



**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES  
7 AUGUST 2019**

*Minutes* of meeting 04/2019 of the University Research Committee held on 7 August 2019 in the Council Room, Building 36.

**Present:**

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

Dr N Abdulaziz  
Prof M Batterham  
Ms E Bellino  
Prof S Carter  
A/Prof H Chen  
D/Prof N Dixon  
Ms S Flint  
S/Prof C Gibson  
A/Prof N Gill

Prof L Kervin  
Mr O Khalifa  
Mr K Krauter  
S/Prof R Lewis  
Prof T Marchant  
Ms S Martin  
A/Prof D Mercer  
S/Prof A Okely  
A/Prof G Peleckis

Prof W Price  
Dr L Sheridan  
Prof W Vialle  
S/Prof S Ville  
Dr M Voyer

**Minute Secretary:**

Ms J Evans

**PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Prof M Randle, Prof J Beck, D/Prof D Adams, S/Prof P Perez, D/Prof A Van Oijen, D/Prof R Roberts, S/Prof D Steel, D/Prof Z Guo, S/Prof P McGuirk and Prof K Clapham.

Dr L Sheridan representing Prof M Randle, Prof M Batterham representing S/Prof D Steel and A/Prof N Gill representing S/Prof P McGuirk.

Dr N Abdulaziz attended from Dubai via phone, Ms K Grove attended for discussion of agenda item 3.3 and Ms Libby McMahon attended for discussion of agenda item 3.6.

**1.2 Arrangement of the Agenda**

**1.2.1 Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**1.2.1 Starring of Items**

Agenda items 1.2, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 were starred for the meeting.

**Resolved (34/19)**

*That the University Research Committee adopt the draft resolutions for the un-starred items.*

### **1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

#### ***Resolved (35/19)***

*That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 June 2019, as attached to the agenda paper, be confirmed and signed as a true record.*

### **1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **1.5 Chair's Business**

#### **Review of Graduate Research School**

The Chair advised the committee that an external review of the Graduate Research School has been initiated to:

- evaluate research training quality, with reference to the ACOLA Review Implementation Plan; and
- ensure that UOW delivers high quality, internationally benchmarked research and research training programmes for our HDRs and supervisors.

The objective of the Review is to ensure the GRS provides effective student-focused support on all HDR matters, to inform and assure the quality provision of graduate research training.

#### **2019 Eureka Prize Finalists**

A UOW-led research team has been named a finalist in the 2019 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes. The Blue Carbon Horizons Team was nominated for the 2019 NSW Environment, Energy and Science (DPIE) Eureka Prize for Environmental Research.

Led by Associate Professor Kerrylee Rogers, from the School of Earth, Atmospheric and Life Sciences, the Blue Carbon Horizons Team also includes Dr Jeffrey Kelleway, Professor Colin Woodroffe (UOW), Professor Neil Saintilan (Macq U), Dr Debashish Mazumder (ANSTO) and Ms Atun Zawadzki (ANSTO). Winners will be announced at a gala award dinner at Sydney Town Hall on Wednesday 28 August.

#### **2019 VC's Research Excellence Awards**

The Chair congratulated the winners of the 2019 Vice-Chancellor's Research Excellence Awards. An Awards ceremony will be held on the evening of Thursday 22 August 2019.

#### **Australian Research Council (ARC) Visits to UOW**

Upcoming visits are as follows:

- Prof Joanne Tompkins, ARC Executive Director, Humanities and Creative Arts will be visiting UOW on 24-25 September 2019. Prof Tompkins will present at several all staff forums and meet with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), RSO staff and key researchers;
- The ARC will be visiting on 2 October 2019 to discuss the outcomes of ERA and EI 2018 Assessments. The team will meet with the DVC(R&I) and RSO staff to discuss UOW results and general feedback from the ERA and EI 2018 evaluations (noting that they will be unable to provide detailed comment on why a particular unit received the rating it did).

#### **FAPESP Sprint Grants for 2019**

An agreement was established in 2017 between UOW and the Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) to fund joint projects via SPRINT (Sao Paulo Researchers in International Collaboration Scheme). For the 2019 round, seven applications were received from UOW researchers, with two awarded:

UOW Lead	Faculty	Project	Brazil Lead (Institute)	\$ awarded by UOW*
Jennifer Atchison	SOC	Improving social and environmental adaptation to rapid environmental change and governance of the coastal zone. Addressing the science and policy gap in the ecosystem services field in Brazil and Australia. (ECOSCIPO)	Paulo Antonio de Almeida Sinisgali (University of Sao Paulo)	\$10,000
Markus Wagner	LHA	China Trade Terms and Their Barriers: A Comparison of their Impacts on Australia and Brazil	Michelle Sanchez (University of Sao Paulo)	\$8,000

\*UOW funding will be matched by FAPESP

## PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

### 2.1 No confidential business.

## PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

### 3.1 Research and Innovation Report

#### *Resolved (36/19)*

*That the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the August 2019 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.*

### 3.2 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update

The Dean of Research advised that the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) was held on 25 July and sponsored by UniBank. The standard was very high and the winners were as follows:

- **Winner:** Vivien Forner (BUS); How can we stop Emergency Service volunteers from quitting?
- **Runner-Up:** Charbel Tawk (EIS); Don't take it for granted, for some it is a dream!
- **People's Choice (joint winners):** Arbab Tufail (EIS); Shining a light on wastewater and Lingzhi Kang (AIIM); Artificial skin for burn patients.

Vivien will represent UOW at the 3MT Asia Pacific Final at the University of Queensland on 4 October 2019. Thanks were extended to the Graduate Research School for organising this great event.

The Dean of Research advised that the HDR enrolments for Spring Session are very low. Reasons include:

- the flow of Pakastani Students has reduced to zero due to funding cuts in Pakistan; and
- Chinese student numbers have reduced significantly due to Australian Government visa delays, with only 3-4 Chinese students commenced this session compared to approximately 30 commencements in previous years. Three more students are due to commence soon following delays of 6 to 14 months in issuing visas.

The Dean of Research suggested a forum be held to discuss low HDR enrolments, in particular the issues associated with delayed visas for Chinese students. Possible solutions to increase enrolments may include:

- taking advantage of India as a great new market for coursework students; and
- investigation into other options in China, for example enrolling remotely and working from a host university in China for the first 6-12 months while awaiting a visa.

An update was provided on the UOW Hong Kong Campus and developing a research profile. The majority of staff at UOW Hong Kong have a Masters Degree could enrol remotely to complete their UOW Doctoral Degree. Expressions of interest from 20 UOW Hong Kong staff have been distributed to faculties, mainly LHA and BUS, with the hope of receiving an offer for Autumn 2020.

**Resolved (37/19)**

*That the University Research Committee note the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Student Update, as presented by the Dean of Research, at the URC Meeting.*

**3.3 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Fee Waiver: Review Outcomes**

The Senior Manager, Business Improvement and Assurance Division (BIAD) presented on the outcomes of an external review of HDR fee waivers in 2018. The amendments noted are a first step to deliver against the endorsed 5Rs (external reviewer/consultant) recommendation. These amendments will not only improve consistency and transparency of the existing processes, but will also help to derive greater value from the fee waiver budget. From 2020 it is proposed that:

- The fee waiver term of a full course International Postgraduate Tuition Award (IPTA) and RTP fee offset will align with the course duration of a standard degree. From 2020, the maximum term for all new full course IPTAs and RTP fee offsets will be:
  - o Masters (2 years full time or 4 years part-time); and
  - o Doctoral (4 years full time or 8 years part-time).
- Two application rounds will be held per annum for sessional IPTAs. This will bring the governance of this Award into line with the Domestic Postgraduate Tuition Awards (DPTAs).
- The guidelines for the award of sessional IPTAs and DPTAs will be revised to clearly state that a student can only receive one sessional IPTA or DPTA. The award of a sessional IPTA or DPTA (4.0 to 4.5 EFTSL) will require joint approval by both the Associate Dean Graduate Research and Dean of Research.
- Any exception to the above, i.e. an application for an additional sessional IPTA or DPTA after having already received an IPTA or a DPTA previously, must have the approval of both the Dean of Research and the DVC(R&I) (i.e. sessional IPTAs or DPTAs beyond 4.5 EFTSL).

**Implementation and Next Steps**

Implementation of the amendments will result in greater consistency and rigour being applied to the IPTA and DPTA processes. Importantly, it will also bring UOW's practices into line with our domestic competitors. The GRS and BIAD will oversee the implementation of the above amendments in time for new students beginning from the Autumn Session 2020.

The Dean of Research noted that while he agreed with the recommendations and process for sessional DPTA's, he disagreed with a number of the interpretations in the report and noted the following:

- the fee waiver budget is growing due to course IPTA's. With the absence of international scholarships, fee waivers have been a way to keep student numbers up;
- with regard to completions, UOW data shows that there are currently only 15 international students with an EFTSL of greater than 4.5, which is a very small fraction of the number of international students. For the 2015 international cohort, 83% of those are already complete and that completion times for all international students is just over 4 EFTSL. While benchmarking shows that UOW's EFTSL allowance of 4.5 is higher than domestic

- competitors of 4 EFTSL, those competitors do also have processes that extend study by 6 months to 4.5;
- domestic students are charged a fee for going over 4.5 and international students usually don't go past 4.5.

The Dean of Research also noted that the suggested changes are reasonable, however, funding spent on course IPTA's is great value for money considering the completion rate for international students is quite high at 90%, much higher than completion rates for domestic students.

Committee Members asked for more clarity with regard to the anticipated savings and were advised that over the 5-year period the conservative anticipated savings would be \$8 million as a result of bringing the EFTSL from 4.5 to 4 and 2.5 down to 2, and reducing the number of multiple sessional IPTA and DPTA to one per student.

***Resolved (38/19)***

*That the University Research Committee note the amendments to the HDR Fee Waiver: Review Outcomes as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Senior Manager, Business Improvement and Assurance Division, at the URC Meeting.*

**3.4 Higher Degree Research (HDR) Coursework Rules**

The Dean of Research advised that the General Course Rules will be split into two, with a separate HDR Course Rules Policy which will improve the visibility and accessibility for students and staff. In addition, the PhD by Published Works will be abolished as this degree does not encompass any research training or guidance by a supervisory team which is an important part of a PhD Degree.

***Resolved (39/19)***

*That the University Research Committee:*

- (i) *forward the Higher Degree Research (HDR) Course Rules policy document to Academic Senate for endorsement, then to Council for approval; and*
- (ii) *note the Admissions Procedures (Coursework).*

**3.5 Reconciliation Action Plan: UOW Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy**

The Director Research Service Office advised that following the release of the Reconciliation Action Plan in July, a URC Working Party is to be established to develop a UOW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy.

The strategy is intended to support activities that develop and enhance the growth and development on Indigenous-led research at UOW. The Working Party will hold its first meeting on 16 September with the DVC(R&I) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Inclusion & Outreach) as co-Chairs. The Working Party will include senior indigenous researchers, the Dean of Research and Faculty Representatives. The Program of Work (attached to the agenda papers) sets out the extensive range of initiatives requiring oversight by the Working Party. A number of strategies are already in process including:

- An Indigenous Entrepreneur in Residence recently appointed at iAccelerate, working two days per month commencing 19 August; and
- A new Vice-Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, currently being advertised for funding from 2020.

The DVC(R&I) suggested that an Indigenous early career researcher should be included in the membership of the Working Party.

**Resolved (40/19)**

*That the University Research Committee:*

- (i) *note the establishment of a Working Party according to the attached Terms of Reference to develop and facilitate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Strategy, and*
- (ii) *recommend that an Indigenous early career researcher be included in the membership of the Working Party.*

**3.6 Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme**

The Research Grants and Development Manager updated the Committee on minor amendments to the VC's Fellowships for 2020, including the addition of the new VC's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. It was confirmed to the Committee that the Indigenous Fellowship is a targeted position, not an identified position, and that the awardee must be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Clarification was also made with regard to the following sections of the Indigenous Fellowship:

- Section 3.3a Demonstrated research engagement with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community - this has been removed as applicants from other nationalities would not be required to engage with their communities/cultures; and
- Section 4.2 (iv) Statement outlining past and expected future research and engagement with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community – this will either be removed or an additional 'if applicable' added; and
- Confirmation that while the Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme targets external candidates, the Indigenous Fellowship Scheme has had this eligibility requirement removed.

The Committee noted the total number of VC Fellowships (6) for 2020 remains the same as previous years, including the Indigenous Fellowship. The Scheme attracts high quality applicants and the Committee suggested the possibility of the total number of fellowships being increased to seven. The DVC(R&I) advised that the number would remain at six for 2020, however, the Scheme will be reviewed for future years and that this suggestion would be taken into consideration during the review process.

The Committee further discussed:

- The advertising process for the fellowships, suggesting a more intensive process, for example targeting applicants, utilising social media and contacts with organisations such as the Aboriginal Land Council; and
- Providing support for the small number of Indigenous researchers at UOW as they are increasingly being sought out to participate on various university committees and projects.

**Resolved (41/19)**

*That the University Research Committee note:*

- (i) *the updated Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme Guidelines and Instructions 2020; and*
- (ii) *the new Vice-Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme Guidelines and Instructions 2020*

*as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Research Grants and Development Manager at the URC meeting.*

**3.7 Global Challenges Program Update**

The Program Director, Global Challenges provided the following update:

- the Global Challenges 2018 Annual Report (tabled) is available:  
[https://issuu.com/uowresearch/docs/201907\\_annual\\_report\\_softsinglepage](https://issuu.com/uowresearch/docs/201907_annual_report_softsinglepage)
- faculty specific data and reports are now able to be provided and interested researchers should contact the Global Challenges Team;

- Seed Funding and Project Funding applications have now been finalised with 30 Seed Funding and 10 Project Funding Applications received;
- 14 of the 30 applications for Seed Funding were interviewed/pitched with 8 successful outcomes with a total \$110,000 in Seed Funding awarded;
- 8 of the 10 applications for Project Funding were interviewed/pitched with 6 successful outcomes with a total of \$248,000 in Project Funding awarded;
- Expressions of Interest for Keystone Funding have recently closed and 2 applications are currently being assessed with outcomes likely in late September.
- A report on a recent Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) Study Tour of the UK by the Program Director has been prepared and is available for those interested, and
- Smart Garments Team have entered into a substantial partnership with a merino wool company, developing technologies to make garments that have fibres that communicate.

***Resolved (42/19)***

*That the University Research Committee note the Global Challenges Program Update and 2018 Annual Report, as presented by the Program Director, at the URC Meeting.*

## **PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES**

### **4.1 Research Integrity Committee**

***Resolved (43/19)***

*That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 29 May 2019 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee.*

### **4.2 Thesis Examination Committee**

***Resolved (44/19)***

*That the University Research Committee note the meeting summaries of the 1 May 2019 and 5 June 2019 Meetings of the Thesis Examination Committee*

## **PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Other Business**

No other Business

### **5.2 Next Meeting and 2019 Meeting Dates**

The next meeting will be held on 4 November 2019 at 3.00pm in the Council Room. Building 36.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1.3** J Evans – file URC Minutes 12 June 2019
- 3.4** T Marchant – send papers to Academic Senate for endorsement
- 3.5** S Martin – include an ECR in the Working Party
- 3.6** L McMahon – make amendments to guidelines
- 4.1** L Lynch – file RIC Minutes
- 4.2** S Flint – file TEC Summaries

Signed as a true record

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is cursive and appears to be 'G. ...'.

Chairperson 18./11/2019