
ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

11:00am – 12:00pm, Tuesday 30 May 2017

Western Tower Boardroom

Members Present: Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson (Chair); Isabella Brook (President, SRC); Wencong Chai (Head of Admissions); Kubra Chambers (Director, Planning and Information Office); Yvonne Cheng (for Jas Chambers); Associate Professor Wendy Davis (Chair, Undergraduate Studies Committee); Professor Annamarie Jagose (Dean, Arts & Social Sciences); Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair, Academic Board); Joshua Reisler (PG Student).

Attendees: Linda Carmichael (Information Management Officer); Dr Matthew Charet (Secretary); Dr Glenys Eddy (Committee Officer, Secretariat); Dr Claire Hooker (Sydney Medical School (for Item 4.3)); Felicity Kiernan (Head of Admissions (Development)).

Apologies: Professor Tyrone Carlin (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar)); Jas Chambers (nominee of the Dean of Science) (Yvonne Cheng attending instead); Associate Professor Rae Cooper (nominee of the Dean of Business); James Fick (UG Student); Peter Finneran (nominee of Director, Student Recruitment); Professor Archie Johnson (Dean, Faculty of Engineering & IT); Associate Professor Michael Kertesz (Acting Chair, Graduate Studies Committee); Professor Michelle Lincoln (nominee of the Dean of Health Sciences); Associate Professor Donna O'Connor (nominee of the Head of School & Dean, Education); Dhaval Sanath Shukla (Nominee of the President, SUPRA); Mary Teague (Head, Widening Participation).

4/2017

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The committee noted apologies as recorded above.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-1

That the Admissions Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 3/2017, held on 18 April 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 advised that he had nothing to report.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-2

That the Admissions Committee note the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board meeting of 2 May 2017

In addition to the written report circulated with the agenda, Associate Professor Masters advised that at its 17 May meeting, Senate was provided with a verbal report on the proposed *University of Sydney (Academic Board) Rule 2017*, which is intended to replace the current *University of Sydney (Academic Governance) Rule 2003 (as amended)*. As the Academic Board was advised on 2 May, it is also proposed to separate procedures for elections from the Rule, and a set of draft Procedures is currently in development. This will allow more agile adoption of electronic election management without requiring the Rule to be approved by Senate.

Several recommendations were made in the Report of the Review of the Academic Board, to free up Academic Board meeting time to discuss strategic matters rather than routine course approvals, and several possible mechanisms to enable this were also advised to Senate. These include starring items presented as part of the reports of the Standing Committees only in advance of the meeting (rather than from the floor), and of possibly restructuring committees to include membership directly from the members of the Academic Board as well as retaining representation from faculties and PSUs as currently. Committee structures are slated for review as the next substantial part of the implementation of the Review's recommendations, and members were advised that the Rule is intended to allow the Board to determine its own committee structures.

The Committee noted the written report circulated with the agenda.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-3

That the Admissions Committee note the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 2 May 2017.

3.3 Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar)

In Professor Carlin's absence, Ms Kiernan spoke to the confidential written report of the Semester 1 2017 admissions round, as circulated with the agenda. She informed members that the round had been very positive for the University, with Sydney leading preferences and meeting offer targets as well as improving the median ATAR required for admission. Intake has also improved via each of our special admission pathways and in direct international admissions, offsetting drops in some domestic postgraduate coursework programs.

In discussion, the Chair advised that he was pleased to see a reduction in the number of students admitted with an ATAR below the published cut-off and that this should increase public confidence in the cut-offs. A possible gap in public reporting on Sydney's full transparency was identified, and the Chair advised that media reports on lack of transparency now focus on other institutions. The positive effect on student and parent perceptions of maintaining a high ATAR whilst being fully transparent was highlighted, with further opportunity to disseminate this information more broadly. The importance of advising staff about this was noted, especially for those who engage with the public such as Student Recruitment and staff working at events such as Open Day. Disseminating this information to school careers advisors and others in the community was also recommended. Ms Cheng recommended that a coordinated message be communicated to Open Day staff regarding the possibility of flexibility, with general agreement that this include a statement such as "if demand allows" in any future communication.

The Chair also questioned the possible drop in conversion from offer to enrolment and Ms Kiernan advised that 2016 statistics were not immediately to hand for comparison, but that these would be looked at to see how 2017 compared to previous years.

The Committee noted the written report circulated with the agenda.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-4

That the Admissions Committee note the Report on Admissions for Semester 1, 2017, as presented.

4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

4.1 Architecture, Design & Planning: Master of Urban Design

Associate Professor Davis spoke to this proposal and advised that the proposal has arisen from a desire to expand the pool of potential applicants by removing the requirement for a Credit average for undergraduate study, broadening the disciplines from which the program can draw, and allowing discretion as to when a portfolio might be required. Associate Professor Davis also advised the Committee of a transcription error in the proposal necessitating an update to clause 3.5(2), such that the wording "or completion of the requirements of the embedded Graduate Certificate with a WAM of at least 65" be retained and not deleted as presented.

In discussion, members sought clarification as to the circumstances under which a portfolio may be requested and was advised that this will be at the discretion of the Program Director based on a combination of academic performance and disciplinary background; this would be very difficult to capture in writing. It was agreed to amend the wording of clause 3.5(3) to read "Based on the applicant's undergraduate performance, the Program Director reserves..." and delete "A portfolio

should only be provided if requested by the Program Director.” These changes would be incorporated and an amended version of the resolutions would be circulated to the Committee before presentation to the Academic Board.

Ms Kubra Chambers sought clarification as to whether the school had any evidence to suggest that this strategy would work to increase enrolments into the program. The Committee was advised that while no formal market research has been undertaken, the admission criteria for the Master of Urbanism (which has a higher intake than Urban Design and includes an Urban Design stream) are similar; the school is therefore confident that the amendment will improve enrolments.

The proposal was endorsed as amended for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-5

That Admissions Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) *approve the proposal from the Sydney School of Architecture, Design & Planning to amend the Graduate Diploma in Urban Design and Master of Urban Design; and*
- (2) *approve the amendment of course resolutions arising from this proposal with effect from 1 July 2017.*

4.2 Engineering & IT: Graduate Diploma in Health Technology Innovation

The Chair advised that written advice had been obtained from the proponent supporting the deletion of the final sentence of clause 6.3(3)(a). It was agreed that this will now read: “A minimum of a bachelor’s degree from the University of Sydney, or qualifications deemed by the faculty to be equivalent, with a minimum credit average.” The sentence that follows this is to be deleted.

In discussion, Ms Cheng observed that there was no standard means of identifying what constitutes a ‘credit average’, with faculties using WAM, AAM, GPA or other means of quantifying this value. It was agreed that while stipulating a ‘credit average’ lacks clear definition, it also allows flexibility in determining how the standard is measured. This is particularly useful in assessing Sydney graduates against non-Sydney domestic and international students (who will not have a WAM).

The proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-6

That the Admissions Committee recommend that Academic Board:

- (1) *approve the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to amend the Graduate Diploma in Health Technology Innovation; and*
- (2) *approve the amendment of course resolutions arising from the proposal with effect from 1 January 2018.*

4.3 Medicine: Master of Bioethics

Dr Claire Hooker attended the meeting to speak to this proposal and advised that the proposed increase in IELTS will bring this program into closer alignment with other offerings in the faculty (many of which have an IELTS of 7 with minimum 7 in each band). The program is largely text-based and relies on written and verbal argumentation and so requires additional language proficiency. Teaching staff in the program have observed that students with weak language skills struggle to perform and have a poor student experience, both of which impact on staff workload. The change is propose to be effective from Semester 1 2018, and has been unanimously supported at faculty level.

The proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-7

That the Admissions Committee recommend that the Academic Board:

- (1) *approve the proposal from Sydney Medical School to increase IELTS score requirements for the Master of Bioethics, Graduate Diploma in Bioethics and Graduate Certificate in Bioethics; and*
- (2) *approve the amendment of the Schedule of English Language Requirements – Postgraduate, as referenced in the Coursework Policy 2014 with effect from 1 January 2018.*

4.4 National Expansion of Future Leaders Scheme: Amendment of Coursework Policy 2014

In Mr Finneran’s absence, the Chair and Ms Kiernan spoke to this proposal. The Chair informed members that based on the success of the scheme in enabling enrolment from the selected cohorts

in the Semester 1 2017 admissions round, it is proposed to expand the scheme in a staggered delivery, to encompass ACT schools in 2018 and possibly expand nationally in 2019 (should resources permit). In discussion, the possible impact on this scheme of the new Mathematics prerequisite for identified programs from 2019 was flagged for investigation. Ms Brook also sought advice as to where the students admitted via this scheme came from, and was advised that the scheme had increased urban, regional and rural admissions in this category, and served as an important mechanism to maintain the University's ongoing relationship with these schools.

The proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-8

That the Admissions Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the amendment of the Coursework Policy 2014, as presented, with effect from 27 June 2017.

4.5 UAC Schedules

Ms Kiernan informed members that each year following the Semester 1 admissions round, the UAC reviews its schedules for assessment of applicants with international secondary qualifications. This proposal presents the assessment of the Admissions Office on proposed amendments to the UAC schedules. In discussion, the Chair especially highlighted the change to the assessment of applicants holding a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, which closes the gap between recent and non-recent school leaver applicants.

The proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Academic Board.

Resolution AB Adm 2017/4-9

That the Admissions Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the adoption or rejection of UAC schedules for applicants with overseas qualifications, as presented, with immediate effect.

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

6 OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Any Other Business

The Chair raised two pieces of additional business.

- (1) The recent announcement from HR was flagged, advising of changes to the University close-down to enable the earlier processing of UAC offers in December, as well as to enable the earlier scheduling of Open Day to allow students to change their preferences as required in mid-December.
- (2) The draft response prepared by the Director of Higher Education Policy and Projects to a paper on ATAR transparency had been circulated to the Committee following its previous meeting. The Chair has provided additional feedback requesting incorporation of advice that the University is keen to distinguish between students who obtain the required ATAR and those who do not, observing that a significant number of applicants via special admission pathways obtain an ATAR in excess of that required for admission without flexibility. Identification of equity pathways is particularly important to the University, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Registrar) has undertaken to edit the University's response accordingly.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:08pm.

Next meeting: 10:00am – 12:00pm, **Tuesday 11 July 2017**
Western Tower Boardroom, Quadrangle

The agenda and papers for this meeting are available from sydney.edu.au/secretariat/pdfs/academic-board-committees/admissions/2017/20170530-Admissions-Agenda-Pack.pdf.