MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ACCOMMODATION COMMITTEE
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM W1 ON THURSDAY.
21 SEPTEMBER 1995

PRESENT: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor A Robson) in the Chair
Chair of the Academic Board (Professor M V Sargent)
Dr D Chang, Dr F Haynes,
Associate Professor B Madsen, Dr T Quickenden
Mr D Tippett (for Guild President)

By Invitation
Vice-Principal, Mr M L Griffith
Mr W Browae

Mrs J Rodrigues as Secretary

APOLOGIES Professor L Beazley

1. MINUTES - REF 07/01/001/001

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Accommodation Committee held on 16 August 1995 be confirmed.

2. REQUEST FOR AIR-CONDITIONING BY THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
REF - 07/02/039/001

The head of the Department of Geography had written to ask the committee to reconsider an earlier decision not to provide funding for a teaching laboratory and a research laboratory.

Members agreed that they could not reconsider the decision relating to the teaching laboratory as it had been made in accordance with policy established as a consequence of the recent change to the air-conditioning policy. They were however, more sympathetic towards the research laboratory which is due to house expensive carbon dating equipment.

It was agreed that the Committee would provide funds to have the air-conditioning system designed and costed and reconsider the request when costs were known.

3. ACCOMMODATION AT QE II REF - 07/02/059/001

The Vice-Principal provided a report on the outcome of meetings held to discuss accommodation in "G" Block and "L" Block.

Members discussed a number of the issues raised by the meetings and considered a letter for the Department of Anatomy and Human Biology which reiterated that department's need for temporary accommodation in 1996. It was agreed that it was becoming unlikely that additional accommodation would become available at the hospital in time for the relocation of the department and that other accommodation would have to be located.
ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

4. MINOR WORKS AND SITE SERVICES PROGRAMME FOR 1996 QUALITY ASSURANCE FUNDING TO IMPROVE TEACHING VENUES
REF - 02/12/006/008; 07/02/012/004

The Working Party had prepared a report which detailed its recommendations. The Chair of the Working Party drew the Committee's attention to the proposal to provide funding from the Minor Works and Site Services Programme and Quality Assurance funds to establish an interactive video-conferencing facility on campus. The Manager Campus Services is developing a proposal for a common teaching facility. It was suggested that this could be co-located in a new University House Building.

The Committee was advised that the Faculty of Economics and Commerce, Education & Law was also investigating the provision of a video-conferencing facility. The Manager Campus Services was liaising with the Faculty to ensure that the University adopted a co-ordinated approach. A member suggested that there could be a need for three facilities on campus. The new common teaching facility, the ECEL facility and the existing Agriculture facility.

Another member suggested that it might be more appropriate to provide the third facility at QE II.

This matter will be reconsidered by the Committee when a detailed proposal is available. Meanwhile, the Committee agreed to forward the report and recommendations to Academic Council.

RESOLVED - 30 to endorse the recommendations of the Working Party in the attached report and recommend their acceptance to Academic Council.

5. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM THE RECENT CHANGE TO THE AIR-CONDITIONING POLICY, REF - 07/01.001/062

The Committee was asked to support the following design criteria:

(i) Commissioned architects should continue to allow for the effect passive energy considerations on buildings and design to minimise the effect of solar gain. Thus buildings should continue to be aligned on the east/west axis and balconies, sun screens and roof overhangs should continue to be used to shade windows. This would have the effect of maintaining many of the features that have become an integral part of the campus architecture while also reducing the running costs of air-conditioning. It would also give rise to a slightly higher building cost than would be the case if the features were not to be included.

Members agreed that the practice of allowing for the effect of passive energy considerations should continue.

(ii) It was recommended that the windows of air-conditioned accommodation should be permanently locked to reduce the air-conditioning running costs. This was because it would be too expensive to zone each room independently, as would be required if individual staff members were to be given the opportunity to open windows at will.

The alternatives to independent zoning are:

(a) to fit alarms to windows that will shut off the air-conditioning in the zone if a window is left open. This could cause problems for other people, especially in laboratories; or
(b) to leave the system running which will adversely affect conditions in adjoining areas and vastly increase the running costs for the whole University.

This item generated a prolonged discussion during which the following points were made.

- It should be possible for windows to be opened during emergencies if necessary. They should also be capable of being opened for cleaning purposes.
- Many staff members would be unhappy if they could not open their windows.
- Some people might have health problems that made it necessary to open the windows.
- If the windows were not locked it would be necessary to put up notes to warn everyone to keep them shut. It should also be recorded that if the University's electricity bill increases because people are careless with air-conditioning there would be a reduction in funds available for other activities.

It was eventually agreed that the windows would be locked but that if individuals felt that they had a good reason for being able to open the window they should discuss it with their head of department.

(iii) Some staff had expressed concern at a perceived loss of privacy that could arise if return air grilles were fitted to doors of offices and laboratories. A member queried how this was handled in buildings in the CBD. He was advised that such buildings did not usually have as many offices as did University buildings. Standard grilles were usually provided for offices. It was suggested that in some spaces, e.g. darkrooms, a filter could be fitted over the door. However, this could not be adopted as the standard because of the effect that it would have on the performance of air-conditioning systems and the running cost.

It was agreed that standard grilles would be used in air-conditioned buildings.

RESOLVED -

31 to recommend to Academic Council that:
(i) design criteria for University buildings should not alter as a consequence of the provision of air-conditioning;
(ii) windows will normally be locked. However, staff who feel that they have a particular need to be able to open windows should discuss their requirements with their head of department; and
(iii) standard return air-grilles should be fitted to office and laboratory doors.

6 ACCOMMODATION IN WINTHROPE HALL REF - 07/02/08/2001

The local branch of the Australian Institute of Tertiary Education Administrators had request accommodation for a part-time staff member who would be organising the 1996 National Conference, due to be held in Western Australia. On being advised that there was a room available in Winthrop Hall Tower the Committee agreed that AITEA could have use of it until after the Conference.

RESOLVED -

32 to recommend to Academic Council that the Australian Institute of Tertiary Education Administrators be allocated temporary use of Room W# in Winthrop Hall Tower.

7 SPACE PLANNING REF - 07/01/001/024; 07/01/001/018; 07/01/001/021
The committee was asked to allocate funds from the Capital Works Programme for three Space Planning reviews that had been approved at the previous meeting. One member expressed concern that the departments to be reviewed might construe the Space Planning activity to be the forerunner of major building alterations. This was not the case. The exercise will be undertaken to see if it is possible to improve the use of existing space. At this time the Capital Management Plan would not allow for any major work to be undertaken for the departments involved.

The Chair indicated that he would write to the departments concerned to ensure that they were aware of the situation.

RESOLVED -
33 to recommend to Academic Council $25,000 be provided from the Capital Works Programme to meet the cost of Space Planning reviews to be undertaken in the Departments of Physics, Music and Psychology.

ALLOCATION OF ACCOMMODATION WITHIN FACILITIES
8 REF - 06/04/010/034

The Chair drew the Committee’s attention to the number of requests that had been made for additional accommodation from some faculties. It was noted that such requests were generally supported by the Executive Dean with no attempt being made to priority rate one request against another. There was also a tendency for accommodation to be allocated in a fairly rigid way without reference to the overall needs of the faculty. Thus a department with reduced student numbers or fewer research projects was unlikely to be asked to provide space for another department in the faculty with a greater need for the accommodation.

A number of members indicated that this was a matter of concern to them as well. One suggested that the Committee prepare a policy statement to indicate that departments and facilities should take steps to ensure that they maximised the use of all available accommodation before asking the Committee to provide additional space. This was important because the Committee was rarely able to provide space to meet an immediate need.

Another member expressed concern that the adoption of this policy could create problems if, as a consequence, special purpose research space was to be "invaded" by undergraduates. It was agreed that there was a need for some stability in tenure to space and that teaching and research space should generally be used for its intended purpose.

Finally, a number of members commented on the practise of on the part of some departments to apply for research grants or introduce new initiatives without ensuring that the required accommodation would be available. One member pointed out that if it was necessary to have research space available the University might find that its research activities were restricted. However, it was agreed that when the new initiative was in the teaching area it was reasonable for more thought to be given to accommodation issues.

RESOLVED -
34 to refer the discussion on maximising the use of accommodation to Academic Council for consideration.