MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country. The committee noted apologies as recorded above, welcomed Associate Professor O’Connor back from leave and welcomed new student members James Fick and Joshua Reisler.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-1

That the Admissions Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 1/2017, held by circulation on 14 February 2017, be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising

There were no actions arising.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair provided an overview of the purpose and scope of the Committee, advising that the Committee provides advice to the Academic Board specifically in the area of policy and procedures relating to admission to the University. Discussion at the Committee is in three broad areas: University-level policy; special admission requirements for new or amended degrees (such as language requirements which differ from the University standard); and adjustments to UAC admissions standards as recommended by the Admissions Unit.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-2

That the Admissions Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 28 February 2017

In addition to the report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters (who was absent) provided further comments via the Secretary which highlighted the report of the external review of the Academic Board as being particularly noteworthy. Two primary areas have been identified for immediate investigation: the constituency and membership of the Academic Board; and the
structure and function of its committees.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-3
That the Admissions Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 28 February 2017.

3.3 Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar)
Further to the written report circulated with the agenda, Professor Carlin thanked all staff involved in the Semester 1 2017 admission round, especially highlighting the contributions of Wen Chai, Felicity Kiernan, Verdi Arli and their colleagues in the Admissions Unit.

Professor Carlin advised that this round has been a strong one for domestic undergraduate admissions, with an increase in recent school leavers, decreased gap between ATAR for recent and non-recent school leavers, increased retentions and continuing student load, and a median ATAR of around 93. International undergraduate admissions remain strong, although there has been a decline in postgraduate coursework admissions which are likely to require institutional resources to address, including an assessment of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) for postgraduate coursework programs. Areas where the University is unlikely to meet admissions targets have been identified, and in many cases these were anticipated with the tightening of admissions standards. Until the 31 March census date, further enrolment movement is expected.

In discussion, Ms Jas Chambers asked for details of the University’s decision not to offer flexible entry in the current admissions round, and how market expectations in this regard were handled. Professor Carlin advised that the decision was based on several factors, including the move to transparency of ATAR and publication of admissions data as requested by the Higher Education Standards Framework Panel. There has been strong growth in many areas even where ATARs were lowered, and in our published alternative admissions pathways such as Cadigal, E12 and the School Leaders Program. Both of these factors have reduced the necessity of flexible entry. Ms Jas Chambers asked that this information be communicated to faculties to close the communications loop.

It was observed that flexible entry does not address equity and does not allow us to clearly communicate our admission standards. Staff involved in recruitment should therefore emphasise the existence of the University’s approved alternative admissions pathways, rather than flexible entry. The desirability of a clear script to which staff can refer was highlighted, specific to the cohort and/or program, to ensure consistency of message regarding entry options.

Conversion of offers to enrolments was discussed, with Professor Carlin informing members that preliminary data indicates a decline in the conversion rate, the later the offer is made. Additional data is currently being collected on conversion rates by round, and the University has also increased the number of early offers made to take advantage of the higher early-round conversion rate. Professor Carlin undertook to provide statistics on pathways and conversion rates to a future meeting of the committee.

The decline in postgraduate enrolments was discussed, with a general downward trend observed in the Group of Eight possibly reflecting the growth in our competitors within niche markets; the increase in emphasis on employability and job-readiness, as well as engagement and international mobility, amongst our competitors was highlighted as a challenge we will need to address. The University also needs to closely examine the decline in HDR numbers.

Members were asked to ensure the confidentiality of the paper, noting that final enrolment statistics will not be available until after 31 March.

Action: Statistics to be provided on admission pathways and conversions. Responsible: Professor Carlin. Timing: April meeting.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-4
That the Admissions Committee note the report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar).

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Malaysian Pathway Programs
Ms Kiernan spoke to this proposal and advised that it arises from a desire to expand pathways into the University for international students. Malaysia has a national quality framework comparable to...
Australia’s admission via this pathway is consistent with other pathway programs offered in Australia and by other international providers. Feedback from Recruitment is that the University is missing very good potential students by not recognising this pathway so its inclusion is presented for consideration.

The Committee endorsed the proposal as presented.

**Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-5**

That the Admissions Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

1. Approve the recognition of Foundation programs, Pre-University programs, Overseas Degree Transfer Programmes and Other pathway programs offered by a recognised university in Malaysia and registered under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework as an entry pathway to undergraduate courses of the University of Sydney; and

2. That these programs be assessed as equivalent to an Australian Year 12 qualification and be assessed in the same manner as Australian and UK foundations programs.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 New BOSTES High School Curriculum

The Chair brought this item to the attention of members, noting that the revised curriculum includes notable changes in Science, Maths, English and History which may impact on the cohort of students commencing university study in 2020. Associate Professor Carlin advised that the University has clear evidence relating to the correlation between maths preparation and tertiary success, but that similar data is currently unavailable for English.

The Committee noted this paper as presented.

**Resolution AB Adm 2017/2-6**

That the Admissions Committee note the release of the new BOSTES high school curriculum, as presented.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

Ms Jas Chambers requested an update on alternative options for students who do not have the opportunity to complete HSC Mathematics as a prerequisite to admission to some degrees, as approved by the Academic Board in 2016. Professor Carlin advised that further discussion with faculties will be required to determine alternate mechanisms for admission of affected students (specifically those attending schools where the appropriate level of Mathematics was not offered), and that the University currently has no intention of offering centralised remediation to these students. He also suggested that it was highly unlikely that such remediation will be necessary as all schools from which the University is likely to attract students offer the required standard of HSC Mathematics, including rural and regional schools. Non-Recent School Leavers are currently exempt from the prerequisite requirements.

**Next meeting:** 10:00am – 12:00pm, **Tuesday 18 April 2017**

Western Tower Boardroom, Quadrangle