

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Meeting No. 3, 2007

Meeting No. 3, 2007 of the University Research Committee was held on Thursday 26 July 2007 at 9.30 am in the R C Mills Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Professor Stanton; Professor Thomas; Professor Dulhunty (for Professor Glasgow); Professor Hill; Ms Kuo; Dr Matthaai (for Dr Jones); Professor O'Neill (for Professor Kirk); Professor Stoljar; Ms Verney; Dr Wheeler; Professor Williams; Professor Williamson; and Ms Wood.

By invitation: Dr Bain; Professor Carroll; Dr Nelms.

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. 2, 2007 of the University Research Committee (305/2007) held on 3 May 2007 were confirmed as amended by the following:

Item 2. 6th bullet point

After "companies", insert "and with Earth Sciences AuScope"

(The minute have been published at

http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/Committees/060PP_Research/meetings.asp)

ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING

ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

3.1 Apologies were received from Dr Ganguly, Professor Glasgow, Dr Golley, Dr Jones, Professor Kirk, Dr McMahon, Professor Merlan, Professor Morphy, and Mr Watt.

3.2 Announcements

3.3 Confidential Items

There were no confidential items. Ms Burke, Dr Dan, Mr Ellis, Ms Hope, Ms Rayner 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:

- **NCRIS**
The Go8 met with DEST for an update on 25 July:
 - . 5.1 Evolving bio-molecular platforms. Bioinformatics infrastructure was still to be resolved. ANU may be able to position itself in the capability
 - . Other capabilities that could benefit from ANU engagement included:
 - 5.7 Population health and clinical data linkage
 - 5.8 Networked biosecurity framework, and
 - 5.16 Platforms for collaboration developments:
 - . an agreement for the national computational infrastructure component has been signed with ANU
 - high performance computing to be maintained through supercomputing facility
 - possible assistance to DEST on data access and discovery, storage and management
 - . Most contracts were now in place. Those involving ANU were progressing well. 5.2.2 plant phenomics was on hold because of the drought conditions affecting funding sources
 - . NCRIS funds and the HEEF could be coupled for high cost infrastructure items (i.e. \$100 million p y). The Go8 would argue that the NCRIS component be earmarked outside HEEF.
- **Research Support Planning Day for 2007**
The format for 9 October would consist of presentations and training/briefing sessions.
- **Review of Registrar and Student Services Division**
Observations in the review report about the Research and Scholarships Office would help inform the Review of HDR being conducted by Professor Thomas.
- **Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS) update**
 - . the program was off to a satisfactory start with an intake of ten students (13 scholarships had been available)
 - . great assistance in preparing the curriculum had been provided by colleagues
 - . the Scheme would be reshaped for 2008 and opportunities expanded
- **Grant Outcomes:**
 - . Federation Fellowships
 - a small number of ANU staff members were recipients in the round

- . Special Research Initiatives Funding Scheme: Centre of Excellence for Policing and Security
 - ANU was a major player in this Centre
- **Go8 Research Intensive Universities**

Tabled: Total Research Income by University 2002-2006(See: <http://www.mis.admin.uq.edu.au//Content/Dashboards/GroupofEight/GO8RESEARCHComp.swf>) and Go8 Collated Data for distribution 2002-2006

Discussion of the analysis of ANU's performance over the five-year period and trends for five years' time was wide-ranging. The data indicated that the quality of ANU's research was strong whereas scale and quantity were a concern. ANU's share of an increasing funding pool was falling (i.e. performance in 2006 at the 2004 level would have netted an additional \$23 million to the University). This raised issues about ANU's future research capacity and what measures could be taken to position the University more strategically for the coming years.

Constructive comments made in discussion related to:

- . access to public funding beyond the ACT
- . the impact of significant funding of single items on the data for a year at an institution
- . opportunities for industry support beyond the local region and an analysis of receptors to identify gaps
- . areas where ANU has been falling down or plateauing, i.e. NH&MRC Grants; Linkage grants with industry
- . whether any inference can be drawn in relation to completion of the IAS buy-in, such as staff having maximised their number of grants as suggested by the \$ per academic staff figures. This appeared to be inconsistent with ANU's share of the pool having fallen concurrently with a stellar performance after the buy-in
- . the need for an analysis of the variable performance across ANU for 2007
- . grant application planning and preparation and peer review processes
- . more effective utilisation of non-traditional funding sources
- . a more creative approach to identifying users of ANU's research capability
- . small grants and seed funding to generate projects leading to subsequent major funding projects
- . balancing competing demands for research support and programs to support early career staff, doctoral students and international peer networks

The Chair invited ANU College Research Committees to:

- . engage in discussion about ANU's future research
- . share in the analysis of performance presented at the meeting (the data and additional detailed ARC Discovery Data would be sent out to the Chairs)
- . bring forward ideas and strategies for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Committee.

ITEM 5. HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH TRAINING REVIEW

Professor Thomas reported that the Scholarships and Funding and Attraction and Recruitment Working Parties were nearing completion and that reports would be brought to the University Education and Research Committees. Briefing papers were being distributed for discussion of the issues:

- . Pathways to the PhD, i.e. a combined PhB/PhD program, with scholarship commencing in the honours year of the undergraduate degree; fast-tracking admission to PhD candidature
- . Building quality PhD programs, e.g.
 - Master classes across campus
 - Oral examination prior to submission as a quality control measure

The new program for the PhD would be introduced from 2008 with transitional arrangements to be put in place for existing students.

The Committee noted that issues about the management of graduate student matters would be addressed by the review by the end of 2007. Functions had been reassigned following the disestablishment of the Graduate School but instructions to assist areas with roles and responsibilities were sometimes unclear. This had been identified as an area needing attention in the recent AUQA audit.

ITEM 6. RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK (RQF)

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

- . ANU and Go8 response to Draft Submission Specifications June 2007
 - . ANU's Response to Draft RQF Submission Specifications (656/7007) and the Draft Submission Specifications (published at website) were noted
 - . the revised Submission Specifications with minor changes was being circulated for wide comment. Finalisation was expected by September
 - . some remaining matters:
 - . multiple group membership
 - . clarification of eligibility of some potential participants
 - . possible significant changes to how impact is described
 - . copyright issues about materials provided to panels. This was likely to be a DEST rather than an institutional responsibility
- . Draft RQF technical specifications process
 - . submissions had been invited
- . Reporting of RFCD codes to provide information about individual researchers
 - . these were wanted by DEST to determine group funding weighting factors
 - . panels should consider how best to position ANU researchers to optimise outcome from the RQF process
- . Development of metrics for quality assessment
 - . processes to develop measures of quality in areas not covered by ISI metrics were in progress
 - . metrics were being built up by groups that ANU is part of and has confidence in, including computing

- . ANU activity over forthcoming weeks:
 - . briefing sessions in July and August were detailed in the Schedule of Presentations (657/2007)
 - . the next stage involves intense activity to collect and verify information during August and visits to groups individually
 - . the 100 word statements to be prepared for the RQF could be a useful tool to promote our good work

Members noted advice that to be eligible for submission as a member of one or more groups, a researcher must be 0.4 FTE at an institution. Cross-institutional groups were also possible formed from more than one institution. It was important to be alert to this eligibility criterion when determining groups.

The RQF Newsletters from the RQF Team for May and June may be viewed at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_newsletters.htm#Newsletters_2007 .

ITEM 7. REVIEW OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, MANAGEMENT AND CLOSING OF ACADEMIC CENTRES POLICY

The Committee considered the paper, “Principles in establishing and administering centres” (658/2007) which had been prepared to assist the initial stage of the review of the University's policy on the *Establishment, Management and Closing of Academic Centres*. The paper proposed scholarly and administrative principles to guide decisions about whether an ANU entity should be classified as a Centre.

Comments arising in discussion related to:

- . how to manage a shift in the status of a centre
- . how to manage more complex combinations and arrangements, i.e. interdisciplinary projects; large grants for cross-campus or cross-institutional programs
- . articulating the strategic rationale for establishing a centre, how it relates to ANU's higher-level strategies, and the prime allegiance of staff engaged in multiple enterprises
- . accountability and performance management issues with respect to: staff members of “virtual” centres; joint appointments and joint supervision; jointly agreed performance objectives and plans (similar to private industry)

It was generally agreed that further discussion was required to first define what the University wants to regard as descriptors of collective activities, e.g. projects, centres, etc. Current approaches that induce the establishment of “centres” rather than a concept of “project with grant” may be explored more fully. The redesign of University systems would support the decision.

ITEM 8. COMMERCIALISATION

The Chair advised that the paper “Policy on Commercialisation Draft Principles” (660/2007) was being prepared taking account of ANU's anticipated *Intellectual Property Statute*. It was oriented towards assets innovation, investors, staff and

students and would enable the University to operate effectively in the public domain in this area. The policy should encompass all modes of commercialisation to take advantage of opportunities across all disciplines for the future.

On the questions of committees, it was noted that:

- . the Commercialisation Committee would be advisory to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and gatekeeper of the University's commercialisation policies
- . sector-based committees or outreach groups would include some representation external to the University and draw on a wide pool of expertise
- . the role of outreach groups would be to engage actively in determining which proposals should go forward, which activities should be discontinued, maintain connections across the biomedical and physical sciences, the humanities, business and commerce

The Committee referred the "Policy on Commercialisation Draft Principles" (660/2007) to ANU College Research Committees for discussion. Feedback should be directed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dr Nelms, Director, Office of Commercialisation.

ITEM 9. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1 Policy and Procedures

The Committee noted that governing principles for infrastructure access had been formulated following wide consultation and that the new policy sits comfortably in the academic community.

The Committee recommended that the *Research Infrastructure Access Policy* (648/2007) and *Research Infrastructure Access Procedures* (647/2007) be approved for implementation:

9.2 Common Research Infrastructure Services (CRIS)

The Committee noted that the proposal for a more strategic approach to managing research infrastructure as described in *Common Research Infrastructure Services (CRIS)* (654/2007) represented a very significant change to the way the University has operated in the past. The model of ownership and operation for the University by an academic unit has been breaking down with changes in scale and there were many benefits in establishing one unit responsible for managing and planning.

The Committee:

- . endorsed the establishment of the new CRIS unit and proposals 1-8 as set out in paper 645/2007
- . noted preliminary discussions in relation to the Services initially identified, i.e:
 - ANU Animal Services (AAS), including the Australian Phenomics Facility
 - ANU Electron Microscopy Unit (EMU)
 - Arafura Timor Research Facility/North Australian Research Unit (ATRF/NARU)

- Siding Spring Observatory (subject to further discussion).
- . noted that each of the Services would be addressed on a case-by-case basis in the next six months.

9.3 Infrastructure Funding

The Committee noted the discussion paper, *ANU Capital Equipment Fund* (661/2007), about a more strategic approach to the use of equipment funding across campus using MEC reserves, some NHMRC equipment funds and possible additional funding from the Vice-Chancellor.

Broad support was forthcoming to consolidate support for groups of users through the establishment of the CEF in the terms of the paper.

Issues raised in discussion were:

- . access to funds for items between \$10k-and the \$70k MEC threshold, such as for basic laboratory essentials, and whether these items should also be allocated through MEC. The allocation of small grants locally rather than by a central committee “off-the-top” was considered to be most strategic approach. The availability of existing funds from NHMRC grants, RIBG and IGS should be taken up by local Research Committees with the relevant Director/Head.
- . a review of how to fund the biosciences, e.g. animals, chemicals, etc, to identify strategies for obtaining funding; to establish what researchers require; and more broadly to achieve optimal coordination within the academic organisation. It was noted that this matter may be addressed by the Biosciences review.

ITEM 10. RESEARCH INTEGRITY

10.1 Annual Reports for 2006

The Committee noted:

- Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee Annual Report (102/1007)
- Human Research Ethics Committee Annual Report (652/2007)
- Institutional Biosafety Committee/Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee (IBC) Annual Report (653/2007)

The Chair thanked the Chairs and all those concerned with the ethics and biosafety regimes for their excellent work.

10.2 Human Research Ethics Committee

The Committee noted:

- . the *Terms of Reference Human Research Ethics Committee* (659/2007) as revised to reflect the E2 protocol assessments and committee structure following implementation of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007)
- . that areas should advise of any issues in relation to the terms of reference
- . new arrangements would be implemented from September.

10.3 Joint NHMRC/AVCC National Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (May 1997)

The Chair reported that:

- . the report from the review of the *Joint National Statement* was expected in the near future
- . external investigation of allegations of research misconduct would be a requirement
- . some changes to accommodate compliance with the new requirements would need to be made progressively
- . ultimately, greater flexibility would be provided for researchers under the revised Statement.

ITEM 11. REPORTS FROM ANU COLLEGES

Reports were not presented due to lack of time.

PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS**ITEM 12. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME**

The Committee:

- Noted the report on grants and consultancies for the period 1 February to 30 June 2007 (651/2007)
- Noted that the oral report from the AUQA panel would be presented to the Vice-Chancellor at lunchtime. The Chair thanked Professor Carroll for her sterling efforts in preparing for the audit and organising the panel visit.

jab/31 July 2007