AGENDA: PARTS I – III

The next meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School will be held in the Senate Room (not the Old Senate Room) on Tuesday, 11 March 2008 at 2.15p.m.

Parts I and II of the agenda are to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. Parts III and IV are for discussion. A member may request the removal of an item from Parts I or II to Part III.

DR KABILAN KRISHNASAMY
Executive Officer
Board of the Graduate Research School
1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST – REF: F34

The Chair will invite members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest, if applicable, with regard to items on the agenda.

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 12 February 2008.

PART I – ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

There are no items

PART II – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

There are no items

PART III – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

3. COMBINED COURSE FOR MBBS AND PhD – PROPOSAL TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – Ref F

The combined course leading to the award of the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and Doctor of Philosophy was approved in 1998 and the first cohort of students commenced in 2001. The structure of the combined MBBS/PhD course is that students undertake the standard MBBS course during years 1-3 after which they gain entry to the combined course and in their fourth year they undertake a full year of full-time research. Students then complete the clinical years of their MBBS course with a concurrent part-time PhD enrolment, and finish with a final year of full-time PhD enrolment. However, currently this course is available to domestic students only.

By R134/07, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences resolved to recommend to the Council via the Board the combined course be made available to international students as well. A copy of the relevant minute extract is attached for members’ consideration (Attachment A).

For Discussion

4. AMENDMENT TO UNIVERSITY GENERAL RULES FOR ACADEMIC COURSES – Ref F

Currently, under the university general rules for academic courses rule 1.3.1.3 states that “a person whose work for a higher degree at this or another institution is under examination at the time of application for admission is not permitted to enrol in a research higher degree or any associated preliminary programme of study until that examination has been completed and the final results have been provided to the Board”.

The original intent of rule 1.3.1.3 was to prevent concurrent enrolment in two different programmes except for combined courses. However, it appears that this is not accurately reflected in the way rule 1.3.1.3 is currently worded.

Arguably, rule 1.3.1.3, in its current form, may be considered irrelevant on two grounds: First, rule 1.3.1.3 seems to predate the Research Training Scheme in that once a candidate submits a thesis for examination they are no longer enrolled in that course unless they receive a resubmit result, in which case they must re-enrol.
Second, the intent of rule 1.3.1.3 is partly covered by another rule, 1.3.1.9: “Except when specific combined courses have been formally approved, a candidate for a research higher degree is not permitted to enrol simultaneously (a) in a course leading to a formal qualification at another institution; or (b) in an undergraduate or honours programme at this university.

As it stands, rule 1.3.1.3 is excessively restrictive and there is a need to reword it to more accurately reflect its original intent. Thus, members are asked to consider the attached amendment to rule 1.3.1.3 (Attachment B).

For Discussion

5. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND OPERATION OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL’S SUBCOMMITTEES – Ref F

The Board of the Graduate Research School, as a standing committee of the Academic Council, is subject to review by its members every two years until 2007, then annually from 2008. The review report from 2006-2007, consolidated by the Institutional Research Unit, is attached (Attachment C). Members were encouraged to complete this annual survey which was sent out in December 2007, but also, during the course of the year, to raise any issue associated with the Committee’s activities and processes which may improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Within the context of the Committee’s modus operandi and its self-review, the Chair will invite comment on the outcomes of the Committee’s review and how the Board can contribute to the University’s overall strategic thinking and directions.

For Discussion