MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive committee will be held in the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences Meeting Room, Room 1.58, First Floor, Physics Building on Tuesday, 31 March 2009, at 2.15pm.

Membership of the Executive Committee as follows:

The Dean (Professor George Stewart)
The Deputy Dean (Professor Bob Grove)
The Academic Student Advisor (Dr Jane Emberson)
The Faculty Manager (Ms Jenny Gamble)

Heads (or their nominees) of the following Schools:
Associate Professor Linda Schmitt (Anatomy and Human Biology)
Professor Geoff Stewart (Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
Professor Bruce Elliott (Sport Science, Exercise and Health)
Associate Professor Ian McArthur (Physics)
Associate Professor David Morrison (Psychology)

Deputy Head of the following School:
Associate Professor Lee Yong Lin (Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)

Associate Deans:
Professor Colin Raston (Research)
Professor Geoff Hammond (Teaching and Learning)
Professor Arunasalam Dhananjayan (South Asia Research Initiatives)
Dr Mohamed Makha (Middle East Research Initiatives)

Managers of the following Schools:
Dr Ron Swann (Anatomy and Human Biology)
Ms Jennifer Stevenson (Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
Mr David Faithful (Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences)
Mr Ron Kelly (Sport Science, Exercise and Health)
Mr Jegathiva Jegathasan (Physics)
Dr Craig Clark (Psychology)

Elected Representatives:
Professor Ian Dadour (Centre for Forensic Science)
Mr Doug Robb (School of Psychology)
Dr Giles Plant (Anatomy and Human Biology)

Part 1 of the agenda has items of communication to be dealt with en bloc. Part 2 of the agenda is items for decisions to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. A member may request the removal of an item from one part to another.

Up to three members of staff from resourced Schools in the Faculty may attend the meeting with speaking rights only. Anyone wishing to do so should contact the Faculty Office prior to the meeting.

Mrs Lesley Tubic
Secretary
AGENDA

1. MINUTES
Confirmation of the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 24 February 2009.

2. DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL OR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
The chair invites members to declare interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

   PART I – Items for Communication to be dealt with En Bloc

   There are no items for inclusion in Part I

   PART II – Items for Decision to be dealt with En Bloc

   There are no items for inclusion in Part II

   PART III – Items for Discussion and Decision

3. DEAN’S REPORT
The Dean will report on current issues of interest to members of the Executive Committee.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT
Professor Geoff Hammond, Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee will provide an update on teaching and learning activities within this Faculty.

5. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT
Professor Colin Raston, Chair, Research Committee, will provide an update on research activities within this Faculty.

6. SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH INITIATIVES REPORT
Professor Arunasalam Dharmarajan, Associate Dean (South Asia Research Initiatives) will provide an update on the Faculty’s marketing activities in South Asia. This will include a report on his visit to India in February 2009. A copy of his report is attached (Attachment A).

7. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS
REPORT ON MY VISITS TO INDIA
November 2008/February 2009

Report by

Professor Arun Dharmarajan

Chennai, India

At the outset I would like to thank Mr Rajan, WA Trade (Chennai Branch) and Mr Srieedharan, Mancomp Ltd for organizing meetings with heads of several research/biotechnology institutes in Chennai. During my 5 days stay in Chennai, I visited, Anna University, Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute, Stella Maris College, Madras Christian College, SRM University and Madras Institute of Technology. In addition, I made a day trip to Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU). MKU has the oldest biotechnology program in South India. It is about 27 years old and produces excellent M.Sc students. I delivered two lectures at MKU. One on my research interest and the other one on “opportunities at UWA for higher degree by research”

All these Institutes have very strong biotechnology/biomedical sciences program. I had an opportunity to discuss about possible research links with the senior faculties of these institutes and also met with potential M.Sc/Ph.D students. The heads of institutes/departments are very keen to establish research links with UWA. Almost all the students I spoke expressed interest in joining UWA for either M.Sc or Ph.D. Many of them expressed willingness to join as full fee paying students. These students have excellent transcripts and proven research potential. I expect to see increase number of IPRS applications from India for the March/August round of scholarships and also India only scholarships.

Of the institutes I visited in Chennai, I have found greater synergy SRM University and Ramachandra Medical Research Institutes. SRM University is keen to sign a MOU with us. SRM attracts very high caliber students and moreover, these students pay about AU$6000/year tuition fees. Most of the students are from well to do family.

Other Research Institutes/Universities/Visits

Bharathidasan University, Trichy

Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore

Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Trivandrum, Kerala
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad
Osmania University, Hyderabad
ICFAI Institute of Technology, Hyderabad
National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad
Centre for Cell and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad

All in all it was a very productive visit(s) and we should see an increase in IPRS/SIRF applications for the March/August rounds and also for India only scholarships. I will be happy to discuss about my visit at the next Faculty executive meeting. Basically, I have covered top Universities and Institutes in South. I will be visiting Universities in North during my next trip. North, I mean Mumbai, Pune, Gujarat and Delhi.

Outcome

As a result of my visits, we have already attracted several M.Sc/PhD students to the Faculty. As far as I can see, we have had a significant increase in HDR students since 2008. Both MSc and PhD. A few received SIRF but unfortunately the current conditions about living allowance prevented them from taking up SIRF. This is one issues I would like to discuss at the meeting.

Future Events

Professor Alan Robson, VC, UWA together with Prof Doug McEachern and a few other scientists will visit CCMB, Hyderabad in September, 2009. Professor Lalji Singh is organizing a one day scientific symposium where scientists from CCMB and UWA will give short presentations. UWA will sign MOU with CCMB on this day.

UWA will also sign MOU with ICFAI Institute of Technology, Hyderabad.

Visitors-2008-2009

Prof Lalji Singh, Director of Centre for Cell and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad
Prof Vijay, Director of National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore
Prof Jyotsna Dhavan, Centre for Cell and Mol Biology, Hyderabad

Students Exchange-Internship

We had 3 students from ICFAI Institute. They spent almost 6 Months in the labs of Professors Waddell, Vrielink and Dr. Charlie Bond. All three students have expressed interest in coming back to UWA for their M.Sc after completion of their B.Tech/BioTech Degree in May 2009.
Australian varsity’s scholarship offer for Indian students

There are three kinds of Indian students who go abroad, according to Professor Arunasalam Dharmarajan. There are the extremely smart, who will get into any university no matter what; the smart, who have got enough money, and the average, whose pockets are bulging.

An Australian university is now offering a merit-based scholarship tailored solely for the needs of Indian students to entice those who may not normally think of studying abroad.

More opportunity

At a meeting jointly hosted recently by the Indo-Australian Chamber of Commerce and the Western Australian Trade Office (India), Mr. Dharmarajan, associate dean of South Asia Research Initiatives and professor in the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences at the University of Western Australia-Perth (UWA), highlighted the higher education opportunities available for Indian students looking to pursue a master’s or Ph.D. degree elsewhere.

Now, the UWA is offering to waive the tuition fees and living expenses ($25,000 per year) for 50 of the brightest and most promising applicants from India through the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship.

“Many students have unclear postgraduate goals and send their resumes to the entire faculty, without selecting a specific research supervisor.”

Others can opt for the Scholarship for International Research Fees which covers the tuition fees only.

“This year is the best time to apply,” he said. “It’s definitely cheaper for students from India to go to Australia than the U.S.”

Disciplines

The disciplines at his university that offer the most for Indian students are cancer biology and infectious diseases, forensic sciences, plant sciences and biomedical sciences. Although Indian universities had the money to fund research, the funds were not being channelled properly, he said.

When it came to gaining admission into universities such as UWA, Mr. Dharmarajan said the biggest drawback Indian students faced were low IELTS scores. A minimum IELTS score of 6.5 was required, but he said too many Indians lost their chance at admission with a score of 6.

Additionally, he said many students had unclear postgraduate goals and sent their resumes to the entire faculty, without selecting a specific research supervisor. “The student has not even looked at the staff profile,” he said.

Another thing Indian students needed to watch out for was the tendency to rely on rote memorisation rather than thinking creatively with regard to research.

While he encouraged students to pursue higher education outside of India to broaden their research opportunities, he still felt they should come back to contribute to research within India itself. “If there are no students to stay back, what will happen to Indian science?” he said.

AMRITHA ALLADI