

**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY****UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

A meeting was held on Wednesday, 15 March 2006 at 9.30 am in the Ross Hohnen Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair); Mr Atkins; Professor Board; Dr Brown (vice Professor Merlan); Professor Cockburn; Mr Cumming; Professor Glasgow; Professor Hill; Professor Huon; Professor Jeffrey; Dr McMahon; Professor Morphy; Professor Stening; Dr Stoljar; Dr Wheeler; and Professor Williams.

In attendance: Ms Bruce

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**Disclosure of Pecuniary or Material Personal Interest**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary or material personal interest in matters listed on the agenda.

**Use of Inside Information or Position**

Under sections 24 and 25 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, a member of the University Research Committee must not make improper use of his or her position or of inside information to gain an advantage for himself or herself or to cause detriment to the University or to another person.

**PART 1: GENERAL ITEMS****ITEM 1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Joint Meeting of the University Committee on Research Policy and the Divisional Research Committees (1022/2005), held on 16 November 2005, were noted. (Published at <http://www.anu.edu.au/cabs/ucrp/meetingdates.htm>)

**ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING****ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES**

**3.1 An apology** was received from Professor Merlan.

**3.2 Announcements**

The Chair welcomed all present at the meeting. He noted changes to the interim Committee membership as follows:

- College of Arts and Social Sciences – one member from the social sciences: Professor Morphy; and one from the humanities: Professor Merlan (alternate: Dr Brown)
- College of Science – one member from the non-biological sciences: Professor Jim Williams; and one from the biological science: Professor Cockburn.

**3.3 Confidential Items**

There were no Confidential Items. Dr Bain, Mr Heslop, Dr Nelms and Dr Wellard attended as observers.

## **PART 2: REPORTS AND POLICY MATTERS**

### **ITEM 4. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

#### **4.1 University Committee Structure**

The meeting noted that:

- . Council, at its meeting on 9 December 2005, had noted:
  - A progress report on implementation of the Operational Improvements Plan (891/2005);
  - The Vice-Chancellor's intention to change the structure, role and membership of the Academic Board and its policy sub-committees to reflect the organisational change within the University from Divisions to Colleges.
- . details of the new University committee arrangements had not yet been finalised and would be considered further at the Council meeting to be held on 31 March 2006.

#### **4.2 University Research Committee**

The meeting noted the interim arrangements for the University Research Committee described in:

- Paper 29/2006 which set out the interim membership of the University Research Committee and Schedule of Meetings
- An extract from the Vice-Chancellor's report to Council on the implementation of the Operational Improvements Plan (891/2005).

The Chair informed the meeting of changes to the composition of the proposed University Research Committee (detailed in paper 29/2006). These included a provision for the Chair to coopt members to ensure representation, for example:

- . in the social sciences and the humanities, and the non-biological sciences and the biological sciences;
- . of senior researcher, i.e. one Level E3 professor or Federation Fellow;
- . of early-career researchers, i.e. one postdoctoral fellow.

One general staff member would also be added to the membership.

### **ITEM 5. COLLEGE RESEARCH COMMITTEES**

#### **5.1 College Arrangements**

The meeting noted that the Vice-Chancellor has asked Colleges to put in place a range of measures:

- The Convenor to take oversight of planning for the College as a whole;

- The Dean to take authority over all education matters (including HDR students) for the College as a whole;
- The College Executive to meet regularly to advise the Convener and Dean on operational matters in the College;
- The College Advisory Board to be formally constituted, and meet at least four times in 2006;
- All sub-committees of the College Advisory Board – for instance, those dealing with Education and Research – to be formally constituted for operation in 2006, and for the Terms of Reference of these committees to have been approved by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Chair commented that the role of College representatives on the Committee in facilitating communication from and to Colleges about research issues would be very important in the new University research structures.

## 5.2 Progress reports

The meeting noted progress with the establishment and implementation of ANU College Research Committees. ANU College representatives reported on the structure and functions of their College Research Committees, current issues and the approach being taken to research planning.

College representatives were asked to forward the membership and terms of reference for their College Research Committee to the Secretary of the University Research Committee.

## ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

### 6.1 Report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

- **Major Equipment Committee**

The meeting noted:

- . the MEC Newsletter 2006 (26/2006). Approximately \$3m was available to fund MEC applications in the round of which about \$2m would be allocated provisionally to equipment funded by ARC LIEF;
- . the membership of the MEC (detailed in the agenda);
- . applicants would be given maximum time to prepare proposals, and as a consequence, late applications would be held over to 2007.

- **Preferred RQF Model**

The Chair reported that:

- . the RQF would likely proceed. The *Final Advice* of the EAG on the preferred RQF model had been prepared and a number of matters were being resolved by DEST;
- . a lunch-time forum on the RQF would be scheduled for ANU researchers at a future date to discuss implementation issues, i.e. research groupings, data gathering processes etc;
- . work needed before commencement included provision of funding to run the scheme, finalisation of the RQF, formation of a steering committee, and operational guidelines for panels

- . provided arrangements were in place by the January, 2008-09 seemed to be the earliest possible date for funding allocations through the RQF;
- . the Go8 had argued that bibliometric studies were already readily available from ABS returns and NHMRC and other existing information at much less cost to the sector. An RQF could be damaging if it were not undertaken well and if there was no shift of resources to focus on quality.

- **Research Office**

The meeting noted the establishment of the Office of Commercialisation and the Office of Research Integrity (paper 30/2006). Responsibility for providing a range of technology transfer and other services to ANU Connect would be discharged through the ANU Office of Commercialisation.

In response to a question, the Chair advised that the University had been consulted about commercialisation scholarships as a supplement to APRAs. About 10 places were expected for 2007 for PhD students with projects in the innovation/commercialisation field.

- **Legal Services for Research Support**

For the future, all legal services for research support direct are to be handled by the Legal Office direct.

## 6.2 Items for Information

The meeting noted:

- The Hon Julie Bishop MP had been sworn in as Minister for Education, Science and Training on 27 January 2006.
- Dr Jim Peacock, AC, had been appointed as the Chief Scientist. (<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Bishop/2006/02/B001280206.asp>).
- The French-Australia Science & Technology Program (FAST) outline of support. (see <http://www.ambafrance-au.org/science>).
- 2006 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science Nominations close 19 May 2006. (see <https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/scienceprize/pages/home.aspx>)

## ITEM 7. ARC FUNDING

The meeting noted advice dated 9 January 2006 from the Professor Peter Høj, CEO of the Australian Research Council. The advice:

- . summarised the outcome of the 2005-06 ARC funding round;
- . outlined some implications of the rise in research funding for demonstrating the return on the investment of public funding for research and on evaluating the outcomes of this research; and
- . emphasised the responsibility of researchers to communicate more effectively the importance of their research. This was of particular interest to the humanities and social sciences.

Members were asked to convey the advice to researchers in their Colleges and draw their attention to the following articles:

- “Humanities need to spread the word”, which was published in the *Australian Financial Review* on 12 December 2005

- *Quadrant Magazine Editorial* March 2006 – Volume L Number 3: “What is Wrong with the ARC”.

## ITEM 8. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE: NCRIS UPDATE

The meeting noted the release of the *Strategic Roadmap* for Research Infrastructure announced by the Minister for Education, Science and Training on 28 February 2006. (<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Bishop/2006/02/B002280206.asp>).

Nine high-priority areas had been identified in the *Roadmap* (at <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/8CA3BC8F-A6A7-417A-955F-2B605DFF8276/9520/NCRISStrategicRoadmap.rtf>) for the first of three phases of major research infrastructure investment:

- 2006 - Implementing nine areas of capability within 6-9 months
  - Evolving biomolecular platforms and informatics
  - Integrated biological systems
  - Characterisation
  - Fabrication
  - Biotechnology products
  - Networked biosecurity framework
  - Optical and radio astronomy
  - Integrated marine observing system
  - Structure and evolution of the Australian continent
- Capabilities requiring development before proceeding to implementation
  - Population health and clinical data linkage
  - Terrestrial ecosystem research network
- Capabilities to be reviewed for possible implementation in 2007
  - Translating health discovery into clinical application
  - Heavy ion accelerators
  - Low-emission, large-scale energy processes
  - Next generation solutions to counter terrorism and crime

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) advised that:

- DEST-appointed Facilitators were being appointed to the nine areas. Universities in the ACT had been consulted about local nominations by the ACT Government;
- integrated cases for the provision of infrastructure would be prepared for submission to the NCRIS committee responsible for recommending to the Minister. About \$30m would be available on average for each area;
- DEST processes were non-inclusive of research-intensive universities.

The meeting noted that to manage ANU's engagement, persons (more than one in such areas as Characterisation, Fabrication and Integrated biological system), were being identified to co-ordinate ANU's linkages and advise on opportunities. Initial appointments listed in the memo from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of 7 March 2006 were noted. A meeting would be convened.

Principal comments arising in discussion were that:

- . to be well positioned, submissions involving ANU should be in the national interest and the infrastructure accessible to other researchers in Australia;
- . about \$200m would be available for phase two;
- . following work on current priorities, the next step would be to look at areas in the second and third phases that were institutionally advantageous;
- . certain infrastructure had been put into an “other” funding category, e.g. systemic information (IT) infrastructure for libraries etc and e-research transformation. ANU was well placed for one of seven hubs (\$1m per year approximately) aimed at building an institution’s capabilities to do research, and to have input in other areas, e.g. collections and e-research policy.

## **ITEM 9. RESEARCH-RELATED POLICY REVIEW**

The meeting noted the timetable and order of priority for the review and revision of research policies in 2006:

- *Intellectual Property: Ownership, Protection and Commercialisation*: minor editorial changes were in progress.
- *Commercialisation*: a new policy separated out from the current IP policy. Initial consultation with researchers was underway.
- *Infrastructure Access*: a new policy to address access within the ANU
- *NIH Research Integrity Procedures*: an update to reflect revised NIH requirements
- *Undertaking Individual Consultancies and Professional Practice (52-Day Rule)*: restructuring of the policy document following the review in 2005
- *Responsible Practice of Research*: to be revised following release of the new National Statement
- *Clinical Trials*: address the situation on ownership with a view to possible separating out from the current *Policy on Externally-funded Grants, Consultancies and Contracts*
- *Establishment, Management and Closing of Academic Centres*: routine policy review

The Chair outlined review and consultation processes, including the establishment of working parties as required (e.g. IP, Infrastructure Access etc) consisting of representatives from Colleges, the Research Office, students and other areas.

## **ITEM 10. RESEARCH PLANNING**

The meeting noted the planning framework for research presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the Retreat 2006, “Moving Ahead Together”, held on 15-17 February 2006, for discussion in relation to the development of the ANU’s strategic plan to 2010. Material from the Retreat was being collated for consultation with Colleges.

The Chair spoke to two of the four primary perspectives:

- (i) Research agendas**
- The challenge of significance
  - Engagement: the challenge of significance
    - Scholarly communities

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- Those-who-need (stakeholders)
- Fields & topics
  - Expertise, focus, scale, daringness, adaptability
  - Selecting and changing fields and topics
- Organisation – for creative effect
  - People, collaborations
  - Deploying capacity for scale, focus

He commented that planning should start not from a disciplinary base but by asking the higher questions, e.g. What is the purpose of research in the College? Why does ANU pursue certain research and allocate research funds to it? College plans should tease out these issues at the College level.

**(ii) Planning and Implementation**

- Planning: ANU/College; strategic/tactical
  - Planning for Colleges: what is needed to plan?
- Money
  - Revenue – the College Economy
  - Expenditure
- Review
  - Indicators, outcomes, feedback/adjustment
- Administration
  - A means to implement

Principal comments arising in discussion related to:

- . networks that are integrative and facilitate cross-College research, modelled along the lines of successful and innovative networks already in place on campus
- . investing in facilitating the environment, i.e. social capital to add value
- . targeting different audiences and interest groups to generate discussion leading to beneficial changes, e.g. policy makers,
- . effective ways of presenting arguments, engaging stakeholders, and networking
- . nurturing higher research degrees, including through scholarships and positions for HDR students to work across areas of ANU-wide interest and enrich their research programs.

**PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS**

**ITEM 11. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME**

**11.1 Grants and Consultancies**

The meeting noted Grants and Consultancies awarded between 31 August 2005 and 28 February 2006 (27/2006 and 28/2006), published at [http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University\\_Research\\_Committee/\\_urcmtg1\\_2006/27grants&consultancies31Augto23Nov05.pdf](http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University_Research_Committee/_urcmtg1_2006/27grants&consultancies31Augto23Nov05.pdf) and [http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University\\_Research\\_Committee/\\_urcmtg1\\_2006/28grants&copnsults1Nov05to28Feb06.pdf](http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University_Research_Committee/_urcmtg1_2006/28grants&copnsults1Nov05to28Feb06.pdf).

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