MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ECONOMICS & COMMERCE CONFERENCE ROOM ON 12 NOVEMBER 2009

PRESENT

Professor D McEachern (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)) in the Chair;
Professor R Owens (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training); Associate Professor S Broomhall; Professor M Gillooly; Assistant Professor K Guelfi; Winthrop Professor D Haskell;
Professor K Miller; Professor D Pannell; Professor J Pillow; Professor C Raston; Winthrop Professor K Siddique

Mrs C Casey (Acting Executive Officer)

Apologies

Professor S Anderson; Professor H Barrett; Associate Professor A Buti; Professor K Croft;
Professor J Davidson; Professor I McLean; Mr R Oehmen; Mr M Thomas; Winthrop Professor J Sweeney; Professor L Vidovich

1. MINUTES – REF F14660

Confirmation

RESOLVED – 5

To confirm the Minutes of the Research Committee meeting held on 13 August 2009.

2. UWA SUPPLEMENTARY TRAVEL GRANTS FOR NEW ACADEMIC STAFF – F896

Members noted the attached (Attachment RC1) final reports of Assistant Professor J Rubenson,
School of Sport Science, Exercise & Health, Dr M Fiorentini, School of Earth & Environment; Dr U Ecker, School of Psychology; Dr A Amarasinghe, School of Population Health; Dr M Renton, School of Plant Biology; Dr N Thebaud, School of Earth & Environment; Dr D Cvejanovic, School of Physics and Dr M Taylor, School of Animal Biology, for their UWA Supplementary Travel Grants for New Academic Staff.

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

Members noted the attached summary report of the 2010 ARC and NHMRC major grant rounds (Attachment RC2). The Chair also highlighted the outcomes in his Report under Item 7.

4. OUTPUT IN THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS – REF F23570

The allocation of funds to reward Output in the Performing and Visual Arts (OPVA) in 2009 was $130,000 and responsibility for the allocation of those funds had been delegated to the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences by the Research Committee. Members of the Research Committee noted the attached (Attachment RC3) report on the deliberations and outcomes of the OPVA Audit Committee.
5. **UWA RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AWARDS – REF RA/1/989/1**

A report of the Convenors of the 2010 UWA Research Development Awards Committees had been attached to the Agenda. The report provided a summary of the projects funded by discipline panel, as well as recommendations for improving the application form to provide better clarity about the information requested of applicants. Members of the Research Committee noted that the Research Grants Office would follow up on the recommendations in the report *(Attachment RC4)*.

6. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING DATES IN 2010 – REF 14662**

Members noted the following meeting dates for the Research Committee in 2010:

- Thursday 11 February 2010
- Thursday 13 May 2010
- Thursday 12 August 2010
- Thursday 11 November 2010

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

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) reported on the successful outcome of the recent ARC and NHMRC major grant rounds. He was particularly pleased with the ARC outcome and highlighted that with regard to ARC Discovery Projects, UWA had received the highest amount of funding in history with over $16.1m which was an increase of over 37% compared to last year. UWA's success rate was higher than the national average and there had been a wider distribution of funds across disciplines within the University.

With regard to NHMRC funding, UWA had performed strongly but in context of the national outcome, he suggested more needed to be done.

A member raised the issue that the timing for the call of membership for the NHMRC Research Committee and policy advisory committees was poor and this was an issue that needed to be taken on board by the NHMRC.

Professor McEachern also advised members that UWA had increased its place on the Shanghai Jiao-Tong Rankings. UWA had moved from 127 to 113 which was a large increase since 2003 when UWA was placed 173. He stressed that UWA was in a good position to move into the Top 100 by 2011/2012.

The following current grant rounds with deadlines within the next 4 weeks were also noted:

- ARC Linkage Projects
- ARC Super Science Fellowships
- ARC Centres of Excellence (Eols)
- ARC Laureate Fellowships
- National Data Service
- GRDC
- Australia/India Strategic Research Fund
- Education Investment Fund (EIF) – UWA was participating in 5 full applications – 3 of which would be hosted by UWA, 1 hosted by the University of Queensland and another by CSIRO

8. **REVIEW OF SOCRATES II INDEX – REF F18052**

Members noted that feedback from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences had pointed to the fact that the point system on Socrates II discouraged the publication of research monographs. In response to the feedback, Professor Robyn Owens, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Research
Training) prepared a paper which re-weighted research monographs in Socrates in line with the weightings given in the UWA Faculty Funding Model.

The paper had been attached to the Agenda (Attachment RC5) and Professor Owens was invited to present it to the Committee.

The paper showed that a re-weighting of research monographs had little impact on the overall University Socratic index points, increasing the average by only 3%. It was noted, however, that there was a significant effect in the Faculties of Law, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and to a lesser extent Education. In these faculties, research monographs were a major form of output and a significant indicator of quality - it was therefore important to encourage publication of research monographs for scholars in these disciplines so that they remain competitive in the national grants schemes.

There was also discussion about the measures of output per staff FTE used for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative and Professor Owens advised members that once there was stability with the requirements for ERA, there could be further change to the points system in Socrates to reflect quality.

Members of the Committee were in support of the modifications and it was

RESOLVED - 6

To approve a modification of the Socrates II Index to increase the publication points for research monographs back to the Faculty Funding Model weights.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee paid tribute to Professor McEachern and acknowledged it was his last meeting as Chair of the Research Committee. Members wished him well in his retirement and thanked him for the difference he'd made during his term as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) at UWA. Professor McEachern congratulated Professor Robyn Owens on her new appointment as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and introduced her as the new Chair of the Research Committee for 2010.
ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL FROM A MEETING OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2009

10. UWA RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRES

(a) Centre for the Study of Social Change – Ref F28381

Members noted the attached (Attachment RC6) proposal to establish the Centre for the Study of Social Change as a UWA Research and Training Centre in the School of Psychology, Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences from the current date until the end of 2012, which has already been endorsed by Academic Council. The Director of the proposed Centre, appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, is Professor Carmen Lawrence. The proposed Centre is designed to harness research and teaching resources across the University to better understand the processes that lead to social change. It involves collaboration with staff in a number of UWA schools and faculties, and the Institute of Advanced Studies. It aims in the longer term to include participation from government, non-government organisations, arts practitioners, and researchers in the region, especially Indonesia and Malaysia. It has a budget in excess of $800,000 over 4 years, including VCDF support. The proposal has the support of the Dean and the Head of the School of Psychology.

(b) Centre for Mathematics of Symmetry and Computation

Members were asked to consider a proposal to establish the Centre for Mathematics of Symmetry and Computation (CMSC) as a UWA Research and Training Centre in the School of Mathematics and Statistics, Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics. The proposed Centre aims to place UWA at the forefront of international mathematics capability by increasing visibility and providing a prominent platform for mathematics education and research. Its focus is around the cutting-edge research of UWA Federation Fellow Winthrop Professor Cheryl Praeger who will direct the Centre and whose group has international research collaborations with more than 12 countries from Europe, North America and China. The Centre aims to increase research training at UWA through PhD enrolments and exchanges with collaborating organisations, as well as outreach activities with high school mathematics teachers and students. It was thought that the proposal was very timely and addressed an emerging national and international deficiency in mathematics education. The proposed Centre has a budget of around $2.7m over the next four years, including VCDF support. The proposal has the support of the Head of School and the Dean of the Faculty.

RESOLVED - 7

To endorse the attached (Attachment RC7) proposal to establish the Centre for Mathematics of Symmetry and Computation for a 5 year period from the current date and to forward this application to Academic Council for approval.

(c) UWA Centre for Energy

Members were asked to consider a proposal to establish the UWA Centre for Energy (UWACE) as a UWA Research and Training Centre in the School of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics. The proposed Centre will build on the achievements of the former School of Oil and Gas and aims to become an internationally renowned research facility in fuels, energy and sustainable development. Its overall aim is to develop new knowledge and advanced technologies for efficient, effective and environmentally-friendly use of fuels and energy in resources industries. The proposed Centre will be central to the continuing development of key relationships within the energy industry and the positioning of UWA as a global engineering hub. The Director of the proposed Centre will be Winthrop Professor Dongke Zhang, formerly Director of the Centre for Fuels and Energy at Curtin University. Members noted that collaboration was with organisations such as Chevron, Woodside Energy, BHP Billiton, the Chinese Academy of
Sciences, Tsinghua University in Beijing and WA:ERA. The proposed Centre has the support of the Head of School and Dean and a budget of over $2.3m over four years.

RESOLVED - 8

To endorse the attached (Attachment RC8) proposal to establish the UWA Centre for Energy for a 5 year period from the current date and to forward this application to Academic Council for approval.

11. REVIEW OF CENTRES

(a) Establishment/Disestablishment/Postponement of Centres

A paper on the Review of UWA Research and Training Centres (Attachment RC9) was tabled at the meeting. Members acknowledged that a total of 43 UWA Research and Training Centres had reached the end of their period of approval with 33 Centres applying to be considered for re-establishment and 10 Centres notifying of their intention to disestablish.

The Review Panel recommended to re-establish 27 Centres, disestablish the following 2 Centres:

- Trade, Migration & Development Research Centre (TMDCRC)
- Centre for Acoustics, Dynamics and Vibration (CADV)

and postpone the establishment of the following 4 Centres:

- Callaway Centre
- Centre for Forensic Science
- Centre for Geographical Analysis and Regional Development
  (formerly Institute for Regional Development)
- Rural Clinical School (RCS)

Professor McEachern highlighted that the outcome of the review aligned with the strategic goals of the University and invited members to view the submissions.

(b) Changes to Guidelines and Application Form

The Review Panel also recommended the following changes to the Guidelines for the Establishment of UWA Research and Research Training Centres and the Application Form:

- Final report due three months before Centre expiry date, rather than the previous year before
- Addition of a page for the Head of School’s signature prior to the Dean’s approval page
- Section 16 – Clarification of budget requirements

RESOLVED - 9

To endorse the attached (Attachment RC9) recommendations of the Panel to Review UWA Research and Training Centres and to forward the recommendations to Academic Council for approval.