ACADEMIC SENATE

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Confirmed Minutes of meeting 09/04 of the Academic Senate of the University of Western Sydney held on Friday 16 October 2009 at 9:30am in the Boardroom, Building AD, at Werrington North.

Present:
Associate Professor Paul Wormell (Chair) Dr Trevor Bailey
Professor Bobby Banerjee Professor Shelly Burgin (arrived late)
Professor Stuart Campbell Professor Andrew Cheetham
Mr David Clarke Dr Maggie Clarke
Ms Liz Curach (arrived late) Dr Graydon Davison
Dr Bruno Di Biase Associate Professor Andrew Francis
Dr Stephen Janes Professor Beryl Hesketh (arrived late)
Dr David Low Dr Lauretta Luck
Professor Michael McDaniel Associate Professor Robyn McGuiggan
Professor Wayne McKenna Ms Robyn Moroney (arrived late)
Mr David Mutton Dr Janette Perz
Dr Penny Rossiter Dr Swapan Saha
Dr Elfriedade Sangkuhl Ms Thea Seabrook (arrived late)
Professor Simeon Simoff Dr Meg Smith
Professor Stephen Teo Mr Sean Toohey
Professor Lesley Wilkes Professor Ian Wilson
Professor Yang Xiang

In Attendance:
Miss Loui Pham (General Secretary – The Hive Student Union)
Mr Jason Pratap (Post-graduate student representative elect)
Mr Greg Wheatley (Secretary)

Apologies:
Associate Professor Berice Anning Dr David Burchell
Associate Professor Robyn Bushell Dr Carmel Coady
Dr Peter Dallow Professor John Ingleson
Ms Laurel Jackson Professor Gregory Kolt
Ms Margaret Malak Mrs Debra Moodie-Bain
Professor Janice Reid Ms Jeni Ryde
Professor Geoff Scott Professor Brian Uy
Mr Brett Wheldon Professor Nancy Wright

Absent:
Professor Michael Atherton Dr Kevin Daly
Dr Betty Gill Professor Barbara Holland
Associate Professor Phil Ross Professor Lynette Sheridan Burns
Associate Professor Steve Wilson
1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

★1.1 INTRODUCTION, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
The Chair of Academic Senate, Associate Professor Paul Wormell, chaired the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He noted that Professor Beryl Hesketh had been delayed and would arrive late.

Senate congratulated Dr Stephen Janes as the Elected School Member for the School of Law and, in absentia, Mrs Debra Moodie-Bain as the Elected School Member for the School of Natural Sciences.

The Chair especially welcomed Dr Bruno Di Biase as one of the three nominated Heads of School from the College of Arts and Mr David Clarke (Vice President Academic of The Hive Student Union), to his first meeting as the elected Undergraduate Student Member of Senate.

Apologies received were reported by the Secretary to Senate.

★1.2 STARRING OF ITEMS
Apart from procedural items, the following items were already starred for discussion:

3.2 Award Courses and Units Approval Policy
3.3 Proposed Amendment: Review of Grade Policy
3.4 Research Higher Degree Scholarship Policy: Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents Policy
3.6 Draft Academic Senate Workplan 2009-2011
3.8 Proposal to introduce a combined MBBS/PhD program
3.9 Proposed Doctor of Philosophy (Political and Social Thought) Rule Policy

The Chair reported that he had received a late request from the General Secretary of The Hive Student Union to raise two matters at this Senate meeting. He said that he would refer to the request in the Chair’s Report at item 3.1 of these minutes.

Members requested that items 3.1 Chair’s Report, 3.7 Student Appeals against exclusion from the University and 4.5 Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee report also be starred for discussion.

It was resolved (AS09:04/01)
That the documents for all unstarred agenda items be noted and, except where alternative action is noted as appropriate, all recommendations contained in those items be endorsed.

★1.3 ORDER OF BUSINESS
A re-arrangement of the order of business, in accordance with the agenda, was not required.

★1.4 OTHER BUSINESS
Professor Yang Xiang requested that the issue of The appointment of a third examiner and arbiter in relation to Bachelors (Honours) degrees be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: Secretary
1.5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 August 2009 were confirmed.

It was resolved (AS09:04/02) That Academic Senate confirm the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 14 August 2009, as an accurate record.

2 BUSINESS ARISING

2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting held on 20 March 2009
  2.1 UNIVERSITY MEDAL POLICY (Item 3.9)
  Senate noted that the Education Committee (the Committee) had investigated the possible advantages/disadvantages for particular disciplines in relation to eligibility criteria for the University Medal award and recommend criteria that are equitable across disciplines. The Committee considered that the University Medal Policy may not require amendment.

  The Committee felt that it was not appropriate to adjust the criteria to enable more College of Business graduates to obtain the University Medal. Instead, the Committee suggested that the College of Business’ School Academic Committees may wish to consider the assessment culture within the College and their schools, and ways to encourage talented students to progress to honours-level study (for further details, refer to the Senate Education Committee report dated 21 September 2009).

Meeting held on 29 May 2009
  2.2 CHAIR’S REPORT: Revisions to academic governance arrangements (Item 3.1)
  Senate noted the progress regarding organising a workshop for the Chairs of School Academic Committees (SACs) to discuss issues relating to the operation of the SACs and their terms of reference. The outcome will be reported to Senate.

3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 CHAIR’S REPORT
The Chair referred to his report covering recent activities undertaken on behalf of the Senate since the previous Senate meeting held on 14 August 2009, and highlighted the following:

- The matters considered by the National Conference of Chairs and Secretaries of Academic Boards held in Hobart from 8-9 October 2009. The program included sessions on:
  - Current issues in Australian Education; Student Grievance and Discipline issues in Australian universities;
  - The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA). An update was provided on the national high-school curriculum and its implications for universities. These will be implications for admission criteria and knowledge requirements across the sector; and
  - The review of the Australian Quality Framework (AQF), that will have important implications for course offerings of UWS and UWSCollege.
• The review of the University’s processes for managing and advising students who are academically at-risk.

• He expressed his appreciation to the contributions made by the Chair of Senate nominees serving on several Promotions and PDP Committees.

The Chair also referred to a request to include two items on the agenda for this meeting, received from The Hive Student Union, on 14 October 2009. The items related to concerns expressed by a number of Psychology students about changes to the Bachelor of Psychology degree course, and fees relating to Law units offered in Summer session. Senate noted that the fees issue is outside the Academic Senate’s Terms of Reference and that the Executive Dean - College of Business and Vice-Chancellor are aware of these student concerns.

Regarding the changes to the Bachelor of Psychology course, the Chair had advised the student body that, in accordance with the Senate Standing Orders, the lateness of the request and the lack of supporting information in sufficient detail precluded Senate members from making an informed decision on the matter. The matter has been referred to senior officers of the University for investigation. The Chair will report the outcome of those investigations to the next meeting of Senate. If necessary, remedial action would be taken.

Action: Chair

POLICY MATTERS

✰3.2 AWARD COURSES AND UNITS APPROVAL POLICY

Professor Campbell, Chair – Senate Education Committee, introduced this item and highlighted the following:

• The Academic Registrar had taken primary carriage of the review of the courses and units approvals policy.

• The Award Courses and Units Approval Policy (the Policy) provides accountability at each stage of the course and unit approval process. The new policy will reflect the University’s re-engineered business processes, featured in the Curriculum Approvals and Publication System (CAPS), currently under development. The predecessor to CAPS, the On-line Courses Approvals System (OCAS), provided important data in the task to re-engineer relevant University processes.

• The Policy features a section on definitions, includes reference to Unit Sets, provision for Fast-tracking Courses and Unit Set proposals, linkage to a range of related policies and a clear summary of delegations.

• In due course, a statement of curriculum principles will be developed to accompany the proposed Policy, covering Graduate Attributes, student retention and other aspects of the pedagogical rationale for the development of courses and units.

Professor Campbell moved the recommendation from the Senate Education Committee and invited comment.

Senate members provided the following comment/request for clarification:
Details of approval of changes to units (clause 63c)
The details relating to unit changes are currently being finalised and will be attached to the Policy as Associated Information on the Policy DDS Directory.

The CAPS has been designed to provide an “automatic” approvals pathway that will guide those involved through the process. The pilot roll-out of unit approvals in pilot schools is scheduled for March 2010, with a full roll-out to all schools scheduled for July 2010.

The role of the School Academic Committee in the Course approval process (Part D – Summary of Delegations)
The School Academic Committee does not have a delegation to approve course proposals. The SACs role under the current academic governance arrangements is to consider proposals but not approve them.

Timing of Approvals for Units (clause 60)
The Policy requires that approval of new units should be completed by mid-March of the year preceding introduction of the unit, to ensure alignment of unit and course versions. The approval timeline has been formulated because some units may be attached to a raft of courses and consequential changes need to be made to affected courses.

Key Program (clause 12)
As defined in the Policy, a Key Program comprises an approved sequence of core, specified units that comprise a minimum 160 credit points and is comparable to a Unit Set. The definition is consistent with that contained in the Structure and Nomenclature of Bachelor Awards Policy.

The issue of a Key Program forming part of a course structure is currently the subject of discussion in a number of Senate Committees. The relevant Senate Committees will examine the structure of course proposals on a case by case basis. The concept of what constitutes a Key Program will be considered by the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee.

Fast-tracked Courses and Unit Set Approvals (clauses 28-30)
The circumstances relating to fast-tracked proposals are usually unique e.g. they can relate to correcting omissions when a previous change was approved, professional accreditation requirements or have risk management implications.

The Librarian requested that a definition of what constitutes “fast-track approval”, and the circumstances relating to such approvals, be developed.

The Academic Registrar advised that the CAPS system will provide notification of such approvals: resource issues will be considered by the relevant Head of School/Executive Dean.

It was resolved (AS09:04/03)
That Academic Senate approve the Award Courses and Units Approval Policy, with effect from 1 January 2010.

Action: Derby
3.3 PROPOSED AMENDMENT: REVIEW OF GRADE POLICY

Professor Campbell, Chair – Senate Education Committee, introduced this item and highlighted the following:

- The revision of the Review of Grade Policy (the Policy) arose from the development of an e-form project relating to applications for Review of Grade.

- The electronic process provides for the Unit Co-ordinator to receive applications from students that satisfy relevant criteria; the Unit Coordinator will provide a written response and both documents will be submitted to the Head of School for determination, based on the application and the Unit Coordinator’s response.

- The Policy conforms to the University’s business processes.

- The reference to the School Academic Committee (SAC) has been removed and the previous function of the SAC will now be performed by the Head of School. This is consistent with the revised Terms of Reference of the SAC embodied in the Academic Senate Standing Committees Policy, which now performs a monitoring function rather than the previous operational role.

Professor Campbell moved the recommendation from the Senate Education Committee and invited comment.

Senate members provided the following comment/request for clarification:

Introduction of electronic process
The introduction of the electronic process is expected to be available for the Spring 2009 examination results (not quarter 3).

Consultation
The introduction of an electronic system featuring streamlined business processes (and consequential amendment of the Policy) followed discussions with Heads of School.

Rationale for new system
The current Review of Grade Policy required applications for Review of Grade to be considered by the School Academic Committee. This proved impractical due to difficulties convening meetings of academics with the appropriate expertise. This tended to slow down the consideration of such applications. Because timely determination of such applications is in the student’s interest, most schools did not follow that practice, as it was considered inefficient and did not add value to the process.

Notification of outcome of Review Applications: Amendment to proposal
Clause 20 of the Policy provides that the outcome will be notified to the student electronically via their UWS student account. There was a suggestion that a timeframe be included to ensure timely communication with the student.

Senate discussed the suggestion and agreed to modify the proposal at clause 20 with the words “normally within a week” after “... notify the student electronically”
Incomplete grades after census date
Senate noted that the University would consider valid reasons if grades remain incomplete after census date. An example of exceptional circumstances may include delays in obtaining feedback from hospitals for nursing related courses etc.

It was resolved (AS09:04/04)
That Academic Senate approve the proposed revision to the Review of Grade Policy, subject to amendment of clause 20 with the inclusion of “normally within a week” after “notify the student electronically”, with immediate effect, noting that references in the proposed Policy to “unit outlines” should, for 2009 only, be references to “unit outlines / learning guides” (clauses 6. 10 a, 10 b and 10 c).

Action: Derby

3.4 RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE SCHOLARSHIP POLICY: AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS
Professor Wilkes, Chair – Senate Research Studies Committee, introduced this item and reported that the proposed Research Higher Degrees Scholarship Policy: Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents (the Policy) is a formalised version of guidelines currently in use.

Senate noted that the Policy outlines the specific award conditions of research higher degree (RHD) scholarships awarded to domestic RHD candidates. In some cases, there may be additional award conditions, to cover individual requirements, such as those applying to a particular grant.

Professor Wilkes moved the recommendation from the Senate Research Studies Committee.

It was resolved (AS09:04/05)
That Academic Senate approve the Research Higher Degree Scholarship Policy: Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents Policy, with immediate effect.

Action: Wilkes/Krone

SENATE ACTIVITY

3.5 UWS MAKING THE DIFFERENCE: OBJECTIVES
The Senate noted the University’s Making the Difference diagrammatic document featured objectives that provide for an Engaged Learning experience, development of targeted world class Research, and Organisational and Financial Strength.

Senate took into account the objectives, as part of its consideration of the draft Senate Workplan 2009-2011, discussed at item 3.6 of these minutes.

3.6 DRAFT SENATE WORKPLAN 2009-2011
The Chair of Senate introduced this item and provided the following comment:

- The draft Senate Workplan 2009-2011, had been prepared in consultation with members of the Senate Executive Committee, key Committee Chairs and senior OAR staff. In particular, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality), Professor Scott, had provided valuable input regarding the areas of focus and activity related to the AUQA audits.
• The draft Senate Workplan aligns with the University's *Making The Difference* objectives and Strategic Plan, and sets out the focus of Senate activity for the current term, taking account of the Senate’s role and terms of reference embodied in the *Academic Governance Policy*, and also addresses the University’s preparation for the AUQA Cycle 2 audit.

The Chair then invited comment from members.

**Ethical Scholarship**

Ethical Scholarship, which has been the subject of discussion by Senate Education Committee, was nominated as a Senate project for 2010.

The Education Committee could not adequately deal with Ethical Scholarship because it embraces areas such as Research activity, and consequently extends outside the Education Committee’s Terms of Reference. Accordingly, it should be recognised at a higher level within the University’s academic governance structure, and be formalised as part of a Senate strategy. This view was endorsed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) in the context of a more stringent regulation regime being imposed within the research portfolio.

There is a need to develop policies and promulgate practice relating to Ethical Scholarship.

Most universities experience challenges regarding ethics approvals. A problematic issue was cited, where institutions are engaged in a collaborative project that requires ethics approval, the issue of which organisation’s ethics regime should be used can arise.

Student misconduct was intrinsically related to ethical scholarship. However, there was a divergence of view on this issue: it was considered that although there is a link between ethical scholarship and academic misconduct, the two concepts should not be intrinsically mixed as this could influence the emphasis of “ethical”. The Chair undertook to clarify this section of the workplan.

**Senate Orientation Kit for new members**

The Senate Orientation Kit should be available on the Senate webpage.

The Chair responded that the current kit would be vetted to ensure it is up-to-date and then placed on the webpage.

**Senate as a Forum for Academic Debate**

The Senate’s Terms of Reference recognise it as the University’s peak academic body and a forum for academic debate. Consistent with this function, the proposed draft Workplan 2009-2011 provides for biannual presentations at Academic Senate on policy matters arising in the sector or major strategic developments in the University.

During 2009, Senate has received the following presentations:

• By the Chancellor, at the opening of the inaugural meeting of the current Senate in March;
• By the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality) on the impending AUQA Cycle 2 Update audit (20 March meeting) and the Bradley Review (Expert Panel) Review into Australian Higher Education in the context of the Federal Budget and the implications for UWS (29 May meeting); and
• By the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the Landscape Review and Framework 2009-2013 (14 August meeting).

The Chair welcomed suggestions from members for speakers who could deliver presentations on issues consistent with Senate Terms of Reference. In particular, he invited the student members to nominate an issue or speaker. The following issues/speakers were suggested:

• The University’s relationship with the VET/TAFE sector: Mr Barry Peddle, Director - South Western Sydney Institute, was nominated as an appropriate speaker. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), who had recently been involved with a summit of Universities and the VET sector, considered Senate would benefit from such a presentation, especially given the Federal Government’s initiatives to improve the articulation and connectivity between the university and VET sectors.

• Bologna Protocol: Senate noted that a presentation was delivered some time ago on the Bologna Protocol, a system that provides for greater commonality between institutions in terms of requirements for a three-year bachelor’s degree and a two-year master’s, as well as a standard credit system. Senate agreed to keep a watching brief on developments in this area.

The Chair thanked Senate for their contribution and invited members to submit further suggestions.

It was resolved (AS09:04/06)
That Academic Senate endorse the Academic Senate Workplan 2009-2011.

Action: Chair

3.7 STUDENT APPEALS AGAINST EXCLUSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY

The Chair outlined the process and procedure followed by the University in respect of appeals against exclusion, pursuant to the University’s Progression and Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

Senate noted the analysis of the appeals considered by the Senate Progression Appeals Panel meeting held on 5 August 2009, and subsequent late appeals.

The Chair also referred to a review of possible changes to the way in which the University deals with students who are academically at-risk.

It was resolved (AS09:04/07)
That Academic Senate note the report on the unsatisfactory academic progress appeals considered by the Senate’s Progression Appeals Panel on 5 August 2009 and subsequent late appeals.

LATE ITEMS

3.8 PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A COMBINED MBBS/PHD PROGRAM

Professor Wilkes, Chair – Senate Research Studies Committee, introduced this item and highlighted the following:

• There is no change proposed to either the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) course nor the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.
• Students who opt to take the combined courses would take a Leave of Absence from their medical studies after the completion of the Bachelor of Medical Research degree (following completion of either Years 1 and 2 of MBBS or Years 1, 2 and 3 of MBBS, depending on which option is selected), complete their PhD and resume the MBBS.

Professor Wilson, Professor of Medical Education, was then asked to speak to the item and made the following points:

• It was anticipated that very few students would opt for the combined program. Some of those students may opt out of the PhD program and qualify as surgeons.

• He outlined the various approaches provided by other Australian universities in relation to similar combined degrees.

• The MBBS is a six year course and the PhD is a two year course. After eight years study, a successful student would be eligible to graduate, in effect, with three degrees, viz Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Medical Research and Doctor of Philosophy.

• Students who elect to undertake the combined program cannot commence the PhD between years 4 and 5 of the MBBS because of the integrated nature of the final two years of the MBBS.

Members provided the following comment:

• The proposal would not present any difficulties with enrolments.

• The proposal was supported by the College of Health and Science.

• There was a suggestion that introduction of the proposal may require a change to the Higher Degree Rule.

• The rationale of the proposal should be to capture prospective research students.

It was resolved (AS09:04/08)
That Academic Senate approve, in principle, a proposal to introduce a combined MBBS/PhD program.

Action: Wilkes/Krone

3.9 PROPOSED DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THOUGHT) RULE POLICY
Professor Wilkes, Chair – Senate Research Studies Committee, introduced this item and highlighted the following:

• The proposed Doctor of Philosophy (Political and Social Thought) Rule Policy (the Policy) provides for the academic governance of the degree, including the admission of candidates, matters related to the enrolment and progression of candidatures, examination and graduation.

• The proposal features a compulsory one year coursework component in the first year of enrolment. The Policy requires, consistent with University Policy, that two thirds of the degree must be research activity.
• There are no specific units attached to the program.

• The proposal requires candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the program.

• The proposal provides, at clause 41, that candidates must complete all coursework participation requirements and achieve an acceptable grade in their coursework. This would normally be B+ or better (B+ being equivalent to Credit Average).

• Candidates must successfully complete a formal Confirmation of Candidature within twelve to eighteen months of commencement of candidature.

In response to a suggestion to combine the Doctorate of Philosophy policies with an overarching policy, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) explained that it would be problematic to amalgamate the various Doctorate policies, including scholarship implications.

Professor Wilkes undertook to clarify the appropriate presentation of the Policy with the Academic Registrar.

It was resolved (AS09:04/09)
That Academic Senate approve the Doctor of Philosophy (Political and Social Thought) Rule Policy, with immediate effect.

Action: Wilkes/Krone

4 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES

4.1 SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
The Senate noted that the Executive Committee convened an e-meeting on 22 September 2009.

It was resolved (AS09:04/10)
That Academic Senate note the report of the Senate Executive Committee e-meeting held on 22 September 2009 and ratify the decisions contained therein.

4.2 RESEARCH COMMITTEE
The Senate noted that the Research Committee met on 4 August 2009.

It was resolved (AS09:04/11)
That Academic Senate note the minutes of the Research Committee meeting held on 4 August 2009.

4.3 RESEARCH STUDIES COMMITTEE
The Senate noted that the Research Studies Committee met on 7 July, 4 August and 1 September 2009.

It was resolved (AS09:04/12)
That Academic Senate note the minutes of the Research Studies Committee meetings held on 7 July, 4 August and 1 September 2009.
4.4 EDUCATION COMMITTEE
The Education Committee met on 21 September 2009.

It was resolved (AS09:04/13)
That Academic Senate note the report of the Education Committee meeting held on 21 September 2009.

4.5 ACADEMIC PLANNING AND COURSES APPROVALS COMMITTEE
The Senate noted that the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee (APCAC) met on 8 September 2009 and convened a special meeting by rotary circulation on 11 September 2009.

Regarding the issue of a Trimester Model for the Academic Year cited in the APCAC report, Senate noted that a report, regarding the wide ranging implications of introducing such a model, has been prepared for the University Executive. The concept has implications *inter alia* for design of degrees and an impact on Summer school. Senate understood that the proposal has been put on hold. The University had to consider whether the trimester model was the most appropriate growth strategy option. Senate would be kept informed of developments.

It was resolved (AS09:04/14)
That Academic Senate note the report of the Academic Planning and Courses Approvals Committee meetings held on 8 and 11 September 2009.

4.6 BOARD OF TRUSTEES
The Board of Trustees most recent meeting was held on 2 September 2009.

The next meeting is scheduled for 25 November 2009. Summaries of Board of Trustees meetings, and minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, are available on the web-site at: http://www.uws.edu.au/boardoftrustees.

5 FOR INFORMATION

5.1 ACADEMIC SENATE ELECTIONS TO FILL TWO CASUAL VACANCIES
Senate noted that, following a recent call for nominations to fill two casual vacancies on the Academic Senate, occasioned by the election of Associate Professor Paul Wormell as Chair of Senate and Dr Elfriede Sangkuhl as Deputy Chair of Senate, the following declarations have been made:

- Mrs Debra Moodie-Bain has been elected unopposed to the position of one member of the academic staff of the School of Natural Sciences; and

- Dr Stephen Janes has been elected unopposed to the position of one member of the academic staff of the School of Law.

Their term of office as members of Senate will commence on 7 October 2009 and conclude on 19 March 2011.

6 NEXT MEETING

Senate noted that the next meeting of Academic Senate is provisionally scheduled for Friday 20 November 2009 in the Boardroom, Building AD, Werrington North, commencing at 9:30am.
The meeting closed at 11:10 am.