



Academic Board Minutes

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Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held at 2 pm on Wednesday 2 February 2005 in the Professorial Board Room

There were present: the Chair (Professor J Carter) presiding, the Deputy Chair (Associate Professor A F Masters), the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Professor T Hirst), the Chairs of the Standing Committees (Professors C Murphy and B Reid), Professors A Brewer, L Copeland, D Day, M J Field, M Fry, S Garton, R McCallum, R Newman, S Nicholas, B Roufogalis, J Sachs, E Schwarz, and K Walker, Associate Professors F Ahmadi-Esfahani, G Barnes, D Dragovich, A Fekete, C B Gillies, D Grant, P McCallum, C Peck, I Ramzan, G Sullivan, B Sutton, N C Weber, T Welch and P Windsor, Drs A Davison, R J Dixon, N Gallery, P Gibbens, M Halliwell, J Hughes, E Innes and A Van Schaik, Ms R Jackson, Ms J Mooney, Mr J Shipp and Ms G Wong.

Also present: Secretary of the Academic Board (Dr W Adams).

Present as observers: Ms S Paynter (Secretariat).

In attendance: Ms M Kemmis.

The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Dean of Science, Professor D Day, and the newly elected president of the Students' Representative Council, Ms R Jackson to the Academic Board.

★ **1. Apologies**

The Board noted that apologies had been received from: Professors C Armour, M Behnia, E Blakely, G Brown, P Gay, R Graycar, J Hearn, B Hesketh, J Lawler, R McLean and J Sinclair, Associate Professors B Buckley, R Drynan, S Kable, C Lumby, P Phibbs and W Evans, Drs A Bashford, K Bosward, D Collins, M Edmond, S Forsyth, C Lennings, E Peden, A Poulos, M Torode, and Mr D Bradshaw, Ms K McGraw and Mrs L Napier.

★ **2. Arrangement of agenda**

2.1 Starring of items

Members of the Board were invited to star for discussion any unstarred items.

The following additional items were starred: 4, 5.1.5, 9.2.3 and 10.

2.2 Adoption of unstarred items

Resolution 1/05

That the Academic Board resolve as recommended with respect to all unstarred items.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Resolution 2/05

That the Academic Board adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2004 as a true record.

★ **4. Business arising from Minutes** (not dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda)

The Dean of the Sydney College of the Arts referred to item 12.2.3 regarding English language requirements. He noted that at its last meeting the Academic Board had approved amendments to the policy *Postgraduate English Language Requirements* to raise the minimum English language requirements for some courses.

He pointed out that it was still not clear what powers Deans had to waive English language requirements, although the minutes of the Academic Board meeting of 10 December 2003 (item 11.2.3) show that the Chair of the Academic Board had acknowledged that Deans should be allowed to do so on a case by case basis, provided that such decisions were appropriately recorded and reported to the Board. He suggested that discussions be held between the Chair of the Academic Board, relevant Deans and the Chairs of the Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Committees.

The Chair agreed to arrange the suggested meeting and report back to the Academic Board on this matter.

★ **5. Report of the Chair**

5.1 General report

5.1.1 Self-Review of the Academic Board

The Chair reminded members that a Review of the Academic Board and the Academic Forum was initiated in June 2001 covering such areas as University legislation in relation to the Academic Board, the operations and activities of the Academic Board and its committees, and the Academic Board's communication across the University.

One of the recommendations of the Review was that the Board should consider self-audits from time to time, and one such self-audit was recently completed. As part of the Academic Board self-review members were asked to complete a questionnaire which aimed to gain an understanding of how the Academic Board approached its objectives, identify where improvements could be made and gain a sense of how well the Board is working.

Members of the Board noted a report containing the responses from the self-review. The report made the following recommendations:

- An introduction and orientation session be held for new Academic Board members.
- Information regarding the role of the Academic Board within the University should also be made more available to students and staff (especially new staff).
- That some of the routine business of Academic Board be done by electronic means, leaving more time during board meetings for discussion of policies, strategies and future direction of the University.
- That efforts be made towards a more efficient time-management of Academic Board meetings leaving time for more consultation with members in decision making processes.

- That consideration be given to feasibility and effectiveness of video-conferencing Academic Board meetings.
- That more follow-up procedures be implemented to appropriately monitor the effects of policy implementation or change within the university.
- New and existing members of the Academic Board could be directed to the University of Sydney Strategic Plan 1999-2004 for clarification of the University's stated "roles and values".
- That the lines of communication between the Academic Board and various stakeholders be improved.
- That self-review procedures of the Academic Board be raised as an agenda item at an Academic Board meeting.

Resolution 3/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board relating to the Self-Review of the Academic Board, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 021/0007/00001-04)

5.1.2 Student Code of Conduct

The Academic Board noted that the revised Student Code of Conduct had been distributed to members on 18 January 2005.

Members noted that it was originally intended that the new Code of Conduct be incorporated into the enrolment processes for Semester One 2005. However this has not been possible and the Code would now be e-mailed to all students in March 2005.

Members noted that the Code of Conduct had been further revised to amend some of the definitions and terms used in the document.

A number of minor changes to Section 5 Academic Conduct were suggested and approved as follows:

- Point 1 was amended to read: "ensure that their enrolment and progress in their award course is lawful and consistent with the statutes, rule and resolutions of the University of Sydney, Students must not enrol in additional units of study outside the degree resolutions even if the student information system allows it when enrolling on-line. It is a student's responsibility to maintain current information in the student information system; and observe key dates and deadlines;"; and
- Point 2 was amended to read: "read all official correspondence from the University, including email and SMS messages;".

Resolution 4/05

That the Academic Board approve the immediate adoption of the amended Code of Conduct for Students, as set out in the report presented.

Action: Academic Board Officer to note the approval of the Student Code of Conduct, update the Policy On-line website, and communicate the policy.

(File 2003/6047)

5.1.3 AUQA Review Report

On 19 January 2005, the Australian Universities Quality Agency released its audit report on the University of Sydney. Overall the University received twenty one commendations, ten affirmations and seven recommendations.

The full report is available at:

http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai_reports/index.shtml

The Chair acknowledged the work of various members and committees of the University and Academic Board as follows:

Professor Ann Brewer

Research

Professor Tim Hirst, DVC(R)

Professor Masud Behnia, DoGS

Ms Merrilee Robb, Director, Research Development

Dr Sean Gallagher, Director, Strategic Development

Mr Warwick Dawson and the Research Office

Research Committee of the Academic Board

Teaching and Learning

Professor Paul Ramsden and Professor Judyth Sachs

Associate Professor Mike Prosser

The Institute for Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning Committee of the Academic Board

Koori Centre

Ms Janet Mooney and the Koori Centre

Library

Mr John Shipp and the University Library

Resolution 5/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board relating to the AUQA Review Report, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2004/4840)

5.1.4 Chairs of Standing Committees

As mentioned at the Academic Board meeting of 8 December 2004, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, Associate Professor Russell Ross, has resigned from this position with effect from February 2005. In addition, the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, Professor Beth Reid, has indicated her desire to step down from this role. The Chair thanked Professor Reid for her work with the Committee.

The Chair advised members of the Academic Board that discussions were still continuing with regard to the appointment of Chairs of the Standing Committees and resolution was expected prior to the next

Academic Board meeting. In the meantime it was noted that the Chair of the Academic Board would act as Chair for both the Graduate Studies Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Resolution 6/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board relating to the Chairs of Standing Committees, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2004/1728)

5.1.5 Electronic Distribution of Agenda Papers

As of the Academic Board meeting of 16 March 2005 it was proposed that only the agenda and minutes would be circulated in hard copy and the reports and other attachments would be available on the Academic Board website. Both pdf and Word versions of the attachments would be available to download. The Chair advised this change to distribution processes had been necessitated by a substantial increase in the costs associated with the production of hard copies of the papers for members (on average \$1000 per meeting).

While a number of members spoke in favour of moving to electronic agendas, it was apparent that the majority of members was probably opposed to the proposed changes. After some debate it was agreed that agendas would be distributed electronically but that members could express a preference for continuing to receive a hard-copy of the papers. Hard copies would no longer be distributed to other University officers for information.

Resolution 7/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board relating to the electronic distribution of agenda papers, as set out in the report presented.

Action: Academic Board members to advise Academic Board officer if they wish to receive hard copies of the agenda.

(File x)

5.2 Honours and distinctions

The Board noted and congratulated the recipients of honours and distinctions, as set out in the agenda.

Resolution 8/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on the honours and distinctions and congratulate the recipients, as set out in the report presented.

Action: Chair of the Academic Board to write to recipients congratulating them on their honours and distinctions.

5.3 **Tribute – Associate Professor Mike Prosser**

The Director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor Mike Prosser, is leaving the University of Sydney to take up the post of Director of Research and Evaluation at the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom.

Mike returned to Sydney in 2000 to head up the Institute for Teaching and Learning. Prior to this he was professor and Head of the Academic Development Unit at La Trobe University from 1993-2000.

Mike has made significant contributions to teaching and learning during his time here. He revitalised the ITL into a significant resource for cultural change in teaching across the University. He participated in many academic board reviews and helped in the training programs for academic board reviewers.

Mike will continue to have an affiliation with the University through continuing ARC grants and supervision of PhD students. On behalf of the Board I thank Mike for his outstanding contributions and wish him well in his new position.

5.4 **Authority of the Chair of the Academic Board**

The Chair advised members that he had made a determination using the delegated authority given to him by the Academic Board. The matter involved a request from the Dean of the Faculty of Arts to approve an agreement between the Faculty and Moore Theological College for the joint supervision of PhD candidates. The Chair advised that he had approved this agreement following consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Resolution 9/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Board on actions taken under delegated authority since the December 2004 meeting of the Academic Board, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File x)

Following the Chair's report the President of the Student Representatives' Council (SRC) queried what action was being taken by the Academic Board regarding student representation on the Academic Board and its committees. The Chair agreed that this was a matter for concern and undertook to discuss the matter further with the President of the SRC.

★ 6. **Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

6.1 **General report**

The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hirst, noted that the Vice-Chancellor had only just returned from overseas travel. The Vice-Chancellor had most recently visited Saudi Arabia where discussions were held regarding government scholarships to allow Saudi Arabia students to study at the University of Sydney. It was envisaged that the scholarships would allow students to attend a foundation course, then complete both undergraduate and graduate study.

The Vice-Chancellor had also attended a Global Colloquium of University Presidents under the auspices of the Secretary General of the United Nations,

Mr Kofi Annan. The Secretary General had invited representatives from the twenty leading research universities in the world, including the University of Sydney to discuss the meaning and extent of academic freedom in the pursuit of research and educational missions and secondly, the global public policy issue of how to promote the best interests of international migrants and the countries they leave, transit or enter.

Professor Hirst advised members that Senate would be conducting a retreat at the end of February which would include a higher education forum. Mr Andrew Robb AO, MP would be speaking to Senate regarding new initiatives in the Federal Government's higher education policy. Professor I Chubb, the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University would also be participating in the forum.

Professor Hirst noted that the media coverage of the Australian Universities Quality Agency audit report on the University had been reasonably positive and noted that the University was developing an infrastructure development plan in response to criticisms regarding teaching venues. He invited Professor Brewer to comment further on the report. Professor Brewer advised that the University had three months in which to prepare a response to the recommendations in the audit report and that further information would be presented at a later meeting.

Members were advised that a policy document on plagiarism was currently being developed at the instruction of the Vice-Chancellor and that further information would be provided in the near future.

Professor Hirst also noted that the enrolment process had proceeded well and gave thanks to both Professor Hearn and Dr Adams for their oversight of the process. Dr Adams commented that with the redistribution of student places across the faculties and the introduction of new places it had been a challenging operation, and he thanked the Deans, Faculty Managers and other faculty staff for their efforts.

Resolution 10/05

That the Academic Board note the general report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2003/2730, TBA)

- ★ 7. **Question time**
A query was raised regarding the possibility of state governments transferring their powers, with regard to tertiary institutions, to the Federal Government. It was noted that the Federal Minister for Education was planning to issue a discussion paper on this matter. This matter will be a topic of discussion at the Senate Higher Education Forum later in the month.

- ★ 8. **Report of the Undergraduate Studies Committee**
 - 8.1 **Oral report of the Chair**
The Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Associate Professor Tony Masters, advised that he had nothing further to report other than what was presented to members in the agenda and supplementary agenda.

Resolution 11/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

8.2 Report on Honours Resolutions of the Faculty of Engineering

Members noted that this issue had been resolved at the Academic Board meeting of 15 September 2004.

Resolution 12/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee relating to the honours resolutions of the Faculty of Engineering, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2001/5108, 2003/6477, 2003/6478, 2004/4687)

9. Report of the Academic Staffing Committee

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9.1 Oral report of the Chair

The Chair of the Academic Staffing Committee, Professor Chris Murphy, reported on item 9.2.3.

Resolution 13/05

That the Academic Board note the report of the Chair of the Academic Staffing Committee.

9.2 Report of the meeting held on 1 December 2004

9.2.1 Receipt of report

Resolution 14/05

That the Academic Board receive and note the report of the Academic Staffing Committee meeting held on 1 December 2004.

9.2.2 2004 Promotions Review

Members noted a number of matters arising from the 2004 Promotions Review which had not been considered at the Academic Board meeting of 8 December 2004, as follows:

- that a template be developed for Faculty Promotions Committee reports to the Central Promotions Committee; and
- that a consistent voting system be introduced whereby Faculty Promotions Committees would vote on each applicant with regard to promotions criteria. These results would then be used to determine the Faculty Promotions Committees recommendation relating to that applicant, using the rule that for a recommendation in support of promotion, the candidate must achieve a level of “outstanding” in at least two criteria.

Resolution 15/05

That the Academic Board approve the introduction of a report template and instructions on voting to Faculty Promotions Committees, as set out in the report presented.

Action: Secretary, Academic Staffing Committee to note the approval of the introduction of a report template and instructions on voting to Faculty Promotions Committees.

(File 128/0031/00079)

★ **9.2.3 Involvement of Professorial Staff in University Community**

At its meeting of 8 December 2004, the Academic Board received a report from the Academic Staffing Committee regarding an issue raised at a meeting of the University of Sydney Association of Professors (USAP), relating to the involvement of professorial staff in the life of the University. Members of the Association had expressed concern that not all professorial staff were as actively involved as they might like to be outside their immediate area of expertise. It was requested that this matter be deferred to the February 2005 meeting of the Board.

The Chair of the Academic Staffing Committee moved that the resolution for this item be amended as follows:

That the Academic Board approve the amendment of relevant promotion forms to include a section where applicants for promotion to Level E positions would be invited to outline the increased role and responsibilities they envisaged taking on for their discipline and the wider University, with effect from 1 January 2005.

This amendment was approved by the Academic Board.

Members discussed the amended resolution and some concerns were raised that the alteration to the promotion forms would impose a requirement which was not part of the criteria for assessing applications for promotion to Level E. The Chair stated that the only criteria that would be used for assessing applications for such promotions would be performance-based criteria, as set out in the existing promotion guidelines.

A majority of Academic Board members in attendance voted in favour of the amended resolution.

Resolution 16/05

That the Academic Board approve the amendment of relevant promotion forms to include a section where applicants for promotion to Level E positions would be invited to outline the increased role and responsibilities they envisaged taking on for their discipline and the wider University, with effect from 1 January 2005.

Action: Secretary, Academic Staffing Committee to note the approval of the amendment of relevant promotion forms to include a section where applicants for promotion to Level E positions would outline the increased role and responsibilities they envisaged taking on for their discipline and the wider University.

(File 128/0031/00079)

★ 10. **General Business**

10.1 Report on the Promotion of Academic Staff to Level E in 2004

Members noted and congratulated the successful applicants for promotion to Level E.

Resolution 17/05

That the Academic Board note the report on the promotion of academic staff to Level E in 2004, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2001/5164)

10.2 Semester and Vacation Dates 2007-2010

The Chair spoke briefly to the report and outlined the various factors reflected in the drafting of the proposed semester and vacation dates. In particular he pointed that in 2008 Easter would fall earlier than normal and that those Australian universities which had already produced calendars for 2008 would be starting their first semester on either 25 February or 3 March. Accordingly, it was proposed that Semester One for 2008 commence on 3 March 2008.

Resolution 18/05

That the Academic Board approve semester and vacation dates for the years 2007-2010 as set out in the report presented.

Action: Academic Board Officer to note the approval of the semester and vacation dates for 2007-2010, update the Policy On-line website, and communicate the approved dates.

(File 023/0007/00010, 2001/0029)

10.3 Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on proctorial matters

Resolution 19/05

That the Academic Board note the tabled report on proctorial matters.

Action: No further action required.

(File 021/0006/00010, 2004/1646, 2004/1647, 2004/8369)

10.4 Conferring of All Academic Titles

Resolution 20/05

That the Academic Board note the report relating to the Conferring of All Academic Titles by Colleges and Faculties, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 2001/5164)

10.5 Appointment of members of the Student Proctorial Panel

The Chair reported that membership to the Student Proctorial Panel had been established, including nine members of the academic staff (of whom at least three are to be professors and at least three are not to be professors) appointed by and from the members of the Academic Board on the nomination of the Pro Vice-Chancellors (College).

Student members of the Panel are appointed by and from the student members of the Academic Board. As student membership of the Academic Board has not yet been finalised for 2005, members noted that these positions would be filled at a later date.

Resolution 21/05

That the Academic Board appoint members of the Student Proctorial Panel, as set out in the report presented.

Action: No further action required.

(File 028/0025/00042)

The meeting closed at 3.19 p.m.

Signed as a correct record

Chair

Date