DEAN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SCIENCE

MINUTES
of the meeting held on
Friday 19 August 2011

Present: Stephen Thurgate (Chair), John Gorman, Kelsie Dadd, Barry Quinn, Bernard Mans, David Coutts, Helena Nevalainen, Karu Esselle, Lesley Hughes, Mark Lackie, Mike Poulsen, Rod Yager, Imtiaz Bhayat, Martina Stiemer, Andrea Lerche, Karl Lukezic, John ten Have and Jane Edgson

1. Apologies: - Peter Nelson, Trish Fanning, Tony Parker, Paul Smith, Sharyn Eaton,

The Dean welcomed Imtiaz Bhayat, the new Faculty General Manager, and John Gorman, the Chief Financial Manager, to the meeting.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:
JtH reported to Item 3:-
• the RSI incidences are under control;
• the unlocked door reported by BQ are due to a change of cleaners and management and a lack of induction. DC expressed concerns that the cleaners be advised of the need for care and a good understanding when cleaning research areas;
• the threatening emails to a staff member from Physics – JtH has spoken to John Durbridge, the Campus Security Manager and formed a plan.

3. Occupational Health and Safety
JtH reminded the committee of the need to report any incidents that occur in the field in case there are further repercussions.
A student had threatened self-harm which had led to a search of the Science buildings. JtH thanked KL and his staff for their quick response.
JtH also asked the committee to ask staff to be aware of students in labs with contagious illness. A student had recently reported he may have contracted an eye infection from a microscope following use by a fellow student.
KL advised that Technical staff were being educated on the use of gas in confined spaces. Risk assessments are being carried out taking small spaces into consideration. More training may be required.

4. Dean’s Report
Budget Process. The guidelines have been finalised. IB reported on the challenge to produce a balanced budget and advised he will be looking closely at items over
which we have control. ST advised he will be talking to three departments about their units with small numbers.

MS advised:

- the guidelines on the mechanics and process will be released today;
- an operational plan template will be sent by cob Monday 22 August – the objective is to keep it simple;
- the departmental administrators have been briefed on their role to assist in the budget process;
- the process will be using the on-line university tool and the dept admins have been advised on this;
- any problems let MS or Therase Tran know;
- TT and IB will be meeting with each dept to discuss detail;
- JE is organising meetings with the Dean;
- OSP and VS will need to be included.

All of the above will need to fit into the budget timeline. TT is checking data re the financials:

- timesheets submitted and entered to date
- outstanding purchase orders
- unallocated expenses from credit cards

The committee discussed the issue of workload and small units. Currently there are 44 across the Faculty and 35 of these are in three departments. Some HoDs expressed concern as the cost of running units is not consistent across the Faculty and this is not evident in the workload model. The Dean advised he is happy to engage in feedback if there are real anomalies.

Student Numbers
Analytics have given an estimate of numbers for 2011. As at the end of July the FoS numbers are showing an 8.5% growth, as are FoHS and FoA. FBE are down by 8.5%. This will reduce the amount of disposable income. These numbers will be confirmed after the census date at the end of the month and the budget figures should follow soon after. JG advised the student number projections for 2012 are 1000 down – revenue growth ~2%, cost growth ~6%. Looking at cutting programs across the university. Generally the university is well positioned through over-enrolments. However, other universities will want to gain back ground. When making offers important to be vigilant and check lists for students who merit an offer. It is important that Open Day is supported and successful. Engineering through SIBT is beginning to look promising. Running a Diploma of Electrical Engineering allows entry to 2nd year Engineering. The Dean advised the Committee of his plan to introduce Mechanical Engineering in SIBT – currently students are being turned away. BQ raised the issue of allowances from SIBT and City Campus. IB to talk to JG about the issues.

Space
Refurbishment and capital works are funded by any surplus. Mark Broomfield, Director of Property, is leading a reorganisation of space issues, starting with a 3-year plan. However, competition for capital expenditure funds will be greater so
important to plan effectively. The HoDs have been asked for their 3-year plan and this should be based on needs rather than issues.

Fieldwork
There are big implications from the new legislation. The Dean suggested the Faculty needs a Fieldwork Manager to help with the organisation of physical assets in a well-managed centralised system. Efficiencies will be gained elsewhere to resource this position.

The meeting closed at 9:55.

Date of next meeting – Friday 2 September 2011 in E6A 202. Prof Jim Piper, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, will be in attendance.