SCHOOL OF PHYSICS
RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee
held at 12.30pm on Thursday 27 May 2010
in Room 454, Physics Annexe Building (A29)

There were present: Professor Don Melrose (Chairperson), Professor Iver Cairns, Dr Bruce Yabsley, Associate Professor Serdar Kuyucak, Professor Richard Hunstead, Professor Elaine Sadler, Dr David Reilly, Dr Boris Kuhlmey

In attendance: Ms C Praseuthsouk (Minute-taker)

1. Apologies
   Dr Cenk Kocer

2. Minutes of the last Meeting
   The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 March 2010 were accepted.

3. Business arising from the Minutes
   The Chair has yet to invite Professor Trevor Hambley to talk about ERA to the School.

4. Report from the Chair

   4.1 Mentoring for Postdoctoral Fellows
   The committee recognises there is currently no proper system in place in the school to mentor Postdoctoral Fellows or to deal with complaints. There is such a process for Postgraduate students but not postdoctoral fellows and Level A or B academic staff.

   Although there is a PM&D review process for the Postdoctoral Fellow with their immediate supervisor, the committee recognised this is not a group effort, and assumes the supervisor will adequately provide the mentoring. This raises another concern, whether some young and inexperienced supervisors also need mentoring. The Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL) provides these courses.
Another suggestion is to assign a qualified academic in the School to be in charge of mentoring problems. This person can also act as an ombudsman/mediator between supervisors and Postdoctoral fellows. It was suggested there be an induction meeting for Postdoctoral fellows twice a year.

The Chair will refer this matter to the School Management Committee meeting.

4.2 Postgraduate Research Support Scheme (PRSS)

It is too late in the year to come up with a new policy. The Chair proposed there be a discussion on how research in the school is structured administratively before approaching the research groups.

No conclusion was reached about the issues concerning distribution, except that the present group structure needs to be improved.

5. Professor Elaine Sadler’s Report

Prof. Elaine Sadler attended the Faculty Research and Research Training Committee (Chaired by the Director, Professor Trevor Hambley).

An Options Paper was created from the Green Paper. Faculties of Science, Arts and Agriculture will most likely remain the same. There was a lengthy discussion about the Green Paper and Linkage Grants. Seminars organised by Research Office does not seem to be beneficial. It was proposed an Industrial Liaison office be created in each Faculty responsible for setting up linkage grants and to build and improve industry link. There were no clear conclusions made about linkage grants.

Sydnovate is recruiting a new Director. Dr Andrew Black is currently acting in Merilee Robb’s former position as Director. The Chair announced there were 66 applications for Future Fellowships, external applications were rather low. The University needs to get more external applicants. Trying to recruit someone excellent from outside the University is still a challenge. Grant monies from ARC are quite low at the moment yet there is an increasing lack of flexibility.
Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) Time Use Survey was considered to be a success. According to the Director, the University had a high response and integrity rate.

ERA submissions is due to start 1 June 2010.

6. Any other business
Professor Iver Cairns (Chair of the School’s IT Policy Committee) has applied for a LIEF grant worth up to $960,000, in the hope to purchase a new supercomputer to replace the McLaren AC$^3$ supercomputer.

Members of the committee were advised by Prof. Cairns that it looks like it is an ARC requirement for the School to provide laptops to successful ARC applicants. The School would then be required to provide up to $1,100 for each successful applicant, with the balance to be covered by the individual. Prof. Cairns will bring this matter forward to the Head of School, and presumably at a future School Management Committee meeting.

The Meeting closed at 1.30pm.

Signed as a correct record

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Chair

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Date