ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

11:00am – 12:00pm, Wednesday 9 March 2016
Western Tower Boardroom

Members Present: Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson, Chair; Professor Tyrone Carlin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar); Jas Chambers, Nominee of the Dean of Science; Associate Professor Wendy Davis, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Committee; Kaveh Ghezel, Recruitment Manager, Student Recruitment; Maxwell Hall, UG Student; Associate Professor Tony Masters, Chair, Academic Board; Associate Professor Alyson Simpson, Nominee of the Dean of Education; Ms Chloe Smith, President, SRC; Nigel Smith, Nominee of the Dean of Business; Professor Greg Tolhurst, Nominee of the Dean of Law; Kate Wylie, Director, Admissions.

Attendees: Ms Linda Carmichael, Information Management Officer; Megan Kemmis, Executive Officer, Academic Board; Felicity Kiernan, Head of Admissions (Development); Matthew Charet (Secretary).

Apologies: Professor Barbara Caine, Dean, Arts & Social Sciences; Professor Archie Johnson, Dean, Faculty of Engineering and IT; Professor Michelle Lincoln, Nominee of the Dean of Health Sciences.

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Board noted apologies as recorded above and welcomed new members.

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-1
The Admissions Committee resolved to note that apologies have been received from the members above and that they be excused for their absence.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-2
The Admissions Committee resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 11 November 2015 be confirmed as a true record.

2.1 Actions Arising

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-3
The Admissions Committee noted that there are no outstanding actions.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

3.1.1 Terms of reference and membership

The Chair drew the attention of members to the Terms of Reference for the Committee, highlighting a primary focus on ensuring that the University is governed by robust admissions policies. Members were also advised that the composition of the committee has been adjusted to be better representative of the new organisational structure emerging from the Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

3.1.2 Meeting times

The Chair advised that due to teaching commitments, he will be unable to join some meetings until approximately 11am. It is proposed that meetings with a light agenda commence at 11am, with heavier agenda meetings to commence earlier; Associate Professor Masters will chair the first portion of these meetings. The Committee was advised that the commencement time for each meeting will be confirmed by the Secretary via email and be noted on the agenda distributed for that meeting.

It was agreed that approval of routine matters (such as changes to the admission schedule)
could also be dealt with by circulation between meetings.

3.1.3 Prioritisation of agenda items

In the interests of ensuring that there is an opportunity to discuss all items submitted for consideration by the committee, it was agreed that a starring system not be adopted.

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-4
The Admissions Committee noted the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 24 February 2016

Associate Professor Masters had nothing to report in addition to the circulated paper.

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-5
The Admissions Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting of 24 February 2016.

3.3 Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar)

Professor Carlin provided a verbal update on trends for the Semester 1 2016 admission round, advising that a more complete report would be provided after the census date on 31 March. Preliminary observations suggest that this intake round has been very successful for meeting target student numbers and lifting quality for several important groups, including recent school leavers and the reduced proportion of offers made below the advertised ATAR cut-off. International and domestic postgraduate enrolments are also strong. The Admissions and Recruitment teams and faculty staff were thanked for their significant contribution to these results.

In discussion, concern was raised that allowing students entry on the best of ATAR or tertiary performance is allowing some students to enter the University despite marginal undergraduate performance. It was theorised that the number of students taking unfair advantage of this provision is significantly lower than students who benefit from a ‘second chance’ following unsuccessful tertiary study in a prior degree.

In response to an inquiry regarding recent press attention on sub-ATAR offers, Professor Carlin advised that data about the number of offers made to students with ATARs below the published cut-off will be provided to a future meeting. A smaller percentage of these offers were made by Sydney compared to the sector, with most only slightly below the cut-off. The possibility of making publicly available our admission data is also under discussion.

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-6
The Admissions Committee noted the report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar).

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Minor Course Amendment Proposals

This proposal was approved as presented.

Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-7
The Admissions Committee approved the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to correct the assumed knowledge details for the Bachelor Information Technology/Bachelor of Commerce, with immediate effect, as presented.

4.2 Review of Dux Scheme

Professor Carlin spoke to this proposal and opened by providing a framework for the scheme. The setting of a ‘guaranteed entry’ ATAR for several degree programs has proven successful in attracting high-achieving students, and grouping ATARs into simple and easily memorable values has removed complexity from admissions processing and reduced reliance on flexible entry. The introduction of maths prerequisites also helps ensure the capability of students entering specific programs. Alternative admissions pathways such as E12 and the Dux Scheme have also proven effective in attracting promising students who may not achieve the publicised ATAR, as well as high-achieving students who are attracted by the guaranteed offer. The scheme has already positively contributed to the culture of the University by facilitating admission of students who might not otherwise attend Sydney. Mr Ghezel advised that 21% of students made an offer under the Dux Scheme were low-SES, 14% were regional, with nearly double the number of such offers as before the introduction of the scheme; only 27% of offers were made to students in the top 100 schools.
Final admissions statistics from the scheme will be provided following census. The Committee was further advised that 62% of applicants did not require ATAR concessions.

The current proposal seeks to expand the Dux Scheme to include School Captains as an indicator of potential, and will maintain the minimum ATAR set by faculties as a requirement for admission to individual programs. The inclusion of non-academic measures for admission will reflect the statement provided to students on graduation from the University, which records non-academic contributions to the institution. The Committee was advised that the scheme will continue to be offered only to students enrolled in NSW secondary schools. Minor wording changes were suggested and it was agreed that the proposal be approved in principle, with revised wording for the policy amendment to be circulated for approval before submission to the Academic Board.

**Resolution AB Adm 2016/1-8**
The Admissions Committee recommended that, in principle:
- the Academic Board change the name of the University of Sydney Dux Entry Scheme to the University of Sydney Future Leaders Scheme;
- the Scheme be expanded to include other forms of demonstrated merit in leadership roles in the school community, specifically for 2017: school captains; and
- the Academic Board approve amendment of the Coursework Policy with a revised proposal clarifying the wording to be agreed by circulation before presentation to the Academic Board for approval.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Next meeting: 10:00am – 12:00pm, **Wednesday 20 April 2016**  
Western Tower Boardroom, Quadrangle