NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS SUB-COMMITTEE

held on Thursday 15 April, 1999
9.00 am, W1

Present: Dr N Ashton (as Convenor & Chair)
         Prof L Beazley
         A/Prof M Fahey
         Prof R Fraser
         Prof C Powell

In attendance: T Vernon (Secretary)

1 - UPRF - Applications

The Convenor welcomed members and thanked them for having agreed to act on the Committee. A/Prof Fahey had previously sent apologies and a ranked list plus comments to the Secretary, however was in fact able to attend the meeting.

The Committee – despite the individual and collective prior experience of its members - was nonetheless overwhelmed by the extremely impressive quality of the clear majority of this year’s 33 applications (from across all faculties) and rightly anticipated that the task of ranking them and selecting only three would prove most difficult.

Members had independently read all applications prior to the meeting, and to begin the selection procedure, were asked to nominate their top five in rank order. Particular attention was given to length of time since PhD completion, rating performance relative to opportunity, track record, publications, identified outcomes, referees’ reports and departmental reports, along with other criteria as specified in the Guidelines.

After considerable discussion, the Committee resolved to recommend that:

a) three, three-year University Postdoctoral Research Fellowships be offered to:
   Dr Yan-Fei Lu for the proposal from Physiology
   Dr A Harvey Millar from Plant Sciences
   Dr Andrew Kennedy from Geography

b) the following three form a ranked reserve list:
   Dr Joseph Tompkins from Zoology
   Dr Fiona Magowan from Anthropology
   Dr Tianzi Jiang from Computer Science/Mathematics & Statistics

The Committee recognised that Dr Kennedy received his PhD in 1992, and accepted the argument within the submission that the five year rule should be waived in this case.
grounds 'that travel and research in the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic is extremely time-consuming and poses special logistic problems'.

No case was made for any nominee to receive a starting salary above the minimum, and it was recommended that all three be offered the nominal starting salary for UPRFs, A$41,500, currently $42,432 p/a and a Fellowship Support Grant of $6,000 for each of the three.

The Committee believed that Dr Pamela Sharpe was an outstanding applicant, but given her many years of experience, felt that the UPRF scheme was not the appropriate vehicle. It was therefore recommended that her application be referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) with a view to determining another funding avenue by means of which Dr Sharpe could be brought here.

The Committee was unanimously of the view that the UWA should make more such Fellowships available - and hopes that this outcome might eventuate from discussions which it understands to be in train. The exceptional quality of the top 10 to 12 applications this year truly highlighted this need.

2-UPRF Policy

A number of matters/issues were raised at this meeting, however it was agreed at the outset that matters of policy would be addressed at a further meeting (yet to be scheduled) of this Committee, with a view to possible recommendations being forwarded in due course to the Research Committee.

15 April 1999