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THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
INTERIM BOARD OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
MEETING 02/06

A meeting of the Interim Board of Undergraduate Studies was held at 2pm on **Friday 3 November 2006** in the **Melbourne Institute Boardroom, Level 7, Alan Gilbert Building**.

Secretary: Gioconda Di Lorenzo
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(8344 3972)

Present: Professor Peter McPhee (Chair), Ms Joan Reese, Professor Loane Skene, Professor Ruth Fincher, Professor Belinda Probert, Professor Bruce Grundy, Associate Professor Christine Ure, Professor Jannie van Deventer, Professor Ron Slocombe, Associate Professor Ian Malkin, Professor James Angus, Professor Cathy Falk, Professor Peter Rathjen, Associate Professor Steve James, Professor Bill Griffiths, Associate Professor Michelle Livett, Professor Mark Hargreaves, and Ms Jessie Giles.

Apologies: Ms Gillian Luck, Ms Linda O'Brien, Dr Pat McLean, Ms Carmel Murphy, Professor Margaret Abernethy, Professor Field Rickards, Professor Ivan Caple, Professor Jonty Stockdale, and Associate Professor Su Baker.

In attendance: Ms Gioconda Di Lorenzo (Secretary), Professor Bruce Grundy on behalf of Professor Margaret Abernethy, Associate Professor Christine Ure on behalf of Professor Field Rickards, Dr George Duke on behalf of Dr Pat McLean.

MINUTES

1. Formal Matters

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The Board received apologies from Ms Luck, Ms O'Brien, Dr McLean, Ms Murphy, Professor Abernethy, Professor Rickards, Professor Caple, Professor Stockdale, and Associate Professor Baker.

1.2 Membership of the Interim Board of Undergraduate Studies and other matters

Professor McPhee welcomed the Deans who were unable to attend the first meeting of the Interim BUGS. The newly-elected chairs of the 'new generation' course standing committees (CSCs) were also introduced. The CSC chairs were confirmed as: Associate Professor Steve James for the Bachelor of Arts; Professor Mark Hargreaves for the Bachelor of Bioscience; Professor Bill Griffiths for the Bachelor of Commerce; Professor Ruth Fincher for the Bachelor of Environments; Professor Cathy Falk for the Bachelor of Music and Associate Professor Michelle Livett for the Bachelor of Science.

Members of the Board agreed that it would be appropriate to invite a representative from the Centre of the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) to join BUGS.

2. Minutes and Action Sheet

2.1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2006 (01/06) were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

2.2 Action sheet

The Chair confirmed that activities on the Action Sheet for meeting 01/06 were in progress, or would be addressed during the meeting.

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The Chair reiterated for the benefit of members who were not present during the previous meeting that BUGS would meet in an interim capacity until University statutes are updated to reflect the Board's position within the University's governance structures.

3. Business arising

3.1 Verbal report from Chair on the place of BUGS in business planning

The Chair explained that BUGS will contribute in a number of ways to the business planning process. It will be involved in the distribution of existing course load into the new degrees, and will offer advice on student support offered centrally. Members were mindful that faculties will also be involved in extensive business planning in the following months, and that they will need to work closely with BUGS to avoid duplication of these activities.

Other resourcing matters were discussed. The Interim Board was reminded that whilst there are not likely be significant load shifts with the implementation of the Melbourne Model, Growing Esteem Transition Funding will be available to assist faculties in coping with major shifts should they occur. BUGS noted that the Chair will bring to the attention on the Vice-Chancellor the concern across faculties that there will not be enough resources in the event of load shifts.

The Chair announced that some of the funds awarded to the University under the Commonwealth Government's Workplace Productivity Program (WPP) will be used to finance the work of the Boston Consulting Group, which will advise the University on effective structures for implementing the Melbourne Model by 2008. Another portion (\$1.5 million) of these funds will be used to assist with the process of curriculum reform.

A timetable for approval of the structure and content of the 'new generation' degrees by the end of March 2007 was tabled by the Chair. Members noted that weekly meetings of the Interim BUGS will be scheduled in February 2007, if required, to enable the approval of the new degrees by this deadline. Meetings are most likely to take place on a bi-monthly basis thereafter.

3.2 Verbal reports from Chairs of Course Standing Committees and progress towards development of 'new generation' undergraduate degrees

The newly-elected chairs of the six 'new generation' course standing committees (CSCs) were invited to give reports of the activities of their respective committees towards the development of the new degrees. The Interim Board considered the early drafts of the 'core' documents of each of the CSCs:

Bachelor of Arts Standing Committee

- The Chair of the Bachelor of Arts Standing Committee described the key features of the proposed 'new generation' Bachelor of Arts (BA). These will include a fundamentally revised first-year, the 'Major' as a compulsory component of the degree, with more structured sequences as well as keystone and capstone activities. Majors will comprise knowledge transfer elements. There is also a recommendation that 25 points of breadth subjects be undertaken each year.
- The Bachelor of Arts Standing Committee is still in the process of finalising the precise features of the Major and the strategies for reducing the number of subjects offered during first-year.
- The Interim Board noted that some of the recommendations for the proposed BA which were set down in the document drafted by the BA Working Group (included with agenda papers for the meeting) had since been amended.
- Members expressed strong support for the proposed Foundational Skills subject – originally intended as a compulsory breadth subject – which would use the collections held at the University and in neighbouring public institutions. The Dean of Arts reported that the subject would no longer be compulsory due to perceived difficulties with offering it to all first-year students.

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- The BA Standing Committee also conveyed concerns about resourcing for large number of non-Arts students.
- The Dean clarified that the proposed Major in Psychology is designed to accommodate accreditation requirements.

Bachelor of Bioscience Standing Committee

- The Chair of the Bachelor of Bioscience Standing Committee, Professor Mark Hargreaves, advised that the document included in the agenda papers was developed during Bioscience CSC meetings held to date.
- Professor Hargreaves acknowledged that one of the main challenges of the Bioscience CSC will be to develop a core curriculum which imparts knowledge and builds competencies as well as incorporating the characteristic components of the Melbourne Model.
- Some members of the Interim Board queried the nomenclature for the proposed core subject, 'The Global Citizen'. It was suggested that this name might be amended to better reflect the objectives of the subject which examines the impact of the environment on human biology. 'The Global Body' was offered as an alternative name. Members agreed that, nonetheless, the content of this subject was very interesting.
- The Dean of Engineering asked about the extent to which the Bioscience CSC has considered foundational knowledge in biomedical engineering when developing first-year subjects. It was decided that to progress the discussion in this regard, appropriate staff from the faculties of Engineering and Science might be invited to join the Bioscience CSC. Professor van Deventer recommended that Professor Peter Scales would be a suitable candidate to represent the Faculty of Engineering. The Dean of Science agreed to advise Professor Hargreaves on a representative from the Faculty of Science.
- Members of the Interim Board discussed the commonalities between the 'new generation' degrees and agreed that the degrees should not be mutually exclusives. The Board envisages some overlap between the six degrees. The overlap will be important to enable undergraduate students to move across to other programs.
- The Board suggested that the core component of the proposed Bioscience degree might also incorporate aspects of animal and plant study.

Bachelor of Science Standing Committee

- The Chair of the Bachelor of Science Standing Committee reported that, in addition to the Bachelor of Science CSC, three multiple-faculty working groups have been involved in developing the curriculum for the 'new generation' Bachelor of Science. The document included in the agenda papers was developed by the Bachelor of Science Structure and Majors Working Group.
- Associate Professor Livett advised that the Bachelor of Science Standing Committee has met twice and has accepted a series of global recommendations. Some of the key issues considered by the Bachelor of Science CSC include: the coherence of the first-year experience; embedding transition activities into the curriculum; flexibility and prerequisites for adequate subject sequencing; capstone activities; and the tension between reducing the number of subjects and ensuring that core knowledge and skills are developed effectively.
- The Interim Board noted that the Bachelor of Science CSC will consider a paper on the breadth component during its next meeting.
- Members discussed the need to resolve the issue of retaining the Honours under the Melbourne Model (particularly as it relates to the Faculty of Science and the proposed +2 structure). Associate Professor Livett confirmed that a working group has been established to consider this matter. The Board noted that the Curriculum Commission was clear about the importance of retaining two pathways under the Melbourne Model. At the same time, the University must avoid the risk that one pathway will be perceived as a 'soft option'.

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Bachelor of Commerce Standing Committee

- The Chair of the Bachelor of Commerce Standing Committee tabled a document outlining the draft rules for the ‘new generation’ Bachelor of Commerce (BCom).
- Members heard that the fundamental principle underpinning the design of the BCom is to maintain its flexibility. The CSC will aim to achieve this by minimising the number of compulsory subjects and by providing choice for students in meeting the breadth requirement. Students undertaking subjects for accreditation in Accounting and Actuarial Studies will have less flexibility in their choice of breadth.
- Professor Griffiths explained that as the BCom has not previously offered a Major, there are still a number of unresolved issues relating to the definition of the Major. One option is to prescribe a certain number of 300-level subjects in a discipline.
- It was suggested that the BCom CSC might consider a pathway in the BCom towards a Master of Engineering (in lieu of the combined Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Commerce).
- The Dean of the Faculty of Land and Food Resources queried whether the breadth subjects provided under the discipline list for ‘Globalisation and the Environment’ (particularly those relating to resource management), might instead be offered as a Major within the BCom. Professor Slocombe and Professor Griffiths agreed to discuss this further.
- The procedure for recommending breadth subjects to CSCs was also discussed. Members agreed that this should be a ‘two-way’ process. CSCs might make recommendations for breadth sequences, for example, and faculties or departments might individually approach CSCs.
- The Interim Board agreed that whilst there is no specific way of deciding breadth, a degree of coherence is recommended.

Bachelor of Environments Standing Committee

- The Bachelor of Environments (BEnv) Standing Committee met for the second time on Friday 3 November. Members of BUGS received with the agenda papers a document drafted by the Bachelor of Environments First Year Working Group.
- The Board was advised that the five faculties represented on the Bachelor of Environments CSC are working on developing a range of common first-year subjects designed to strengthen the cohort experience, followed by a range of Majors. These Majors will be available in Arts; Science; Civil Engineering; Environmental Engineering; Geomatics; and Architecture, Building and Planning.
- The Chair of the Bachelor of Environments CSC explained that two additional first-year subjects will need to be available to BEnv students, although only a small number of students are expected to take them. The two maths subjects will be undertaken by students intending to complete Majors in Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, or Geomatics. The maths subjects will not be the same as those offered in the first-year Bachelor of Science.
- Professor Fincher also reported the reluctance of some academic staff to teach first-year subjects based on the perception that these subjects, involving large enrolment numbers, will be difficult to teach. The Board heard that whilst extra resources will be needed in some cases to support classes, CSCs should also aim to achieve a balance in selecting subjects which avoid duplication of content. The intention is not to introduce more courses, but to improve the quality of subjects.

Bachelor of Music Standing Committee

- The Interim BUGS received a paper, tabled by the Chair of the Bachelor of Music (BMus) CSC, which describes the structure and principles underpinning the ‘new generation’ Bachelor of Music.
- The Chair of the Bachelor of Music CSC outlined the proposed core elements of the BMus and highlighted the tension between providing undergraduates with essential music instruction whilst encouraging broader knowledge and competencies. The fourth-year Honours year will be critical in this regard.
- Professor Falk explained that, in developing the breadth sequences, the CSC has had to ‘imagine’ prospective cohorts.
- Capstone activities in the new Bachelor of Music will include overseas work placements, Study Abroad and Exchange possibilities.

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- It is intended that all ESL students in the 'new generation' BMus will take the DELA test, and will be asked to enrol in a prescribed ESL subject accordingly. This subject will be taken as part of the breadth component of the new degree. The Chair of BUGS reminded members that ESL subjects should aim to develop cultural literacy as well as language skills.

3.3 Draft list of academic issues for consideration by BUGS

The Board noted the draft list of academic issues which was included in the agenda papers. These issues will be considered in due course.

4. Reports of activities relating to the Interim BUGS

4.1 Draft letter regarding marking schemes by Professor Leslie Holmes, Department of Political Science

The Chair proposed that further discussions about possible changes to the University's marking schemes would be beneficial. It would be useful to investigate the marking practices of other universities in considering this matter. The Interim Board agreed that Professor Holmes' letter might also be considered by the Postgraduate Scholarships Committee.

5. Other business

The Chair advised that Boston Consulting will present a report to BUGS (on recommended structures for implementing the Melbourne Model) at the next meeting.

Professor McPhee also asked the chairs of CSCs to consider in the short-term the following specific issues as their committees develop course proposals for the 'new generation' degrees: a) an appropriate timetable for finalising course descriptions and course proposals; and b) a decision on the number of first-year subjects to be offered as part of the degrees.

4. Date of Next Meeting

2.15pm, Friday 8 December 2006 in the Melbourne Institute Boardroom, Level 7, Alan Gilbert Building.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm

Distribution

Professor Peter McPhee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), (Chair)
Ms Joan Reese, Director, Melbourne Model Implementation
Professor Loane Skene, President of the Academic Board
Ms Gillian Luck, Vice-Principal and Academic Registrar
Ms Linda O'Brien, Vice-Principal (Information Services)
Professor Ruth Fincher, Dean, Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning
Professor Belinda Probert, Dean, Faculty of Arts
Professor Margaret Abernethy, Dean, Faculty of Economics & Commerce
Professor Field Rickards, Dean, Faculty of Education
Professor Jannie van Deventer, Dean, Faculty of Engineering
Professor Ron Slocombe, Dean, Faculty of Land and Food Resources
Associate Professor Ian Malkin, Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Faculty of Law
Professor James Angus, Dean, Faculty of MDHS
Professor Cathy Falk, Dean, Faculty of Music, and Chair, Bachelor of Music Standing Committee
Professor Peter Rathjen, Dean, Faculty of Science
Professor Ivan Caple, Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Science (proposed co-optee)
Professor Jonty Stockdale, Head, School of Music, Victorian College of the Arts (proposed co-optee)
Associate Professor Steve James, Chair, Bachelor of Arts Standing Committee
Professor Bill Griffiths, Chair, Bachelor of Commerce Standing Committee
Professor Ruth Fincher, Chair, Bachelor of Environments Standing Committee
Associate Professor Michelle Livett, Chair, Bachelor of Science Standing Committee
Professor Mark Hargreaves, Chair, Bachelor of Bioscience Standing Committee
Ms Jessie Giles, President, University of Melbourne Student Union

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For Information

Ms Carmel Murphy, Director of Academic Programs (Student Access)

Dr Pat McLean, Manager, Growing Esteem Strategy Office

Professor Bruce Grundy, Deputy-Dean, Faculty of Economics and Commerce

Professor David Smith, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Engineering

Professor David Chapman, Faculty of Land and Food Resources

Professor Michael Crommelin, Dean, Faculty of Law

Professor Bruce Singh, Associate Dean (Planning), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Associate Professor Ian Holtham, Faculty of Music

Professor Andrea Hull, Director, Victorian College of the Arts