MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (Professor D McEachern) - Chair
Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Professor K Simmer)
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) (Professor R Owens)
President of the Postgraduate Students' Association (Ms D Bond)
Professor S Anderson
Professor H Barrett
Associate Professor S Broomhall
Associate Professor A Lynch
Professor K Miller
Professor N Morgan
Professor D Pannell
Professor C Raston
Professor Z Rengel
Professor J Sweeney
Mr M Thomas
Associate Professor L Vidovich
Professor G Yech

Standing Invitees:
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Initiatives) (Professor Alistar Robertson)
Director, Energy and Minerals Initiative (Mr Tim Shanahan)

By invitation in an Observing Capacity:
Dr A Buti
Dr E Chapman
Professor K Croft
Associate Professor R Cardell-Oliver
Professor J Davidson
Associate Professor J Lee
Dr W Maier
Associate Professor I McLean
Dr S Stewart

Dr Judy Berman

RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING – 14 November 2008

The next meeting of the Research Committee will be held in the Senate Room on Thursday 14 November 2008 at 2.15pm.

Dr Campbell Thomson
Executive Officer, Research Committee

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. MINUTES

   Confirmation

   Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 14 August 2008.
3. DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

PART 1 – ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

4. UWA SUPPLEMENTARY TRAVEL GRANTS FOR NEW ACADEMIC STAFF – REF F896

Attached (Attachment RC1) for noting are the final reports of Dr Daniel Franklin, Centre for Forensic Science, Dr Nicola Mitchell, School of Animal Biology, Dr Kym Guelfi, School of Sport Science, Exercise and Health, Dr Scott Stewart, School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences, Dr Keith Stubbs, School of Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences, Dr Renee Firman, School of Animal Biology, Dr Jeremy Shaw, Centre for Microscopy, Characterisation and Analysis, Dr Keith Horton, School of Humanities, Ms Lucienne Tessens, Organisational and Staff Development Services, Dr Melissa Thomas, School of Animal Biology, Dr Jennifer Kelley, School of Animal Biology, Dr Anura Amarasinghe, School of Animal Biology, Dr Nicholas O’Toole, Centre for Plant Energy Biology, and Dr Jagadeesh Putta, School of Mechanical Engineering, for their UWA Supplementary Travel Grants for New Academic Staff.

5. UWA POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP SCHEME – REF

Attached (Attachment RC2) is a report of the Assessment Committee to recommend the award of the 2008 UWA Postdoctoral Fellowships.

For noting.

6. RESEARCH TRAINING IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES – Interim Report

Attached (Attachment RC3) is an interim report of a Parliamentary Inquiry into the contribution that Australian universities make to research training in Australia, and the challenges Australian universities face in training, recruiting and retaining high quality research graduates and staff.

Some of the major issues raised during the inquiry include:

- Increased funding is needed for research and development;
- Funding is needed for the full cost of research;
- Financial support for postgraduate students is inadequate; and
- Career pathways for researchers are limited.

This report outlines some of the key recommendations for the Australian Government’s consideration, with the Committee’s final and more comprehensive report to feature full discussion of the issues.

For noting.

7. RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING DATES IN 2009 - REF14662

The meeting dates for the Research Committee in 2008 are as follows:

Thursday 12 February
Thursday 14 May
Thursday 13 August
Thursday 12 November

For noting.
PART 2 – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

There are no items in this part of the agenda.

PART 3 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

8. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH AND INNOVATION)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will report on items of interest which have arisen since the previous meeting.

9. MAJOR GRANT ROUND 2009 OUTCOMES – REFS RA/1/31/1, RA/1/54/1

A summary report of the 2009 ARC and NHMRC major grant rounds is attached (Attachment RC4).

The relatively poor result for 2009 major grant round funding has resulted in the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Initiatives) meeting individually with Deans to advise on strategies to improve the number and success of grant applications in future rounds.

Further detail about strategies to improve UWA’s ARC and NHMRC grant success will be provided at the meeting and feedback is invited from members of the Research Committee.

For discussion.

10. OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES PLAN 2009-2013

A progress report on the development of the Operational Priorities Plan (OPP) 2009-2013 was considered at the Senate meeting held on 27 October 2008, and a copy of this progress report is available from http://intranet.uwa.edu.au/planning/planning_services_intranet/operational_priorities_plan_for_2009_2013.

The Research Executive has met and developed the attached (Attachment RC5) research and research training objectives and implementation strategies to form part of the OPP 2009-2013. These objectives have been discussed widely by groups across the University, including the Vice-Chancellor’s Advisory Group, the Senior Managers’ Forum and the University Managers’ Forum.

There are substantial challenges in formulating the new OPP, including the current global economic climate downturn and how this is likely to impact on the University’s aspirational target of becoming a top 50 university.

It is the intention to subsume the Academic Profile into the OPP in this new version so that the OPP will also articulate the University’s research priorities for 2009-2013. While UWA has a history and tradition based on being a comprehensive, research-intensive university, there is nonetheless a need, in light of the University’s limited resources, to provide appropriate focus and direction to our research activities.

It is therefore proposed to focus on three strategic research outcome areas and a number of emerging and seed priorities, while aiming to continually improve the quality of research discoveries, publications and research productivity at UWA.
The proposed strategic research outcome areas are:

- Management of natural and agricultural ecosystems
- Exploration, production and exploitation of minerals, oil and gas
- Molecular, genetic and population approaches to health

In addition to the proposed strategic research outcome areas, it is proposed to promote a number of emerging areas for research concentration in areas of strategic and local significance. These proposed areas of emerging and seed priority are:

- Bio-engineering and bio-imaging
- Social policy, public policy and international studies
- Educational measurement
- Radio astronomy
- Green chemistry
- Organisational behaviour
- Marine and ocean studies
- Medieval studies (NEER)

The Chair invites members to comment on the OPP 2009-2013 draft research and research objectives and implementation strategies, as well as the proposed strategic research outcome areas and areas of emerging and seed priority.

For discussion.

11. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH ACTIVE

A working party was convened by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) to look at the conjunction of the different elements of research active, including research publications, research income and HDR student load and completions, and how this might be impacted by academic level and discipline. The purpose was to propose a framework in which Faculties can review their definitions of research active within the context of some generally accepted principles.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) will report at the meeting on progress with the development of Socrates as a tool to report the new parameters of research active staff.

For discussion.

12. UWA RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRES

(a) Centre for Petroleum Geosciences

Attached (Attachment RC6) is a proposal to establish the Centre for Petroleum Geoscience as a UWA Research and Training Centre in the School of Earth and Geographical Sciences, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The proposed Centre aims to act as a focus for research and training in petroleum geoscience and establish UWA as a major player in this growing field. The Director of the Centre will be the new appointee to the Chevron-Woodside funded Chair in Petroleum Geoscience. The proposed Centre involves collaboration of staff from SEGSI with CSIRO and WA-ERA, and potentially with the Geological Survey of WA, Curtin University of Technology, and the Australian School of Petroleum at the University of Adelaide. It has the support of the Head of School and Dean and a budget of over $3 million over five years. Approval for a 5-year period from 1 January 2009 is sought.

For discussion and approval.
(b) Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Attached (Attachment RC7) is a proposal to establish the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies as a UWA Research and Training Centre in the Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. The proposed Centre aims to serve as a highly visible vehicle to promote quality research and build research capacity in the area of Medieval and Early Modern Studies. It involves collaboration predominantly amongst staff in the Schools of Humanities and Social and Cultural Studies with others from a range of disciplines. It has a budget of around $350,000 over three years, including VCDF support. The proposal has the support of the Dean and approval for a 3-year period from a current date is sought.

For discussion and approval.

13. OTHER BUSINESS