MINUTES OF THE FACULTY OF LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES BOARD MEETING HELD IN
THE ECONOMICS & COMMERCE CONFERENCE ROOM
ON MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2008

PRESENT: Professor George Stewart (Chair), Associate Professor I Dadour, Mr R Dickinson,
Professor B Elliott, Dr J Emberson, Ms J Gamble, Dr S Gaudieri, Professor R Grove,
Professor G Hammond, Professor A Harvey, Associate Professor D Morrison, Ms H
Morton, Mrs J Stevenson, Professor G Stewart, Associate Professor M Wise

APOLOGIES: Dr J Henderson, Dr T Koppi, Dr L Jeffery

VISITOR: Mrs J Fetherston

Ms Imelda Ooi, Secretary

1. MINUTES REF: F3059

RESOLVED – 1
that the minutes of meeting held on 6 December 2007 be confirmed.

2. DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST REF: F3060

The Chair invited members to declare interests in relation to any items on the agenda. No such conflicts
were declared.

3. PROMOTION REF: F1158

The Chair on behalf of the Faculty congratulated Dr Elizabeth Quill (School of Biomedical,
Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences) on her promotion to Senior Lecturer.

4. PRINCIPLES FOR THE OPERATION OF COMMITTEES REF: F12439

Members had before them a copy of the Principles and Rules of the Operation of Committees as well as
Committee Members’ Code of Conduct. Speaking to the item, the Chair drew members’ attention to the
importance of familiarising themselves with this document. He stated that members should be familiar
with the function and operation of the Faculty Board and stressed the importance of their participation at
the Board meetings.

5. REVIEW OF COURSE STRUCTURES REF: F15115

Members had before them a draft response to the discussion paper “Courses for Tomorrow’s World:
Issues and Options” prepared by Professor Geoff Hammond, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), as
well as the relevant extract from the minutes of the last Board meeting.

Speaking to the item, Professor Hammond said that the draft response had been developed through the
Faculty’s Teaching and Learning Committee which had looked at the issues that were most relevant from
the Faculty’s point of view. As the response might not have reflected views of all staff in the Faculty, he encouraged Schools and individuals to submit comments to him. He reminded them that the deadline for comments to the discussion paper is 31 January 2008. He also advised that the Review website stated that May 2008 would be the final stage of the Review with the release of proposals and recommendations for consideration and implementation by appropriate University bodies.

The Chair stated that he was not at the Faculty’s last Board meeting on 6 December 2007 when Professors Ian Reid and Don Markwell had attended to provide members with an overview of the process and the discussion they had initiated at that time. However, he expressed that there was some measure of support for Options 6 and 7. He went on to say that members should be looking at the general issues in the “Issues and Options” paper in developing a Faculty response.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- External bodies had indicated support for Options 6 and 7. This was evident from the last meeting of the Board when Professor Markwell stated that students with a masters degree were in greater demand by employers and professional groups, particularly overseas. If the demand was for students with a masters degree, it was felt that perhaps masters degrees should be developed rather than implementing changes to the undergraduate degrees.
- Range of unit options for science students at the University of Melbourne had not changed significantly. Consequently, the Chair felt that Schools should not be overly concerned if the Melbourne model of generalist undergraduate courses were to be adopted.
- Implementation of the 3+2 cycle of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at UWA would have an adverse impact for the one-year honours program. The Associate Dean maintained that this predicament could be overcome by allowing for a 3+1 cycle (i.e. an end-on Honours year). The Honours program had served well for the Faculty over the years and should be protected.
- It was questioned how the 3-year BSc could be protected and its competitive quality retained with the introduction of the 3+2 model where students were expected to complete five years worth of study.
- If content was spread out over five years, would students who had completed the 3-year degree be adequately prepared for Honours? This concern was expressed by several members.
- Students who left at the end of three years would have a ‘general’ degree which would not be appealing to students.
- A good marketing campaign would be required to successfully market a general BSc and BA. It was felt that marketing a general BSc and BA would be difficult and that it would take a number of years for it to become effective. This was one of the reasons why programs had been introduced in the BSc.
- The number of applicants for PhD in the Faculty and the quality of students had been dropping and needed to be addressed. The Chair questioned whether the Faculty was providing enough stimulus in its undergraduate degree programs for students to pursue studies through to PhD.
- Combined courses were drawing students away from research and this would be addressed if Option 6 or 7 were implemented.

In response to the Chair’s query as to whether members were happy with the draft response to the discussion paper, one member suggested that apart from confining the Faculty’s submission to issues raised in the Issues and Options paper, the Faculty should perhaps spell out specifically what it wanted. The Faculty’s desired option was for 6.5 which would be the retention of the honours year i.e. that Option 6 or 7 include a 3+1 as well as a 3+2 cycle of degree. The Chair proposed that Professor Hammond revise the response and circulate the final draft to members for information. In the meantime, he strongly encouraged members to submit their comments to Professor Hammond, the deadline for which was 23 January 2008.

6. ATTENDANCE AT LABORATORIES AT PSB ACADEMY, SINGAPORE

REF: F5075

The Director at PSB Academy, Singapore, had highlighted an issue in relation to attendance at laboratories for offshore students. Speaking to the item, Professor Geoff Stewart stated that that was an issue not restricted to PSB Academy. He went on to say that most of the units offered by the School specified that unless a student attended 80% or more of the laboratories in a unit, they would not be able to sit the final exam. Laboratory attendance was compulsory for students except under mitigating circumstances. For consistency, he would like this ruling to apply across all disciplines in the School.
including PSB Academy. The Academic Student Adviser reiterated that this ruling had been provided for
in the University General Rules as follows:

"1.2.1.15(1) To complete a unit a student must –
(a) meet the faculty’s requirements with respect to attendance at prescribed classes, lectures, seminars,
tutorials, practicals and clinical practice, and to the sitting of examinations;
(b) complete assignments and other prescribed work of the unit at a standard acceptable to the faculty;
and
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1.2.1.16 A student who fails to attend or to complete work in accordance with Rule 1.2.1.15(1) (a) or (b)
may be prohibited by the faculty from undertaking further study or examinations in the unit concerned."

One member said that there was no such rigid statement applied to units in his School. The Faculty
Manager pointed out that currently nothing had been specified in the Faculty Rules pertaining to
laboratory attendance and suggested that rather than excluding students at the point of examination, they
should be classified as “Fail” if they did not attend a certain amount of laboratories. The Deputy Chair
proposed that this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board to allow Schools further discussion
on the issue.

ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF ACADEMIC SECRETARIAT

7. **BSc (PSYCHOLOGY) – INCLUSION OF SCIE1106 MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF THE CELL
AS AN OPTIONAL UNIT** REF: F5028, F5075

In order to provide greater flexibility for students, the School of Psychology had requested that in the
Rules for BSc (Psychology) programme, the Psychology Level 1 options under Group A be amended to
include SCIE1106 Molecular Biology of the Cell (6 points) to be taken in combination with one of the
following biology units – ANHB1101 Human Biology I, ANHB1102 Human Biology II, BIOL1130 Core
Concepts in Biology and BIOL1131 Plant and Animal Biology

**RESOLVED – 2**
to recommend to Academic Council that with effect from 2008, the Rules for BSc (Psychology) be amended to
include SCIE1106 taken in combination with one of the following units - ANHB1101/ANHB1102 and
BIOL1130/BIOL1131.

8. **MASTER OF PHARMACY - INCLUSION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY
REQUIREMENT IN THE RULES** REF: F7784, F5075

The International Centre had advised that some of the course entries and Rules in the Handbook were
incomplete as they failed to specify higher than normal English language entry requirements. They had
requested that the Rules for these courses be changed to incorporate the English language requirement.
The Faculty wished to comply with this request.

**RESOLVED – 3**
that the Rules for the Master of Pharmacy be amended to include the following statement:

“Applicants with qualifications from overseas institutions where English is not the medium of instruction must
provide evidence of English language competency equivalent to an IELTS score of 7.0 overall with no band
lower than 7.0”.

9. **PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A FOUR-YEAR PHD COURSE INCLUDING PROGRAMS
REF:**

At the last Faculty Board meeting on 6 December 2007, the proposal for the establishment of a four-year
PhD course including programs had been discussed. It was proposed that the item be deferred to this
Board meeting to enable Schools to discuss with their staff, the structure of the proposal in greater detail,
particularly in relation to the following.
• Initial Coursework - should this be 36 points coursework and a 12-point dissertation, or 24 points coursework and a 24-point dissertation; or some other combination?
• Should there be a requirement for students to do additional coursework in the second, third or final year, or should this be optional?
• Should progression to second year be conditional upon students achieving a weighted average mark of either 65% or 70%, or should the pass mark for each unit be set at 65%?

Members had before them the relevant extract from the minutes of the last Board meeting. A copy of the proposed draft Rules was also tabled at the meeting for members’ information.

Opening the discussion, the Chair reiterated that the Faculty was looking to offer a PhD that was closer to the US and Bologna model so as to make it more attractive to students, particularly overseas students. Some international students were able to get funding to undertake a PhD degree overseas as long as that degree included some coursework. He went on to say that the structure of the course being proposed would comprise coursework in the first year that would also include some research training. Students who did not make the cut-off (i.e. 65% in all units undertaken) could transfer to the Master of Science and Technology. Although this was an important initiative for the Faculty, there was no obligation for Schools to accept students into this program.

Schools were generally supportive of the initiative. Some of the main points noted at the discussion were:

• An exit strategy should be in place and that the research component should not be compromised.
• Students be provided an opportunity to rotate round the laboratories to give them a choice of options regarding their subsequent research.
• There should be a clear gateway between Year 1 and Year 2
• Students should start completing the PhD proposal in their first year of the program.
• There would be no provision for advanced standing.

In regards to the structure of the program, members endorsed the following:

• Entry requirements to be the same as the existing PhD.
• 48 points of coursework to be satisfactorily completed in the first year. (This comprised 36 points coursework and 12 points research preparation).
• progression to second year to be conditional upon students achieving a 65% pass mark for each unit undertaken in the first year.

RESOLVED – 4
that the proposed establishment of the 4-year PhD including programs be endorsed and forwarded with the amended draft Rules (Attachment A) to the Graduate Research School for consideration.

Confirmed

CHAIR
9.7.4 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY INCLUDING PROGRAMS (5XXXX)

Applicability of the University General Rules for Academic Courses
9.7.4.1 The Rules in 1.1, 1.3.1 and 1.3.3 of the University General Rules for Academic Courses in this handbook apply to the Doctor of Philosophy by way of Program except as set out in the rules which follow.

Applicability of the Science Faculties' General Provisions
9.7.4.2 The Science Faculties General Provisions in 9.6.1 apply to the first year of the course.

9.7.4.3 The first year of the program will be administered by the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences. All remaining years will be administered by the Graduate Research School.

Admission
9.7.4.4 The Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences and the Graduate Research School may accept as a student in the course for PhD by way of Program (XXXX) an applicant who –
(a) has a bachelor's degree with at least upper second class honours in an appropriate subject area or a qualification recognised by the Board as equivalent; or
(b) has a bachelor's degree of this University or a qualification recognised by the Board as equivalent, and can satisfy the Board that they have had adequate research preparation since graduation; or
(c) is a recipient of a University scholarship for PhD study awarded by the Scholarships Committee of the Board; or
(d) has previously undertaken work, which in the Board's opinion is of a sufficiently high standard, towards a research higher degree in this or another approved institution but has not submitted it for any degree.

Course Structure
9.7.4.5 The course consists of coursework units to a total of 48 points in one of the following programs and a thesis –
- Biomedical Science
- Human Science
- Physical Science

Research Proposal
9.7.4.6 Continuation to the research component of the course is subject to the student completing and having approval by the Board, on the recommendation of the supervisor and the head of school, a PhD research proposal.

Satisfactory Progress
9.7.4.7 For progression to the second year of the course, students must –

(a) satisfactorily complete 48 points of coursework in the first year;
(b) achieve a pass mark of 65% in each of the coursework units; and
(c) have submitted a research proposal which has been accepted by the Graduate Research School

Award of the Master of Science and Technology
9.7.4.8 After having regard to the recommendation of the Faculty, the Board may permit a student who has completed the coursework component and one year of research during the course of the enrolment to submit the thesis for examination for the award of the degree of Master of Science and Technology, although the student has at no time been enrolled for that degree.