

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE****Meeting No. 5, 2006**

Meeting No. 5, 2006 of the University Research Committee was held on Thursday, 16 November 2006 at 9.30 am in the Ross Hohnen Room of the Chancelry.

Present: Professor Cram, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Professor Board; Dr Brown; Professor Cockburn; Dr Ganguly; Mr Ikin; Ms Kuo; Professor Lloyd (for Professor D Hill); Dr Stoljar; Professor Thomas; Dr Wellard (for Dr McMahon); Dr Wheeler; and Professor Williams.

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. 4, 2006 of the University Research Committee (997a/2006) held on 14 September 2006 were confirmed as amended at Item 7., 4th dot point and with the addition of Dr Brown to the attendance list (published at http://info.anu.edu.au/OVC/University_Research_Committee/_meetings.asp)

ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING**Item 10. Research Policies****Terrorism Offences under the *Anti-Terrorism Act (No. 2) 2005***

It was noted that responses received from three ANU Colleges (CASS, CAP and CoL) to the Summary of Changes to Legislation (954a/2006) were being taken-up by the Legal Office. The document and procedures for dealing with notification of requests were expected to be finalised by the end of the year for publishing at the Legal Office website.

ITEM 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

3.1 Apologies were received from Dr Bain, Professor Glasgow and Dr Collins, Professor C Hill, Dr Jones, Dr McMahon, Professor Merlan, Professor Morphy, and Dr Nelms.

3.2 Announcements

Changes to Membership of the Committee

The Committee noted the following changes to the membership:
ANU College of Business and Economics:

Professor Tom Smith (replacing Professor Bruce Stening)

Early Career Researcher: Mr Chris Ikin, ANU CBE

PARSA representative: Ms Ivana Kuo, JCSMR

Chair, Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee: Dr David Jones

The position of Dean of Graduate Studies: disestablished

The Chair welcomed new members to the meeting.

3.3 Confidential Items

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

PART 2: REPORTS AND POLICY MATTERS

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Committee noted the report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the following items.

- **ANU Executive structure**
Responsibilities under the new arrangements have been broadly agreed to as follows:
 - . Higher Degree Research and Research Integrity: Professor Thomas
 - . Sponsored Research and Graduate Coursework: Professor Steffen
(Note: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has now assumed responsibility for all coursework.)
 - . Commercialisation; Undergraduate Education: Professor Cram
 - . Interdisciplinary matters, outreach, ANU College support including the RQF, and policy issues would be shared across the three offices of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Professor Thomas spoke about her portfolio, the opportunities for working across disciplinary boundaries, and the importance of achieving a level of consistency in College strategic plans. Combined meetings of College Research Committees could provide an avenue for cross College discussion of issues to do with research directions on a more informal basis.
- **Graduate Research School**
Higher Degree Research would be integrated more closely with research at ANU following the disestablishment of the Graduate Research School. A statement of functions and how they are to be carried out was in preparation.
- **Reviews**
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans
The revised statement would be released early in 2007. Concerns raised in relation to some sections of the draft, such as in the area of overseas research, had been addressed and the draft modified.

Joint NHMRC/AV-CC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice

The code of conduct to become available in early 2007 would provide a framework for research integrity that would work well for ANU. Appropriate mechanisms for implementing Chapter 10 about allegations requiring external investigation were still to be determined.

- **Human Research Ethics**

Work was nearing completion to finalise the specification of a new ARIES module. The HREC would be adopting a variant of the “Griffith University Model” which has appeal to many researchers and the added benefit of a significant reduction in the costs of building an online model. It would involve 3 tiers of ethical risk and associated intensity of review:

- Tier 1: Reduced form; cleared by Chair/Deputy of HREC
- Tier 2: Full form; cleared by subcommittee of HREC (3-4 people)
- Tier 3: Full form; full committee consideration

The new scheme would provide a higher quality of processing, reduce the effort required by the research community and the work load of the Ethics Office and would move away from local servicing of Local Ethics Committees to a more uniform and consistent approach. Local Ethics Sub-committees would continue under a revised membership.

- **Reports**

The following were noted:

- . Impact study on the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Programme
https://www.crc.gov.au/HTMLDocuments/Documents/PDF/CRC_Economic_Impact_Study_Final_121006.pdf
The report had pointed to positive contributions by CRCs but had also raised issues about Higher Degree Research in the context of CRCs.
- . CSIRO Science Health Report
<http://eprints.anu.edu.au/archive/00003519/>
The report provided a guide for presenting ANU research.
- . Productivity Commission Report
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/publications_resources/profiles/economic_impact_of_public_r_d.htm

ITEM 5. RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK (RQF)

The Chair advised that the report from the Development Advisory Group prepared by the Chief Scientist had been published and was the basis for the Minister’s assessment. (Papers summarising the advice provided to the Development Advisory Group from the Technical Working Groups may be viewed at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_development_2006.htm#wga)

It was noted that:

- . Outcomes would be determined by October 2008 to inform the Government’s budget allocations for 2009.
- . ANU’s RQF portfolios should be ready by late 2007 for the May 2008 submission date.
- . Panels were being formed by the end of March 2007. With the creation of a second panel in the social sciences for education, law, and professional practice, the total number had increased from 13. In the case of the ANU, 14

shadow panels would be established, including a special panel in Asia and the Pacific. The Chair encouraged colleagues to promote nominations for membership of the panels. Plans for their establishment would be reviewed and circulated for comment.

It was further noted that the census date for assessment was 31 March 2007 on work undertaken between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2006. With some conditions, the impact of group work could be reported over a 12-year period. The panels would comprise 3 international members; 3 end users; a Chair, and 5 members from within Australia.

A smooth transition of funding over the term to 2013 could be expected, with the maximum shift in funding for an institution likely to be no larger than \$20 million over the 5 years. ANU's research was reasonably balanced and the quality likely to be confirmed and existing pattern to continue. However, some elements of the RQF disadvantaged ANU relative to less research-intensive universities. Although medical research at ANU was less than at other institutions, it was not expected to impact on resourcing.

The Chair commented on the importance of reputation in the redistribution of funding and the way in which the RQF exercise needs to be viewed:

- . About \$520 million (derived from about 50% of RTS (\$540M) and 100% of IGS (\$300M)) would be available for redeployment on the basis of high cost/low cost and quality/impact, on average about a \$28,000 pa per person "level" for 20,000 researchers.
- . Taking into account quality/impact and high cost/low cost, the "value" of a researcher could range from < \$10,000 pa at the lower end of the scale to >\$100,000 pa plus additional benefits to the institution for a high quality/high cost researcher.

Principal comments arising in discussion were:

- . Infrastructure funding for Commonwealth Competitive Grants (ARC, NHMRC) would continue under the RIBG scheme which was already quality based.
- . The RQF presented challenges for some high cost areas to maintain current levels of funding, possibly in the range of \$85,000 per researcher
- . The precise formula for the RQF had not been disclosed possibly to allow for some discretion to be exercised if necessary. Universities would be participating without knowledge of some of the more important aspects of the scheme. For example, the relative size of the impact and quality pools was not known although it was expected that 20-50% would be directed to impact.
- . ANU groups would consist of a maximum of 50 researchers ranked according to quality and sorted on the basis of impact. ANU's panels would determine the best possible groupings.
- . End users on panels should be viewed as competent impact assessors.
- . Staff and early career staff in particular, need reassurance that their research contribution is important and valued. Strategies should be put in place to support this position, for example the forming of complementary and inclusive groups that include younger researchers as appropriate.

- . Collaborative research should also be promoted. A Science model was being imposed on the sector and was not necessarily compatible with a collaborative approach. Cross-cultural studies were done collaboratively and the quality of impact statements were expected to be quite high
- . The areas of concern raised in relation to the humanities and social sciences were not ANU specific but having to be faced by all institutions.
- . The main differences between the UK RAE and the RQF were (a) eligibility - the RAE was designed for tenured staff whereas the RQF includes Fellows; and (b) assessment level – the RAE analysis is undertaken at departmental level and the RQF at group level.

The Chair observed that ANU's shadow panels were a good way of approaching the RQF but would involve an additional workload for local areas. He recommended that Chairs of the panels be experience senior staff with good administrative ability. They should be identified first and form a committee with the DVC, the PVCs (Research), and persons with RAE experience before the panel memberships are put in place. Panels would map broadly to Colleges.

The Committee endorsed the recommendation that:

- . the draft processes to be circulated to areas for comment; and
- . Panel Chairs to be identified by the end of 2006 by ANU College Deans and Conveners following consultation with their Research Committees.

ITEM 6. NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (NCRIS)

The Committee noted that an announcement by the Minister for Education, Science and Training about the NCRIS determination was imminent. Most capabilities identified in the Roadmap had been recommended by the NCRIS Committee to the Minister for NCRIS investment.

Work on the Biotechnology products and the Networked Biosecurity framework capabilities was already in progress and had commenced on the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) and Population Health capabilities.

Planning had been put in place for ANU to manage “contracting” efficiently between relevant areas and the Research Office and Local Offices.

Further information about investment plans and processes was available at the website: http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/ncris/#Investment_Plans

ITEM 7. GRANTS ROUNDS FOR 2007

The Committee received reports on the outcome of the ARC and NHMRC grant rounds and processes:

2007 ARC Grants (1004/2006):

- Discovery Projects (DP)
- Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development (DIRD)

- Linkage Projects Round 1 (LP)
- Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities (LIEF)
- Linkage International Awards Round 2 (LX)

2007 NHMRC Funding (1003/2006):

- Research Projects
- Capacity Building Grants
- Career Development Awards
- Enabling Grants
- Research Fellowships

ANU Results for ARC Discovery Projects (spreadsheet1006/2006)

Comments arising in discussion were:

- . ANU had been very successful in the 2007 round of ARC funding, which compared favourably with the 2006 round. This was against a background of some concern regarding the impact of the devolution of research management on ANU's ability to maintain its current level of funding, levelling out of funding after a sharp increase up until 2005, and the possible effect of completion of the IAS buy-in.
- . The average dollar value for ANU was slightly down on the previous year. In the past, highly ranked applicants have received a higher percentage of the funding whereas those at the cut-off line received less. This could suggest that ANU's rankings for 2007 were towards the middle of the range. However, the Committee was advised that the 2007 round had been different from previous rounds with projects receiving an average only 65% of what was requested in their budgets. This meant that uniform cuts were made across the board from the highest ranked to the lowest ranked.
- . Application pressure was from the number and not from the quality of the applications being submitted. Hiving off the poorer quality applications and the shifting of resources in this way did not serve to benefit universities like ANU where applications were of a good quality overall.
- . Early career research was an issue that needed to be address in respect of ARC funding. International experience was an important component in the assessment of applications.

The Committee noted the reports and the matters raised in discussion.

ITEM 8. RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING PLAN

The Committee reviewed some metrics for research planning noting that these were to be gathered centrally for ANU College responses to *ANU by 2010*.

- Bibliometric analyses (1007/2006) (prepared by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor):

Thomson ISI data –citation and publication counts

It was noted that:

- . All of the information referred to was available through the Research Evaluation and Policy Project.
- . Table 1.1 showed that the time series citation impact for ANU continues to rise. The Committee noted possible reasons.

Other performance measures, plus current performance measures used by DEST for RRTMR

It was noted that:

- . Research active staff (Table 2.2) indicated that 45% (less than half) of staff generated research income, 66% generated publications, and 44% were engaged in HDR supervision. This suggested considerable potential for growth, publications and supervision.
- . The figures invited further investigation, i.e. to isolate and analyse data relating to continuing staff; construct College specific profiles; identify the number of staff publishing; to consider any correlations with teaching etc.
- . Teaching loads could be expected to have a bearing on publication rates but the high proportion of research-only staff overall was further reason for a closer examination

Assessment reviews

- Independent Rankings of the World's Top Universities – 2006 (prepared by the Policy and Planning Office)
- International Comparisons – The world's top 200 universities (The Times Higher Education Supplement http://www.thes.co.uk/statistics/international_comparisons/)

It was agreed to make the bibliometric analyses available for discussion by ANU College Research Committees.

ITEM 9. REPORTS FROM ANU COLLEGES

The Committee noted reports from the Chairs of the following ANU College Research Committees on their main current activities.

- ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

Preparation for the RQF: Development of a network for early career researchers was continuing. About 18% of Early Career Academics had responded to the ECA survey in CASS and some quantitative data had been collected. Issues raised by the survey would be taken-up.

The Anti-terrorism Legislation had been extensively discussed in the College.

- ANU College of Law
Research Committee and Visitors Program: The program would bring legal scholars to the College to help mentor early career staff and would also help to establish linkages. Two scholars from overseas were also being invited for 2007.

Social Sciences Research Network: The College was in the process of joining this North American on-line initiative for sharing research such as published papers through an integrated website. The Universities of Sydney and Melbourne were already participating.

The Anti-terrorism Legislation had been considered in depth and the comments provided to the Legal Office were being taken-up in the revisions to the ANU's documentation.

- ANU College of Science
The Research Committee has been considering the College's success in the ARC round and possible measures for the next round to bring the larger disciplines on campus together and to improve peer reviewing.

PART 3. ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 10. OTHER BUSINESS AND QUESTION TIME

- Grants and Consultancies:

The Committee noted Reports for the periods 1 July to 30 September 2006 (1001/2006 and 1002/2006 published on the website).

jab/13 December 2006