funding schemes. There are approximately 50 research title holders. Conjoint and clinical title holders (numbering >500) are currently eligible to apply to internal funding schemes.

The committee expressed mixed views in response to this request. Due to the fact that the Committee had not had the opportunity to review and consider Professor Burke's request prior to the meeting, the Chair resolved that a final decision be deferred until the next meeting and that Professor Burke prepare a short but more detailed briefing for circulation.

##### (3) **Faculty of Pharmacy Research Committee Report – Professor Michael Murray**

Professor Murray spoke to his presentation circulated prior to the meeting highlighting the research discipline groupings within the Faculty, improving research performance and productivity, Faculty research committee activities, and the outcomes of recent reviews of research in the Faculty one of which recommended a

broadening of its research focus to align with more mainstream health and medical research and caution at the impact on research of UG student growth. The future strategies adopted by the Faculty include identifying a limited number of strengths aligned with CHS and University strengths, increasing research capacity, identifying new funding sources (eg ARC Linkage) and raising awareness of research opportunities within UG programs.

**(4) Reports**

**(i) Professor Tim Hirst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation):**

Professor Hirst reported on the recent successes of the University in ARC Federation Fellowships (5 new awards), ARC Centres of Excellence (collaborating in 5 of the 11 new Centres) and NHMRC Program grants (4 new awards). As part of the RQF discussion, the G08 is investigating appropriate metrics for the quality of research training. One proposal being considered is a ranking scale by thesis examiners (eg. top 25% internationally, nationally etc). The Committee considered that this metric was problematic due to the varying quality and cohort of examiners and theses examined. It was recognized that a suitable metric for all disciplines ('one size fits all') is not readily identifiable. Alternative discussed included graduate destination (grants, fellowships/jobs) or a modified thesis ranking system as used in Europe.

**(ii) Professor Behnia, Dean of Graduate Studies**

Professor Behnia reported that 13 applications have been received for the VC's awards for excellence in research supervision and that 86 applications have been received for semester 2 co-funded scholarships (40 awards available). There has been a significant increase in central scholarship funding in 2005 which may not be continued in 2006 due to pipeline effects. In order to maintain growth in HDR load it will be necessary for Colleges and Faculties to consider additional scholarship funding.

**(iii) Mr Warwick Dawson, Director, Research Office**

Mr Dawson reported that USyd led the nation in the total value of new ARC Linkage-Projects recently announced (2004 round 2 applications). The DEST HERDC submission is now complete with total 2004 income increasing by 13% to \$175m and publications increasing by ~33% to a score of 3300. The internal R&D grant schemes are now open, closing 19 August.

**(iv) Mr Mark Bennett, Acting Director, Business Liaison Office**

Mr Bennett reported that the first USyd 'Innovation Challenge' has been launched with all relevant details available at the following website: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/innovationchallenge/> (NB: website no longer active). The implementation of the BLO review is continuing with a greater customer focus and emphasis on commercialization. A recent G08 forum on CRC's highlighted that the benefits to universities from core participation are declining due to an increasing risk and uncertainty of commercial outcomes. Future involvement may be limited to supporting participant or service provider.



## The University of Sydney

### *Research Active Academic Staff*

*Definition adopted by the University Research Committee in April 2000 and reviewed in September 2003 August 2004 and July 2005*

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#### **Introduction**

The specifications for the Research and Research Training Management Report require universities to discuss research active staff. The Go8 PVC/DVCs (Research) have been discussing this, as have the Vice-Chancellors of those universities.

The issue was discussed at the meeting of the Research Committee in April 2000 and was reviewed in September 2003, August 2004 and July 2005. The Committee explored the complexities of the situation and recognized that fine-grained, but administratively cumbersome definitions were possible. There was recognition that a reasonably simple definition was required that did not move beyond a categorical form of measurement. Within this framework, members of the committee were comfortable with the following definition.

#### **Definition**

To be classified as research active, a staff member must have as a minimum **EITHER**:

1. Publications in the past three (3) years that satisfy the requirement for at least three (3) DEST publications (i.e., 1 research book, or 3 chapters in a research book, or 3 refereed journal articles, or 3 refereed conference papers, or an appropriate combination of chapters and papers), as reported in the HERDC, or a combination of at least three patents, refereed designs, creative works or major exhibitions as collected by The University of Sydney.

**OR**

- 2a Publications in the past three (3) years that satisfy the requirement for at least one (1) DEST publication (i.e., 1 chapter in a research book, or 1 refereed journal article, or 1 refereed conference paper), as reported in the HERDC, or a patent, refereed design, creative work or a major exhibition as collected by The University of Sydney.

**and**

- 2b Satisfied at least one (1) of the following:

- Acted as the Supervisor of at least one (1) research higher degree graduate or graduand in the past four (4) years

**or**

- Received at least one (1) external grant of more than \$5000 from a competitive grant scheme or industry in the past three (3) years.