MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 2005

PRESENT:
Dean of the Graduate Research School (Professor Robyn Owens) as Chair
Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Dr Annette George)
Postgraduate Students’ Association President (Ms Natalie Mast)
Associate Professor Judith Johnston
Dr Ian McArthur
Dr Allan McKinley
Professor Mark Randolph
Professor Ken Clements
Professor John Cordery
Associate Professor Kevin Croft
Professor Sarah Dunlop
Associate Professor Matthew Knuiman
Dr Bu Yeap

Dr Sato Juniper (Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships)

By Invitation:
Dr Campbell Thomson (Director, Research Services)
Dr Judith Skene (Graduate Education Officer)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Mr Chester Cutinha

APOLOGIES:
Professor Craig A Atkins
Associate Professor Jim Whelan
Professor Norman Etherington
Dr Krystyna Haq (Graduate Education Officer)

WELCOME
The Chair welcomed Associate Professor Matthew Knuiman to his first meeting as a Board member. Members were advised that Dr Allan McKinley had another commitment and would be arriving later to the meeting. Members were also advised that Dr David Glance would present a demonstration on the functionality and use of Koios, the secure website that had been developed for the electronic circulation of confidential documents to Board members, at the end of the meeting.

1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members were requested to declare any conflicts of interest that they may have with respect to any items on the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared. Dr Allan McKinley arrived at the meeting after item 10(ii) was discussed and hence even though he was the supervisor of the candidate listed on the item, the issue of conflict of interest did not arise. Dr Yeap also arrived after this item and during the course of the meeting declared a potential for perception of conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 12(i) and did not speak to that item.
2. MINUTES – REF: F36,

RESOLVED – 37/05

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 8 March 2005 be confirmed.

3. MEASURING THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH TRAINING

Members had before them for noting a paper entitled *How do we measure the quality of research training?* This document had been prepared by several members of the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDOGS), and was expected to be endorsed by the DDOGS later this year. The document set out an argument and framework for the inclusion of research training in the Research Quality and Accessibility Frameworks for Publicly Funded Research that will be developed in the next two years.

Professor Owens spoke to this item. The following points were noted in discussion:

- It is important that all members of the Board of the Graduate Research School are aware of the issues raised in the paper and remain abreast of developments.
- Currently, UWA is the only university that actively assesses the quality of the thesis. The University of Melbourne asks examiners to rate candidates' attainment of generic skills. However, there is a danger of the examination process becoming too cumbersome if too many different purposes are attached to it.
- A member asked whether there is a drive to standardise the thesis examination process across Australia. There is no such drive, but sets of National guidelines on best practice already exist and will continue to be produced. The development is similar to the evolution of the Bologna protocol, whereby different countries endorse and adopt protocols for educational practice.
- A member remarked that there is a large difference between the quality of research training and the quality of the thesis, the only product of the training. The notion of a measure of thesis quality determining funding is problematic. Professor Owens responded that the DDOGS have already indicated support for the continuation of the Research Training Scheme.

Members were invited to forward comments on the paper and the issues raised in it to Professor Owens.

Noted

4. NOTING OF EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 MARCH 2005

(i) Report of scholarships awarded in 2004 for 2005 and feedback on the Athena scholarships ranking system

Members had before them for noting an extract from the minutes of the Scholarships Committee held on 15 March 2005 providing a report (Attachments B5 – B8) of scholarships awarded in 2004 for 2005 and feedback on the Athena scholarships ranking system.

Noted.
(ii) Funding for early completion incentive schemes: Whitfeld Fellowships

Members had before them for noting an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Scholarships Committee held on 15 March 2005 where the Committee resolved to transfer the remaining available funds under the Whitfeld Fellowship scheme to the Completion Scholarship Scheme and not award any further Whitfeld Fellowships in 2005.

Noted.

(iii) Change to the Completion Scholarships Conditions of Award

Members had before them for noting an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Scholarships Committee held on 15 March 2005 where the Committee resolved to change the Conditions of Award for Completion Scholarships making the school liable for 100% of the funding (previously 50%) if the candidate failed to submit by the agreed deadline.

Noted.

(iv) Faculty fee payment and partial fee relief policy for international students

Members had before them for noting an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Scholarships Committee held on 15 March 2005 where the Committee resolved to approve the new policies proposed in the paper prepared by the Dean of the Graduate Research School outlining new arrangements for assistance for international postgraduate research students who are unable to continue to pay full international tuition fees.

Noted.

5. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA (UUM) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Members had before them for their information and interest a Memorandum of Understanding between the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and the University of Western Australia with respect to a program of joint supervision of PhD candidates enrolled at UWA and employed as academic staff at UUM.

Members were advised that all the provisions described in the Memorandum of Understanding were within the current Rules and practice for management of Research Higher Degrees at UWA.

Noted.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF KOIOS

Members were advised that Koios was now ready for implementation and was undergoing testing. Koios is the name of the Web resource for the Board of the Graduate Research School, which includes an on-line system to manage and track the classification of theses by circulation.
At the end of the meeting, Dr David Glance demonstrated the functionality and usage of Koios and members were advised that they would be issued with their usernames and passwords shortly. Members were also provided with the draft *Instructions for Using Koios* and were advised that they would shortly be provide with an updated and revised version of the booklet.

Members were advised that Koios would go live shortly and for an interim period of up to a month would be run in parallel with the existing paper document circulation system. During the interim period members were advised that they were required to address the circulation items both in paper and electronic format. Members were invited to provide feedback to the Graduate Research School (via Chester Cutinha or Sato Juniper) on any aspect of Koios or the instruction document that could be improved. Members were of the opinion that a month would be too long to run both the systems in parallel and requested that the interim period of dual methods of circulation be shortened to two weeks. The Manager of the Graduate Research School, Dr Sato Juniper agreed that this would be desirable. [NB: The Graduate Research School proposes two weeks after Koios is fully operational, to ask members whether they are prepared to move to Koios as the sole means of managing items by circulation.]

**Noted.**

**7. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR – REF: F34**

Members noted that Professor Craig Atkins’ term as Deputy Chair of the Board expired on 31 March 2005. The Chair invited nominations for this position and advised the Board that Professor Atkins had nominated for the position of Deputy Chair. No other nominations were received and it was

**RESOLVED –38/05**

unanimously to elect Professor Craig Atkins as Deputy Chair of the Board of the Graduate Research School for the term commencing 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2005.

**ITEM FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL**


Members had before them for endorsement a proposal that had been approved by the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences to shift the administration of the examination of the thesis component of the Master of Forensic Science (thesis and coursework) from the Faculty to the Graduate Research School.

The Manager of Graduate Research and Scholarships advised members that this proposal was welcome. The change was expected to involve only a small additional administrative load and would simplify some aspects of management of the Research Training Scheme. However, a caveat was that the examination processes fit the current frameworks for thesis examination that operate currently in the Graduate Research School.
Members were advised that there was one small difference in the relevant Rules: Currently, a candidate for the Master of Forensic Science (thesis and coursework) whose thesis has been classified as "Pass subject to correction" is allowed up to six months to complete the correction, whereas candidates in the Master by Research courses currently administered by the Graduate Research School are allowed four months. In the interests of consistency and equity it would be desirable for the requirements to be the same. Members were advised that the Graduate Research School was prepared to accommodate this difference pending further discussions with the Faculty.

A member commented that it was not clear why the Graduate Research School is not responsible for the administration of all RTS degrees. It was explained that all Master by Research degrees were administered by faculties until relatively recently. When the (Post) Graduate Research School was established (NB: Academic Board Resolution 171/1999) and administration of Master by Research degrees was centralised, it was agreed by Academic Board that only those courses that did not include a formal coursework component would be administered by the (Post) Graduate Research School. For a variety of practical reasons there has been no move to alter this arrangement.

RESOLVED –39/05

To endorse the proposal and recommend to the Academic Council that the Graduate Research School adopt responsibility for administration of the examination of the thesis component of the Master of Forensic Science (thesis and coursework).