SCHOOL OF PHYSICS  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES  

Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee  
held at 12.30pm on Wednesday 28 July 2010  
in Room 454, Physics Annexe Building (A29)

There were present: Professor Donald Melrose (Chair), Professor Iver Cairns,  
Professor Serdar Kuyucak, Professor Richard Hunstead, Dr Cenk Kocer and Dr  
David Reilly

In attendance: Ms C Praseuthsouk (Minute-taker)

1. Apologies  
Dr Bruce Yabsley

2. Minutes of the last Meeting  
The minutes of the last meeting have been accepted as true and accurate.

3. Business arising from the Minutes  

Mentor  
The Chair will discuss at the PAC meeting on Monday 2 August about the  
opportunity of appointing a mentor for Postdoctoral Fellows within the  
School.

ARC Funding Rules  
Some members of the committee sought clarification with Professor Iver  
Cairns about the ARC funding rules for lap tops. The funding rule in ARC  
mentions that lap tops should be covered proportionately by ARC and the  
rest subsidised by the School. It is estimated that an amount of $1100 can  
buy a staff member a standard lap top.

The Chair would prefer not to do anything until further notice. It was  
agreed that the purchase of lap tops should come from RBG and not  
teaching funding.
4. Report from the Chair

1. USYD Postdoctoral Fellows

The ranking of the University of Sydney Postdoctoral Fellowship 2011 Scheme consists of a two stage process. The first stage is to assess the expressions of interests and to advise potential applicants if they should submit a full application. Applicants will need to have a mentor in order to be able to apply. The School’s deadline for EOI is 6 August 2010. After that date, the Chair with the ranking committee would like to shortlist for potential applicants.

Dr Cenk Kocer who is one of the members on the ranking committee provided a quick summary of the EOI received to date:
- 13 EOI are not from the University of Sydney, most are PhD graduates.
- 3 EOI have a mentor
- 2 outlined their projects, the rest only provided emails with their CV
- 5 had good track record and good publications in the last year

2. International Program Development Fund (IPDF)

The IPDF is not well known to many academic staff. Dr Cenk Kocer applied for this grant last year when hardly anyone heard about it in the School. After that, there were 8 applications made and 3 were successful. It is a grant that is used for travel and for supporting international collaborations. There is only one application at the moment. The School has to come up with 50% funding while the grant provides the other 50% funding. The Chair has asked Professors Dick Hunstead and Iver Cairns to assess the one application. Applicants need to do a full proposal if they want to apply. Either Professor Martijn de Sterke or the Chair will send an email to notify the applicant(s).

3. Major Items of Equipments Grant

It has been suggested that Dr Michael Biercuk is a strong candidate for receiving this grant. However, the Chair would like to see other members of staff have the same opportunity to bid for this grant. The deadline for applications is 24 September 2010.
11 August 2010

The Chair will call for expressions of interest and assess potentially good applicants. If they are strong contenders, the Chair will specify the guidelines for drafting a proposal.

4. Other Business

Dr David Reilly proposed to the committee that the School should have a research vision statement created by the Research Committee. The School has grown in research capacity especially with the new 5 Centres of Excellence and funding for the Institute of Nanoscience building being recently awarded to the School. The Chair is concerned about setting a vision statement without the important stakeholders on the Committee. No conclusions were made about this proposal.

Associate Professor Serdar Kuyucak who is the School’s Postgraduate Coordinator expressed concerns about the current ranking system used in distribution of the PRSS grants among the PhD students. He is worried that they are not being evenly distributed (66 students applied for the total grant of $36,000 in 2010, and only 20 were successful). This is a real issue as it has other repercussions such as publications. The committee agreed that all 2nd and 3rd year PhD students should get a share of the PRSS grant subject to a satisfactory progress and other set criteria. The money received will support overseas travel and conferences and can be part of their yearly evaluation. The Chair will make this proposal at the next School Management meeting.