

The Australian National University

University Research Committee

A meeting of the Committee was held on Thursday 18 May 2006 at 9.30AM in the Ross Hohnen Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair); Dr Baldwin (for Professor Williams); Professor Board; Professor Brent (for Professor D Hill); Dr Brown (for Professor Merlan); Professor Glasgow; Mr Heslop; Professor C Hill; Professor Huon; Professor Kirk (for Professor Cockburn); Professor Morris-Suzuki; Dr Powles (by invitation for item 6); Professor Rubenstein (for Dr Wheeler); Professor Stening; Dr Stoljar; Ms Thornberry (for Mr Atkins); Ms Wood.

In attendance: Mr Dodd.

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 meeting of the University Research Committee (33/2006), held on 15 March 2006, were confirmed.

ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING

ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

3.1 Apologies were received from Mr Atkins; Dr Bain; Professor Cockburn; Dr Ganguly, Professor D Hill Dr McMahon; Professor Morphy; Professor Williams.

3.2 Announcements
There were no announcements.

3.3 Confidential Items
There were no confidential items. Dr Nelms, Ms Rayner 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 the Policy, *Academic Board and Policy Sub-committees of the Academic Board*, approved following the March meeting of Council.

4.2 University Research Committee

The meeting noted that the University Research Committee membership reported to the March Committee meeting had been expanded to include:

- One member of the general staff appointed by the Chair of the Committee:
Ms Melina Wood, ANU College of Business and Economics
- Additional members appointed by the Chair:
 - One senior academic researcher: Professor Caryl Hill, JCSMR, ANU College of Medicine and Health Sciences
 - One early-career academic researcher: Appointment in progress

The revised membership of the University Research Committee and terms of office of appointed members, detailed in [518/2006](#), was noted.

4.3 Research Issues

The Chair noted that he would fold discussion of the 1st dot point in the agenda item, "possible research areas around which Key Research Principles affecting research at ANU may be developed" into a discussion of his draft paper *Research at the Australian National University* under agenda item 6.

The Chair invited comments from members regarding the presentation of research issues for discussion by the Committee, noting that he would welcome suggestions on how best to establish effective communications between members of Colleges, ANU College research committees and the University Research Committee (URC). During discussion members agreed that the URC should receive reports and presentations on matters related to research management, and that thought be given to College committees informing the URC about their activities.

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) reported on:

Federal budget 2006

Professor Cram stated that as national expenditure on research is at about OECD norms it was not surprising that there was little extra money for university research in the budget. He noted that the budget provision of funding for early stage R&D commercialization present funding opportunities for ANU staff. The \$125M capital grant to ANU will be applied partly towards the JCSMR building program (\$50M) and the balance to other capital works. Thought is being given to new buildings which would provide "blended" accommodation. The aim would be to co-locate researchers housed currently in inadequate accommodation, with their collaborators from other Colleges or academic areas in a new building. Professor Cram said he would welcome expressions of interest from researchers interested in the concept. The meeting noted the 2006-07 Science and Innovation Budget Tables circulated with the agenda.

RQF

The meeting noted the media release circulated with the agenda. Professor Cram reported that budget funding of the RQF program is for further development of the

model only. The ANU is prepared to make an early submission if the RQF program calls for submissions for the 2007-08 financial year.

Professor Cram asked members to advise their College committees that the ANU will label current publications by RFDC codes and once sufficient data is available Colleges will be asked to assign researchers' activities under those codes. He said that discussions are in train in an effort to make sure that RQF panels would be structured to enable them to evaluate sensibly innovation flowing from research.

Research Office Structure:

Professor Cram reported that after its restructure the Research Office comprises:

- Office of Research Integrity (ethics, biosafety etc)
- Office of Commercialisation (IP, ANU Connect etc)
- Office of Grants
- Research Management and Policy Support (data collection and policy)
- Business Solutions Group.

During discussion members endorsed the Chair's suggestion that the Office of Grants be titled "Office of Sponsored Research". Professor Cram responded to concerns expressed by members about access by researchers to advice and information in relation to grants. He noted that ANU had lost important corporate knowledge about major grant schemes through staff losses. There will be a hiatus but plans are in train to recruit at new graduate level a number of staff who will work in the DVCR office and the Grants Office for about 12 months and then will be assigned to Colleges to provide expert advice and assistance (the aim being to have one grants officer for each 100 or so researchers). Professor Cram suggested that Simon Cann-Evans of ANU Enterprise would be a useful source of advice on applying for major grants from less usual sources, especially in the humanities and social sciences.

Professor Cram asked that in the meantime requests for rulings on ARC policies and procedures should be addressed to Dr Wellard of the Office of Sponsored Research in the first instance – the ARC preferring a formal line of communication with universities. Formal communications ensure records of decisions and advice are available in cases of dispute. That said, useful information can be obtained by individual informal inquiries to the ARC as to why a particular application was not successful.

Export Controls and Terrorism

Professor Cram commended the booklet *Tertiary and Research Institutions Export Controls – Your Responsibilities* (circulated at the meeting) to members. The booklet notes that universities produce research potentially of value to terrorist organizations and countries of proliferation concern. He foreshadowed the introduction of ANU protocols to assist staff in dealing with inquiries in relation to their research or facilities, and in relation to their research collaborations with partners in other countries. The meeting expressed support for the suggestion that such inquiries should be referred to the office of the DVCR for decision and advice.

Go8/AVCC DVCR Meetings

The Go8 discussions included the planned RQF program and the Productivity Commission Report on Innovation. Members of Go8 universities are assisting the Commission in the finalisation of its report.

The AVCC meeting discussed tensions between CRC representatives and host universities without resolution, and the issue of women in research.

Focus on Business

The ANU will present a "focus on business" program in tandem with the ACT Government program to be held in September. Professor Cram said that he would be initiating discussions with Colleges about the ANU program.

Research Planning Day: Thursday, 10 August 2006

Professor Cram asked members to encourage appropriate College and area participation in the event.

In response to a question about the Knowledge Fund, the Chair stated that the future of the Fund is being reviewed. The ANU view is that money should be made available to train early researchers in business skills and to provide seed funding for business ventures to commercialise their research.

The report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) was noted.

ITEM 6. **ANU TO 2010: UPDATE**

ANU to 2010

Dr Powles briefed the meeting about progress since the February 2006 Retreat in developing the ANU strategic plan, and the supporting College plans, for 2006-2010. (The intention is to launch *ANU Futures*, the operational strategic plan of *ANU to 2010*, on 1 August, which is ANU Foundation Day.) The Policy and Planning Office has been consulting closely with ANU Colleges throughout the plan process. He noted that College plan drafts are due by early July.

The following documents (circulated with the agenda) were received by the Committee:

- Strategic Planning Process: 2006-2010 (43/2006)
- Draft ANU Directions (44a/2006)
- College Plan template (45/2006)
- Strategic Planning – checklist (46/2006)

In response to questions Dr Powles and Professor Cram advised members that Colleges are not being asked to set hard targets and indicators for 2010. Rather, plans should make clear the tools and processes Colleges intend to use to make decisions on issues facing them and their disciplines in the plan period. Decisions on strategic directions during 2006-10 would be made on the basis of evaluation of disciplines by metrics and taking into account larger considerations of overall University policy and the national and international environments in which ANU operates. Dr Powles said he would ask the working party on the academic calendar to make early recommendations on the loss of the AVCC common week and the overlap with school holidays.

Paper by DVCR, *Research at the Australian National University*

Professor Cram called for comment on the draft paper, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Comments made during discussion included:

- the general thrust of the "planning and delivery" section of the paper, that the University will determine its research agenda, was endorsed and it was suggested that other references in the paper might be made consistent with this view;
- support for the acknowledgement of the importance of the role of individual researchers in determining the ANU research agenda;
- the opening paragraph should state that ANU research is of the "highest international quality";

- there should be additional references to the international dimension of ANU research and ANU's engagements with communities;
- support for the inclusion of ANU's role, through its international dimension, of acting as a conduit for bringing cutting edge research to Australia.

ITEM 7. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Review of National Statement

The meeting noted:

- The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) and the Australian Research Council (ARC) have established a Joint Working Group (JWG) to review the 1997 NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (the Statement). The ARC is participating in the review of the Statement with the intention of formally endorsing the revised Statement. Consistent with the combined responsibilities of the ARC and the NHMRC, the revised Statement is required to have broad relevance across all research disciplines;
- The JWG has carriage of two major projects:
 - (1) revising the Statement, and
 - (2) the identification of models designed to facilitate the investigation and management of research misconduct across all spheres of research. While these projects will be managed separately, there will be substantial interaction between the two processes;
- Submissions for the Second Round Consultation closed in early May 2006

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans:

Second Round of Public Consultation

The meeting noted that the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) are jointly undertaking a revision of the *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999* (the National Statement).

The Chair foreshadowed that the issue of ethical procedures for student conduct of research involving humans will be a matter for review by the University. He advised also that the processes for the lodgement and review of proposals for research involving humans at ANU are to be reviewed with perhaps the introduction of local level assessments of less complex proposals and on-line lodgement of proposals.

ITEM 8. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE: NCRIS

The meeting noted:

that the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop approved the NCRIS Investment Framework and that the Investment Framework describes:

- how NCRIS will use facilitators to develop investment plans in consultation with the research community;
- how interested parties can participate in the development of investment plans;
- the role of the NCRIS Committee in ensuring the quality of investment plans;
- the role of the Minister in providing final approval of funding for Investment Plans; and
- administrative arrangements for implementing investment plans;

the list of ANU contacts for NCRIS capabilities; and

information about the e-Research Strategy Task Force, chaired by Professor Jim Williams (circulated prior to the meeting).

The Chair reported that ANU contact persons met on 17 May and that he expected that ANU's interests would be particularly in NCRIS capability 1.1.6, use of computers in research.

ITEM 9. RESEARCH-RELATED POLICIES

Intellectual Property: Ownership, Protection and Commercialisation (517/2006).

The meeting noted:

- the Vice-Chancellor had approved minor changes to the policy detailed in the memorandum from the Director, Research Office (circulated with the agenda);
- there is in train a major revision of IP policy.

The Chair reported that the new IP policy will be promulgated as legislation so that the University may more confidently assert ownership, but commercialisation policy will remain as a policy of the University. He stated that the URC would have an opportunity to comment on both policies.

ITEM 10. ANU COLLEGE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee noted the governance arrangements in ANU Colleges and progress towards the establishment of College Research Committees as set out in the agenda.

PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 11. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME

Grants and consultancies

The meeting noted the grants and consultancies awarded between 1 March and 30 April 2006.

There were no questions.