

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Meeting No. 1, 2007

Meeting No. 1, 2007 of the University Research Committee was held on Thursday 8 March 2007 at 9.30 am in the Ross Hohnen Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Professor Stanton; Professor Thomas; Dr Brown; Dr Ganguly; Professor Glasgow; Dr Golley; Professor Hill; Ms Kuo; Dr Jones; Professor Kirk; Dr McMahon; Dr Makeham; Dr Rendell; Professor Smith; Dr Stoljar; Ms Verney; Dr Wheeler; Professor Williams; and Ms Wood.

By invitation: Dr Bain; Professor Carroll

In attendance: Ms Bruce

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.

MINUTES

PART 1: GENERAL ITEMS

ITEM 1. MINUTES

The minutes of Meeting No. 5, 2006 of the University Research Committee (1008/2006 attached) held on 16 November 2006 were confirmed (published at http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University_Research_Committee/_meetings.asp).

ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING

ITEM 3. MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Committee noted the “Membership and Operating Procedures” of the University Research Committee (174/2007) and updates to the membership:

- Early career researcher: Dr Jane Golley, ANUCBE
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Steffen: position discontinued

ITEM 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

4.1 Apologies were received from Professor Merlan, Professor Morphy, Professor Morris-Suzuki, Dr Nelms and Professor Williamson.

4.2 Announcements

4.3 Confidential Items

There were no confidential items. Ms Burke, Dr Dan, Ms Hope, Ms Pandey, Ms Rayner and Dr Wellard attended as observers.

PART 2: REPORTS AND POLICY MATTERS

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Committee noted the following report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor:

- **Storm Damage**
The full scale of the damage to University property incurred in the hailstorm on 27 February was not yet known. Some infrastructure was still too wet to be restarted. The Vice-Chancellor plans to hold a function to recognise the efforts and magnificent response of staff and emergency services to the crisis.
- **ANU Executive Structure and Support**
 - Professor Will Steffen was appointed Director of the new Fenner School of Environment and Society from early March.
 - The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Thomas, now share responsibilities for sponsored research.
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stanton, has responsibility for graduate coursework and flexible delivery and coherence at Master coursework level.
 - Dr John Wellard has been appointed Executive Officer to provide additional support to the Executive.
 - Ms Karen Burke has been appointed Director of the Office of Sponsored Research. Recruitment to other vacancies will occur.
- **NCRIS**
 - ANU is a “player” in many of the Capabilities. ANU’s engagement in the astronomy Capability is under discussion.
 - Funding and governance arrangements are being worked on by DEST.
 - Administrative processes that require expert advice not generally available on campus, for example for joint ventures and company formation, are to be coordinated through the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
 - More discussion was needed about the bioinformatics component of the biology platforms Capability.
 - Planning for the Platforms for Collaboration (Cap.5.16) is underway through the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- **ANU Connect Ventures CEO**
Professor Tim Hunt, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Sydney, has been appointed the CEO of ANU Connect Ventures.

- **Update on Grant Applications** (tabled: ARC DP ANU Applications 2005-2007 and Applications for ARC DP from Go8 Institutes 2004-2007)
 - . ANU CECS has increased sharply its funding requests this year. Applications from ANU CASS were fewer than expected compared to the previous two years. The total number of ANU applications has declined.
 - . Good engagement strategies have been put in place to encourage staff to apply.
 - . Applications from Go8 Universities represent about 75% of the total. The statistics indicate that sizeable increases in the number of applications at some other universities have not translated to a higher success rate.
 - . Factors that may have affected ANU's lower application rate for 2007 were:
 - . restructuring in ANU CASS was possibly a distraction for staff
 - . the number of eligible staff, i.e. who have not reached maximum grant capacity. This information should be extracted from University data
 - . the one grant rule applying to staff of Centres of Excellence. This may account for significant variations within disciplines between 2005-2007
 - . the 3-year anniversary dates since IAS full entry to the NCGS, i.e. 2002, 2005 and 2008 as the next likely date for application
 - . Static funding of the DP pool places greater emphasis on the need to explore other sources.
 - . The proportion of ANU research-only staff applying is not above the Go8 average; this is perhaps a surprise.
 - . Potentially, the RQF process may be used for research management information for areas.

After discussion, it was agreed to conduct a short seminar at future December meetings of the Committee on the ARC and NHMRC rounds including discussion of relevant data.

- **Prizes, Awards and Honours**
 - . ANU Colleges were reminded about opportunities for staff nominations for awards, particularly for recognition of research achievements. Teaching nominations were being largely coordinated and monitored through CEDAM.
 - . Local discipline based committees were suggested as a means for facilitating the dissemination of information, matching staff and disciplines with awards and for keeping abreast of the criteria.
- **Trends in External Funding**
 - . The time series information comparing ANU's performance in various components with other universities (Grants data 179/2007) was available for discussion by ANU College Research Committees.
 - . The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that IGS income had been slightly underestimated in the past. He drew attention to the affect a small number of large grants can have on data about an institution's performance.
- **Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS)**
 - . This six months award program, funded under the *Higher Education Support ACT*, (non-RTS load) provides a stipend at APA level for Higher Degree Research student training in commercialisation.
 - . ANU would be able to provide stipends for approximately 15 students per year. Additional places would be available on a fee-paying basis.

- . The first intake would be in Second Semester 2007. All ANU Colleges would be encouraged to participate with economics, science and engineering already represented.
- **AUQA and Research Management Data**
 - . The membership of the panel was being negotiated for the visit to take place before the end of July.
 - . The focus of the ANU's portfolio, prepared under the supervision of the University Executive, was strongly on outputs.
- **Research Management Data**
Metrics produced in the AUQA submission will be updated annually and linked to performance measures in ANU Colleges.

ITEM 6. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

6.1 Terms of Reference, Mode of Operation, and Membership of Ethics Committees:

- . ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (176/2007) and
- . Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee (Institutional Biosafety Committee) (175/2007)

The Committee noted the statements for each of the Committees. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor invited comments from ANU College Research Committees.

6.2 Reviews

- *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)*
It was noted:
 - . The National Statement would be released for implementation once it has been tabled in both Houses of Parliament in mid-year.
 - . About three months lead-time for implementation of the new processes could be expected.
 - . The Statement would enable new multi-institutional processes to replace the current requirements for a full review of proposals by both ACT Health and University HRE Committees
 - . The University has been taking appropriate measures in relation to the Gene Technology and NHMRC regulations
 - . The review of clinical trial proposals by ACT Health experts is on a fee-paying basis and all cleared protocols are reported to the insurer.
- *Review of Joint NHMRC/AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice*
There was nothing to report at this time about the draft new document, *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

6.3 Clinical Trials Subcommittee

Members noted current processes. These require, for instance, ACT Health clearance as well as consideration by the ANU HREC. New streamlined arrangements will be introduced after release of the National Statement that would make use of ACT Health HREC expertise. They would supersede the role of the ANU Clinical Trials Subcommittee.

6.4 OECD Global Science Forum: *Workshop on Best Practices for Ensuring Scientific Integrity and Preventing Misconduct*, 22-23 February 2007

Professor Thomas reported that the main focus of the Workshop had been to inform and develop scientific research policy across 30 countries. Reports of incidents of misconduct were on the increase and a matter for concern. The Workshop had considered principles that mesh across institutions with a view to formulating overarching guidelines. A move to propose to the Australian Government the establishment of an Office of Research Integrity reflected similar shifts occurring elsewhere.

Members noted:

- . A major US study had identified a sense of procedural injustice as the main reason for research misconduct and different approaches to researcher mentoring can mitigate or reinforce the feeling of injustice.
- . Training, national workshops and conferences, such as those offered in the US, offered ways to stimulate more responsible research practices.
- . Pressures to produce and to impress supervisors, and a focus on quantity rather than quality by some funding agencies were instrumental in creating an environment conducive to misconduct.
- . There were implications also for HDR student training. Current courses in human research and ethics attract about 20 students per session. In addition to induction materials for HDR students, ongoing training should be available for both students and supervisors.
- . Promulgation of ethical clearance requirements should be linked to completion of the on-line training program recently introduced.
- . Laying foundations at an early stage was critical to building a culture of integrity in research, i.e. in the first year of undergraduate study through the transition to HDR studies.

ITEM 7. ANU AND THE RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK (RQF)

The Committee noted the following papers and references:

- *ANU Response to the Research Quality Framework* (177/2007) and memorandum from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (dated 10 January 2007)
- *Retreat Washup* (http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/About_this_Office/files/anu_only/Retreat%20followup.pdf)
- Access to Research Findings ARC and NHMRC Media Release of 18 January 2007 (http://www.arc.gov.au/media/releases/media_18Jan07.htm)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that the University community was developing a good understanding of the RQF. The RQF Guidelines were expected in mid-year.

The next steps would be to:

- Test the RQF data with a relatively small part of the campus in mid May, i.e.
 - . enter information into the system
 - . generate reports area by area and check data
 - . identify the four major publications
 - . prepare individual notifications

- Prepare group impact statements once the RQF guidelines become available:
 - there were challenges in working through the evidence trails required to justify any claimed impact
 - construction of group statements could draw on the experience of those prepared for the RSSS review.

Two components of the RQF were the quality of Australian research and accessibility of Australian research. Access was being strongly promoted by DEST. The ARC and NHMRC had recently released indicated that they will require improved community access to the outcomes of government-funded research.

The Committee noted:

- Infrastructure and services for ANU researchers to deposit papers would be in place before mid-year. Lightly mandatory requirements for depositing research findings into the University's own archives are being prepared for circulation in Semester II.
- Tools were needed to assist researchers as the University moves towards open access to data and research findings. Agencies were addressing funding support.
- Long-term curatorial management was an important issue still to be resolved.
- The NIH policy provides for timely release and sharing of final research data from NIH-supported studies for use by other researchers.

ITEM 8. HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM REVIEW

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Thomas, spoke to the review of the University's management processes for Higher Degree Research (HDR). The review had been broadly supported at the 2007 Leadership Retreat (see "Higher Degree Research Nature and Numbers" at http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/About_this_Office/files/_anu_only/Higher%20degree%20research.pdf). Factors that had added to the impetus for the review were the decline in applications and enrolments across the sector; the transfer of functions in 2006 following the disestablishment of the Graduate Research School; and strategies for marketing and recruitment. Background to the review and the establishment document for the Reference Group had been detailed in the papers:

- Extract from "Higher Degree Research Training Program Review" from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- "Higher Degree Research Training Program Review Reference Group Establishment": Terms of Reference and Membership (178/2007)

The Committee noted that:

- Attraction and retention of HDR students would be the first priority of the review.
- Discussion of oral defence would be taken up in consideration of the HDR package.
- Transparency, efficiency and the quality of HDR training would be a primary focus.
- A link between attracting new students and the quality of the training program was needed and evaluation of the training program written into the terms of reference.
- The review process would be highly consultative to capture the diversity of training and HDR experience at ANU.
- A number of outstanding issues to do with relocation of functions, redistribution of resources and the role out of delegations, a graduate commons and website presentation would also be taken-up in the review.

After discussion, the Committee noted the establishment of the HDR Training Review Reference Group and endorsed the terms of reference for the Group.

ITEM 9. RESEARCH POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

The Committee noted recent policy issues and the framework for the review and maintenance of the University's suite of research policies.

- **Anti-Terrorism Legislation: dealing with requests for information**
 - Memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor from University Counsel dated 6 February 2007 (73/2007). This includes advice that the University's policies adequately cover those situations giving rise to a request for information under the *Act* (73/2007).
 - "Summary of Terrorism Offences under the *Anti-Terrorism Act (No. 2) 2005* for Individuals involved in ANU Research" prepared by the Legal Office. The published summary would be drawn to the attention of areas.
- **Academic Engagement in Public Debate**
A draft statement was under consideration on the matter of academic engagement in public debate, in particular, the broad principles which might govern staff's use of an ANU affiliation as evidence of their expertise on an issue. ANU College Deans had been asked to comment on the statement.
- **Policy on Externally-funded Grants, Consultancies and Contracts** (180/2007) (published at the ANU's website: http://info.anu.edu.au/policies/Policies/Research/Other/External_Grants.asp)

The policy had been revised as follows to capture a statement of principle relating to funding approved by Council on 8 December 2006:

"2.2.1 Agreements which compromise Academic Freedom and the integrity or reputation of the ANU

The ANU recognises that bodies providing funding for research and/or education programs are entitled to specify the fields and scope of the programs, and to monitor their quality and timeliness. However, the ANU will not accept funding either:

- * where the funder requires a dominant position in the appointment of relevant staff; or
- * where the funder has any right to interfere in, or alter, or prevent publication of, the outcome generated by the ANU's researchers and teachers in delivering the funded program. The ANU does recognise that commercial or other considerations might sometimes require delays in publication."

- **Research Office Policy Framework Work Plan** (170/2007)
- The overview of work required or in progress to update the University's suite of research policies was received. The University was currently in the process of changing over to an upgraded University policies website.

ITEM 10. MAJOR EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the current terms of reference and membership of the Major Equipment Committee (MEC) (181/2007) and a report from the Chair of the Committee on the 2006 funding rounds (182/2007).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor described proposed changes to separate out the ARC LIEF role (in the first part of the year) from the Major Equipment Grants (MEG) activity (in the second part of the year). These would enable:

- . easier engagement for researchers with the administrative process
- . improved timing about how one decision relates to the other
- . hollow-log funding for major equipment after the LIEF round
- . more funds potentially for equipment, i.e. \$1M to be designated for matching LIEF grants; \$2M minimum funding for MEG; additional matching funds for LIEF from the Research Developments Fund as required

The Committee commended the Research Office and the MEC for their work to reshape the process and on the standard of the revamped research grant applications workshops. It was noted that by submitting LIEF bids (closing date in April) researchers could indicate strong ANU support for ARC funding of equipment. Leveraging of approximately 40% of total matching funds should be available from local and central areas.

The Committee noted that the revised terms of reference for the MEC would be included in the papers for the next meeting to be held in May.

ITEM 11. REPORTS FROM ANU COLLEGES

The following reports were submitted for inclusion in the minutes.

ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

- . An RQF subcommittee has been established consisting of 8 members to oversee management of three of the 14 ANU panels - panels 9,12,13.
- . Conveners of the College's 10 research themes have been asked to submit 300-word outlines on how the themes would articulate cross the College and ANU as a whole. These will be included in the CASS strategic plan.
- . The newly formed Research School of Humanities will provide input into at least 5 of the 10 research focus areas of CASS.
- . CASS has noted a fall in ARC applications for the 2008 funding round. The Research Committee will work actively with the Research Management Office of CASS to encourage more applications from active researchers.
- . The Faculty of Arts Research Committee has now merged with the CASS Committee and the terms of reference modified to include at least 3 members from the Faculty.

ANU College of Science

- . The Research Committee will be meeting to discuss the RQF.
- . To date, RQF and ARC grants issues have been treated at Discipline levels:

- ARC applicant mentoring and proposal checking was co-ordinated on a discipline basis. This worked well in physics, astronomy, earth sciences and chemistry, and co-ordination is evolving in other disciplines;
- Most discipline groupings in CoS have had initial discussions on how to proceed in the RQF process.

ANU College of Engineering and Computer Science

ARC submissions:

- The College made 29 DP submissions including 8 Fellowships - a total request of \$17.9M.
- The internal policy about the culling of applications is under debate.
- The requirement to enter data into ARIES before submission has added to the workload at a very busy time. The need to have the same data in a form to be signed by the College Dean should be integrated into ARIES. This matter will be taken up with the Research Office.

HDR update:

- This year saw the introduction of the MICT program with 10 local and 6 international student enrolments. There will be a pipeline effect when these students convert to the PhD at the end of 2007.
- Alongside the MICT, 19 students have enrolled in the MPhil/PhD program so far. Most of these are in FEIT, but there are some in RSISE. Of these, 10 are RTS and 9 are international students.
- Another 4 RTS and 6 international students are expected by the March census date.
- Research Student Office issues:
 - CECS plans to take up issues to do with the granting of advanced standing to students transferring to the ANU as part of the HDR review.
 - CECS would like to make students with good H2A degrees eligible for University Research Scholarships (URS). For engineering degrees, the final honours grade is not solely dependent on work undertaken in the student's final year. This means that lower marks in early years can result in a student who has very good research potential being awarded a high H2A. CECS believes that the Colleges should be given the discretion to award URS to these students.
- CECS would like to see a clear policy that permits HDR students to audit courses across the entire University, subject to space. Currently, CECS HDR students are able to audit any course in CECS or within the Mathematics department on this basis.
- The impact of the storm on CECS research students is still being assessed. Some have suffered loss of equipment and data and may require extensions.
- The Graduate School has been disbanded with work devolved to the Colleges. CECS has raised the following matters:
 - When are the funds (or staff) associated with the Graduate School going to be devolved, so that Colleges can employ more staff to take on the new workload?
 - What has happened to the funds convenors used to have for HDR well being?
 - The web site needs to be overhauled to remove reference to the Graduate School.

- . Themes:
Research Themes are now part of the CECS strategic plan. CECS plans to implement and validate them, and to allocate resources accordingly. This exercise is expected to overlap with the RQF process.
- . RQF:
Professor Brian Anderson will lead RQF within CECS, with Prof Matt James as his deputy. Professors Anderson, Clarey and Gregor attended the DEST meeting on February 21st, the outcome of which is yet to be discussed.

PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 12. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME

- Grants and Consultancies for the period 1 November 2006 to 31 January 2007 (161/2007 published at the website) were noted.

jab/22 March 2007