GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

10:00am – 12:00pm, Tuesday 17 June 2018
Senate Room, Quadrangle

Members Present:
Professor Michael Kertesz (Chair); Associate Professor Patrick Kelly (Medicine) Deputy Chair; Dr Matthew Beck (Business); Dr Christopher Coady (Sydney Conservatorium of Music); Professor Ross Coleman (Director, Graduate Research); Associate Professor Steven Cumming (Nominee of Academic Board Representative) for Dr Peter Kench; Dr Hayley Fisher (Arts & Social Sciences); Edwina Grose (Nominee of the Deputy Registrar); Professor Paul Groundwater (HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee Representative) for Associate Professor Shae McCrystal; Associate Professor Janice Gullick (Nursing & Midwifery); Associate Professor Lynette MacKenzie (Health Sciences); Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair of the Academic Board); Dr Petr Matous (Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies); Associate Professor Nicole Mockler (Nominee of Academic Board); Professor Cameron Stewart (Law); Associate Professor Lee Stickells (Architecture, Design & Planning); and Dr Gareth Vio (Nominee of Academic Board).

Attendees: Dr Matthew Charet (Executive Officer to Academic Board); Sally Hilton (Committee Officer); Professor David Lowe (Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies) for Item 4.1; and Peter Murlis (Portfolio Manager, Higher Degree by Research Administration Centre).

Apologies: Professor Jo-Anne Brien (Pharmacy); Sara Brown (General Manager, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Dr George Carayannopoulos (Head, HDR Administration Centre); Sinem Guletkin (Postgraduate Coursework Student); Dr Peter Kench (Nominee of Academic Board); Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy); Professor Shae McCrystal (Chair, HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee); Sayan Mitra (Postgraduate Research Student); Professor Philippa Pattison (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education); Nicole Seebacher (nominee of the President, SUPRA); and Dr Munira Xaymardan (Dentistry).

2018/4

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Committee welcomed new members and noted the apologies as recorded above.

2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Members confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 May 2018 as an accurate record of the meeting.

Resolution GSC18/4-1

That the Graduate Studies Committee resolved that the minutes of meeting 3/2018 held on 22 May 2018 be confirmed as a true record.

2.2 Actions Arising

The Chair provided the Committee with an update on actions arising:

- Finalised revised versions of ten proposals requiring minor amendments were presented to and approved by the Academic Board on 12 June 2018.
- Item 4.6
  The proposal from the School of Architecture, Design and Planning to amend the Master of Architecture (Sustainable Design) was withdrawn following the Committee meeting and was not presented to the Academic Board.

Respect is a core value of the Academic Board
• Item 4.13
The proposal from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to amend the Master of Education and embedded programs was withdrawn following the Committee meeting and was not presented to the Academic Board.

• Item 4.52
The proposal from the School of Architecture, Design and Planning to amend the Doctor of Philosophy was withdrawn following the Committee meeting and was not presented to the Academic Board.

Resolution GSC18/4-2
The Graduate Studies Committee noted the updates provided on outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report of the Chair
The Chair’s report was taken as read and noted without further comment.

The requirement for thesis embargo requests to be supported by appropriate evidence was noted and members were requested to communicate this to their Faculties and Schools.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the thesis erratum notice process.

Members were reminded that the Chair will be on Special Studies Program Leave for six (6) months from 1 August 2018 and thanked Deputy Chair, A/Professor Patrick Kelly (Medicine) for acting as Chair during this period.

Resolution GSC18/4-3
That the Graduate Studies Committee noted the report of the Chair.

3.2 Report of the Academic Board
The Chair of the Academic Board provided a verbal report to members, congratulating the Board on the large volume of work transacted at the 12 June 2018 meeting.

Resolution GSC18/4-4
That the Graduate Studies Committee noted the report of the Academic Board meeting held on 12 June 2018.

3.3 Report of HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee
Professor Paul Groundwater (HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee Representative) was in attendance for Professor Shae McCrystal (Chair, HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee) to provide a verbal report of meetings held on 25 May 2018 and 22 June 2018.

Professor Paul Groundwater outlined significant concerns raised by the HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee (HDRSSC) in relation to the Enhanced Scholarship scheme.

Members were of the view that implementation and awarding of the Enhanced Scholarships be delayed until:
• A comprehensive policy, strategic direction and infrastructure is developed;
• Transparent eligibility criteria, a target audience and the scholarship title be determined; and
• A branding and marketing strategy is advertised and promoted.

It was suggested that the above concerns are expected to be addressed by September 2018.

Resolution GSC18/4-5
That the Graduate Studies Committee discussed the report from the Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Sub-Committee (HDRSSC) meetings held on 25 May 2018 and 22 June 2018.
4 ITEMS FOR ACTION

Major Course Proposals

4.1 Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies: Master of Professional Engineering (Accelerated)

Professor David Lowe (Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies) presented a proposal to introduce the Master of Professional Engineering (Accelerated). The proposal is aimed at addressing declining enrolments by introducing a two (2) year variant of the current Master of Professional Engineering (MPE). Learning outcomes remain the same, however, it will provide for admission of students with different levels of prior studies.

The Chair noted his reservations in considering this proposal outside of the correct course proposal submission processes, advising members that the proposal has not yet received approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education); nor been presented to the University Executive Curriculum and Course Planning Committee (UE CCPC) for endorsement prior to submission to the Committee.

Members provided mixed feedback, commenting that:

- use of the term “Accelerated” in the degree title was slightly misleading academically, however, understandable from a marketing perspective;
- the proposal will require a substantial volume of work from Academic Modelling and that given the current timeframe and the requirement for Senate approval, the proposal is unlikely to be visible prior to late 2018 and therefore may not assist with increasing enrolments; and
- the MPE (Accelerated) not be reliant on cross-referencing to the existing MPE and it include details such as learning outcomes, assurance of learning, academic dress and other considerations.

The proposal was endorsed in principle for 2019 implementation and submission to the Academic Board subject to amendments to learning outcomes, assurance of learning, academic dress and endorsement by the UE CCPC.

Resolution GSC18/4-6

That the Graduate Studies Committee recommend that the Academic Board approve the proposal from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to introduce the Master of Professional Engineering (Accelerated); approve the introduction of course resolutions and unit of study tables arising from the proposal; and recommend that Senate approve the amendment of the Resolutions of Senate for the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies, with effect from 1 January 2019.

Minor Course Proposals

Nil

Higher Degree by Research

Nil

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee: Revised Terms of Reference of the HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee

Resolution GSC18/4-7

That the Graduate Studies Committee noted the revised Terms of Reference of the HDR Scholarships Subcommittee.

5.2 Graduate Research: Options for Reducing HDR Thesis Examination Times

The Chair advised members that the original Options for Reducing HDR Thesis Examination Times proposal was submitted to the 12 June 2018 Academic Board meeting, where it was resolved that the Director, Graduate Research, further develop recommendations to reduce HDR examination times for future consultation.
Resolution GSC18/4-8

That the Graduate Studies Committee noted the Options for Reducing HDR Thesis Examination Times.

5.3 Graduate Research: Consideration of Excessive Examination Times for HDR Thesis

The Director, Graduate Research, provided members with an overview of the main challenges in reducing the University's HDR thesis examination times:

1. Academic Supervisors breaching policy by failing to nominate examiners in a timely fashion;
2. Delayed receipt of the third PhD thesis examiner's report; and
3. The allocation of three (3) months for students to complete corrections to an examined thesis, which in many cases substantially less time may be adequate.

The Academic Board at its 12 June 2018 meeting proposed further investigation of the following:

• Reduction in the number of examiners from three (3) to two (2); and
• Introduction of a mandatory oral component in addition to the thesis-based examination, consistent with the recommendations of the Australian Council of Learned Academics (ACOLA) Review of Australia's Research Training System report.

Members noted that this proposal is a significant departure from current processes and provided the following feedback:

• That inviting three examiners and selecting only two to examine would require careful management and that utilising a reduced number of examiners may not necessarily mitigate the delayed receipt of the latest examiners report. Concern regarding Australia’s geographical isolation potentially resulting in limited access to international examiners and conflicts of interests of Australian academics was also raised.
• Clarification of the proposed model(s) of oral examination was requested. It was advised that a range of models would be investigated for further consultation with the Committee with the aim to develop a well-rounded oral examination model which includes a detailed thesis evaluation.
• That the University has a current process in place for oral examinations and that it may be beneficial to revise this to address the prevailing challenges rather than creating a new policy.
• Clarification of the post oral examination feedback that would be provided to students.

Following meetings of the HDR Examinations Sub-Committee and Academic Quality Committee, it was determined that the complexities and challenges of introducing the changes outlined in this proposal require a more detailed submission and further discussion.

Members were requested to discuss the proposal with their Faculties and Schools and to provide any feedback directly to the Director, Graduate Research.

Resolution GSC18/4-8

That the Graduate Studies Committee discussed the proposed options to reduce HDR thesis examination times.

5.4 Post-Bachelor Coursework Programs: Post-Bachelor Coursework Programs Report

The Chair spoke to this item in Professor Pip Pattison’s (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education) absence, noting that the changing nature of post-Bachelor education in Australia and internationally is an issue of concern within the sector.

The proposal's recommendation to undertake a current state market assessment of post-bachelor opportunities in the first quarter of 2018 was endorsed.

Resolution GSC18/4-9

That the Graduate Studies Committee endorse the recommendations of the Post-Bachelor Coursework Programs Report to undertake a current state market assessment of post-bachelor opportunities in the first quarter of 2018.
5.5 **Office of Educational Integrity**: Towards an Institutional Response to the Risks Posed by Contract Cheating

The Committee supported the proposal from the Office of Educational Integrity to address the risks posed by contract cheating and noted:

- The importance of student awareness regarding the potential risks in sharing personal information online.
- That the issues outlined in the proposal are not limited to contract cheating and occur in a range of other university assessments.
- That increased free access to online intellectual content may assist somewhat in ameliorating the issue.

**Resolution GSC18/4-10**

*That the Graduate Studies Committee supported the initiatives proposed by the Office of Educational Integrity to address the risks posed by contract cheating.*

6 **OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 11:30am

7 **NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 11 September 2018
10:00am – 12:00pm
Senate Room, Quadrangle