

**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting No. 2, 2007**

Meeting No. 2, 2007 of the University Research Committee was held on Thursday 3 May 2007 at 9.30 am in the Ross Hohnen Room of the Chancelry.

**Present:** Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Professor Stanton; Professor Thomas; Ms Andressakis (for Ms Kuo); Dr Ganguly (for Professor Morphy) ; Professor Glasgow; Dr Golley; Dr Grafton (for Professor Morris-Suzuki); Professor Hill; Dr Jones; Professor Kirk; Dr McMahon; Professor Smith; Dr Stoljar; Dr Wheeler; Professor Williams; and Ms Wood.

**By invitation:** Dr Bain; Professor Carroll; Mr Watt.

**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.

**MINUTES**

**PART 1: GENERAL ITEMS**

**ITEM 1. MINUTES**

The minutes of Meeting No. 1, 2007 of the University Research Committee (184/2007 attached) held on 8 March 2007 were confirmed (published at [http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University\\_Research\\_Committee/meetings.asp](http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University_Research_Committee/meetings.asp))

**ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING**

**Item 5., 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point: Prizes, Awards and Honours**

The Chair reminded members about the approaching closing date for a number of public awards in science, including the Prime Minister's prizes.

**ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES**

**3.1 Apologies** were received from Dr Brown, Ms Kuo, Professor Merlan, Professor Morphy and Professor Williamson.

**3.2 Announcements**

**3.3 Confidential Items**

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

**PART 2: REPORTS AND POLICY MATTERS****ITEM 4. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported on current issues. The Committee noted that:

- **Biosciences Review:** Draft Terms of Reference (297/2007)  
The review encompasses the biological sciences (in JCSMR, RSBS, Faculty of Science and the Fenner School) but not in the clinical sciences (centred in JCSMR and the Medical School). It will be conducted by a panel of distinguished international scientists and report to the Vice-Chancellor. The academic community will have the opportunity to make submissions. Professor Cram will chair the ANU steering committee.
- **Chemistry Review:** Draft Terms of Reference for the Review (298/2007)  
The review will focus on the Research School of Chemistry and the Department of Chemistry and on research and teaching.
- **Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS): Award program**  
ANU has signed-off on the agreement with DEST. A Graduate Certificate in Commercialisation has been designed for commencement in Semester II. Approximately sixteen scholarships will be available: 14 at APA rates for current domestic PhD students and 2 for international students funded by the Vice-Chancellor. The program was being publicised with a closing date in early June.
- **Academic Expertise and Public Debate:**  
<http://info.anu.edu.au/Policies/Documents/PDF/Governance/academicfreedom.pdf>  
The statement adopted by Council makes clear that staff can rely on unqualified University support when speaking in the public domain on topics in their area of expertise.
- **Addresses on ANU publications**  
In order for published articles to be identified with ANU and counted in publications data collections, the tagline must contain "ANU" or other string identifying the whole University. Members were reminded that other location names, such as the Research School, are not sufficient to ensure that the publication is captured.
- **NCRIS Update**  
Contracts with DEST were being taken-up quickly by the relevant organisations. ANU was a partner in the Astronomy and Fabrication companies and with Earth Sciences AuScope and was joining ventures in microscopy and other capabilities. The Biosecurity and Terrestrial Environment capabilities were still being processed.

Professor Stanton reported in relation to the computing infrastructure capability (NCRIS 5.16) that:

- . the capability was being taken-up later than some others to enable better links with other NCRIS programs and with e-research communities more generally
- . the topics addressed in recent meetings were the computing infrastructure (ANU is to be offered a national responsibility for this), the grid and data
- . draft contracts were being prepared for there was still some way to go to bring the three aspects (compute, grid, data) together

With decision on 5.16 being made, the report on e-research (chaired by Professor Williams) could be finalised and circulated to Colleges.

The Chair advised that College plans could evolve to include e-research requirements to inform the Chancery about resource requirements for the coming years.

- **NHMRC Data.** The following spreadsheets were noted:
  - Applications for NHMRC Projects from Go8 Institutes
  - ANU Applications by ANU College
- **Centres policy**  
Comments arising in discussion related to:
  - reporting processes and requirements for both internal and external purposes
  - accommodating both academic and administrative needs. It was important at the national level for academic activities that cross areas of the University to be visible
  - trigger points to enable a unit to evolve and change in nature
  - What distinguishes a centre from established networks?
  - the purpose of the policy to identify organisations of aggregational academic activity
  - a web-based system to process the establishment, disestablishment and evolution of academic units

The Chair undertook to prepare a paper for consideration at a future meeting.

## **ITEM 5. RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK (RQF)**

The Committee noted:

- The appointment of RQF Assessment Panel Chairs (see [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/policies\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/research\\_quality\\_framework/rqf\\_assessment\\_2008.htm#Assessment\\_Panel\\_2008\\_Chairs](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_assessment_2008.htm#Assessment_Panel_2008_Chairs))
- Nominated ANU Panel chairs and members (tabled) and Research fields (tabled)
- The March and April newsletters from the RQF Team at the DEST RQF site

The Chair advised that nominations for the DEST RQF panels would close on Monday, 14 May 2007. In view of ANU's engagement, nominations of at least one ANU staff member or associated researcher on each panel would be the desired outcome for the University. The attributes and selection criteria for panel members has been detailed in the Information Kit. A substantial time commitment would be involved in assessing material between May and August 2008 and attending an Assessment Panels meeting in September. Fees and allowances for panel members had not yet been determined.

ANU's RQF data resources had been review and were moving along well. Data from the HERD collection and other sources will be distributed for staff to provide feedback on their best publication and its impact. A meeting of panel chairs would be convened in May.

The Committee agreed that, in view of the large number of eligible staff for appointment, Deans and Directors should be asked to consider staff in their areas at Level D and above for the 13 DEST panels and submit their nominations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

## **ITEM 6. RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

The Committee noted that the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)* has been released for implementation by the end of 2007.

The Chair advised that:

- Human research applications would be processed on-line with categories determined electronically from the information supplied. There were three levels:
  - short form version for clearance by the Chair of the Ethics Committee (accounting for between one quarter and one third of protocols)
  - exempt categories defined in the Statement (to be registered as E1 for researchers)
  - significant ethical risk (subject to full review by current ANU HREC processes)

- Some activities previously assessed as low-risk may, under the provisions of the revised *Statement*, be categorised as high-risk.
- Training sessions and information at the website would be available to assist staff.
- New processes for the assessment of E2 protocols would need to be incorporated into the terms of reference for the ANU HREC.

It was noted in discussion that:

- The *National Statement* sought to facilitate multi-centre research and minimise duplication. For instance, protocols assessed and cleared by ACT Health would normally default to category E1 within ANU without further processing. The supporting documentation would be available to researchers.
- Category E1 should not be seen as implying necessarily that the research is “low-risk”, e.g. applications assessed by non-ANU ethics committees may fall into the E1 category but may be high-risk.
- Monitoring will be in place to ensure that project clearance has been obtained
- If there were uncertainty about the appropriate channel for applying, the parties concerned would need to consult.

The Committee:

- (i) Noted the revised terms of reference for the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (176a/2007) and that the statement would be amended in light of the revised *National Statement*;
- (ii) Endorsed the revised terms of reference for the Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee (Institutional Biosafety Committee) (175a/2007).

#### **ITEM 7. EXTERNALLY FUNDED CONTRACTS**

The Committee noted an extract from the policy, *Externally-funded Grants, Consultancies and Contracts* (paragraph “2.2.1 Agreements which compromise Academic Freedom and the integrity or reputation of the ANU” at <http://info.anu.edu.au/policies/browse.asp?view=title>).

The Committee also noted the advice from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that:

- A literal interpretation of the policy could mean that ANU has to decline certain contracts.
- Academic staff should contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or the Pro Vice-Chancellors for assistance if instances arising which require a value judgement.
- As a general guideline and in keeping with the position of the University as an open and public institution, it was acceptable for a particular contract to specify that certain work is confidential.
- It may be necessary to consider whether some externally-funded research already being pursued satisfies the criteria and should continue.

#### **ITEM 8. RESEARCH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

The Committee considered a proposal from the ANU College of Business and Economics (294/2007) to form a working party to further explore the establishment of a Research School of Business.

It was noted that:

- The working party would be chaired by Professor Smith, Associate Dean (Research), ANU CBE. The membership would include staff from other Colleges and staff on campus would be able to take up any matters with the ANU CBE and the working party.
- Some issues that had arisen were:
  - a “virtual” Research School drawing on existing ANU staff resources
  - the time commitment required of staff to form an effective Research School
  - evaluating the impact of research in the field to determine whether the proposal was viable
  - reasons why economics was not included in the scope of the proposal. Economics research was being undertaken in other Research Schools; the question of a Research of Economics has been raised on several occasions and put aside because the economists had not consider it to be the best model; there were mixed views from economists about whether or not they should be included in the current discussions
  - a primary focus of the working party would be to examine how the proposal would assist and improve research. It was not self evident that quality research requires the establishment of a Research School

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor undertook to report the discussion to the Vice-Chancellor.

## **ITEM 9. HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH TRAINING REVIEW**

Professor Thomas reported that three of the review working parties were in progress involving about forty members and invitees. She thanked staff and students for their participation.

The main items identified by the working parties to date were:

- Establishing a position of Associate Dean in each ANU College responsible for higher degree research matters. Discussions were in progress to define the role and responsibilities of the position and the relationship with Conveners.
- The role and responsibilities of Conveners of Graduate Studies Programs.
- Complexities associated with support for PhD students beyond the expiry of their scholarships, including: funding (to the average course length of 4.9 years); delays to completion from the need to take up employment; how best to accommodate language training, fieldwork and outside work in the overall program; the size of the piece of work required for the PhD; and international comparisons and considerations.

Professor Thomas commented that ANU was in the position to be a leader in determining the nature of the PhD and the content.

The Committee noted:

- (i) The report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor; and
- (ii) The Terms of Reference and Membership of the Higher Degree Research Training Review and of the Reference Group and Working Parties (190a/2007).

## **ITEM 10. EQUIPMENT**

The Committee noted reports on the following and matters raised in discussion:

### **10.1 Infrastructure Policy**

Following comment by Colleges, the draft policy will be brought forward to the University Research Committee.

**10.2 NH&MRC Equipment Funds**

The Chair advised that the processes for allocating NH&MRC funds were under discussion. The Committee noted:

- . the NH&MRC application and the internal ANU allocation processes
- . a significant amount of funding was earned on NH&MRC work that does not have equipment needs. The grants are not tied to NH&MRC funded staff but available for medical research generally
- . an ANU committee of senior researchers determines allocations including for equipment costing as little as \$7k per bid
- . aligning the allocation with the MEC processes may achieve a more strategic investment of NH&MRC funds which would need to be earmarked broadly for the relevant areas
- . issues to do with ANU's performance in the NH&MRC funding round compared with many other universities were thought to be related to views about the IAS block grant, and the absence of big-ticket items at the higher end of importance. The ability to bid for these items was often contingent on the availability of experts with the necessary skills to operate the equipment.

**10.3 Major Equipment Subcommittee, Mass Spectrometer/Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Subcommittee, and Microscopy Subcommittee**

The Chair outlined the need for strategies to ensure that expensive research facilities are being used well and infrastructure is properly staffed. A discussion paper would be prepared for circulation to ANU College Conveners and Deans and Directors.

**10.4 Major Equipment Subcommittee**

Changes to the Major Equipment Subcommittee processes were noted at the March meeting of the University Research Committee. The Chair reported on support at the MEC meeting of 2 May about funding LIEF bids using central and ARC funds and a top up from the local area. The University and MEC would need to be satisfied that strategic equipment needs were being met.

**ITEM 11. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Committee noted the following announcements:

- ARC Centres of Excellence – An additional \$67 million for high-performing research centres  
All ANU Centres of Excellence have been extended. A mini review of one Centre extended for one year would be conducted towards the end of the term.
- ARC Internationally Coordinated Initiatives (ICIs) – Call for proposals for social sciences
- ARC scheme calendar has become available - Schedule of key dates for researchers planning to apply for Australian Research Council (ARC) funding for projects commencing in 2008.

**ITEM 12. REPORTS FROM ANU COLLEGES**

Due to lack of time, reports were not presented.

**PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS****ITEM 13. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME**