MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL HELD IN THE OLD SENATE ROOM, IN THE IRWIN STREET BUILDING, ON TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

PRESENT:
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) (Professor Robyn Owens) as Chair
Postgraduate Students’ Association President (Mr Benjamin Jardine)
Professor Ken Clements
Professor Kevin Croft
Professor Arun Dharmarajan
Professor Norman Etherington
Associate Professor Judith Johnston
Professor Matthew Knuiman
Associate Professor Ian McArthur
Dr Allan McKinley
Associate Professor Brett Nener
Associate Professor Susan Prescott
Associate Professor Robert Stuart

Executive Officer (Mr Chester Cutinha)

BY INVITATION:
Director, Research Services (Dr Campbell Thomson)
Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships (Dr Sato Juniper)
Graduate Education Officer (Dr Michael Azariadis)

APOLOGIES:
Nominee of the Chair of the Academic Board (Associate Professor Annette George)
Graduate Education Officer (Dr Krystyna Haq)
Professor Mike Anderson
Professor Craig A Atkins (Deputy Chair)
Professor Jim Whelan

WELCOME
The Chair welcomed Associate Professor Robert Stuart to his first meeting as a Co-opted Member of the Board.

1. CALL FOR DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members and invitees were requested to declare any conflicts of interest that they may have with respect to any items on the agenda.

Professor Robyn Owens declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 10(b)(i) and did not speak to this item.

Professor Arun Dharmarajan arrived after the call for declarations of conflict of interest item but declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 10(a)(iii) prior to the discussion of the item and left the room during the discussion of the item.

Associate Professor Judith Johnston declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 10(b)(ii) and left the room during the discussion of this item.

Associate Professor Ian McArthur declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidate referred to in item 10(a)(i) and left the room during the discussion of this item.
Dr Sato Juniper declared a conflict of interest with respect to the candidates referred to in items 10(a)(ii) and 10(b)(ii).

2. MINUTES – REF: F36

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That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Graduate Research School held on Tuesday, 8 August 2006 be confirmed.

3. CHANGES TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL – REF: F34

The Chair of the Board, Professor Robyn Owens, advised the Board that Associate Professor Robert Stuart had accepted the invitation from the Chair to join the Board of the Graduate Research School as a co-opted member from the September 2006 Board meeting and that Members had via circulation approved the co-option. Associate Professor Stuart’s term will expire on 31 March 2007.

Noted.

4. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CANDIDATES – DISCUSSION PAPER

Members had before them for noting a Discussion Paper suggesting various strategies to increase the number of scholarships for international research candidates. The Paper provides background on relevant current policies and argues that some of these should be changed in order to increase flexibility in the range of scholarships offered and increase the University’s capacity to offer scholarships to international candidates. Specifically, the Paper presents options whereby the University could use full and partial fee waivers strategically to create additional tuition fee scholarships.

The Board noted that the Paper was to be discussed by the Executive on Friday 8th September, and a member asked whether any feedback had been received from that discussion. The Board was advised that the Executive had favoured Option 3 in the Paper, which provides for the use of fee waivers and fee reductions to allow more scholarships to be offered (likely to be 50 for 2007), but which does not include an amendment to the Faculty Funding Model. This means that the faculties in which awardees of these scholarships are enrolled will continue to receive full load and completion funding as at present, and thus will effectively be subsidised from the University budget. The recommendation in the Paper is for Option 4, which includes an amendment to the Faculty Funding Model so that the enrolling faculty would receive a proportion of the fees received and thus receive reduced funding for awardees of scholarships that are based on fee waivers. Options 3 and 4 both provide for recompense of the central costs of supporting additional international research candidates via a budget allocation to the Academic Services budget equivalent to the allocation that would normally be received in the absence of a fee waiver or reduction. This recognises that, because in the current budget model the central share of the University budget is based on a fixed proportion of the total budget rather than EFTSL, the actual costs of fee waivers are concentrated in key central areas unless there is an appropriate adjustment. This concentration is exacerbated under the current Faculty Funding Model. The allocation to the Academic Services budget will be made from the current budget allocation for new SIRF scholarships, which is no longer required for its original purpose of paying fees.

Members also heard that the Executive had not favoured all aspects of Option 3. Specifically, the proposal to offer partial fee-waiver scholarships to candidates was not supported for 2007.

The Board was advised that the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office is currently finalising details with respect to the number and balance of International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) and Scholarships for International Research Fees (SIRFs) to be offered in 2007.

Noted.
5. PROPOSAL TO INVITE GRADUATE RESEARCH COORDINATORS TO ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS AS OBSERVERS

Members were advised that the Graduate Research School had proposed that Graduate Research Coordinators who were not Board members be invited on a rotational basis to attend Board meetings as observers. It was suggested that this would lead to the Graduate Research Coordinators being more informed of relevant policies and practices, particularly in relation to sign-off on research proposals and theses submitted either for examination or completion. To this end it was desirable for all Graduate Research Coordinators to serve a term on the Board. However, since this was not feasible, it was felt that an invitation for them to attend Board meetings might give them a better understanding of the Board's processes, the manner in which it operated and the issues that the Board considered to be important. Graduate Research Coordinators attending meetings as observers would be bound by the same rules that apply to Board members and invitees with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

Members were unanimous in their agreement that this would be beneficial not only to the Graduate Research Coordinators but also to the Board as this would leave to a better information flow from the Board to the wider community. The Board

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to invite Graduate Research Coordinators who are not Board members to attend Board meetings as observers on a rotational basis.

6. PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT/DUPLICATE-BADGED NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH TRAINEE EXCHANGE PROGRAM BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Members had before them a preliminary proposal from Associate Professor Mathew Martin-Iverson from the School of Medicine and Pharmacology for a joint/double-badged neuroscience research trainee exchange program between The University of Western Australia and Queen's University located at Kingston in Ontario, Canada.

In general, members received the preliminary proposal positively, but offered several comments:
- Neuroscience is a Discipline rather than a school at UWA, and it potentially crosses over several schools. Some thought needs to be given to this in the proposal, especially in terms of student enrolment and delegations of authority. Appropriate endorsement would be required at school level, including by all relevant Graduate Research Coordinators.
- The proposal includes provision for Postdoctoral Fellowships. Is this appropriate in a proposal for research training, ie can Postdoctoral Fellows be considered to be participating in research training per se?
- How does the University receive income from Postdoctoral Fellowships?
- Postdoctoral Fellows attract funding by publishing, and they also assist with the supervision of HDR candidates.

The Board expressed its interest in receiving the full proposal in due course.

7. HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ASSESSMENT PANELS – REF: F8211

Members had before them for consideration the recommendations from the five assessment panels for the award of Prizes for Higher Degree by Research Achievements (2006). Also attached for members’ information were the current guidelines governing the call for submissions under the scheme.

The following main points were raised in the discussion of the Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

In addition to the $1000 major prize, a lesser prize of $250 should be awarded for work that is deemed to be highly commendable. This would serve to increase the profile of the awards and benefit a greater number of students who would be able to add this academic distinction to their curriculum vitae.
Adoption of this recommendation would formalise current practice, wherein extra awards are made to Highly Commendable entrants.

Why is there a second prize? Why not award two first prizes?

A member responded to this question by citing Tournament theory [NB: Tournament theory is an explanation of the differential between relative rewards and relative performance; the magnitude of differences in performance might be less important than the actuality of relative rankings]: competition for a single first prize tends to raise the overall standard.

Agreed: to award a single first prize for each panel plus lesser prizes as deemed fit.

Recommendation 2:
Members of the Biological Sciences Panel came to the conclusion that in future prize rounds applicants should be required to supply a one to two page statement outlining how their work is original (this is in addition to providing the already mandatory 100-word lay description of their publication and its context). This review panel, especially those reading outside their own field, would benefit from being able to understand the extent to which the work is novel or ‘ground-breaking’.

Recommendation 3:
In accordance with the views of the Biological Sciences Panel, the Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Engineering Panel recommend that in future prize rounds, in addition to providing a 100-word lay description of their publication and its context, applicants or persons supporting the applicant should be required to supply a structured statement – perhaps one to two pages – outlining how their work is original and innovative. This statement should include an assessment of the impact the work has had on the particular field of study or research. The review panel, especially those reading outside their own field, would again benefit from being able to understand the extent to which the work is novel or ‘ground-breaking’.

Agreed: Recommendations 2 and 3 are essentially the same.

Adoption of this recommendation would provide good advance training for the Research Quality Framework exercise. Researchers will increasingly be required to provide evidence about the impact and quality of their research.

In relation to the current context, which is research training, “impact” is not a particularly useful construct; “quality” is a more useful construct.

The recommendation may not prove very useful: adopting it would simply give panel members more to read without necessarily improving the process. Applicants should be able to explain the context, originality and significance of their research in the existing 100-word allocation.

The quality and originality of the research should be able to be determined from the quality of the journal in which the research is published. That is not likely to work. Second or third order journals might publish excellent research.

This recommendation implies that the Panels are using innovation as a selection criterion, but that they have determined that they do not have a reliable mechanism for measuring this.

A dedicated statement about originality would be an additional tool for panels to use in their evaluations.

It would be preferable to request applicants to be more focussed in their 100 word statements so that they provide advice about: how the publication has advanced knowledge in the discipline, what the significance of the publication is; and how the publication demonstrates that the research is innovative.

Agreed: to add to the Guidelines a note that the 100-word statement should address the way in which the publication advances knowledge in the discipline and the significance and innovation of the publication.

The following recommendations relate specifically to the Humanities and Social Science category.

Recommendation 4:
It has been put that, in light of the large number of submissions in this category (twenty in total) submissions allocated to the Humanities and Social Sciences category in future prize rounds, once received, should be further subject to classification by panel members. Submissions would be divided into a predominantly quantitative group; such as those that encompass the disciplines of economics, psychology and population health, and those that are predominantly qualitative in nature; such as those that encompass the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, history and politics.
Recommendation 5:
Given the above recommendation, two prizes of equal value should be allocated to the Humanities and Social Sciences category; one prize should be awarded to the quantitative group of submissions, and one should be awarded to the interpretive group of submissions.

Recommendation 6:
In future prize rounds, and again in light of the relatively high number of submissions received, an additional panel member should be recruited in the Humanities and Social Sciences review panel. In this way, two panel members would assess the group of quantitative submissions, and a further two members would assess the group of qualitative submissions. This division would make the task of evaluating the submissions less onerous for the panel members, and fairer or more equitable for the authors who are competing for the prize.

- It is important that arrangements for prizes are equitable across the University.
- There is a range of ways in which prizes could be allocated to different areas. For example, prizes could be allocated on the basis of: one per faculty; proportion of the number of applications received; proportion of completions; proportion of publications and so on.
- In some areas of the Humanities and Social Sciences not all candidates publish. Publication can almost be seen as an optional extra in these disciplines.
- It is too difficult for panel members to confidently read and assess the publications across such a wide range of subject areas.

Agreed: to split the Humanities and Social Science panel into two panels, and allocate a prize for each panel to award.

Recommendation 7:
In future prize rounds, participants be limited to entering one submission for an award.

- Each applicant should be limited to one submission per panel.
- Each submission should be assessed by one panel only.
- It is not logical to prevent an applicant making more than one submission, as long as each submission is assessed by a different panel. However, this should not be encouraged.

Agreed: Each applicant is limited to one submission per panel, and each submission will be assessed by only one panel. Applicants will be permitted, but not encouraged, to make more than one submission, as long as these relate to different works and are to different panels.

Recommendation 8:
In future prize rounds, those submitting book chapters must include in their documentation original referee’s reports. These should be included in addition to editor’s reports.

Agreed as recommended.

The Board also agreed that all panel members should be listed formally in the Minutes of the Board.

The Board RESOLVED – 100

to vary the arrangements for the assessment and award of Prizes for Higher Degree by Research Achievements as follows:

- For each panel, a single first prize will be awarded plus a lesser prize as the Board deems fit.
- The Guidelines will be amended to state that the 100-word statement should address the way in which the publication advances knowledge in the discipline, and the significance and innovation of the publication.
- The Humanities and Social Sciences panel will be split into two panels, one for predominantly qualitative disciplines and one for predominantly quantitative disciplines. Each panel will award a separate prize. That is, in future rounds an additional prize will be awarded.
- In future rounds each applicant will be limited to one submission per panel, and each submission will be assessed by only one panel. Applicants will be permitted, but not encouraged, to make more than one submission, as long as these relate to different works and are to different panels.
- In future rounds, applicants submitting book chapters must include in their documentation original referee’s reports in addition to editor’s reports.
ITEM FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE UNIVERSITY SECRETARIAT FROM THE BOARD OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

8. PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE UNIVERSITY GENERAL RULES FOR ACADEMIC COURSES TO ALLOW CONCURRENT ENROLMENT IN THE PHD AND THE COMMERCIALISATION TRAINING PROGRAMME – REF: F15962

The Chair, Professor Robyn Owens briefed members on the Commercialisation Training Scheme, an initiative of the Australian Government that provides selected candidates in the PhD with additional scholarship support to participate in a dedicated training programme in commercialisation. Members were advised that Universities would be funded to provide such programmes, and that The University of Western Australia intends to do so.

Professor Owens also advised members that the method for allocating a proportion of the total number of places to each University would be similar to the method for allocating each university’s proportion of Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA), ie based on completions. Twenty five of the proposed two hundred and fifty places had been allocated to Western Australia, with thirteen of these being allocated to UWA.

Members were advised that candidates selected to undergo a semester of Commercialisation Training activities under the scheme would receive a six month extension to their scholarship and would receive a Graduate Certificate in Commercialisation on exit. It was proposed that candidates could either be enrolled full time in the Commercialisation course for six months or could undertake the course part time along with their PhD.

The Manager, Graduate Research and Scholarships, Dr Sato Juniper, advised that the current University General Rules for Academic Courses precluded enrolment of PhD candidates in coursework programmes for which the University receives Commonwealth Government funding. Dr Juniper advised that to accommodate the Commercialisation Training Scheme, the Rules needed amendment and that she had made some minor draft modifications to the rules (Attachment A1) to accommodate this.

In the brief discussion that followed, the following main points were raised:

- Was the Commercialisation Training course likely to be a further distraction to PhD candidates? The pressures on candidates would probably be the same as those candidates undertaking a teaching internship during their PhD.
- Have the guidelines/rules been finalized for the selection of candidates? No, they are still being formulated.
- The curriculum for the course will be stipulated by DEST.
- The Graduate School of Management is working closely with the Office of Industry and Innovation to form the course curriculum.
- Will the Graduate Certificate lead into any further career paths? It might lead into a Graduate Diploma or further into a Master of Business Administration, but its primary objective is the upskilling of PhD candidates.

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to recommend that the Academic Board/Council adopt the attached changes (Attachment A1) to the General Provisions for Research Higher Degrees (by thesis) under the University General Rules.
Concurrent Enrolment in Coursework Units

1.3.3.6 Unless otherwise approved by the Board, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate will not be permitted to enrol, as part of the degree, in more than 24 points of undergraduate or postgraduate units.

1.3.3.7 (1) A candidate may, with the approval of the Board and the appropriate faculty, enrol concurrently in a diploma or other coursework programme at this University provided that—

(a) following a written submission from the candidate, the name of the concurrent programme is submitted through the supervisor and the head of school to the Board for approval; and

(b) with the exception of the Commercialisation Training Scheme, the concurrent programme is not one for which the University receives Commonwealth Government funding.

(32) A candidate enrolled in a concurrent programme who wishes to continue with the Doctor of Philosophy may be required to withdraw or suspend enrolment in the concurrent programme if they do not make satisfactory progress in the degree of Doctor of Philosophy annually.

(43) Unless the Board, in recognition of exceptional circumstances, approves otherwise, a candidate must not be enrolled in a concurrent programme during the year in which they indicate they will be submitting a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(54) Unless the Board, in recognition of exceptional circumstances, approves otherwise, suspensions and extension of candidature will not be granted for reasons connected with concurrent enrolment.

(65) The Board will not grant a reduction of the time limit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of work completed during a concurrent enrolment.